

THE EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper, on the night when he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the centuries until he should come again and in this way to entrust to his beloved Bride, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet “in which Christ is eaten, the heart is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.” (Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 47)

The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit... Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it. (General Instruction on the Roman Missal [GIRM] 16)

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The Bishop’s Role

1. For the diocesan Bishop, the chief steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care, is the moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole liturgical life. (*GIRM* 22).
2. In celebrations at which the Bishop presides, and especially in the celebration of the Eucharist led by the Bishop himself with the presbyterate, the deacons, and the people taking part, the mystery of the Church is revealed. For this reason, the solemn celebration of Masses of this sort must be an example for the entire diocese. (*ibid.*)
3. The Bishop should therefore be determined that the priests, the deacons, and the lay Christian faithful grasp ever more deeply the genuine meaning of the rites and liturgical texts, and thereby be led to an active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist. (*ibid.*)
4. He should also be vigilant that the dignity of these celebrations be enhanced. In promoting this dignity, the beauty of the sacred place, of music, and of art should contribute as greatly as possible. (*ibid.*)

Proper Matter

1. The most holy eucharistic sacrifice must be offered with bread and with wine in which a little water must be mixed. (c. 924, §1)
 - a. The bread for celebrating the Eucharist must be made only from wheat, must be recently baked, and, according to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, must be unleavened. (*GIRM* 320)

The meaning of the sign demands that the material for the Eucharistic celebration truly have the appearance of food. It is therefore expedient that the Eucharistic bread, even though unleavened and baked in the traditional shape, be made in such a way that the priest at Mass with a congregation is able in practice to break it into parts for distribution to at least some of the faithful. Small hosts are, however, in no way ruled out when the number of those receiving Holy Communion or other pastoral needs require it. The action of the fraction or breaking of bread, which gave its name to the Eucharist in apostolic times, will bring out more clearly the force and importance of the sign of unity of all in the one bread, and of the sign of charity by the fact that the one bread is distributed among the brothers and sisters. (*GIRM* 321)

- b. The wine for the Eucharistic celebration must be from the fruit of grapevine, natural, and unadulterated, that is, without admixture of extraneous substances. (*GIRM* 322)

Minister of the Eucharist

1. A priest is permitted to celebrate even if the rector of the church does not know him, provided that either he presents a letter of introduction from his ordinary or superior [known as a *celebret*], issued at least within a year, or it can be judged prudently that he is not impeded from celebrating. (c. 903)
2. Catholic priests are forbidden to concelebrate the Eucharist with priests or ministers of churches or ecclesial communities which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church. (c. 908)
3. It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they partake of the chalice...so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated. (*GIRM* 85)
4. A priest is granted the faculty by law to celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays and, if pastoral necessity requires it, three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation. (c. 905, §2) If pastoral necessity requires that a priest regularly celebrate more than two Masses on weekdays or more than three Masses on Sundays, the diocesan bishop may dispense in individual cases. (Diocese of Dodge City *Faculties for Priests*)
5. With regard to fasting, a priest who celebrates the Most Holy Eucharist two or three times on the same day can take something before the second or third celebration even if there is less than one hour between them. (c. 919, §2)
6. Mass Stipends
 - a. A priest celebrating or concelebrating a Mass is permitted to receive and offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention. (c. 945, §1)
 - b. The customary offering as approved by the Bishops of the Kansas Province is \$5.00 per Mass intention. A priest may accept a lesser sum but may never insist on a greater amount. The priest may accept a greater amount if it is clear and

- evident that the excess is spontaneously offered personally to the individual priest. (c. 952, §1)
- c. Generally, a priest who celebrates more than one Mass on the same day may only keep one Mass stipend (except on Christmas). Another exception is if a priest celebrates a funeral or wedding Mass on Saturday. He may keep the stipend for the funeral or wedding as well as the stipend for the later Mass. Otherwise, other stipends are to be forwarded to the purposes prescribed by the ordinary. (c. 951, §1) In the Diocese of Dodge City, excess Mass stipends are to be forwarded to the Office for the Propagation of the Faith or used for corporal works of mercy.
 - d. Priests are not to accept more Mass intentions than can be satisfied within a year. (c. 953) Mass intentions and their stipends that cannot be reasonably satisfied by a priest are to be forwarded to the Office for the Propagation of the Faith.
 - e. Every priest must note accurately the Masses which he accepted to celebrate and those which he has satisfied. (c. 956)

Concelebration

1. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dodge City to encourage concelebration by priests taking part in any Mass anywhere in the diocese, most especially whenever priests are gathered at diocesan functions.
2. The concelebrants wear diocesan albs and diocesan stoles. The celebrant always wears the chasuble.
3. In the Diocese of Dodge City:
 - a. At the concelebrated Mass, the priests approach the altar and genuflect before receiving from the cup. If the consecrated bread and the consecrated bread are on the altar for the priest's communion, a single genuflection upon reaching the altar will suffice.
 - b. The concelebrants are to speak their parts with the celebrant in a very low voice.
4. USCCB *Guidelines for Concelebration* (2003) provide an outline of the actions of the principal celebrant and the other concelebrants in relationship to the deacon, other liturgical ministers and the assembly. These guidelines may be adapted by the bishop for his diocese.

Universal Law

1. Consult the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2002); USCCB (2003) for the norms on the celebration of the Eucharist.
2. *Instruction on the Eucharist (Redemptionis sacramentum)*, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (2004) provides further guidance.

Particular Law – United States

1. *Norms for Distributing and Receiving Communion Under Both Kinds*, USCCB (2002).

Particular Law – Liturgical Norms of the Diocese of Dodge City

1. *Directives Concerning the recently approved Third Edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the recently revised Second Edition of the Lectionary for Mass (Volumes I-IV)*. Full implementation of these norms is the First Sunday of Advent, 30 November 2003.

Kneeling

- The *GIRM* left many liturgical decisions to the Conference of Bishops of each nation. Paragraph 42 of the *GIRM* was adapted by our U.S. Conference to read: “In the dioceses of the United States of America, (people) should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the *Sanctus* until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion by reasons of health, lack of space, the large number of people or some other good reason. Those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the consecration. The faithful kneel after the *Agnus Dei* unless the Diocesan Bishop determines otherwise.”
- The only licit posture for the faithful during the Eucharistic Prayer is kneeling: that is the uniform posture desired. It is on exceptional and extraordinary occasions, and not on a regular basis, that standing during the Eucharistic Prayer is permitted. I shall make the determination of what constitutes “some other good reason.” Nursing homes and similar environments have their own special needs, of course.
- The construction of new churches and chapels must include kneelers for the people. Any renovation or modification of a sacred space must incorporate kneelers as well. There are some churches and chapels without kneelers: what about them? Parish churches should explore what provision might be made for kneeling. The diocesan Building Commission may be of some assistance in this research. In this way, they can move toward some provision for kneeling at the earliest opportunity. The chapels I shall handle on a case-by-case basis.

Tabernacle

- The *GIRM* leaves the placement of the tabernacle to the judgment of the Diocesan Bishop (#315). He is guided in this judgment by Canon 938: “The tabernacle in which the most Holy Eucharist is reserved should be placed in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer.”
- In the future, I want the tabernacle within the sanctuary of the church or chapel: if not directly behind the altar, then in some other prominent or conspicuous place within the sanctuary. The construction of churches and chapels must incorporate this in their design plans. All existing parish churches that do not have the tabernacle so situated should work in consultation with the Diocesan Liturgical Commission to move it. The Commission can assist with parish catechesis and liturgical design as needed. The chapels I shall handle on a case-by-case basis.

Lectionary

- The use of the revised Lectionary became mandatory on Pentecost 2002. No other editions may now be licitly used within our diocese or within the United States. Please make sure that your church or chapel uses all four volumes of this Lectionary. This may be a hardship for some of you, but I ask you to show movement in this direction.

Book of the Gospels

- As I move about the diocese, I find a few places have and use the Book of the Gospels. I understand why: I am myself appalled at the cost of some of these books. But the Gospel is at the center of our lives, and I thus ask you to make plans to move toward the use of the Book. As with the Lectionary, I shall ask you from time to time about your progress.

Silence

- In order to achieve full, conscious, and active participation in the Liturgy, the Church asks us to make appropriate use of the times of silence. There is a vertical dimension to the Liturgy as well as a horizontal one, and silence before Mass and at other proper times can help dispose us for that full and active and conscious participation. Accordingly, I would ask that you ensure at least fifteen minutes of prayerful preparation before each Mass, using soft music, perhaps, to lend magic to the effort, or some other appropriate means. Ushers and Greeters may need to be re-trained to help foster the appropriate disposition.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- They are to approach the altar for communion as the priest consumes the Eucharist. Some few may bring the vessels to the altar as preparations are being made, of course. The permission to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion does not include permission to assist with the Rite of Fractioning. After communion, they may consume what remains of the Precious Blood. They may also assist the priest and deacon with the purification of vessels. [NOTE: The original indult dated 22 March 2002 for a period of three years allowing extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to assist with the purification of vessels was not renewed in 2005. Therefore, extraordinary ministers are no longer allowed to assist with the purification of the vessels.]

Standing to receive Holy Communion

- Standing is the proper posture for the reception of Holy Communion. Before receiving the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ, a bow of the head is the appropriate sign of reverence. All are asked to assume the same reverential posture in order to express visibly our sharing in the one Body of Christ. Those who decide to kneel or to genuflect must not be denied Communion. Rather, you might look for an opportunity to explain the new norm, and to encourage them to follow it for the sake of unity.

Concelebrants

- At a concelebrated Mass, the priests approach the altar and genuflect before receiving from the cup. If the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine are on the altar for the priests' communion, a single genuflection upon reaching the altar will suffice.

National Day of Penance

- The anniversary of the tragic Supreme Court decision *Roe v Wade*, 22 January, has been designated by the USCCB as an official Day of Penance. The Mass *For Peace and Justice* should be celebrated with violet vestments as an appropriate liturgical observance for this day. When the 22nd falls on a Sunday, 23 January shall be observed as the Day of Penance for that year.

2. *Norms for the Celebration of the Eucharist* ("Norms" from *Redemptionis sacramentum* are to be fully implemented in the Diocese of Dodge City by Pentecost, 15 May 2005)

On 25 March 2004, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published the Instruction *Redemptionis sacramentum*, which contains the liturgical norms promised in the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. These norms are already in force. The text of the instruction may be found on the U.S. Bishops' website: usccb.org or from the bookstore at the same site. The text that follows is a summarized version of some of the more important of those norms. References in parentheses are to paragraphs in the Instruction.

1. The point of the norms is to assist in instilling in both priests (#33) and people (#40) the deep wonder and amazement they should experience at the Eucharist.
2. Priests should not add to, subtract from, or change what is given in the liturgical texts (#31). The contrary custom is reprobated (#59). Room for creativity and adaptation is given in the texts (#39).
3. The homily at Mass may never be given by a lay person (#64), including seminarians, pastoral assistants, or members of any group or association (#66). Any contrary custom is abrogated, and the practice is reprobated (#65).
4. Offerings brought forward at Mass may include money or a symbolic portion of other things for the poor; these should be placed away from the altar (#70).
5. At least some parts of the Eucharistic bread fractioned before Communion should be given to the faithful, but small hosts requiring no further fractioning should be used for the most part (#49). It is preferable that the faithful receive hosts consecrated at the same Mass (#89).
6. Several chalices may be used for Communion, but the main chalice might well be larger (#105). The practice of using chalices made of glass or other breakable material, or metals that easily rust or deteriorate, is reprobated (#117). After the consecration, the Blood of Christ may not be poured from one vessel to another; hence, flagons or bowls may not be used (#106).
7. Whatever remains of the Blood of Christ must be entirely consumed once the distribution of Communion is completed. Anyone who pours the Blood of Christ into a sacrarium incurs an excommunication reserved to the Holy See (#107).

8. Instruction or testimony by a lay person should be given after the “Prayer After Communion.” It should not become a regular practice; it should be clearly distinguished from the homily, and may never replace the homily (#74).

The Christian Faithful and the Eucharist

1. The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this sacrament devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with highest adoration... (c. 898)
2. Any baptized person not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to holy communion (c. 912)
3. Children
 - a. The administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion. (c. 913, §1)
 - b. The Most Holy Eucharist, however, can be administered to children in danger of death if they can distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food and receive communion reverently. (c. 913, §2)
 - c. It is primarily the duty of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible. (c. 914)
4. All recipients
 - a. It is highly recommended that the faithful receive holy communion during the eucharistic celebration itself. It is to be administered outside of Mass, however, to those who request it for a just cause, with the liturgical rites being observed. (c. 918)
 - b. It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they partake of the chalice... so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated. (*GIRM* 85)
 - c. A person who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist can receive it a second time on the same day only within the eucharistic celebration in which the person participates, without prejudice to the exception of receiving holy communion in danger of death in the form of Viaticum. (c. 917)
 - d. A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for water and medicine. (c. 919, §1)
 - e. The elderly, the infirm and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour. (c. 919, §3)
 - f. After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year. (c. 920)
 - g. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave

reason and there is no opportunity to confess. In this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible. (c. 916)

5. Those in Danger of Death
 - a. The Christian faithful who are in danger of death from any cause are to be nourished by holy communion in the form of Viaticum. Even if they have been nourished by holy communion on the same day, however, those in danger of death are strongly urged to receive communion again. While the danger of death lasts, it is recommended that holy communion be administered often, but on separate days. (c. 921)
6. Those who are Sick
 - a. The pastor, parochial vicars and chaplains... have the duty and right of bringing the Most Holy Eucharist as viaticum to the sick. In the case of necessity or with at least the presumed permission of the pastor... who must be notified afterwards, any priest or other minister of holy communion must do this. (c. 911)
 - b. Holy Viaticum for the sick is not to be delayed too long; those who have the care of souls are to be zealous and vigilant that the sick are nourished by Viaticum while fully conscious. (c. 922)
7. Refraining from Receiving the Eucharist
 - a. Those who have been excommunicated or interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and others obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion. (c. 915)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

1. The ordinary minister of holy communion is a bishop, presbyter or deacon. An extraordinary minister of holy communion is an [instituted] acolyte or another member of the Christian faithful designated... (c. 910)
2. An extraordinary minister may be called upon to function when there is an insufficient number of ordinary ministers. (c. 230, §2)
3. Extraordinary ministers of holy communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. (*Norms for Distributing and Receiving Communion Under Both Kinds* 28)
4. In the Diocese of Dodge City, a candidate for this ministry should be a fully initiated Catholic, sufficiently mature, at least 21 years of age and morally capable of receiving the sacraments.
5. It is proper that an extraordinary minister of holy communion be commissioned to this ministry (see Chapter 63 in the *Book of Blessings*).
6. Should a person who serves as an extraordinary minister of holy communion be charged of a serious crime, even before being tried and convicted, this person will be asked to step away from this ministry until such time as the truth of the matter can be determined.

Reservation and Veneration of the Eucharist

1. Tabernacle
 - a. The Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory. (c. 938, §1)
 - b. The tabernacle is to be immovable, made of solid and opaque material and locked in such a way that danger of profanation is avoided as much possible. (c. 938, §3).

The tabernacle should be securely fastened to its resting place to diminish the opportunities for theft and desecration.

2. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

- a. Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass is the pertinent document.
- b. The minister of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a priest or deacon. When no priest or deacon is available, an extraordinary minister of holy communion may serve as minister of exposition and reposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- c. The minister of benediction is a priest or deacon.