



Purification of sacred vessels after Holy Communion during Mass in the Diocese of Belleville in Illinois

– For implementation by December 2-3, 2006 –

*** Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under both Species**

- Both the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and the United States document, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States*, uphold the principle that “Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds. For in this manner of reception a fuller sign of the Eucharistic banquet shines forth.” (*GIRM*, #281, *Norms*, #20)
- Distribution and reception of Holy Communion under both species has been the practice in the parishes of the Diocese of Belleville for over 20 years, to the benefit of the faithful and the whole Church.
- There should be no change to this laudable practice and Communion from the Chalice should continue and be encouraged for all the faithful.
- If, in rare circumstances, it is not possible to have communion under both species, the faithful should be reminded that they receive the body and blood of the risen Christ under either species.

*** Purification of vessels after Holy Communion**

- In March of 2002 the bishops of the United States received an indult from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to allow extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to purify vessels after the distribution of Holy Communion at the discretion of the local bishop. (*No other country in the world had this special permission.*)
- In 2002 this indult was extended to the parishes and institutions of the Diocese of Belleville.
- In 2006 the Bishops of the United States sought an extension of that indult from the Holy See. However, it was not extended because the Holy Father wanted the practice in the United States to be consistent with the rest of the world and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.
- Thus, purification of the vessels after Holy Communion is to be carried out by the priest or deacon, or in the absence of a deacon, by an instituted acolyte (*GIRM*, #182, 192).

*** Options to consider in the purification of vessels after Holy Communion**

In General

- Ordinary and Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion continue to consume as needed what remains of the Precious Blood from their chalice of distribution.
- For a small number of vessels, if there is no undue interruption to some time for silent prayer or a song of praise before the prayer after Communion, (a) the priest may purify them at the altar or the credence table or (b) the deacon or duly instituted acolyte may purify them at the credence table.
- For a large number of Communion vessels, it is permissible to wait until after Mass has ended, rather than to purify them at the altar or the credence table during Mass (cf. *GIRM*, #183).
- In this case, the vessels are set on the credence table, suitably covered with an appropriately clean cloth. After Mass, they may be taken to the sacristy where they are purified by either the

deacon or the priest after he has greeted the people. After they have been purified they can be washed by the sacristan or other minister as usual.

- As part of the ongoing formation of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and sacristans, these directives should be made known and explained to them at an opportune time prior to the weekend of December 2-3.

In Parishes and Institutions where there is a deacon(s) assigned

- At Masses where a deacon is scheduled, it is most appropriate that, after Mass, he should purify the vessels before they are washed as usual.

In Parishes and Institutions where there is no deacon assigned

- The chalices and other Communion vessels may be taken to the sacristy after the completion of the celebration of Mass.

- If there is a large number of chalices to be purified, or if time constraints warrant it, the priest may purify by pouring water into the first chalice, swirling the water around in the customary manner, and then pouring it into the next chalice, and then into the next, etc. After he has done so with the last chalice to be purified, he consumes the ablution. The vessels may then be washed by the sacristan or other minister as usual.

*** Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion outside Mass not affected**

- Holy Communion outside Mass is not affected by what takes place during Mass as described above. The proper ritual book remains in force and is to be used:

Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum [PCS]

- Communion of the Sick by an Ordinary Minister
- Viaticum outside Mass by an Ordinary Minister

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest [SCAP]

- Liturgy of the Word with Communion