

**Liturgical Norms of the Archdiocese of Atlanta
Promulgated Between 2001 and 2006**

Sacred Rites

The Mass

The Homily

The homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest, or occasionally, according to circumstances, to the deacon, but never to a lay person. (GIRM, no. 66)

On occasion, the pastor will ask members of the lay faithful to address the congregation for some specific purpose, and it is often done at the time reserved for the homily. A better time is at the conclusion of Mass, after the Communion Rite is completed, and before the final greeting and the celebrant's blessing. In any case, the homily is always to be delivered, by a priest or deacon, regardless of any extraordinary presentation. (GIRM-Notes)

The Creed

At the words et incarnatus est (by the power of the Holy Spirit...and became man) all make a profound bow; but on the solemnities of the Annunciation and of the Nativity of the Lord, all genuflect. (GIRM, no. 137)

The bow or genuflection at the words commemorating the Incarnation of our Lord are not optional; I ask that these signs of reverence and humility be practiced throughout the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The words of the Nicene Creed are not to be changed from the text which appears in the Roman Missal. (GIRM-Notes)

The Sign of Peace

The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers, but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. In the dioceses of the United States of America, for a good reason, on special occasions, (for example, in the case of a funeral, a wedding, or when civic leaders are present) the priest may offer the sign of peace to a few of the faithful near the sanctuary. At the same time, in accord with the decisions of the Conference of Bishops, all offer one another a sign that expresses peace, communion and charity. While the sign of peace is being given, one may say: Pax Domini sit semper tecum (The peace of the Lord be with you always), to which the response is Amen. (GIRM-USA, no.154)

The priest celebrants of the Archdiocese of Atlanta should consider remaining within the sanctuary during the Sign of Peace the norm, and should leave the sanctuary only under the circumstances given above. (GIRM-Notes)

Holy Communion

The deacon or priest places the consecrated bread in several ciboria or patens and, if necessary, pours the Precious Blood into enough additional chalices as are required for the distribution of Holy Communion. (Norms USA, no. 37) These actions are reserved to priests and deacons. They are not to

be carried out by extraordinary ministers.

If extraordinary ministers...are required...they approach the altar as the priest receives Communion. (Norms USA, no. 38) Extraordinary ministers are not to gather at the altar until the celebrant and concelebrants are receiving. Deacons and extraordinary ministers are not to receive Communion at the same time as priests. Also, extraordinary ministers are not to wait to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution. See Norms USA, no. 39. Also, GIRM, no. 162: *These ministers (extraordinary ministers) should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion and they are always to receive from the hands of the priest celebrant (or the deacon if he is so delegated,) the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful.* (GIRM-Notes)

The extraordinary ministers distribute the Eucharist according to local practice, then they give the vessel to the celebrant, deacon or acolyte, or place it on the altar. Each genuflects and goes to the credence table to cleanse his or her fingers, in the case of those who have distributed the Precious Body, before returning to places among the assembly. (Communion Distribution 2002)

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, it is permitted to distribute Holy Communion under both species at all masses. (Communication from Archbishop Gregory)

The Purification

Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent in 2006, parishes in the Archdiocese of Atlanta are requested to see that all sacred vessels are purified by a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte. ... The GIRM permits that vessels be purified either after communion or after mass, and parishes with large numbers of vessels may find it more convenient to do so after mass. In any case, all of the Precious Blood that remains should be consumed at the end of communion. In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the permission for extraordinary ministers to consume any of the precious blood that remains after communion continues in effect. While the Prefect of the Congregation, in his letter, mentions two additional pastoral approaches: the distribution of Holy Communion under only one species or the use of intinction, at present the use of intinction is not encouraged in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The choice to distribute communion under one or both kinds remains at the discretion of the priest. (Purification-Notice)

The purifications should take place only at the altar or the credence or side table, not in the sacristy. The following is the policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta regarding the actions of extraordinary ministers at the conclusion of the Communion rite:

They (the extraordinary ministers) distribute the Eucharist according to local practice, then they give the vessel to the celebrant, deacon or acolyte, or place it on the altar. Each goes to the credence table to cleanse his or her fingers, in the case of those who have distributed the precious Body, before returning to his or her place among the faithful. ... It is to be remembered that the extraordinary ministers are commissioned, as their name implies, to a restricted function, and only when necessary. When the distribution of Holy Communion is completed, they should return to their appropriate places among the faithful, since the only persons authorized to be in the sanctuary are the ministers of the altar, the priest(s), deacon(s), and their authorized assistants (acolytes, lectors, cantors, etc.). (GIRM-Notes)

Posture

The faithful continue to sit at the conclusion of the Offertory while the invitation "Pray, brethren..." is extended. They rise to respond, "May the Lord accept..."

The only licit posture of the faithful during the Eucharistic Prayer is kneeling, unless they are prevented **on occasion** from kneeling due to "health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or some

other good reason." The determination of what constitutes "some other good reason" will be made by the Diocesan Bishop.

The phrase "**on occasion**" was specifically chosen by the Bishops in order to establish a uniform posture of kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer. It is only on exceptional and extraordinary occasions, therefore, and never on a regular basis, that standing during the Eucharistic Prayer is permitted in the dioceses of the United States of America.

The following chart is provided to assist in catechesis for the proper common posture at Mass.

From the beginning of Mass until the First Reading	STAND
From the First Reading until the Gospel Acclamation	SIT
From the Gospel Acclamation until the end of the Gospel	STAND
During the Homily	SIT
From the profession of Faith until the end of the General Intercessions	STAND
From the Preparation of the Gifts to the completion of "Pray brethren..."	SIT
From the beginning of the people's response "May the Lord..." to the end of the Holy, Holy	STAND
From the completion of the Holy, Holy until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer	KNEEL
From the beginning of the Our Father until the completion of the Lamb of God	STAND
From the "Behold the Lamb of God" until the distribution of Holy Communion	KNEEL
When receiving Holy Communion (see Chapter 4, Reception of Holy Communion below)	STAND
During the sacred silence after the Distribution of Holy Communion	SIT or KNEEL
From the beginning of the Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass	STAND

(GIRM-Notes)

Deacons

From the epiclesis until the priest shows the chalice, the deacon normally remains kneeling. (GIRM, no. 179)

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, for reasons of age or infirmity, the assisting deacon may remain standing during the consecration. In all other instances, the deacon should kneel as directed. (GIRM-Norms)

Baptism

The Church teaches that Baptism may be performed either by immersion or by pouring water over the head of the candidate. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1239-1240, #1278) In the United States, pouring of water over the head of the candidate has become the prevalent, although not exclusive custom. Since the bishop is the principal dispenser of the Sacred Mysteries, and the operations surrounding the administering of the Sacraments are in his care, and since I have been asked for my counsel on this subject, I would offer the following as guidelines for the Archdiocese of Atlanta, and direct that they be observed.

- Baptism by immersion or by pouring water over the head of the candidate are both acceptable in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.
- As with pouring water over the head, if Baptism is to be performed by immersion, the actions must be carried out in such a way that the dignity of the Sacrament is in no way compromised:
 - The pool used for immersion must be located within the church, and of permanent construction. The physical circumstances providing for immersion may not be improvised simply so immersion can take place.
 - Safety, especially in the case of infants, must be of paramount concern. The Sacrament

must never be an occasion for possible harm occurring to the person receiving it, or to those assisting in the ceremony.

- When the Sacrament is celebrated using immersion, great care must be given to preparation for the actual movements of the ritual and the disposition of those taking part – for example: where will the celebrant stand, what will the celebrant wear, who will help with the robing and disrobing, where will the candidate dress after the immersion, etc. In all circumstances of the Rite, the dignity of the Sacrament must be guarded from awkwardness or unintentional levity which might result from lack of preparation.
- A pastor may permit Baptism by immersion as long as the ritual integrity of the action is observed and the dignity of the Sacrament is guaranteed, as above. The family or individuals involved must agree to the celebration of Baptism by immersion rather than being confronted with this option without proper preparation. Where permitted by the pastor, the choice of immersion or pouring of water over the head remains with the parents or guardians of the candidate in the case of infants or minors, or with the candidate. (Baptism Instruction 2005)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

One of the duties of the bishop is to delegate through pastoral assignment, members of the lay faithful to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. They are called “extraordinary” ministers to distinguish them from those who are the “ordinary” ministers of Holy Communion, the bishop, the priest, and the deacon. In the recent instruction on the Eucharist, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, the following direction is given, and I ask that it be followed faithfully in the Archdiocese, not only in parlance, but also where the words themselves appear in printed text, such as parish bulletins and websites.

“This function (extraordinary minister) is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist” by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.”

Also, the term “Eucharistic Minister” is to be used only to describe those who are the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist: the bishop, the priest and the deacon. (2004-letter)

Distribution of Holy Communion Outside of Mass

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Circumstances calling for the use of the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* are not to be found in the Archdiocese of Atlanta (2004-letter)

Communion Services

The *Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass with the Celebration of the Word* is to be used in the following instances:

- a) When sickness or emergency causes the absence of the only priest in a parish from a scheduled mass
- b) In parishes with only one priest, when on a regularly scheduled off-day, no other

priest is available to cover the scheduled daily mass.

The *Rite for Communion outside Mass* should be held in the place where the Eucharist is regularly celebrated or reserved. (Communion may be given, however, in other places, including private homes, when it is a question of the sick, prisoners, or others who cannot leave the place without danger or serious difficulty.)

The Rite may be celebrated only by a deacon, an instituted acolyte, or an appointed extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. All other rubrics given in the *Introduction to Holy Communion Outside Mass* are to be followed.

This rite may be celebrated only with the permission of the pastor, or in his absence, permission from the local dean, or from a Vicar of the Archdiocese or the Archbishop.

This rite may not be used in parishes where Mass is offered for the general parish community on the same day, and it may not be used as an “optional” ceremony for any other purposes, such as the commissioning of leaders, teachers, or other incidental parish events. (2004-letter)

Communion for the Sick

The Church's primary reason for reserving the Holy Eucharist is for distribution to the sick as viaticum. The usual ministers for this merciful work are the priest and the deacon, but when necessary, also the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. The rites to be followed are found in the *Roman Ritual: Administration of Communion to the Sick*. The rite may be obtained from the USCCB Publishing office. In *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, the following caution is given:

“A Priest or Deacon, or an extraordinary minister who takes the Most Holy Eucharist when an ordained minister is absent or impeded in order to administer it as Communion for a sick person, should go insofar as possible *directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person's home, leaving aside any profane business so that any danger of profanation may be avoided* and the greatest reverence for the Body of Christ may be ensured.” (2004-letter)

Improvisation

Words of the Order of the Mass and of the prayers proper to the day, as printed in the Missal and the Sacramentary, and the words of the readings as printed in the Lectionary approved for use in the United States, are not to be altered or omitted, but delivered with faithful adherence to the printed text. Those places where the celebrant is encouraged to speak in his own words are clearly identified, both in the General Instruction and in the Order of the Mass itself. (*Redemptionis Sacramentum* Letter)

Music

In some churches it has become the practice to use the organ or other instruments to cover moments of silence, as musical “filler.” This practice is to be discouraged. The Eucharistic Prayer must never be accompanied by any so-called “background music.” (GIRM-Notes)

The use of Latin

“All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman liturgy. Other types of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that

they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.

“Since faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is fitting that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, set to the simpler melodies. (GIRM, no. 41)”

The Second Vatican Council expressed the desire of the Church that the Latin language and the use of Gregorian Chant not be discarded as regular practices of the Roman Church. (GIRM-notes)

Sacred Times

Lent

Holy water should remain in the holy water fonts during Lent, as a reminder of Baptism and of the repentance especially appropriate to the Season, and *never* be replaced with sand, or any other substance.

The represents the teaching of the Church as clarified by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments in 2003 as follows:

1. The liturgical legislation in force does not foresee this innovation, which in addition to being 'praeter legem' is contrary to a balanced understanding of the season of Lent, which though truly being a season of penance, is also a season rich in the symbolism of water and baptism, constantly evoked in liturgical texts.
2. The encouragement of the Church that the faithful avail themselves frequently of the sacraments is to be understood to apply also to the season of Lent. The 'fast' and 'abstinence' which the faithful embrace in this season does not extend to abstaining from the sacraments or sacramentals of the Church.

The practice of the Church has been to empty the Holy Water fonts on the days of the Sacred Triduum in preparation of the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil, and it corresponds to those days on which the Eucharist is not celebrated (i.e., Good Friday and Holy Saturday) (Lent Letter 2004)

The Sacred Triduum

Good Friday

Please remind the Faithful, that from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil, all are to genuflect when presenting themselves or passing before the Holy Cross. (Holy Thursday Announcement)

Sacred Objects and Places

Silence

Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner. (GIRM, no. 45)

In many churches, conversation, even in raised voices, has become acceptable, impairing the sense of reverence and silence which should be observed in the presence of our Lord, and as a fitting preparation for the celebration of the Eucharistic mystery. Pastors are urged to promote the custom of silence as directed in the paragraph above. (GIRM-Notes)

Sacred Vessels

Glass vessels, or vessels of clay, earthenware, ceramic or porcelain or any easily broken material are no longer to be used as containers for the Precious Blood. It is acceptable to use such vessels to carry the wine forward at the Offertory, but as the instruction stipulates, from that point, the wine should be poured into chalices - see # 117. (Redemptionis Sacramentum Letter)

Linens

All altar cloths, corporals, purificators, lavabo towels and palls used in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, must be made of absorbent cloth and never of paper. No reasons concerning economy or utility will be allowed to supersede the reverence we are bound to show the Precious Blood of our Lord, and the care with which we will treat all those surfaces that may come in contact with His Body and Blood. Any cloth that becomes saturated with any portion of the Precious Blood, should immediately be washed, and the water poured into the sacrarium. (Purificator Memo)

Holy Oils

The sacramental oils of the Church are:

- the Oil of Catechumens, used at baptism, or in ceremonies during the period of the catechmenate as specified in the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*;
- the Oil of the Sick, used in celebrations of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick;
- the Holy Chrism, used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

Bishops, priests, and deacons are the only ministers authorized to use the holy oils, and the holy oils are not to be used in any ceremonies other than the sacramental liturgies listed above. (2004-letter)

Sources

2004-letter – Undated Letter included in the Clergy Mailing in 2004

Redemptionis Sacramentum Letter – Letter dated July 2, 2004 accompanying a copy of Redemptionis Sacramentum.

Purificator Memo – A memo from Archbishop Donoghue dated May 2, 2003 regarding paper purificators

GIRM-Notes – A collection of excerpts from the GIRM with local adaptations promulgated by Archbishop Donoghue on Nov 24, 2003.

Baptism Instruction 2005 – An instruction from July 2005 regarding Baptism, especially the requirements for Baptism by immersion.

Communion Distribution 2002 – A letter from Archbishop Donoghue dated Nov 1, 2002, providing certain details for the actions of extraordinary ministers following Holy Communion.

Lent Letter 2004 – A letter from Archbishop Donoghue regarding removing Holy Water from the fonts during Lent.

Purification Notice – A memo from Archbishop Gregory dated Oct 26, 2006 regarding the purification of vessels by lay ministers.