



ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Timothy P. Broglio
by the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

GENERAL DECREE

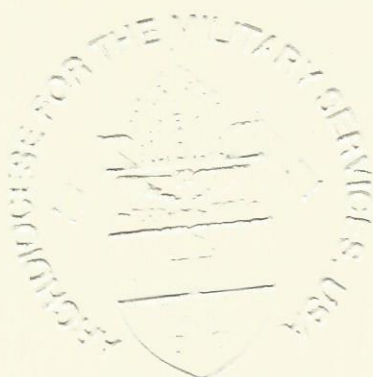
Among the seven ritual sacraments of the Church, the Most Holy Eucharist is held in highest honor (see cc. 897 and 898). In the Eucharistic sacrifice, which *Lumen gentium* calls "the fount and summit of the whole Christian life" (LG 11), the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection is celebrated and the people of God are nourished.


As sacred ministers, bishops, presbyters, and deacons are entrusted with the distribution of Holy Communion to the Christian faithful. When these ordinary ministers are lacking, impeded, or insufficient to accommodate the distribution of Communion under both kinds, the diocesan bishop can commission suitable lay faithful to serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (see cc. 910 §2 and 230 §3).

To order this important ministry in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, I am pleased to promulgate Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. In addition to regulating the process by which extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned, the Norms also provide regulations for the use of the rite *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* and the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament on military installations.

Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion take effect immediately. They replace any previous norms issued by me or my predecessors on the subjects contained therein.

Given this seventh day of January, Memorial of St. Raymond of Peñafort, two thousand fourteen in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.




The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA


Deacon Michael Yakir
Chancellor

ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

NORMS FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Note. The term **Catholic**, as used throughout this and other AMS documents, refers not only to the Latin Catholic Church but also to all the Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris* that comprise the Catholic Church.

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)

1.1. The **ordinary** ministers of Holy Communion are bishops, presbyters, and deacons (c. 910 §1). They exercise this ministry by virtue of their ordination.

1.2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are lay members of a particular installation chapel community (to which a priest is permanently assigned) who assist the priest in the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, bring Communion to the sick or aged, or expose the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel for Eucharistic veneration because of the shortage of ordinary ministers. In extraordinary instances—and as indicated below—they may be permitted to conduct a Sunday Service in the temporary absence of a priest or deacon.

1.3. To be commissioned as an EMHC a person must:

- 1.3.1. be at least 18 years of age;
- 1.3.2. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and received First Communion and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be assumed;
- 1.3.3. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- 1.3.4. be reverential, respectful of his or her faith and the Blessed Sacrament, and of good moral character.
- 1.3.5. If the EMHC is married, it must be a valid marriage, according to the law of the Catholic Church.

1.4. An EMHC must be a qualified person chosen and trained by a priest (see Priests' Manual, 4.3.16.8). It must be remembered that EMHCs can exercise their ministry only when sufficient ordinary ministers are not present.

1.5. Priests can request that the Archbishop commission qualified candidates by completing the application form found on the AMS website (milarch.org → Forms → Special Requests → Application for EMHC).

1.5.1. After the Chancellor, acting as the Archbishop's delegate, has notified the priest that approval has been granted, the EMHC must be properly installed by the priest at a community celebration at the installation according to the rite provided in the *Book of Blessings*, nn. 1871–1896.

1.5.2. A certificate may be printed for the EMHC by using the template provided on the AMS website (milarch.org → Clergy → Chaplains' Documents → EMHC Certificate template).

1.6. The priest should do training and evaluation yearly (see Priests' Manual 4.3.16.9).

1.7. Once commissioned by the Archbishop for a three-year period, an EMHC can function at any installation within the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

1.7.1. At the end of the three-year period, the commission can be renewed by completing the application process online (see 1.5 above).

1.7.2. Priests can check to see if a person has been commissioned as an EMHC in the AMS by going to the online directory on the website (milarch.org → Clergy → Chaplains' Documents → EMHC Directory).

1.8. “The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged” (*Redemptionis sacramentum*, 158). An EMHC may also bring Communion to the sick or homebound members of the installation with the frequency recommended in the rite of *The Pastoral Care of the Sick*. EMHCs are ideally sent directly from Mass to establish the connection between the Eucharistic assembly and the sick.

2. Sundays/Holy Day Celebrations at a chapel in the absence of a priest

2.1. If only one Catholic Mass can be celebrated at a given unit or installation then no “Celebration in the Absence of a Priest” may be added to the schedule.

2.2. If a Catholic priest is not available to celebrate a Mass, the faithful should be directed to celebrate at a civilian Catholic parish.

2.3. In the absence of a Catholic priest, Catholics can observe the sacredness of Sundays by participating in a Catholic liturgy led by a deacon or authorized EMHC. The Archbishop for the Military Services, through his delegate, the Vicar General or Chancellor, must explicitly give approval for this rite.

2.4. The deacon or EMHC must clearly specify that the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest is not a Sunday Mass, explaining that the rite is a temporary response and not considered an ideal solution to the present situation.

2.5. A Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP) can take the form of either the *Liturgy of the Hours* or the *Liturgy of the Word*. Both rites contain readings and prayers used by Catholics throughout the world on that same day. In either case, the *Rite of Communion* is not permitted (SCAP 41).

2.6. Attendance at a Protestant, ecumenical, or interfaith worship service does not qualify and is never permitted to replace the Catholic liturgy of the EMHC. Catholic rites may never be in conjunction with any ecumenical or non-Catholic services. With due regard for canon 844 §2, Catholics are prohibited from receiving communion from a non-Catholic chaplain or minister.

3. Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament

3.1. Catholics have a right to access the Blessed Sacrament at all those installations where a priest is normally assigned. Therefore it must be reserved on all ships, bases/posts, and hospitals to which a priest is assigned. The Blessed Sacrament must be kept in a ciborium, and housed in a safe, sacred and appropriate space, preferably in a tabernacle.

3.2. The Blessed Sacrament may never be entrusted to laypersons other than EMHCs, or any non-Catholic clergyperson, for any reason.

3.3. A Catholic priest who judges conditions to be such that appropriate respect is not or cannot be given the Blessed Sacrament is seriously obliged to retrieve the Sacrament and inform the AMS Chancellor.

3.4. Canon 939 requires that consecrated hosts “are to be renewed frequently and the older hosts consumed properly.” At a minimum, this is to happen at least twice per month (see c. 934 §2). The Blessed Sacrament is primarily reserved for Communion to those who are sick and dying and for adoration. There is no need to reserve large quantities of consecrated Hosts.