

E) FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION: ⁸⁶

101. **Who can become** an extraordinary **minister** of Holy Communion?
*To become an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, one must first **be a communicant** himself; then, he must be in **full communion** with the Church; be able to set a **proper example** among the congregation; show great **reverence** for the Blessed Sacrament—especially when distributing Holy Communion—; and have a special **devotion** for the Eucharist. Extraordinary ministers should be in good standing with the Church, and in a **state of grace** when distributing the Eucharist.*

101a. In regards to the prior question, **how does one usually become** an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion?
*To become an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, one must receive a **preparation**: "...Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient **spiritual, theological, and practical** preparation to fulfill their role with **knowledge and reverence**. ..." ⁸⁷ Thereafter, one may be temporarily deputed by his bishop to act as an extraordinary minister (e.g. for one to three years). It is desirable that extraordinary ministers be provided with a mandatory **yearly retreat** to help them renew their knowledge, faith, love, and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.*

102. What is the **difference** between an **ordinary minister** and an **extraordinary minister** of Holy Communion?
*"...the **ordinary** minister of Holy Communion is the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon. **Extraordinary** ministers of Holy Communion are those instituted as acolytes and the faithful so deputed. ..." ⁸⁸ Therefore, it is **ordinarily** the office of **the priest** to distribute Communion, and it is **extraordinary** to depute a **lay minister** to distribute Holy Communion.*

102a. In **what circumstances** may the extraordinary ministers be requested to assist with distributing communion?
*When the **size** of the congregation requires it, and when **no other priests**, or deacon, are available, the extraordinary ministers may be requested to assist with distributing communion; they may not distribute communion while clergy remain seated in the sanctuary.*

86. See Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and read all parts on the 'Communion Rite'.

87. NCUBK, Part II, No.28 (bold face added).

88. *Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of priest*, Practical Provisions, Article 8, The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, §1 (bfa), Congregation for the Clergy.

103. Describe the appropriate **clothing** that one should wear while **servicing as** an extraordinary **minister** of Holy Communion?
*"To distinguish their duty from the "ordinary" ministries derived from ordination, institution (acolytes) or association with the clergy (servers), [the extraordinary **ministers**] normally **do not wear robes**. ..."*⁸⁹ *Their lay dress should always be **modest and neat**.*^{89a}

104. Why should the extraordinary ministers **arrive** at the church at least **fifteen minutes before** the Mass starts?
*Extraordinary ministers should arrive early enough so that they are better prepared to **fulfill their duty** and **honor** the Holy Eucharist. Besides the fact that they need time to recollect before the Mass, they also need to find out before the Mass starts how to proceed at communion. Are they really needed, and if so what will be **their position** in the nave to distribute the Eucharist; will communion be distributed under **both species**—which is always up to the celebrating priest and not to the lay ministers—; if so, will they be ministering a **ciborium** of Hosts or a **chalice** of the Precious Blood. Extraordinary ministers should wash their hands before the Mass, and save them for the Eucharist by abstaining from shaking hands during the Mass. A minister that has a cold, the flu or something likewise contagious should **abstain** from distributing Holy Communion.*

105. Name the **sacred vessels** and the **sacred linens** that are used for the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist?
*The sacred vessels used for the Eucharist are the **chalice**, the **ciborium** (ciboria), and the **paten**. The sacred linens used for the Eucharist are the **corporal**, the **purificator**, and the **pall**. It is not unusual to have several chalices and several purificators for Masses with communion under both species.*

106. At what **moment** of the Holy Mass does **Jesus Christ become truly and really present** in the Eucharist?
*Jesus becomes truly and really present in the Eucharist at the moment of the **Consecration**. That is, the moment of the Mass when the priest—acting in the person of Christ—holds the bread and wine offerings while repeating the words by which Jesus instituted the Eucharist: This is my Body... This is my Blood... . At that moment, there is a transubstantiation and Jesus becomes incarnated in the Eucharistic species on the altar.*^{89b}

89. CMRR, Appendix 1, no. 779 (bold face added).

89a. Dress code: also see the answer to question 85.

89b. The Real Presence: also see Part Five, Appendix 'B', Eucharistic Miracles.

107. What does the word '**transubstantiation**' mean?

*The word 'transubstantiation' indicates that "by the **consecration** of the **bread** and the **wine** there takes place a **change of the whole substance** of the bread into the substance of the **body** of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the **substance of his blood**,"⁹⁰ and this, even though the appearances of the species of bread and wine remain the same.*

108. For **how long** is **Jesus Christ present** in the Holy Eucharist?

*Jesus Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, for **as long as the eucharistic species subsists** in the form of the bread and wine.*⁹¹

109. What does the word **commingling** mean?

*When at the 'breaking of the bread', the priest breaks a small piece off from the large Host and puts it in the chalice that contains the Precious Blood of Christ, there is **mingling of the Body and Blood** of Jesus Christ in the chalice; that is called the commingling.*

110. At the time of the 'Lord's Prayer', if extra Hosts are needed from the Eucharistic reserve, why is it more appropriate that a **priest**, rather than an extraordinary minister, **opens the tabernacle** and brings the ciboria of Hosts to the altar?

***If extra Hosts are needed**, it is more appropriate that a priest rather than a lay person opens the tabernacle, because the **priest** is the **first minister** of Holy Communion. Moreover, **more respect and reverence** for the Eucharist is generated among the assembly **when a priest** or a deacon, rather than a lay person, **opens the tabernacle and brings the ciboria** of consecrated Hosts **to the altar** before distributing the Hosts to the faithful at communion. Furthermore, using Hosts from the reserve for communion during the Mass should not be a standard practice, because the faithful should receive Hosts consecrated at the same Mass.*⁹²

111. What is a **Eucharistic reserve**?

*A Eucharistic reserve is another word for **tabernacle**, which is a receptacle, usually beautifully ornate, in which the **Blessed Sacrament is reserved** (kept) in churches, chapels, and oratories.*⁹³

90. CCC 1376 (bold face added).

91. Cf. CCC 1377.

92. Cf. GIRM [56h] 85; also see Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion Rite, The Eucharistic Reserve.

93. Tabernacle: Part Five, Church Norms, I- Arrangement and Furnishing of Churches, The Tabernacle; Catholic Glossary.

112. At **what moment** of the Mass do the extraordinary ministers enter the sanctuary, and how should they proceed?

*"During the **Communion of the celebrant**, not earlier, extraordinary ministers come to the sanctuary. They first **genuflect** to the Eucharist on the altar. Then they may go to the **credence table to cleanse their hands**. ..." ⁹⁴ "... [Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion] should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion, and they are always to receive from the hands of the priest celebrant the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful." GIRM [-] 162.*

113. Since the extraordinary ministers '**washed**' their hands before the Mass, why do they need to '**cleanse**' their hands at the credence table before the communion?

*There are **two reasons** for extraordinary ministers to cleanse their hands before the communion. First, since it is a **purification ritual**, as they cleanse their hands, extraordinary ministers should pray to God to be purified, and to be made worthy to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ. They could quietly say the prayer that the priest says when he cleanses his hands before the offertory: "Lord, wash away my mistakes; cleanse me from my sin". However, the cleansing of the hands of the priest has a deeper meaning, since he does so in order to be made worthy not only to touch the Eucharist, but also to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice.*

*Secondly, when the extraordinary ministers wash their hands in the sanctuary in front of all, it shows **respect** towards the assembly, as to signify to the communicants that they, who are about to distribute the Eucharist to them, have clean hands.*

*While washing our hands is about getting them **physically** clean, cleansing our hands is primarily about getting our hands and our conscience **spiritually** clean.*

114. What should the extraordinary ministers do **after cleansing** their hands for the communion?

*After cleansing their hands, "... [the extraordinary ministers] **stand to the side**, [in a common posture] not at or around the altar, because they are not concelebrants or deacons..., nor do they assist in breaking Hosts at the fraction, which is reserved for priests. The celebrant should bless them quietly before [the] "This is the Lamb of God." [After the communion of the celebrating priest], the **celebrant**, deacon or instituted acolyte **gives [the ministers] Holy Communion** before the servers, [and] preferably under both*

94. CMRR, Revised edition, 2005, Appendix 1, no. 781 (bfa).

kinds. [The extraordinary ministers] **do not give themselves Communion** as if they were concelebrants, that is, simultaneously with the celebrant or by taking the Eucharist from the altar. ...[nor] take it directly ...from the tabernacle. Again the ceremonial signs truthfully define their ministry as "extraordinary" and hence dependent on the celebrant." ⁹⁵

115. May an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion assist the priest at **the breaking of Hosts**?

*No, an extraordinary minister **may not assist the priest at the breaking** of Hosts at the time of the fraction at the 'Agnus Dei', nor at any time during or after the communion. Neither may an extraordinary minister **transfer** consecrated Hosts from one ciborium to another ciborium. These acts, which may only take place at the altar, are **reserved to the priest** or deacon. Doing otherwise can be considered a sacrilege.*

*Moreover, since the Blood of Christ is to be consecrated directly in the chalices that are to be used for the communion, under no circumstances may the Blood of Christ be transferred from one sacred vessel to another: "... the **pouring of the Blood of Christ** after the consecration from one vessel to another **is completely to be avoided**, lest anything should happen, that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. ..."* ⁹⁶

116. After their communion, how should the extraordinary ministers proceed **once they have received** from the priest a **sacred vessel** containing one of the Eucharistic species?

*After receiving a ciborium of Hosts or a chalice of the Blood of Christ, the extraordinary ministers **follow the priest(s)** and deacon out of the sanctuary and into the nave, where they **take their position**—which should always be agreed upon before the Mass and not improvised at the time of the Communion—and then, they **distribute the Communion** to the faithful according to local practice.⁹⁷ "Extraordinary **ministers are not to distribute Holy Communion** while ordinary ministers, such as **concelebrants or clergy** in choir, remain seated. ..."* ⁹⁸

95. CMRR, Appendix 1, no. 781 (bold face added).

96. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 106 (bold face added).

97. How to minister Communion: extraordinary minister should study all the text found in Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion Rite: from 'Communion Procession' through 'Cleansing of Hands'.

98. CMRR, Appendix 1, no. 784 (bold face added), cf. *Response of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law*, February 20, 1987, ordered to be published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, by Pope John Paul II, June 1, 1988; see *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, July 25, 1988, p. 8.

117. How should the extraordinary **ministers proceed after** they have finished **distributing communion**?

*Once they have finished distributing communion, the extraordinary ministers go back to the altar and "...**give the vessel** to the celebrant, deacon or acolyte, or place it on the altar. Each **genuflects** [to the Eucharist on the altar, and those who distributed the Hosts] go to the credence table to **cleans** [their] fingers before **returning** to their places among the assembly. They do not purify the sacred vessels."⁹⁹ Before giving back the chalice, extraordinary ministers are usually expected to **drink the Blood** of Christ remaining in the chalice that they used to minister the Eucharist.*

118. Why do the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion need to **cleans** their **fingers after the communion**?

*As the priest cleanses his fingers during the purification of the sacred vessels after the communion,¹⁰⁰ the extraordinary ministers that have **distributed the Hosts** must cleans their fingers after communion because **remnants of Host** are more likely left **on their fingers**. Thus, they go to the credence table and use the same wash plate that they used before the communion, and dry their fingers with a purificator. Then after the Mass, the water contained in this wash plate will be poured into the **sacrarium**.¹⁰¹*

119. Do extraordinary ministers **assist the priest** in the **purification** of the sacred vessels?

*"Extraordinary **ministers do not purify** the sacred vessels."^{101a} However, in answer to a request from the USCCB, the Holy See has issued a decree, making an exception to this rule for the U.S.A. for a period of three years, expiring in March of 2005.¹⁰²*

120. What do the extraordinary ministers do **once they have cleansed** their hands?

*Once they have cleansed their hands, the extraordinary ministers have **completed** their duty. Thus, they **leave** the sanctuary making a **bow** to the altar, or tabernacle, and they reverently go **back to their pews** among the assembly and recollect.*

99. CMRR, Appendix 1, no. 782 (bfa). See answer to Q. 119 & footnote 102 here below.

100. See Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion Rite, After Communion, Cleansing of Hands.

101. See Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, After the Mass, The Sacristy.

101a. Only a priest, deacon or instituted acolyte can purify the sacred vessels: cf. GIRM [238] 279.

102. Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion Rite, After Communion, p. 151, paragraph with footnote 137.