

A Eucharistic Instruction
To the Faithful of the Diocese of Tyler

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. It is the strength the Church draws on for its mission in the world. It is indeed the source and summit of Christian and ecclesial life.¹

We must continually rediscover the centrality of the Paschal Mystery 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 proclaimed and celebrated in every Eucharistic Liturgy and demands our prayerful attention and careful reverence.² 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.³

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. A crucifix presides over the altar of the Holy Eucharist.⁴ If the sanctuary currently contains a beautiful cross with a risen Christ, or statues of the risen Christ, the cross or statues are to be moved to another appropriate place and a proper visible crucifix should be put in place. Otherwise, please ask in writing for an exception. The risen Christ might be moved to a place of devotion in the church or a prominent spot elsewhere on the campus. Prominent placement in a parish hall, for example, might be a more appropriate location than trying to find a place in a small church.

2. 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.

3. Prayerful silence in church before the Mass begins is the proper and fitting preparation for celebrating this great mystery of faith.⁵

4. 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. One should always genuflect before opening or closing the tabernacle. If the tabernacle is not in the sanctuary of the church, a profound bow towards the altar is an appropriate sign of reverence.⁶

5. Prior to receiving Holy Communion, each individual should make an act of reverence.⁷ This can be done by giving a meaningful bow of the head and shoulders while the person in front of you is receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

6. The freedom and the proper disposition of communicants to receive or not to receive Holy Communion are the most important criteria guiding the communion procession. Therefore, ushers who help to start the procession either from the front or the back pews should not follow the line pew by pew. When the communicants begin to process as the custom of the parish may be, either from the front or the back pews, the ushers should retire once the procession is visibly established.

7. Holy Communion may be received either in the hand or on the tongue.⁸ If received in the hand, the left hand should generally be placed over the right, making a throne for Jesus.⁹ If the Eucharist is offered under both species, it is the option of the communicant to receive from the chalice after consuming the Host.¹⁰ Only the minister of Holy Communion can offer Communion by intinction (dipping the Host in the Precious Blood). If intinction is used, the Host is always placed directly onto the tongue of the communicant.¹¹

8. The common posture in this country for receiving Holy Communion is

standing. But no one will be denied Holy Communion for kneeling, which is an ancient custom in the Church. Consideration should be given to the common practice.

9. Those coming forward at communion time who do not wish to receive Holy Communion can be assisted in making a spiritual communion. They present themselves with their arms crossed over their chests and heads bowed. The minister of Holy Communion says, Receive the Risen Lord Jesus into your heart. No blessing is to be given.¹²

10. Eucharistic bread made from wheat and water alone is the only valid bread for the Eucharist.¹³ 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 altar bread prevents this and maintains the proper decorum and respect for the sacramental presence of Jesus. Many Religious groups of sisters are helped by the proceeds from the sale of altar bread.

11. 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. The diocesan bishop has been given the authority to allow Extraordinary Ministers of Communion in his diocese, and the bishop alone regulates their ministry within liturgical celebrations. It is permissible for both men and women to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Communion. Those who deny that Extraordinary Ministers are approved by the Church are in conflict with the authority of the Church.¹⁴

12. Norms for Ministers of Holy Communion:

A. The ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the priest and deacon. When administering Communion they vest with alb and stole.¹⁵

B. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion fulfill their function only when there are not sufficient ordinary ministers (priests or deacons) to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion within the time allotted for the celebration of Mass, or when they assist priests to bring Holy Communion to the sick or elderly. If present, Acolytes, as instituted ministers of the Church, would take precedence over other Extraordinary Ministers of Communion.¹⁶

C. Extraordinary Ministers should be appropriately dressed when distributing Holy Communion during the liturgy. In the Diocese of Tyler, this should be the normal dress of people. It must be both modest and tasteful, but should not distinguish the Extraordinary Ministers from others. The use of a cross or a pin to distinguish Extraordinary Ministers of Communion might be helpful for those going to the sick, since it would help identify them and the purpose of their visit.

D. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion should be seated with the Assembly in the body of the church and come forward to the sanctuary during the Lamb of God. They wait until the priest receives Holy Communion before approaching the altar. They are not to go to the tabernacle to get the ciboria nor to assist in distributing the Hosts into ciboria or pour the Precious Blood into the communion chalices. Altar servers and instituted Acolytes are not permitted to do this either.

E. Extraordinary Ministers and Acolytes receive Holy Communion only after the priest and deacon have communicated under both species. They do not go to the altar and drink from the chalice as though they are concelebrants. This order of receiving Holy Communion preserves the distinction between the ordained ministers and laity. Extraordinary Ministers receive Communion from the celebrant or deacon before they receive the sacred vessel which they will use in distributing Holy Communion, directly from the priest or deacon.

F. The ministers of Holy Communion should never place a Host into a pyx during the communion procession.

G. Any of the Precious Blood that is not consumed in the distribution

from the chalice should be consumed immediately after distribution of Holy Communion, either by the priest or deacon at the altar or by ministers back at the credence table or in the sacristy. Do not wait until Mass has concluded. It is inappropriate to consume the Precious Blood while walking back to the altar or the credence table. Consecrated Hosts that are not distributed are to be returned reverently to the tabernacle before the Prayer after Communion is prayed. Generally the priest or deacon should take the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. If the tabernacle is outside the main body of the church, the priest may request one of the Extraordinary Ministers to take the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle.¹⁷

H. Taking the Blessed Sacrament to the sick:¹⁸

1) In bringing Holy Communion to the sick or the home bound, the Host is to be carried only in a pyx.

2) It is appropriate for Holy Communion to be taken directly from the Mass when possible. At Mass the pyx can be placed on the altar with the other sacred vessels, or the pyx may be brought to the altar by the Extraordinary Minister at the end of communion. The Host for the sick is to be placed in the pyx by the priest or deacon 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. The Extraordinary Ministers may be sent forth with a simple blessing.

3) If it is not practical for Eucharistic Ministers to take the Blessed Sacrament directly from Mass, it is permissible for them to reverently take a Host from the tabernacle, with the permission of the parish priest.

4) It is disrespectful for the ministers of Holy Communion to visit with other people while carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

5) Holy Communion should be given according to the approved ritual of the Church.

6) If in the process of administering Holy Communion to a sick person, the Host becomes contaminated from falling on the hospital floor, or from having been put into the person's mouth, it should NOT be consumed by the minister, but returned and placed reverently in the tabernacle (either in the pyx or in a cloth) and the priest notified immediately so that he can be sure it is disposed of appropriately.

7) If for any reason a sick person is not able to consume the Host, it is to be returned to the tabernacle immediately. If the minister is properly disposed he or she may consume the Host reverently, waiving the required fast. 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.

I order this Instruction to be made known to all the Faithful in the Diocese of Tyler and that it be observed in all parishes, missions, institutions and chapels in the Diocese as of February 1, 2003. Given by me on this 12th day of December, 2002.

**Most Rev. Álvaro Corrada, SJ
Bishop, Diocese of Tyler**

**Rev. Msgr. James E. Young
Chancellor, Diocese of Tyler**

¹ Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)* 10.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* 1068, 1069.

³ *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (Eucharisticum Mysterium [EM])* 3f-g.

⁴ *General Instruction Roman Missal (GIRM)*, 3rd ed., 2002, 308.

⁵ *GIRM* 45.

⁶ *GIRM* 274-275.

⁷ *EM* 34b.

⁸ *GIRM* 161.

⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat. Myst.* V, 21-22.

¹⁰ *GIRM* 284.

¹¹ *GIRM* 287.

¹² Directive of Bishop Corrada, November 2002.

¹³ *GIRM* 320.

¹⁴ *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 910, 230. See *GIRM* 162.

¹⁵ Canon 910.

¹⁶ Canon 910, 230; *GIRM* 100, 162.

¹⁷ *GIRM* 284.

¹⁸ See *Pastoral Care of the Sick*.