

In which case, the Blessing should be ministered by laying a hand on the person's head or shoulder and saying words such as: *May the love of God be strong in your heart.*

## SHOW REVERENCE TO THE SACRAMENT

- Arrive at church early to avoid any last minute rush and to help with any preparations
- Spend time before Mass quietly in prayer and reflection, read the scriptures for the day
- Dress smartly, put on your 'Sunday Best', take off your outside coat
- When you are on the sanctuary, set an example to the congregation, be attentive, join in all the prayers and all the hymns
- If you need to move around, do so gently, avoid moving during a prayer and try not to cross in front of the altar
- Be aware of what is happening, guide the altar servers if necessary, ensure everything to be consecrated is on the corporal
- When preparing to receive Holy Communion move to the back of the sanctuary and stand in a line with the other ministers and altar servers so that Holy Communion can be distributed easily
- If you are ministering the Precious Blood, step forward to the priest to receive the chalice, the priest should not come to you
- If you are ministering the Host, step forward to receive the ciborium after you have received the Precious Blood
- If you are ministering the Precious Blood and your chalice is empty, place the purificator over the top as a sign to those still in line, who may wish to go to another chalice
- If you are able, consume any Precious Blood in your chalice before returning to the sanctuary, to reduce the risk of spillage
- When returning to the sanctuary with the ciborium or with the chalice, do not bow to the altar, you have the Body or Blood of Christ in your hands
- If you have been ministering the Precious Blood, stand at the step of the sanctuary until the priest has returned to his chair
- When purifying the Sacred Vessels, do not drink from the ciborium
- Above all, never make a fuss and avoid doing anything that will distract the faithful from their prayer

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/>

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# MINISTERING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

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



## BEING NOURISHED IN FAITH

At Mass the faithful are nourished by the ministry of the word and of the Eucharist. These two realities, word and Eucharist, are closely related. The sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is a sacrament of faith and faith has its origin and sustenance in the word.

The Church is nourished spiritually at the table of God's word and at the table of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed. The spoken word of God brings to mind the history of salvation; the Eucharist embodies it in the sacramental signs of the liturgy.

It can never be forgotten, therefore, that the divine word read and proclaimed by the new Church in the liturgy has as its one goal the sacrifice of the New Covenant and the banquet of grace, that is, the Eucharist. The celebration of the Mass in which the word is heard and the Eucharist is offered and received forms but one single act of divine worship. That act offers the sacrifice of praise to God and makes available to God's creatures the fullness of redemption.

*Introduction to the Lectionary, 10*

## MINISTERING HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

A minister of Holy Communion is asked to do more than simply assist the faithful in receiving Holy Communion as food and drink. The reception of Holy Communion is a sacred action, an opportunity for encounter with Christ himself who offers himself to us under form of Bread and Wine.

But as in any relationship of love, his offering of himself has to be met by faith if a life-giving encounter and deep personal communion is to take place.

*One Bread, One Body, 53*

The Lord himself offers us nourishment through the sacrament. But Ministers of Holy Communion have a great contribution to make in assisting the assembly to receive the sacrament fruitfully. They do this through the reverence they show for the Sacrament and for those to whom they minister it. (*See later.*)

## HOLY COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

The Church encourages that, wherever practical, Holy Communion should be distributed to the faithful under both kinds, that is under the forms of both Bread and Wine.

Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For, in this form the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident and clear expression is given to the divine will by which the new eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the relationship between the Eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Father's Kingdom.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 281*

## MINISTERING THE HOST

The minister takes a host, raises it just a little and shows it to the communicant saying: *The Body of Christ*. The communicant answers *Amen*. Communion is then ministered. Those receiving communion are free to choose whether to receive in the hand or directly on the tongue.

## MINISTERING THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

The minister raises the chalice just a little and shows it to the communicant saying: *The Blood of Christ*. The communicant answers *Amen*. The minister then hands the chalice to the communicant who then drinks from it and returns the chalice to the minister. The minister then wipes the rim of the chalice with the purificator.

## INTINCTION

It is possible to minister Holy Communion by dipping the host into the chalice, which is known as Intinction. This is not recommended in the Dioceses of England and Wales. However, sometimes visitors to our churches will want to receive Holy Communion in this way and will take the host and bring it to the chalice, to dip it themselves. Whilst this is not correct, it should be allowed to preserve the reverence of the Sacrament.

## BLESSING

In our parishes when people present themselves for a Blessing rather than Holy Communion, it is always given by Father Oliver. However, if there is a visiting priest, he may expect the blessing to be given by the minister.