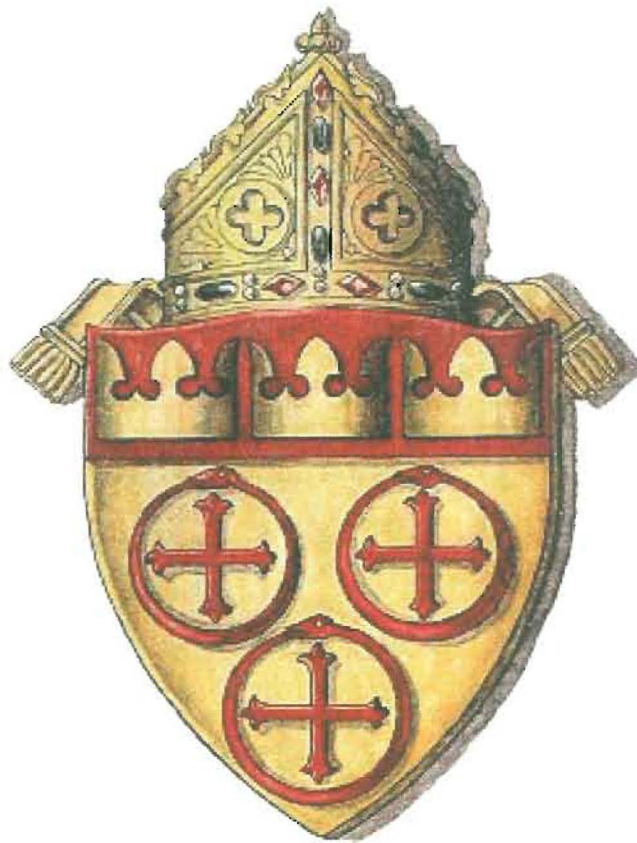


*Guidelines and Norms for  
the Distribution and Reception of Holy  
Communion Under both Kinds  
and  
Extraordinary Ministers  
of Holy Communion*



*Diocese of Sioux City*

## I. Introduction

“On the day before he was to suffer, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes raised to heaven to you, O God, his almighty Father, giving you thanks he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples...”<sup>1</sup> When our Lord thus “offered to God the Father His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine, and under the symbols of those same things gave [Himself] to the apostles,”<sup>2</sup> He gave the Church the Eucharist as the unchanging memorial of His death and Resurrection. The Church always and everywhere has faithfully celebrated this memorial with the utmost reverence and devotion:

The most venerable Sacrament is the blessed Eucharist, in which Christ the Lord Himself is contained, offered, and received, and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord... is the summit and the source of all worship and Christian life. By means of it the unity of God’s people is signified and brought about, and the building up of the Body of Christ is perfected.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates *the heart of the mystery of the Church*.”<sup>4</sup> At the very heart of this Eucharistic mystery is the sacrifice of the Holy Mass. It is through the celebration of Mass that the faithful, along with the sacred ministers, worship God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit; and, particularly through sacramental communion, the faithful take part more fully in the Eucharistic celebration. “Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.”<sup>5</sup>

Just as Christ gave the Eucharist to the Church under the double sign of bread and wine, “Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, “Sacred pastors should take care to ensure that the faithful who participate in the rite or are present at it are as fully aware as possible of the Catholic teaching on the form of Holy Communion as set forth by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.”<sup>7</sup> Namely:

[T]his belief has always been in the Church of God, that immediately after the consecration, the true body of our Lord and His true blood, together with His soul and divinity, exist under the species of bread and wine; but, indeed, the body under the species of bread, and the blood under the species of wine... the same body, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Canon, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Roman Missal.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Trent, Session XXII, chap. 1. See Lk 22:19.

<sup>3</sup> Code of Canon Law, c. 897. See Jn 6:35-40, I Cor 15:22-28.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, #1 (2003). Emphasis in original. See Jn 6:53.

<sup>5</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1322. See I Cor 10:16-17.

<sup>6</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, third typical edition, 2002, #281.

<sup>7</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #282.

under the species of wine, and the blood under the species of bread... and the soul under both... and the divinity furthermore.... Therefore, it is very true that as much is contained under either species, as under both.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore,

The Holy Synod itself, instructed by the Holy Spirit... and following the judgment and custom of the Church itself, declares and teaches that laity, and clerics not officiating, are bound by no divine law to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist under both species, and that without injury to the faith there can be no doubt at all that communion under either species suffices for them for salvation.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, as I taught in my pastoral letter, *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, "We must renew our reverence, love, adoration and devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, within and outside of Mass."<sup>10</sup> Such a renewal obviously entails that we love and receive the great gift of the Eucharist with the same gratitude and joy, in obedience to the Church, our holy mother, regardless of whether we may be blessed to receive Him under the species of bread alone, or of wine alone, or of both together. Holding firmly this true and Catholic faith, and the same belief in the Real Presence of our Lord "truly, really, and substantially"<sup>11</sup> under either form of the sacrament of the Eucharist, together with all the clergy of this diocese, I encourage the faithful "to seek to participate more eagerly in this sacred rite, by which the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is made more fully evident."<sup>12</sup>

To that end, I now offer the following guidelines and norms to govern the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds and the expectations for all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Diocese of Sioux City.<sup>13</sup>

## II. When Communion Under Both Kinds May Be Given

The time when Communion is distributed under both kinds has never been universal, i.e. everywhere and at every Mass.<sup>14</sup> The faithful who receive the Eucharist, receive the fullness of Christ's Body and Blood, soul and divinity, under either species (of bread or of wine). There are

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<sup>8</sup> Council of Trent, Session XIII, chap. 3; see also Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1374, 1377, Acts 2:42.

<sup>9</sup> Council of Trent, Session XXI, chap. 1.

<sup>10</sup> "*Ecclesia semper reformanda*: The Church is always in need of renewal: Pastoral letter on the future of the Church in the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa," 15 October 2009: Pastoral Priority #1, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Council of Trent, Session XIII, chap. 1; see also can. 1.

<sup>12</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 282. See I Cor 11:27-28.

<sup>13</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 283: "The diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups."

<sup>14</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 11: "[T]he Eucharistic Sacrifice is, first and foremost, the action of Christ Himself, and therefore its proper efficacy is unaffected by the manner in which the faithful take part in it."

appropriate times to invite the faithful to receive our Lord under both species, and other appropriate times to offer Holy Communion to the faithful only under the species of bread. Holy Communion under both kinds may freely be offered:

- a. In addition to those instances specified by the specific ritual books, such as at Ordination, Confirmation and other specific rituals when this permission is granted, there are several instances when the General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that Communion under both kinds may be permitted:<sup>15</sup>
  - a. for priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate;
  - b. for the deacon and others who perform some role at Mass;
  - c. for the community members at their conventual Mass (religious orders), for seminarians, and for all who are on retreat or are participating in a spiritual or pastoral gathering.
- b. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states:
  - i. The diocesan bishop also has the faculty to allow Communion under both kinds, whenever it seems appropriate to the priest to whom charge of a given community has been entrusted as its own pastor, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of the profanation of the Sacrament or that the rite would be difficult to carry out on account of the number of participants or for some other reason.<sup>16</sup>

**Particular Law for the Diocese of Sioux City**

1. Where there is a large number of faithful present and the gathering is taking place in a building or venue other than a church, Communion is to be offered only under the species of the Consecrated Host. Exceptions to this norm may be granted only with the explicit written permission of the diocesan bishop.

- c. The *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* states, "In practice, the need to avoid obscuring the role of the priest and the deacon as the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion by an excessive use of extraordinary minister might in some circumstances constitute a reason either for limiting the distribution of Holy Communion under both species or for using intinction instead of distributing the Precious Blood from the chalice."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 283.

<sup>16</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 283.

<sup>17</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, #24 (2002). On the valid use of intinction to distribute Holy Communion under both kinds, see *Redemptionis Sacramentum: Instruction on the Eucharist*, #103-104 (2004).

- a. Priests in the Diocese of Sioux City might consider using intinction or offering Holy Communion only under the species of bread, so as to avoid such an “excessive use” of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

**Particular Law for the Diocese of Sioux City**

2. In parishes, chapels, and institutions in the Diocese of Sioux City, Communion under both kinds is permitted on those times specifically instructed in the ritual books, i.e. Confirmation, Ordination.
3. Communion under both forms may also be distributed at Masses on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
  - a. This should be done in such a way so as to avoid the “excessive use” of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Communion may be briefly prolonged, so as to use fewer Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
4. Communion under both forms may be distributed at daily Masses at the discretion of the priest who is celebrating the Mass.

### III. The Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- a. By virtue of his sacred ordination, the bishop or priest offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, the head of the Church. He receives gifts of bread and wine from the faithful, offers the sacrifice to God, and returns them the very Body and Blood of Christ, as from the hands of Christ himself. Thus bishops and priests are considered the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. In addition, the deacon who assists the bishop or priest in distributing Communion is an ordinary minister of Holy Communion. When the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, the deacon ministers the chalice.<sup>18</sup>
- b. Bishops, priests, and deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

### IV. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- a. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) is one instituted as an acolyte, or one of the faithful so deputed in accordance with Canon 230, § 3.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, #26.

<sup>19</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #92-94; *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, #154.

<sup>20</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, #155.

## Particular Law for the Diocese of Sioux City

### 5. Guidelines for Selection of Candidates:

- a. The Pastor shall oversee the selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
  - i. Pastors are encouraged to collaborate with other parish or school staff members in recommending candidates to serve as EMHC.
  - ii. Once persons have been selected to serve as EMHC, the pastor shall submit these names on the proper form, with a letter of request to the Office of Worship, which will coordinate the bishop's approval and mandate.
  - iii. To avoid unnecessary confusion, all requests must be made in writing to the Office of Worship on the proper form with all of the necessary information. All requests will be processed at the beginning of each month. Any requests sent in after the first of the month will be processed the following month. The letter of request must include the full name of the person requesting the permission and the type of role that the person will fulfill (school, parish Masses, homebound/hospital/nursing home).
- b. EMHCs should only be selected, approved, and mandated according to pastoral need.
- c. Both men and women may be chosen as EMHC, to administer communion both at Mass, and to the sick and dying. Those who are invited to serve in this ministry shall be:
  - aged 18 or older (i.e., have completed their eighteenth year),
  - baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics,
  - regularly sharers in the Eucharist,
  - of exemplary Christian character,
  - committed to the faith,
  - devoted to the Eucharist,
  - respected by the community,
  - demonstrably interested and involved in the community's life,
  - in good standing according to the law of the Church,
  - spiritually sound,
  - and capable of adhering to all of the Church's procedures for EMHCs.

Those chosen must make a public profession of faith and be deemed responsible to carry out the mandate entrusted to them.

- d. For those who are confirmed and under age 18 to serve as an EMHC in the school setting, a special mandate can be requested. This mandate will apply only to the particular school and its Masses.
  - i. A principle or chaplain at the high school may request this mandate through the person's local pastor.
    - a) All means should be exhausted, i.e., Catholic faculty and staff should assist as EMHC primarily, and mandates requested for those confirmed students under the age 18 only when absolutely necessary.
  - ii. In order to avoid a large number of persons under the age of 18, and since they will be granted the mandate to serve at school Masses only, it may be



**Particular Law in the Diocese of Sioux City, (5) Guidelines for Selection, cont'd:**

advisable to limit the times during school Masses that the use of these EMHC would be needed, i.e., offer Communion under one form.

- e. The invitation to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is not to be understood as a reward, but as a call to service. Parishes and communities should avoid practices in selecting Extraordinary Ministers where individuals simply volunteer themselves for this ministry.

b. Guidelines for the Use of EMHCs:

- i. EMHCs may distribute Holy Communion at Mass only when the ordained ministers present are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion, or when the very large numbers of the faithful present would excessively prolong the celebration if only the ordained ministers distributed Holy Communion.<sup>21</sup> A brief prolongation in the distribution of Holy Communion is not a sufficient reason to have more Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion than necessary.<sup>22</sup>
- ii. "To avoid creating confusion, certain practices are to be avoided and eliminated – especially, extraordinary ministers receiving Holy Communion apart from the other faithful as though concelebrants (they are not to enter the sanctuary until after the priest-celebrant has received communion); and the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass thus arbitrarily extending the concept of 'a great number of the faithful.'"<sup>23</sup>
  - a) The time of distributing Holy Communion should be proportional to the length of the rest of the celebration.

c. Formation of EMHCs:

- i. Extraordinary ministers of communion shall receive adequate catechesis and liturgical training before they are commissioned to exercise this ministry.
  - a) Catechesis and training for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is provided by the local community and is to be overseen by the pastor.
  - b) Catechesis should include a spirituality of this ministry and an understanding of the Eucharist, as well as specific instruction on the practice for administering communion.
  - c) Each parish is responsible for the continuing formation and spiritual enrichment of commissioned extraordinary ministers of communion.

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<sup>21</sup> Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Vatican City, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, #158.

<sup>23</sup> Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Vatican City, 1997.

d. Commissioning and Mandate of EMHCs:

- a. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are mandated by the bishop to serve their parish or community for a period of not more than three (3) years. Terms are renewable for as long as the pastor chooses and the individual is willing to serve in this ministry. Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be re-mandated and re-commissioned after every term for as long as they continue to serve in this ministry.
- b. Once the names have been submitted to the Office of Worship and the bishop has granted the mandate, a certificate will be sent stating the terms of service, along with a letter from the Director of the Office of Worship.
- c. After receiving a mandate from the bishop, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion shall be commissioned in the local community in which they will serve.
  - i. Before the commissioning, the EMHC must make a public profession of faith- see Appendix II.
  - ii. The commissioning is done by the pastor, parochial vicar or deacon according to the rite found in chapter 63 of the Book of Blessings, preferably during a parish or community Mass, ordinarily on a Sunday. Parishes should avoid celebrating the commissioning at Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday) liturgies; on the Sundays of Lent (Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays) when the Scrutinies are celebrated; and at other liturgies which have special ritual elements.
- d. Pastors shall keep on record the names of all currently mandated and commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and the dates of their current term of service.
- e. Once commissioned for service at a particular parish, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may exercise their ministry at another parish or religious institution within the Diocese of Sioux City, provided the pastor or superior of the second parish/institution has given explicit permission.
  - i. If an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion moves from one parish to another in the diocese:
    - a) The pastor of the parish from which the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion moves shall delete the name from that parish's list of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and notify the Office of Worship in writing;
    - b) The pastor of the parish into which an extraordinary minister of communion moves shall enter the name to that parish's list of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, upon the presentation of a valid certificate. It is the pastor's decision to allow the person to exercise this ministry for the remainder of his/her term.



## V. Procedures During Mass

- a. The EMHCs should not approach the altar before the priest-celebrant has received Communion, and they are always to receive from the hands of the priest-celebrant the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for the distribution to the faithful.<sup>24</sup>
  - i. The deacon may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the EMHC.<sup>25</sup>
- b. When the distribution of Communion is finished, the priest himself consumes at the altar any consecrated wine that happens to remain; as for any consecrated hosts that are left, he either consumes them at the altar or carries them to the place designated for the reservation of the Eucharist.
  - i. When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for Communion, and if not consumed by the bishop or priest celebrant, “the deacon immediately and reverently consumes at the altar all of the Blood of Christ that remains; he may be assisted, if need dictate, by other deacons and priests.” When there are Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, they may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their chalice of distribution with the permission of the diocesan bishop.<sup>26</sup>

### **Particular Law for the Diocese of Sioux City**

6. EMHC are granted permission to consume the remaining Precious Blood from their chalice of distribution upon returning to the altar.
7. The practice of consuming the remaining Precious Blood in the place of distribution or at the credence table or in the sacristy is not permissible.

## VI. Communion to the Sick and Homebound

- a. Parishes and communities are especially urged to make Holy Communion available to the sick and to the dying on Sundays and Holy Days when these individuals cannot attend the Eucharist of the local community, as well as on other pastorally appropriate occasions.
- b. The Eucharist may only be carried to the sick and dying in a pyx. It is never to be carried in any other container, such as a handkerchief, envelope, etc.
- c. It is not proper for EMHCs to the sick and to the dying to be given the consecrated host for this purpose during the Communion Rite of Holy Mass.

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<sup>24</sup> GIRM 162.

<sup>25</sup> #40, Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Washington, DC. 2002.

<sup>26</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, #52.

- i. The necessary pyxes should be prepared at the altar either during the Breaking of the Bread or at the conclusion of the communion of the faithful.
- ii. It is recommended that ministers who will be administering communion to the sick and to the dying come forward and be sent forth after the communion of the faithful is completed.
  - 1) The Extraordinary Minister(s) of Holy Communion to the Sick is to approach the altar after the distribution of Holy Communion has been completed, but before the Prayer after Communion, to receive the pyx with the Blessed Sacrament from the priest or deacon. The community may be invited to pray for them and those to whom they will minister. The Extraordinary Minister(s) should then leave the altar with the pyx and proceed immediately to the assigned sick person(s). They are not to remain for any further prayers or blessings or gatherings. Because they are carrying Holy Communion, their reverent demeanor will be an example to others.
- d. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must take the Eucharist directly from the church to the individuals who are to receive. The Eucharist must never be taken home overnight to be distributed to the sick or dying the next day, and must never be kept in one's vehicle nor anywhere else but a tabernacle.
- e. Present Church norms also allow that, when necessary, communion to the sick and to the dying may be administered under the form of consecrated wine. The Precious Blood must be carried with the same reverence, in a worthy and spill-proof container.

## VII. Communion to the Sick and to the Dying in Hospitals

- a. Since assembling at the parish or religious institution is the normative expression of the local parish community, it is preferred that communion of the sick and of the dying in hospitals be administered by Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion who are commissioned in and serving a parish or religious institution.
- b. At a Catholic hospital, the pastoral care department may invite suitable persons (all the same criteria apply), who are not already commissioned in a parish, to this ministry. It is preferable that the steps to become an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (i.e. adequate catechesis and formation, a mandate from the bishop, commissioning) be completed in each person's home parish and that each person serve as a communion minister in his/her home parish.
  - i. When this is not feasible, however, the pastoral care department may provide catechesis and formation, ask for a mandate from the bishop, and a priest or deacon on staff at the hospital may commission these persons as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- c. The name of each of these individuals should be recorded in their home parish's list of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, even when commissioned by a priest or deacon on staff at the hospital.
- d. Those responsible for pastoral care in a hospital or other institution should see that the rite for "Communion in a Hospital or Institution" is used appropriately in these settings.

## VIII. Other Functions of Extraordinary Ministers

- a. Ash Wednesday
  - i. EMHCs may distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday according to the "Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes" found in chapter 32 of the Book of Blessings.
- b. Saint Blaise
  - i. EMHCs may also bless throats on the feast of St. Blaise (Feb. 3) according to the "Order for the Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise" found in chapter 51 of the Book of Blessings.

## IX. Conclusion

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great King of hope and mercy, desires that all His faithful children persevere diligently in the holy and saving Catholic faith. His greatest gift to us is the Most Holy Eucharist. Praying fervently that the whole Church may grow daily in devotion and in her duty to safeguard and proclaim the sacredness of the Eucharist, I now promulgate these revised norms for the distribution and reception of Holy Communion under both kinds in the Diocese of Sioux City, and for Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. All previous versions notwithstanding. *Given from the Chancery of the Diocese of Sioux City on this 24th day of June, 2011, the Solemnity of the Birth of Saint John the Baptist.*

*+R. Walker Nickless*

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless  
Bishop of Sioux City



*DA Lopez*  
Deacon David A. Lopez, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

### Appendices:

- I. Form to Request the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- II. Public Profession of Faith in English and Spanish
- III. Rite of Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion