

III. Excerpts from "Immense Caritatis"

- A. "Christ the Lord has left to the Church, his Spouse, a testament of his immense love. The wonderful gift of the Eucharist, which is the greatest gift of all, demands that this important mystery should be increasingly better known and its saving power more fully shared. With the intention of fostering devotion to the Eucharist--the summit and center of Christian worship--the Church, moved by pastoral zeal and concern, has issued suitable laws and appropriate documents.
- B. "Present day conditions, however, demand that, while the greatest reverence toward this Sacrament is constantly maintained, easier access to holy communion should be made possible. Thus the faithful, by sharing more fully in the fruits of the sacrifice of the Mass, may dedicate themselves more readily and effectively to God and to the good of the Church and of humankind.
- C. "First of all, provision must be made lest reception of communion become impossible or difficult because of insufficient ministers. [Secondly,] the sick must not be deprived of spiritual consolation by being impeded from receiving holy communion because of the law of fast, which they may not be able to observe even though it is already very moderate.
- D. "Local ordinaries have the faculty to permit a qualified person individually chosen as a special minister for a specific occasion or for a time or, in case of necessity, in a permanent way, or to give the Eucharist to himself or to other members of the faithful or to take it to the sick who are confined to their homes. This faculty may be used when
a) there is no priest, deacon, or acolyte; b) these ministers are prevented from administering holy communion because of another pastoral ministry or because of ill health or advanced age; c) the number of the faithful requesting holy communion is such that the celebration of Mass or the distribution of the Eucharist outside Mass would be unduly prolonged.
- E. "Local ordinaries also have the faculty to permit individual

priests exercising their sacred office to appoint a qualified person to distribute holy communion on a specific occasion, in cases of genuine need.

- F. "If time permits, it is fitting that the qualified person individually chosen by the local ordinary for administering holy communion, as well as the person appointed by a priest having the faculty spoken of [immediately above, no. 5], should receive the mandate according to the rite . . . [found in the Book of Blessing, Chapter 63]. They are to distribute holy communion according to the liturgical norms.
- G. "Since these faculties are granted only for the spiritual good of the faithful and for cases of genuine necessity, priests are to remember that they are not thereby excused from the task of distributing the Eucharist to the faithful who legitimately request it, and especially not from giving communion to the sick.
- H. "The faithful who are special ministers of communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting.
- I. "The period of time of the eucharistic fast or abstinence from food and alcoholic drink is reduced to approximately one quarter of an hour, for the following persons: a) the sick in hospitals or in their own homes, even if they are not confined to bed; b) the faithful advanced in age who must remain at home because of age or who are living in a home for the aged; c) sick priests, even if not confined to bed, and elderly priests, who wish to celebrate Mass or receive holy communion; d) persons looking after the sick and the aged as well as those relatives of the sick and aged wishing to receive holy communion with them, whenever they are unable to observe the fast of one hour without inconvenience."