

# Sharing the Body and Blood of Christ



**A resource book  
for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion  
at Mass**

St John the Evangelist, Horsham

## Sharing the Body and Blood of Christ

*Guidelines and suggestions for Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion at Mass*

From *Celebrating the Mass* (2005): **“Faithful to the Lord’s command to his disciples to ‘Take and eat,’ ‘Take and drink,’ the assembly completes the Eucharistic action by together eating and drinking the elements consecrated during the celebration.”** (n 209)

### PREPARATION

As with all ministries exercised on behalf of the Christian community, it is important to prepare carefully by PRAYER. This is, essentially, the principal necessary ingredient in fulfilling any calling from the Lord. If the Extraordinary Minister of Communion prepares with prayer he or she, when exercising their ministry, will be helping others to pray.

### THE ROTA

If you are unable to make your turn, please ensure that a replacement is found in good time. This must be a fellow Minister whose name also appears on the rota. It may be best to arrange a straight swap.

### ARRIVE IN GOOD TIME

This will allow you an opportunity to pray and to inform the coordinator that you are present.

### DURING THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word is an opportunity for the Minister to listen attentively to the voice of the Lord as heard in the scriptures and to prepare for their ministry reflectively and prayerfully.



## APPROACHING THE ALTAR

Ministers should approach the altar during the Sign of Peace. From *Celebrating the Mass (2005)*: **“If commissioned ministers are to assist at Communion, it is desirable that they are in place on the sanctuary by the end of the exchange of peace”** (*n* 206). Please, therefore, share the sign of peace only with those nearest and approach the sanctuary immediately. Each Minister approaches the altar and takes their place as soon as they can.



## THE FRACTION

This ritual is fundamental to the celebration of Mass. The Lord Jesus took, blessed, broke and shared the bread of the Last Supper. If Ministers are in place behind the altar before the Sign of Peace is concluded, the Fraction will be clearly visible for all to see.

On Weekdays, please **do not** go to the tabernacle and remove the Blessed Sacrament. *Celebrating the Mass (2005)* says: **“The faithful are not ordinarily given Communion from the tabernacle. When, for genuine pastoral reasons, for example, the late arrival of unexpected numbers, the bread consecrated at the Mass must be supplemented with the Body of the Lord consecrated and reserved in the tabernacle after a previous Mass, this may be brought reverently but without ceremony from the tabernacle to the altar at the Breaking of Bread”**. (*n* 206)

On Sundays, for the time being, because of the difficulty of estimating numbers, we will continue to take the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. The appropriate Minister removes the ciborium and places it on the corporal immediately after arriving on the sanctuary. You may prefer to place the lid of the ciborium in the tabernacle and not on the altar. A ‘cluttered’ altar is a counter-sign.

## RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion will be administered by the Priest/Deacon to the Ministers in the usual way. The Deacon always receives Holy Communion first.

## DISTRIBUTING HOLY COMMUNION

Please go to the appointed places when you are free to do so. Keep an eye on spacing and where your colleagues are. Use the whole of the front of the church, spreading out as far as is possible (especially on the Lady Chapel side).

## BLESSINGS

There is no need for those coming forward for a blessing to go only to the Priest. Place a hand on their shoulder/head (if you are happy to do so) and say: **“May the Lord Jesus bless and keep you”**.

## AFTER DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Minister distributing the Body of the Lord returns any remaining Hosts to the altar and, subsequently, to the tabernacle. The Ministers distributing the Precious Blood of the Lord go to the appointed place, consume any remaining matter and cleanse the vessels.

Be conscious of the fact that this is a silent time for the congregation. Return quickly, but with reverence, to your places in the church.

## TAKING HOLY COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND

- Please place your pyx on the credence table (not the altar) before Mass begins with a note of the number of those who will be receiving Holy Communion after Mass.
- The deacon will call you forward and return the pyx containing the Body of the Lord to you for distribution.
- Go immediately from Mass.
- Please try and go from the church without unnecessary conversation and chatter.
- Please remember to take a Parish Newsletter and perhaps one of the Catholic Newspapers with you.
- Remember to cleanse the pyx once you have finished.

### Documentation

General Instruction on the Roman Missal (2005) - Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

Celebrating the Mass (2005) – Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

With hearts and minds (2005) – Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

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