

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- Look at the readings and prayers of the Mass and use them for your prayer. What do they say to you of the Mystery of God's love, and of the Communion that God invites you to share in and minister?
- Call to mind the people you will be ministering to. Remember that, together with you, they are members of the Body of Christ.
- Pray for them, for yourself, and the other parish ministers —that together you will find deeper communion with Christ and each other through your sharing in the Church's liturgy and sacraments

RESOURCES

Over recent years the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has issued a range of documents which provide an introduction to the Church's teaching on the Mass and the Scriptures, and on ministry in the Church.

One Bread One Body. This teaching document on the Eucharist in the life of the Church seeks to help Catholics to a greater understanding of the Mass and the Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications/One-Bread-One-Body-1998

The Gift of Scripture. This teaching document introduces how we might read the Old and New Testaments, learning to more deeply hear and live by the word of God. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/GoS.pdf

Celebrating the Mass. This pastoral introduction offers a resource to help the Church consider how it prepares, celebrates and lives from the Mass. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/CTM.pdf

The Sign We Give. This report has been approved by the Bishops' Conference and issued to encourage the Church in England and Wales to think more deeply and imaginatively about the theology and practice of collaborative ministry. [www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/CBCEW-Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/CBCEW-Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/(language)/eng-GB)

One Bread, One Body; The Gift of Scripture; and Celebrating the Mass are published by the Catholic Truth Society, www.cts-online.org.uk. *The Sign We Give* is published by Matthew James Publishing Ltd.

This document and others in the series can be found on our website: <http://stmaryandstpaul.org.uk/> These have been produced based on a series of resources prepared by the **Westminster LITURGY Commission** who kindly agreed to its use to support the continuing formation of liturgical ministers in the parishes of St Mary and St Paul. The originals and other resources can be found on their website: <http://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/>

An introduction for commissioned ministers of Holy Communion in the parishes of St Mary's, Dukinfield and St Paul's, Hyde



MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

All ministry in the Church is ordered to the building up of the Body of Christ. It is there to assist humankind to enter more fully into the communion of love that is God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The focus of all liturgical ministry is to assist people's communion with God through their fruitful participation in the worship of the Church.

MINISTERING HOLY COMMUNION TO THE CHURCH

The highpoint of Catholic worship is the celebration of the Eucharist, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all upon the cross to his Father. The culmination of the Eucharist is our reception of the gifts of the Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Ministers of Holy Communion assist members of the Church to receive these gifts reverently and fruitfully.

WHAT ARE 'EXTRAORDINARY' MINISTERS?

In this case 'extraordinary' has a technical meaning. It simply means 'out of the ordinary', rather than 'great' or 'remarkable'. It is used to distinguish the 'extraordinary' minister from the 'ordinary' or 'normal' minister.

The 'ordinary' ministers of Holy Communion are Bishops, priests and deacons. At Mass Holy Communion is made available to us from the elements over which the priest celebrant has offered the Thanksgiving. It is therefore important that the connection between our Communion and the Sacrifice of the Mass is made clear. One of the ways in which this is achieved is by Holy Communion being distributed by the priest celebrant. Other priests or deacons will assist the priest, if necessary.

When there not enough other 'ordinary' ministers present, then the priest celebrant may be assisted by 'extraordinary' ministers. These will normally be ministers who have been carefully chosen, prepared and commissioned to exercise this ministry.

WHEN AND WHY?

There are a number of circumstances both during and outside of Mass when a priest will need assistance from extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

- To assist with the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds
- To assist with the distribution of Holy Communion when the size of the congregation is such that without their assistance the Communion Rite would be unduly long
- To minister Holy Communion to the sick and housebound
- To expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament
- To assist at a Celebration of Word and Holy Communion in the absence of the priest

There are other times that ministers of Communion can help, although these do not currently happen in our parish:

Viaticum - Although normally viaticum will first be ministered by the priest, often within a celebration of Mass, the dying should be given the opportunity to receive Holy Communion as viaticum on successive days, frequently if not daily. The rite of 'Viaticum outside Mass' is printed in the Pastoral Care of the Sick. Ministers should also be familiar with the prayers for the 'Commendation of the Dying' and the 'Prayers for the Dead', which are also printed in the Pastoral Care of the Sick.

Ministers and preparation for Funeral Rites – A minister of Holy Communion may develop a close pastoral relationship with the sick and the housebound, as well as their families and friends. Because of this, when a person dies, that minister will often be well placed to assist the family in their preparation for the funeral rites. Sometimes the family will know the lay minister better than they know the parish priest. This assistance may be given either by accompanying the family at their first meeting with the priest, or, with the priest's agreement, and after proper formation by preparing the funeral rites with the family.

MINISTERING WITH CARE AND REVERENCE

Guidance in some of the practical aspects of the ministry will be found in Ministering the Body and Blood of Christ, another leaflet in this series. Underlying everything there should be the prayerfulness and reverence of the minister. Of particular importance is the way a minister prepares for service and the practices described overleaf may also be helpful: