

SELECT NORMS

On Preparation of the Sacred Ministers and the Faithful for Holy Mass

1. Careful attention should be given to the development of proper dispositions for the celebration of Mass, including observance of the canonical fast of at least one hour, regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance, and the living of a life of prayer and good works.

On Preparation of the Church for Holy Mass

2. Every effort should be made to see that churches in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are always clean and in good order. This includes the maintenance of not only the sanctuary, but vesting rooms, sacristies, vestibules, and other areas.

3. Holy water fonts should be regularly cleaned and filled with fresh and recently blessed water.

4. Altar cloths and linens should be regularly washed and ironed. The practice of pre-rinsing altar linens in the sacarium should be observed.¹ Household cloths and towels are inappropriate for use during the Sacred Liturgy.

5. Liturgical books, vestments and other blessed items which are no longer suitable for the liturgy should be reverently destroyed.

6. Sacred vessels (chalices, ciboria, monstrances, pyxes, etc.) are to be made of precious metals² and should be regularly cleaned and polished.

7. The thurible should be regularly cleaned and should be suitable as an instrument of adoration in the Sacred Liturgy.

8. The Altar is to be constructed in accord with the liturgical norms.³ Nothing should be placed upon the altar except the altar cloth, candlesticks and the books and vessels required for the Sacred Liturgy. Flowers, celebration aids, glasses, etc. should never be placed upon the Altar.

9. The Chair for the Priest celebrant is to be constructed and located in accord with the liturgical norms. Every effort should be made so that it is not placed in front of the tabernacle. A chair for the deacon should not have the same dimension or prominence as that of the priest.

10. The Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in a tabernacle which is opaque, locked and secure. The

¹ Cf. GIRM, 334, see RS, 120.

² Cf. GIRM, 327-332.

³ Cf. GIRM, 304-308.

tabernacle is to be located in the center of the sanctuary behind the main altar whenever possible.⁴

On the Celebration of Mass

11. Priests, deacons, religious, liturgical ministers, and all the Catholic faithful should carefully observe the norms of the Sacred Liturgy.⁵ Because we are servants of the Sacred Liturgy, and not its masters, creative innovation beyond what is authorized by liturgical law is not permitted.⁶ This also applies to the liturgical texts and formulas.

12. Particular attention should be given to the fostering of sacred silence in the celebration of the Eucharist. Before Mass begins, in the sacristy or vesting room and in the body of the Church, a certain recollected silence should be observed.⁷ In addition, it is appropriate that periods of silent reflection follow at times the proclamation of Sacred Scripture, the homily, and the reception of Holy Communion.⁸

13. Particular care should be taken to observe all the postures prescribed by the Church for the celebration of the Eucharist. Kneeling, in particular, expresses our adoration of the greatness of the Lord and fosters in us a sense of humility before the mystery of God.

14. Particular care should be given to the observance of the sign of veneration before the reception of Holy Communion on the part of all the faithful.

15. All persons should be encouraged to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament upon entering and leaving the Church and whenever they pass in front of the tabernacle.⁹

16. Care should be taken, especially by homilists, to maintain the proper terminology in reference to the Blessed Sacrament. The Body of the Lord and the Precious Blood are always more appropriate descriptions of this great mystery than are the terms “bread” and “wine,” under whose appearances the Lord is present.

17. When possible, an effort should be made to provide for a solemn celebration of the Eucharist at a main parish Mass on Sundays.¹⁰ An appropriate number of well trained liturgical ministers, the use

⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 938 and *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 314-316.

⁵ Cf. *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38, 40.

⁶ Cf. SC 22, GIRM, 24.

⁷ Cf. GIRM, 45.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹ Cf. GIRM, 274.

¹⁰ Cf. GIRM, 115.

of incense and of more solemn music, a procession with the *Book of the Gospels*, etc. are elements which might be appropriately employed at such celebrations.

18. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion facilitate the reverent distribution of Holy Communion to large numbers of the faithful. Care should be taken that all liturgical ministers be well trained, and that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion exercise this ministry only in the absence of ordinary ministers. The title “Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion” should always be used instead of “Eucharistic Minister.” All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to be suitably trained and, once authorized, they should be commissioned according to the rite found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63.

19. Bells are to be rung at the consecration in all Masses in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

20. The sign of peace is to be exchanged in a sober manner with those nearby as an expression of ecclesial communion and mutual charity.¹¹ Appropriate catechesis should be offered on the nature and practice of the Sign of Peace.

21. Whenever possible, it is fitting that the people “receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and, ... in the instances when it is permitted, ... partake of the chalice, so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.”¹² The USCCB *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States* should be carefully followed, especially in regard to the formation of the faithful in Catholic doctrine regarding Christ’s presence in the sacred species.

22. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, along with other non-ordained ministers of the Liturgy, approach the altar for the reception of Holy Communion only after the Priest has received Holy Communion. After they have received the sacred species, the Priest hands each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion a Ciborium or Chalice from which they will distribute the Body and Blood of the Lord.

23. When an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is to bring the Eucharist to the sick, he or she should leave a pyx with the priest before Mass. After the distribution of Holy Communion the priest celebrant fills the pyx of the minister with the needed number of hosts. After the Prayer after Communion or immediately after Mass, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion goes immediately to the sick person. Only the approved liturgical rites found in *Pastoral Care of the Sick and Dying* and in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass* may be used for distribution of Holy Communion to the sick.

24. Whatever remains of the Precious Blood must be reverently consumed as soon as the distribution of Holy Communion is completed. The purification of the sacred vessels is reverently accomplished by one of the ordained ministers.

¹¹ Cf. GIRM, 82

¹² GIRM, 85.

Eucharistic Adoration and Exposition

25. All celebrations of Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration should carefully follow the rites contained in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass*. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament must always be associated with the Mass in understanding, prayers and rites.¹³

26. All Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are invited to take part regularly in adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament. In this regard, Pastors should make every effort to see that all churches are open for the prayer of the faithful for as many hours of the day as possible.

October 7, 2008
Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

¹³ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 66.