



Key Points in the Revised *General Instruction*

This summary has been compiled to highlight certain significant revisions to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Norms for the Celebration and Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States*. This summary also offers clarification on existing norms and, finally, communicates particular determinations for the celebration of the Eucharist in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

This summary is by no means meant to serve as a substitute for the careful reading and studying of the revised *General Instruction* and the *Norms for the Celebration and Distribution of Holy Communion*.

The liturgical assembly

The celebration of the Eucharist is an action of the whole Church, and each person present—ordained, lay ministers, members of the faithful—should be helped to realize that this Sunday celebration is of utmost importance in the life of the parish, and is, in fact, the center of the whole Christian life of the Church. (see GIRM, nn. 1–26)

Everyone who takes part in the celebration of the Eucharist is to prepare himself or herself before the liturgy. Silence, as an aid to this preparation, should be provided for all. (see GIRM, n. 45)

NOTE: If the church has a gathering space and people greet one another there, then silence may accompany their entrance into the body of the church. If people greet one another in the church, then a few moments of silence may be requested before the liturgy begins.

This silence should also be observed within the course of the celebration of the Mass, particularly at the following moments, as appropriate: after the invitation of the priest to pray, after the proclamation of the first and second readings, after the homily, and after communion. (see GIRM, n. 45)

Participation of the faithful throughout the celebration of Mass is to be encouraged and fostered, particularly in those parts of the Mass that are usually sung. (see GIRM, nn. 39–41)

This participation is further realized in the common postures and gestures which the faithful are called upon to make or observe:

- by bowing in the Creed at the words, “by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” (see GIRM, n. 137)
 - by standing, in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, after the priest’s invitation to “Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable . . .” and before they respond, “May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands . . .” (see GIRM, nn. 43, 146)
 - by kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer after the Sanctus is sung and until after the singing of the Amen. (see GIRM, n. 43) (Note: When Mass is celebrated in a place that does not allow for kneeling—for example, in a gym—then the faithful all bow when the priest genuflects after the consecration of the bread and after the consecration of the wine. See GIRM, n. 43)
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• by following the custom of the parish in kneeling or standing after the Lamb of God and throughout the communion procession until the prayer after communion.

NOTE: In the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Archbishop has determined to allow for parish custom at this time. (see GIRM, n. 43)

• by bowing his or her head to the Eucharistic elements in the hands of the minister as a sign of reverence before receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord in communion. (see GIRM, n. 160)

• by normally standing for the reception of Holy Communion. (see GIRM, n. 160)

All the faithful are normally to receive elements consecrated at the same Mass. (see GIRM, n. 85)

The faithful may receive the consecrated host either in the hand or on the tongue, as they decide. (see GIRM, n. 160)



Self-intinction by the communicant is never allowed. (see *Norms*, n. 50, GIRM, n. 287)

The priest

The Eucharistic liturgy is the gift from God to his Church and as such, no one is permitted—including the priest celebrant—to add, remove, or change anything in the celebration of the Mass, except where the norms allow for a decision between options. (see GIRM, n. 24)

If the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary of the church, then the priest and ministers genuflect before it when they approach the altar and when the procession leaves at the end of Mass, but never during the liturgy. (see GIRM, n. 274)

Prayers which the priest prays in his own name (that is, before reading the Gospel, at the preparation

of the gifts, and also before and after the communion of the priest) are to be said quietly. (see GIRM, n. 33)

It is not permitted to substitute or add non-biblical texts to the Liturgy of the Word. (See GIRM, n. 57).

The homily is a most important element of the Liturgy of the Word and care should be taken in its preparation. The homily may not be omitted on Sundays or holy days of obligation. It is given by the priest celebrant, a concelebrating priest, or the deacon, but is not to be given by a lay person. (see GIRM, n. 66)

For the Creed, only a formula approved by the Church is allowed for liturgical use. (See GIRM, n. 67)

For Mass on weekdays in Ordinary Time, the prayers from the previous Sunday, orations from another Sunday in Ordinary Time, or one of the prayers for various needs provided in

the Missal may be used. (see GIRM, n. 363)

During the preparation of the gifts, the prayers of blessing for the bread and the wine are to be said separately, not at the same time. These prayers are said before either the chalice or the paten are placed on the altar. (see GIRM, nn. 141–142)

It is very appropriate that the priest, if he is able, sing those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer for which musical notation is provided. (see GIRM, n. 147)

At the sign of peace, the priest ordinarily remains within the sanctuary, but may, for pastoral reasons, offer the sign of peace to a few of those near the sanctuary. (see GIRM, n. 154)

NOTE: In some parishes, careful thought must be given to establishing a sense of proportion and integration of this rite into the overall design of the

liturgy, while respecting the importance this rite has taken in the Eucharistic celebration. Pastors who wish to discuss this should contact the Office of Divine Worship.

The fraction rite is to be carried out only by the priest celebrant. A concelebrating priest and the deacon may assist. This pertains to portioning out the consecrated hosts to communion plates as well as to pouring the Precious Blood into ancillary cups. (see GIRM, n. 83; *Norms*, n. 37)

NOTE: In some cases, because of the number of communion cups needed, it may be necessary to pour unconsecrated wine into the cups during the preparation of the gifts. These cups would then remain on the altar during the consecration of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The celebrating priest (and concelebrants, if present) is to receive communion before it is given to anyone else. (see GIRM, nn. 158, 160, 182, 244)

The priest (and the deacon, if present) is to hand the communion vessels containing the consecrated elements—plates and cups—to the extraordinary ministers of communion. (see GIRM, nn. 83, 160, *Norms*, n. 40)

Concelebrating priests are normally to vest in the vestments worn when celebrating Mass individually. (see GIRM, n. 209)

The deacon

During the procession at the beginning of Mass, the deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels, if it is used, precedes the concelebrants and principal celebrant. He places the Book of the Gospels flat on the altar in preparation for the proclamation of the Gospel. If he is not carrying the Book of the

Gospels, he walks to the right of the principal celebrant. (see GIRM, n. 194)

NOTE: The Lectionary is not carried in the procession, but rather is placed on the ambo before Mass begins. (see GIRM, nn. 118, 120) In the absence of a deacon, a lector may carry the Book of the Gospels, if it is used, in the opening procession. The Book of the Gospels is not carried out in the closing procession. (see GIRM, nn. 120, 194)

The deacon, if he is able, should kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer, from the epiclesis to the elevation of the chalice, that is, just before the Memorial Acclamation. (see GIRM, n. 179)

The deacon receives communion under both species from the priest immediately after the priest's own communion. (see GIRM, n. 182)

The deacon assists in distributing communion to the extra-

ordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to the people, and may also assist in distributing vessels to the extraordinary ministers. (see GIRM, n. 182, *Norms*, nn. 38, 40)

If communion is distributed under both species, the deacon is to minister the Precious Blood. (see GIRM, n. 182)

If a deacon assists at the altar, he is the one who usually announces the Prayers of the Faithful and the announcements after the post-communion prayer. (see GIRM, nn. 177, 184)

The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion

NOTE: In the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Archbishop has allowed for the following means of distributing communion to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.



The extraordinary ministers of communion may approach the sanctuary and the altar as the priest receives communion. (see GIRM, n. 162, *Norms*, n. 38)

After the priest (and the deacon, if present) has received, he may distribute communion to two of the extraordinary ministers.

The priest may then give to one of these two extraordinary ministers a cup of the consecrated wine and to the other, a paten of the consecrated bread. These two ministers may then communicate the remaining ministers. (The deacon, if present, may assist.)

After each extraordinary minister has received communion, he or she goes to the altar, where the priest or deacon gives a communion vessel to the minister. The minister then goes to the assigned communion station. (see GIRM, n. 162)

Ministers may not add anything to the words of communion: “The Body of Christ,” “The Blood of Christ.” (See *Norms*, nn. 41, 43)

Extraordinary ministers of communion are to receive before they distribute communion to the rest of the faithful, not afterward. (see *Norms*, n. 39)

The Archbishop of Chicago has given permission for the extraordinary ministers to help consume whatever is left over of the Precious Blood after all have received communion. Extraordinary ministers may also help to purify the vessels at a side table. It is also permissible for the vessels to be covered by an appropriate cloth on the side table and cleansed after Mass. (see *Norms*, n. 52)

It is forbidden to pour what remains of the Precious Blood into the ground or down the sacrarium. (see *Norms*, nn. 51–55)

NOTE: The norms mention nothing about going to the tabernacle before or during communion in order to bring out consecrated hosts. The norms presume that enough hosts are consecrated so that all who take part in the Eucharist receive hosts consecrated at that Mass. (see GIRM, nn. 85, 118c) Furthermore, there is nothing in the norms to prohibit someone other than the priest (for example,

the deacon or the extraordinary minister of communion) from taking what is left over of the consecrated hosts to the tabernacle after communion.

The lectors

If the Book of the Gospels is used, the lector may carry it in the absence of a deacon, and lay it flat upon the altar in preparation for the proclamation of the Gospel. (see GIRM, nn. 194–195)

NOTE: The Lectionary is not carried in the procession, but rather is placed on the ambo before Mass begins. (see GIRM, nn. 118, 120) The Book of the Gospels is not carried out in the closing procession. (see GIRM, nn. 120, 194)

Normally, the scriptures proclaimed in the first and second readings are each proclaimed by a separate lector. (see GIRM, n. 109)

The division of any scriptural readings into parts, except for the Passion, is prohibited. (see GIRM, n. 109)

When no deacon is present, the lector or another minister announces from the ambo the Prayers of the Faithful. (see GIRM, nn. 99, 197)

