

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS
OF
HOLY COMMUNION**

By

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P R E A M B L E :

The right understanding and correct appreciation of the nature, role and finality of the Institution of Extraordinary Lay Ministers of Holy Communion, can be readily deduced from the following more basic and pertinent texts: (underscoring supplied)

- A. "In liturgical celebrations, each person, be he a minister or a layman, should perform his role by doing solely and and totally what the nature of things and the liturgical norms require of him." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 28)
- B. "Although they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated. Each of them, in its own special way, is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ." (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 10)
- C. "The person designated to be an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is necessarily to be instructed, and should distinguish himself by his Christian life, faith and morals. Let him strive to be worthy of this great function; let him cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show himself as an example to the other faithful by his piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen, whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful." (*Immensae Caritatis*, no. I,VI)

Based on the text and context of the above citations, the following observations by way of guidelines and procedural measures are in order, in conjunction with other documents relative to Liturgy, the Apostolate of the Laity and Lay Ministries:

1. **THAT** Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have the following definite and defined eucharistic **ROLE** that should be exercised according to established Liturgical

Norms: To assist the priest in distributing Holy Communion during the Holy Mass. To substitute the priest in giving Holy Communion during a "priestless" full Service of the Word. To bring Holy Communion to the sick confined at home, in Hospitals and similar Institutions.

2. **THAT** Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are and should remain **EXTRAORDINARY** collaborators of priests who are the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and conserve their **LAY STATE** so that while they should have the proper and convenient Insignia during the Services to distinguish them from other Laymen, care however should be made less they be "clericalized" through ambivalent or formally clerical insignia.
3. **THAT** Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should already have the following much opted **QUALIFICATIONS** even prior to their designation or installation as such: Pre-established moral integrity and good standing in the community, Pre-demonstrated interest and regular presence in the Eucharistic Celebration. And pre-witnessed frequency in the reception of Holy Communion. These qualified conatural dispositions are the best premises of the effectivity and constancy of Extraordinary Lay Minister of **HOLY COMMUNION**.

I. PRE-INSTALLATION PROGRAM:

On the Principle that the duly presented and admitted Candidates for installation as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be nurtured both by prayer and study, the following Syllabi appears in order by way of a Pre-Installation Formation Program:

- A. **SALVATION HISTORY:** The historical dealing of God with man as testified to specially by the Old Testament. Creation. Fall. Promise, Election. Covenant. Expectation. (Two sessions at least, plus open forum).
- B. **CHRISTOLOGY:** Christ as the Fulfilment of God's Salvific Plan. The Savior, the Son of God, the Suffering Servant. His Death. His Resurrection. His Ascension. The Holy Spirit. (Two sessions at least, plus open forum).
- C. **ECCLESIOLOGY:** The Church as the New People of God of the New Covenant through Christ. The Mystical Body of Christ extending His Salvific Mission in history, till the consummation of time. The Local Community of Believers living in and according to the grace of Christ is the Church

in the concrete. The Christian Domestic Community is a Basic Unit in the Church. (Three sessions at least, plus open forum.)

- D. **LITURGY:** Worship, with the Eucharistic Celebration as its apex, is a privileged moment of the saving encounter between God and man. Through Christ and in imitation of Christ, Christians participate in the fulfillment of Salvation History. The structure of the Eucharistic Celebration, The Theology of the Extraordinary Lay Minister of Holy Communion as a given mode and particular role of participation in the Eucharistic Celebration. (Three sessions at least plus open forum.)

Observations:

For greater pedagogical benefits, it is highly advisable that the order of the courses as above indicated be observed by the Lecturate, and that the treatment of the course contents be accommodated to the level of the Candidates, who could be divided into sections or groups according to their educational attainment in the event that the need really arises.

Whereas the envisioned Pre-Installation Formation Program is rather basic and fundamental, the more profound and extensive treatment of which could readily be done during the Post-Installation Program, it is markedly desirable that the Lecturate confine the teachings to the truly official and solidly orthodox Church doctrine and practices.

While it is not really necessary to deny Installation to those Candidates who either missed some sessions or failed to attend most of them for one reason or another, consistent and regular presence therein is well indicative of a genuine interest, good disposition and stable desire of being Extraordinary Ministers.

II. INSTALLATION RITES:

There are two ways of installing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: first, for all given occasions (ad modum habitus); second, for every single occasion whenever a layman is expressly asked and accordingly deputized to give Holy Communion (ad modum actus). The present Liturgical Installation Rites refer to the formal ceremonies to be observed in installing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for all given occasions or on a more permanent basis.

There are also two ways of installing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, irrespective of whether they are deputized for all given occasions or for every single occasion: **first**, within the Eucharistic Celebration (intra Missam); **second**, outside the Eucharistic Celebration (extra Missam). The present Liturgical Installation Rites refer to the formal ceremonies to be observed in installing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion within the Eucharistic Celebration or during the Holy Mass.

There are finally two ways adapting the Rites of Installation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, depending on whether the Rites aim at installing one or more Candidates, and depending as well on whether the Candidates are all men, all women, or mixed. The present Liturgical Installation Rites refer to the formal ceremonies to be observed in installing several Candidates, all men.

Rites:

The formal Installation Ceremonies begin right after the Gospel reading. The Candidates for installation may be conveniently arranged and seated outside the Sanctuary, facing the altar.

1. The Célébrant, seated in front of the altar, addresses the People to acquaint them with the nature and finality of the Installation of Extraordinary Lay Ministers of Holy Communion.
2. The Celebrant thereafter addresses the Candidates for Installation to remind them of the sanctity of their forthcoming commitment and its consequent demands on their Christian lives.
3. The Pastor then addresses the Celebrant, presenting to him in general the Candidates for Installation who qualify, and subsequently calls them one after another by name.
4. The Candidates individually stand up when their respective names are called by the Pastor, to signify their option to be installed, saying: "I am present in the name of the Lord."
5. The Celebrant stands after all the Candidates have been individually called, and addresses the People, asking these explicitly to applaud if they approve of the Candidates presented for Installation.
6. The Celebrant then addresses the Candidates with the following questions, after each of which they all answer clearly, "I am resolved with the help of the Lord.":
 - a. "Are you resolved to profess and live the Faith with the grace of God, in your private and public life?"

- b. "Are you resolved to assume the function of Extraordinary Lay Ministers of Holy Communion in loving service to God and His People?"
- c. "Are you resolved to give due respect and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as the ultimate reason of your being as Extraordinary Ministers of the Bread of Life?"

7. The Celebrant, after all the above questions have been made and duly answered, says: "May the Good Lord, who has begun the Good Work in you, bring it to fulfillment."
8. The Pastor brings forth the Insignia and Certificates of Installation, and presents them to the Celebrant who blesses the Insignia thus:

"Almighty and everliving God: You will that Your People serve You in truth and in love. Do bless these Insignia designed to symbolize the truthful and loving service of Your chosen Extraordinary Lay Ministers of Holy Communion. Help them to wear these symbolic representation with distinction and humility. Give them the grace to live their lives in accord with their Eucharistic Apostolate. This we ask through Christ Our Lord. Amen." (Holy Water used.)

9. The Celebrant and the Candidates sit down. The Pastor calls the Candidates one by one. A Candidate, once called, stands, and accompanied by his wife (a bachelor may be accompanied by his parents or their representative) approaches the Celebrant and kneels before him.
10. The Celebrant makes the Candidate kiss the Insignia, after which the Celebrant hands it to his wife/parents/representative. The Candidate stands, faces his wife/parents/representative who then places the insignia on him.
11. The Candidate faces the Celebrant who then hands him his Certificate of Installation. The thus newly installed Extraordinary Minister takes his place in the Sanctuary, and thereat remains till all the Candidates have been also installed. His wife/parents/representative goes back to the pew with the People.
12. The Celebrant stands up and proceeds with the Eucharistic Celebrations. The Extraordinary Ministers follow the Holy Mass facing the People. They may receive Holy Communion under both Species. Subsequently, they themselves formally begin exercising their function by distributing Holy Communion.

Observations:

It is advisable that the Installation Rites be held within a Holy Mass presenced by a sizeable number of the People, be this an ordinary day or a day of obligation. This way, the People, whom the Extraordinary Ministers will serve, could witness and know who in effect have been officially installed as such.

It is opted that after the Installation Rites proper, the thus newly commissioned Extraordinary Ministers — two at least if not all of them — bring to the altar the bread and wine for consecration, in an Offertory Procession.

It is proper that in the Prayer of the Faithful, one concrete prayer at least be included in favor of the duly installed Extraordinary Ministers, viz., "That our Brothers just installed as Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion be blessed abundantly in the performance of their function, and receive their ultimate reward in the everlasting Kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord." Answer: "Lord, hear our prayer" (or the like).

III. POST-INSTALLATION PROGRAM:

The over-all finality of the POST-INSTALLATION FORMATION PROGRAM in favor of duly installed Extraordinary Lay Ministers of Holy Communion is the deepening of their Christian Faith principally through on-going intellectual and practical exercises that would in turn enhance their effectivity and constancy in their Eucharistic Apostolate.

While the POST-INSTALLATION FORMATION PROGRAM is admittedly open to various alternatives and approaches on proviso that its over-all finality is achieved, the following could be adopted by way of a continuation of the PRE-INSTALLATION FORMATION PROGRAM:

- A. **SCRIPTURES:** Books, Inspiration, Interpretation, The New Testament as the Fulfillment of the Old Testament and as a point of encounter with the saying Christ. The call of Christ for our response in Faith. The ethical imperatives of being a Christian. Guidelines on how to draw life from the Sacred Book. (And so on.)
- B. **SACRAMENTS:** In general, effective signs used by Christ in and through the Church to continue carrying out His Work of saving man. In particular, the theology and liturgy of Baptism and Confirmation and their implications to all the members of the Church, of Holy Communion and Recon-

cillation and their significance in relation to Christ and the Ecclesial Community, of Christian Marriage and the Priesthood as vocations, and of the Anointing of the sick. (And so on.)

- C. **MORAL THEOLOGY:** Living according to our commitment to Christ, intrapersonally and interpersonally. The Supreme Law of Charity. Justice. Sexual Ethics. Virtues. Sin. Freedom and Authority. The Rule of Conscience. Basic Christian Moral Principles. Dated and Contemporary Moral Problems. (And so on.)

The **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS** may also be accordingly motivated to undergo the following exercises as part of their Post-Installation Formation Program: **RECOLLECTIONS** and/or **ANNUAL RETREATS** in the formal connotation of these practices, **MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT** and/or **CANA CONFERENCES**. And without losing sight of their specific Eucharistic Apostolate, they may engage themselves in serious campaign for priestly and religious vocations, in the formal recruitment and training of Altar Services, in the preparation and direction of Liturgical Eucharistic Feasts, and the like.

The **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS** may then form themselves into some kind of a Parish Group, formulate their policies and guidelines of action, rules of conduct, schedule of meets, parochial involvement consonant with their particular function, select their officers, and the like — all under the moderating guidance of the Pastor.

CONCLUSION:

By way of guidelines and information, it appears useful to herein expressedly mention the following items pertinent to how an **APPLICATION** could be done, who may make the **INSTALLATION**, and what is the **COMPETENCE** of Acolytes who are well distinct from Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

- A. **APPLICATION:** On account of the opted qualifications on the par of the Extraordinary Minister that should already be somehow proven existent in him even prior to his Installation proper, it is advisable that instead of issuing the invitation indiscriminately to all, the Pastor would do better if he personally and individually invite only those who, in his prudential judgement, would make good Extraordinary Ministers.

For Parochial Record purposes, it could prove useful if the Application for Installation would be done in writing by the interested, possibly with the subscribed to "Conforme" of his

wife in the event that he is married, in order to give the matter its due significance. And attached to the written Application Letter, it would be convenient if the Applicant would submit some kind of a General Information Sheet, bearing his personal data such as full name, address and telephone number if any place at least of baptism and confirmation, name of spouse and place at least of Canonical Marriage, children, and his educational attainment and employ.

It is not altogether incongruous if the names of the Candidates for Installation as Extraordinary Ministers would be conveniently made known to the Parochial Community during the Pre-Installation Formation Program, through means at the discretion of the Pastor, in view of not only making the people aware of those who would subsequently serve them in the Table of Life, but also in order to somehow prevent the Installation of questionable Applicants and thus avoid, as far as humanly possible, disturbing or painful consequences that could arise from an unwarranted Installation.

For the acceptable human satisfaction of Extraordinary Ministers, and by way of due credentials, the Parish could hand them some kind of a simple printed CERTIFICATE that could carry the following entries: Parish Church. Certification that the named has been duly installed as an Extraordinary Lay Minister of Holy Communion after having successfully complied with the required basic courses in the Catholic Faith. Date given. Installing Authority. Pastor.

B. INSTALLATION: It could be proper and sufficient to herein simply cite the Instruction "IMMENSÆ CARITATIS", issued by the S. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, on 29 January 1973, I:

"I. Local Ordinaries have the faculty to permit a suitable person individually chosen as an Extraordinary Minister for a specific occasion or for a time or, in case of necessity, in some permanent way, either to receive the Eucharist by himself or give it to other faithful and to take it to the sick who are confined in their homes. This faculty may be used whenever a) there is no priest, deacon or acolyte; b) these are prevented from giving Holy Communion on account of another pastoral ministry, ill health or advanced age; c) the number of the faithful asking for Holy Communion is such that the celebration of the Mass or the distribution of the Eucharist outside the Mass would be unduly prolonged.

"II. Local Ordinaries have also the faculty to allow individual priests exercising their sacred office, to appoint a suitable person who would distribute Holy Communion in a specific occasion, in cases of genuine necessity.

"III. The above-mentioned Local Ordinaries can delegate these faculties to Auxiliary Bishops, Episcopal Vicars and Episcopal Delegates.

"IV. The suitable person referred to in Nos. I and II, shall be designated according to the following order of preference: Lector, Major Seminary Student, male Religious, woman Religious Catechist, Catholic man or woman. This order however, can be changed according to the prudent judgement of the Local Ordinary.

"V. In oratories of Religious Communities of men or women, the function of distributing Holy Communion in the circumstances described in No. I, can be fittingly given to a male Superior not having Major Orders, or to a woman Superior, or to their respective Vicars.

"VI. If time allows, it is fitting that the suitable person individually chosen by the Local Ordinary to give Holy Communion, as well as the person appointed by a Priest in possession of the faculty spoken of in No. II, should receive the mandate according to the Rite annexed to this Instruction. Said persons are to distribute Holy Communion according to the Liturgical Norms."

- C. **COMPETENCE:** To avoid possible confusion and resolve some doubts relative to the function or role truly proper of EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS as expressly mentioned in the PREAMBLE and cited above from the Instruction "IMMENSÆ CARITATIS", it could be helpful to cite herein the text pertinent to ACOLYTES, contained in the Motu Proprio of PAUL VI, titled "MINISTERIA QUÆDAM", 15 August 1972, No. IV:

"The Acolyte is instituted to help the Deacon and minister to the Priest. His function is therefore to take care of the Altar Service, to assist the Deacon and the Priest particularly in the celebration of the Mass, to distribute Holy Communion as Extraordinary Minister whenever there is lack of the Ministers mentioned in Canon 845 CIC, or when said Ministers are prevented from giving Holy Communion because of illness, advanced age or due to another pastoral ministry, or when the num-

ber of the faithful approaching the Holy Table is such that the celebration of the Mass would be unduly prolonged. In similar extraordinary circumstances, the Acolyte may be commissioned to expose publicly the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist for the adoration of the faithful, and thereafter reserve it; he may not however impart the blessing to the people. . ."

The ACOLYTHATE — and the Lectorate — were formerly MINOR ORDERS and formally reserved to those aspiring for the Priesthood. Presently, they are simply called "MINISTRIES" and may be given to plain Laymen, not however to Laywomen. Those aspiring for the Priesthood should nevertheless be first installed as Lectors then as Acolytes prior to their Diaconal Ordination.

The installation into the Ministry of the Lectorate and the Acolythate is done by the Ordinary, i.e., the BISHOP for the Diocese, and the Major Superior for Clerical Institutes. The conferment of these Ministries generates no right no claim to Church financial support or remuneration whereas the Clerical State proper begins with the Diaconate.

The ACOLYTE has manifestly a more extensive function than an EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER of Holy Communion since the former includes the total ministry of the latter, whose ministry is but a part of the competence of the former. Wherefore, while the EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER is expressedly and simply commissioned to receive Holy Communion by himself and to give Holy Communion to others under given circumstances, the ACOLYTE may also act as Extraordinary Minister under the same circumstances, in explicit addition to his other auxiliary functions in formal Liturgical Acts in general, in the celebration of the Holy Mass and in relation to the Most Blessed Sacrament in particular.