

Ministers Queries

The following queries have been raised by Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in recent years and answered in the annual newsletter. They are catalogued and summarised below for easy future reference.

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Duties at Mass

[Should Ministers do two jobs at Mass...eg. Read and Minister?](#)

Not normally. There might be exceptions but the principal is that one should only perform one ministry in any Mass. This will allow the use of as many people as possible so as to let all feel that they are included.

On this basis server / MC should not normally minister during Mass. However if there is insufficient number of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion available he / she can minister.

Renewal Days

What is the length of a Renewal Day?

If you look at the notes on your Faculty you will find that under note 3 it states:-

Those commissioned are required to: -

- a) Renew their commitment annually before their parish community,
- b) Attend an annual Day of Renewal,

In fact most Renewal Days last from about 10.00 am until 3.30 pm which is hardly a full day. These times have been selected to allow for travel to the venue and sufficient time for Ministers who are ministering at a Saturday evening mass to return to their parish in time. Any shorter time would not really allow sufficient time for the retreat nature of the day.

Communion to the Sick and Housebound

Can any Minister take Holy Communion to People in Hospital?

Most hospitals have a chaplaincy team and strict rules about who may enter to take Communion to the sick. If we know that someone is going into hospital we should encourage them to tell the Chaplain in advance. Emergency admissions need to be followed up vigorously.

Do we have to use the new translation when taking Communion to the sick and housebound especially when the person has difficulty with it?

The Bishop is more than happy for any sick and housebound person to use the old formulae should it be too much for them to change.

Can the Service of Communion of the Sick and Housebound be provided in Braille?

The Bishop is happy for the Service of Communion of the Sick and Housebound to be provided in Braille. However at the present time we are not aware of anyone who has produced a Braille version.

I was of the opinion that when we carry the consecrated hosts we should not talk to anybody as far as possible. This is not observed-by all.

The consecrated hosts should always be carried with the utmost care and reverence when taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound. We should not at any time engage in unnecessary conversation with anyone when carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

Should we purify the pyx after giving Holy Communion at home.

The pyx should always be purified after giving Holy Communion. If this cannot be conveniently done at Church, the purification should be carried out in the Minister's own home, pouring the water used for the purification on to the earth afterwards.

Normally we place our pyx with unconsecrated hosts on the altar before the Mass and pick them up after the Mass after they have been consecrated. Quite often it has been noticed that some open the Tabernacle and take the consecrated hosts directly from the main ciborium. Is this right to do ?

The arrangement for Ministers taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound is to receive the pyx with the consecrated hosts in from the priest or deacon after the Final Prayer of the Mass has been said. A prayer sending out the Ministers is then said. This allows the sick and housebound to receive Holy Communion consecrated at the Mass and unites them with the community which has just offered the Mass together.

If the Minister is taking out Holy Communion at any other time, as can happen, it is practical for him/her to take the host from the ciborium in the Tabernacle.

Celebration of Word and Communion

What are the Commission's recommendations for the orderly entrance of the Leader of a Celebration of Word and Communion Service?

As you are aware, the Leader can be either a Deacon or a trained member of the laity. In this diocese, most trained members of the laity are Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

If a Deacon is leading the Service he will enter from the Sacristy and will probably sound the bell. If a member of the laity is leading the Service we recommend that he / she enters from the congregation. This emphasises that an ordained minister is not present and that the people of God have assembled to celebrate. As no bell is sounded this could lead to the Leader appearing in the Sanctuary without members of the congregation being aware that this has happened. We suggest that this is overcome by either, an Entrance Hymn being sung or more likely at a Weekday Service, by recitation of the Entrance Antiphon as the Leader approaches the Sanctuary.

Notice that hymns may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Communion.

What are the recommendations for the entry and exit of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion?

It is recommended that the sign of peace is celebrated just before the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion enters the Sanctuary from the congregation. The EM then exchanges the sign of peace with the Lay Leader who then retires either to a suitable side seat on the sanctuary or to his place in the congregation.

The EM then collects the ciborium from the tabernacle and places it on the altar and continues with the Communion Rite.

At the end of the Communion Rite the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion returns the ciborium to the tabernacle and returns to his place and the Lay Leader returns to the sanctuary.

In the case where it is necessary for the Lay Leader and the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to be the same person the minister enters the sanctuary at the beginning of the Service but does not wear his / her scapular. At the start of the Communion Rite he /she puts on the scapular for that part only. The scapular is removed when he / she returns to the Lay Leader roll.

Dress

Both the Lay Leader and the Extraordinary Minister should be respectably dressed in everyday clothes that do not cause offence. Except in an emergency one should not be wearing gardening or beach wear, nor revealing clothing etc.

Neither should anyone be dressed in cassocks or any form of vestments. However the Extraordinary Minister wears the scapular whilst ministering Holy Communion.

Locations on the Sanctuary

The Lay Leader introduces the Service from the side of the sanctuary not from the altar. If a microphone is needed and is not available at the side of the sanctuary use the lectern, not the altar. The altar is only used by the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for the Communion Rite.

The presidential chair must not be used but another chair should be provided. The altar must only be used to place the ciborium on before commencing distribution of Holy Communion.

How many duties should the Lay Leader perform?

Members of the congregation should be used for the Readings and for the Prayers of Intercession. If possible separate people should read the First Reading, the Gospel and the Bidding Prayers. It is better if someone other than the Lay Leader reads the Gospel. All of these are proclaimed from the lectern.

When is a Service of Word and Communion allowed?

It is important that a worshipping community is kept together, and that the faithful be able to be nourished by Word and Sacrament without having to travel an unreasonable distance, and The Bishop is happy for the following to be the norm: -

Services of Word and Communion may be held in any parish on any weekday other than a Holyday of Obligation in place of the celebration of Mass when the priest is not able to celebrate Mass due to his absence from the parish. They may be led by a Deacon, or in his absence by a Lay Leader assisted by an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

There should be no more than one such Service in any parish on any given day. A Service of Word and Communion may not be held in a parish if Mass is being celebrated in the parish church or chapel-of-ease on that day, unless the two churches are more than ten miles apart. Only the formula which the Bishop has approved may be used.

The Bishop is aware that the Department for Christian Life and Worship is preparing a revised edition of the text for the Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, and will let us know when the text is ready.

Bishop Malcolm hopes, in particular, that no Minister feels that what he or she has been doing in the past is 'wrong', since their Ministry is valued immensely.

Temporally Commissioned Ministers

What are the obligations for Temporally Commissioned Ministers?

These are only allowed under certain defined conditions of which your PP is aware. A Temporally Commissioned Minister should behave in exactly the same way as a Commissioned Minister i.e. wears a scapular, although this may have to be borrowed from the parish, and attend Renewal Days.

Should Temporary Commissioned Ministers attend Renewal Days

A Temporary Commissioned Ministers has been commissioned by the Parish Priest to provide an urgent need in the parish. He / she is appointed until such a time as the minister can attend a training course and be commissioned by the Bishop. Such a person is carrying out the same duties as a commissioned minister and as such will benefit from the attendance at a Renewal Day. He / she should attend and the ministers in the parish should make sure that he/she is invited.

Coeliac Disease

Low-gluten bread is not safe for all

Low-gluten bread is acceptable to many people with Coeliac Disease, but not to them all. Some Coeliacs have such a pronounced reaction to gluten that they may not safely eat any bread made from wheat flour. Even extremely low amount of gluten in a low-gluten altar bread could be dangerous to them. Consequently, and regrettably, the combination of these people's medical condition and the tradition of the Church means that they are unable to receive Holy Communion under the form of bread. In the Roman Catholic Church, therefore, they would, as a matter of course, receive Holy Communion only under the form of wine. In receiving Holy Communion even under this form only, they receive Christ whole and entire. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1376-7)

Where a parish has a known Coeliac Sufferer the Extraordinary Ministers should be aware of this and only offer the appropriate chalice and/or ciborium to the Coeliac.

Some sufferers of Coeliac Disease are not able to consume the low gluten hosts without an allergic reaction. Does this mean that they are unable to receive Holy Communion?

As you are aware one receives the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ under either species on its own. Therefore the Bishop has recommended that Coeliacs who suffer this problem receive from the chalice only. Of course it is essential that a chalice which does not contain a small particle of the host is consecrated for this purpose.

Cross contamination

Cross contamination is a very serious problem for Coeliacs, which is not always appreciated by those who do not suffer from the disease. It is therefore our responsibility as Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to do all we can to avoid this. If there are two chalices we should see that a coeliac sufferer receives from the one without the particle of the host in it.

For those Coeliacs who can take a low gluten host we should never put the low gluten host in a ciborium that contains ordinary hosts. Also to avoid contamination by touch we should offer the vessel containing the low gluten host to the Coeliac for them to take the host from it. We have to rely on the Sacristan not to have caused contamination when preparing for the Mass.

Intinction

Is Intinction allowed and if so when?

In this diocese Intinction should never be practised. However one may come across a visitor, particularly from abroad, where this is their normal practice. In which case one just has to go along with it.

If it is a regular parishioner who is carrying out this practice please have a word with your priest.

Procedure for Intinction

The correct way for Intinction to be carried out is for the priest / minister to dip the host into the Precious Blood and to administer Communion on the tongue.