

- When individuals are unwilling to receive directly from the chalice, because of colds or other illness, they should be advised to receive Holy Communion under one kind for the duration of their illness.

Blessings

Should people present themselves to a minister (ordained or lay) for a Blessing rather than for Holy Communion, then the Blessing should be ministered by laying a hand on the person's head and saying words such as: *May the love of God be strong in your heart.* These words should not be accompanied by a sign of the cross.

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.
- *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.
- *Celebrating the Mass.* This pastoral introduction offers a resource to help the Church consider how it prepares, celebrates and lives from the Mass.
- *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.

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.

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Ministering the Body and Blood of Christ is one of a series of resources prepared by the Liturgy Commission to support the continuing formation of liturgical ministers in Westminster diocese. Other resources can be downloaded from www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy

Acknowledgements: *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* © 2005, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. *One Bread, One Body* © 1998, the Bishops Conference of England and Wales, et al. *Introduction to the Lectionary* © ICEL, 1981 Other texts © 2007, Westminster Liturgy Commission

Ministering the Body and Blood of Christ

An introduction for commissioned ministers of Holy
Communion in Westminster Diocese

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 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 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.

Holy Communion under both kinds

The Church encourages that, whenever 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 and 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

When Holy Communion is distributed under both kinds, and a deacon is present he should always be one of the ministers of the chalice.

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. The minister should not make the sign of the Cross with the host before ministering Holy Communion.

Those receiving the host are free to choose whether to receive in the hand or directly on the tongue.

Ministering the Precious Blood

Standing before a communicant 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

Ministering Holy Communion by intinction is not recommended in the Dioceses of England and Wales. However should communion be distributed in this way the minister of holy communion should be accompanied by a server holding a communion plate and another minister holding the chalice. The minister takes a host, dips it partly into the chalice and showing it, says: *The Body and Blood of Christ*. The communicant responds: *Amen*. He or she receive the Sacrament on the tongue from the minister and then withdraws.

- When intinction is offered, all members of the congregation should be invited to receive Holy Communion under this form. However individual communicants can choose to receive under the form of Bread alone.
- Holy Communion by intinction can only be administered by a minister and may not be self-administered.