



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Archbishop

June 7, 2007

To: All priests and deacons

Re: A Eucharistic Instruction

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 6, 1999, Archbishop Fiorenza sent out "*A Eucharistic Instruction*" which addressed the need for proper decorum and respect in regard to the Eucharist and the role of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

In view of recent changes in Church law, I am reaffirming and updating this Instruction.

I ask that you give the enclosed updated "*A Eucharistic Instruction*" your careful attention and that it be thoroughly discussed with all the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in your parish or institution.

Fraternally in Christ,

+ *Daniel N. DiNardo*

Most Reverend Daniel N. DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

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enclosure

A Eucharistic Instruction

Our relationship to Jesus in the Eucharist is the measure of the validity of our Catholic faith. Love and devotion to the Eucharistic Christ and the careful respect we render to his presence in this sacrament is at the center of who we are as Catholics. Nothing is more important in parish life than the proper celebration of the Eucharist. The Church draws its strength for its mission in the world from the Eucharist. It is indeed the summit and source of all the Church's activities.

We must continually rediscover the centrality of the Eucharist in parish life and in our personal lives. The action of Jesus who gave himself completely to the Father on the cross for our salvation, is re-presented in every Eucharistic Liturgy and demands our prayerful attention and careful reverence. Eucharistic devotion and adoration are wonderful encounters with the living Christ and a powerful means of parish spirituality and renewal in the gospel spirit of service and salvation to all.

This profound truth is the motivation for keeping before all Catholics the Church's regulations on the celebration of the Eucharist and the proper care of this sacrament as distributed within and outside of Mass and reserved in our churches. The following regulations are to be faithfully observed in every church and chapel and posted in all sacristies.

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion fulfill their function only when there are not sufficient Ordinary Ministers (priests or deacons) to assist in the distribution of Communion within the time allotted for the celebration of Mass or when they assist priests to bring Communion to the sick or elderly.
2. Extraordinary Ministers should be appropriately dressed when distributing Communion during the liturgy. On several occasions I have directed that men, including young men, must wear a coat and tie and women modest dresses or pant suits. This directive is to be observed even for Youth Masses.
3. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be seated in the front pews, that is, near the sanctuary, and come forward to the altar as the priest receives Communion. They are not to separate the Hosts into ciboria.
4. Extraordinary Ministers receive Communion only after the priest and deacon have communicated under both species. They do not go to the altar and drink from the cup as though they are concelebrants. This order of receiving Communion preserves the distinction between the ordained ministers and lay ministers. Extraordinary Ministers receive communion from the celebrant, deacon or other extraordinary minister. After receiving Communion, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion receives the ciborium or chalice from a deacon or priest before they distribute Communion to the faithful.
5. Any of the Precious Blood that is not consumed in the distribution from the cup should be consumed by the Extraordinary Ministers back at the credence table. Do not wait until Mass has concluded. It is inappropriate and unsightly to consume the Precious Blood while walking back to the altar. Consecrated Host that are not distributed are to be consumed at the altar or reposed reverently in the tabernacle before the Prayer after Communion is prayed. After

reposing the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, the Ordinary or Extraordinary Minister genuflects and closes the tabernacle door.

The vessels used in the distribution of Communion are preferably purified at the credence table on a corporal after the distribution of Communion. When the number of vessels are small purification at the altar is acceptable. The vessels may be covered appropriately with a purificator and purified immediately following Mass, especially when there are a number of vessels to purify. Only a priest, deacon or instituted acolyte may purify the vessels. The vessels may be washed by anyone once they have been purified.

6. In bringing Communion to the sick or homebound, the Host is to be carried only in a pyx. The Host for the sick is to be placed in the pyx at Communion time at the altar, or after the conclusion of Mass. Once the Extraordinary Ministers receive the pyx with the Host they are to go immediately to the sick. It is disrespectful for the extraordinary ministers to visit with other parishioners while carrying the Blessed Sacrament.
7. If for any reason a sick person is not able to consume the Host, it is to be returned to the tabernacle immediately. The Host is not to be left in the room of the sick person to be received later. Nor is the Host to be kept in one's home to be returned to the tabernacle at a later time.
8. Eucharistic bread made from wheat and water alone is the only valid bread for the Eucharist. I strongly discourage the use of homemade bread for eucharistic use. Homemade breads crumble easily and it is difficult to keep sizeable fragments from falling to the floor. The use of traditional hosts prevents this and maintains the proper decorum and respect for the sacramental presence of Jesus.
9. The manner in which one dresses for Mass, even on vacation, is a reflection of profound belief in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Prayerful silence in church before the Mass begins is the proper and fitting preparation for celebrating this great mystery of faith. The traditional genuflection before the tabernacle is an act of adoration which witnesses to belief in the presence of the risen Christ in the Sacrament. If the tabernacle is not in the sanctuary of the Church, a profound bow towards the altar is an appropriate sign of reverence.
10. Finally, I want to make clear to everyone that the use of Extraordinary Ministers is approved by the Holy Father, contrary to rumors one hears from time to time. Diocesan bishops have been given the authority to allow Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their diocese and the bishops alone regulate their ministry within liturgical celebrations. Those who deny that Extraordinary Ministers are approved by the Church are in conflict with the authority of the Church.

+Daniel N. DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston
June 10, 2007
Solemnity of Corpus Christi