

Celebrating the *Constitution* on the Sacred Liturgy for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



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Your ministry provides a unique opportunity not only to encounter the Body of Christ in the liturgy, but also to promote it. Our current understanding of the presence and action of Christ in the liturgy has been shaped significantly by the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council in 1963.

In calling for the reform and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this document recognized the liturgy as an exercise of Christ's priestly office, which is shared with all who are incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism. The liturgy, therefore, is the sacred action of the entire Body of Christ in which all the faithful are to participate fully. As a result, this text strongly affirmed the faithful's reception of the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice as the priest, and granted permission for Communion under both kinds to be received by religious and the laity, not only clerics.

In serving as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, you encounter the Body of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine as you receive it and share it with others. You encounter Christ in each member of his Body who comes

forward hungering for Jesus. You are joined in communion with all who receive Christ's Body, and together as the Church, manifest the Body of Christ on earth. Strengthened by the Eucharist, you then bring Christ's Body into the world, as you become Christ's hands and feet, together and as individuals.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the Church offers gratitude for your contribution and engagement in the liturgy. We encourage you to reflect further on the value of your ministry, and to explore the rich text of this document on your own or with a study group. Finally, we pray that our liturgical celebrations increasingly gather the entire Body of Christ into deep and lasting communion.



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