

Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass in the Diocese of Erie During the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Adapted from the
Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass with the Celebration of the Word
Found in
Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass nos.26-41*

Pennsylvania Yellow or Green Phase

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge us as we strive to balance the care of souls with the necessary precautions to protect the health of our people and clergy. What follows is the adapted rite to be used for the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass to those parishioners who cannot or should not attend Mass out of health concern during this time.

The center of our liturgical celebrations is the celebration of the Lord's Paschal Mystery; that is, His Passion, Death, and Resurrection which we encounter each time we celebrate the Eucharist. Although what is proposed below is less than ideal, the hunger of the people for the reception of communion requires us to minister in an unusual way in this unusual time.

The first document is intended to be led by a priest or deacon. In those cases where the clergy are unable to lead the celebration because of legitimate concern for their own health, a suitable and properly trained Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may do so using the second document.

Persons participating in the rite, and approaching for communion, are to be instructed beforehand to practice social distancing and to wear a face mask, except during communion reception. Those who prefer to receive communion on the tongue may be asked to wait until the end of the communion line.

The priest or celebrant of the rite is to have a small, separate table near the altar with hand sanitizer or other cleaning supplies to be used during the distribution of communion if the minister's hand significantly touches the communicant's hand, tongue, etc.

The faithful are reminded that outside of Mass, it is not permitted to receive the Eucharist more than once daily.

The church is to be appropriately cleaned and sanitized after each service.

RITE LED BY A PRIEST OR DEACON

VESTURE: either cassock and surplice with white stole, or alb with white stole.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

27. After the people have assembled and preparations for the service are complete, all stand for the greeting of the minister.

GREETING

In the name of the +Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

℞. Amen

If he is a priest or a deacon, he says:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

℞. And with your spirit.

OR:

The Lord be with you.

℞. And with your spirit.

OR:

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

℞. And with your spirit.

Penitential Rite

28. The penitential rite follows, and the minister incites the people to recall their sins and to repent of them in these or similar words:

My brothers and sisters,
to prepare ourselves for this celebration,
let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

All say:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers, and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers, and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The minister concludes:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

℞. Amen

Or:

The minister, or someone else, makes the following or other invocations:

Lord Jesus, You healed the sick:

Lord, have mercy.

℞. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:

Christ, have mercy.

℞. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you give yourself to heal us and bring us strength:

℞. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us,

forgive us our sins,

and bring us to everlasting life.

℞. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

In this unusual moment it is recommended to use the following:

THE SHORT FORM OF THE READING OF THE WORD

Omitting the celebration of the word of God, the minister or other person should read one of the following short scriptural texts referring to the bread of life.

John 6:54-55

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.
For my flesh is true food
and my blood is true drink.

John 6:54-58

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.
For my flesh is true food
and my blood is true drink.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me, and I in him.
Just as the Father sent me
and I have that life because of the Father,
so also, the one who feeds on me
will have life because of me.
This is the bread that came down from heaven.
Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread will live forever.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him:
“I am the way, and the truth, and the life;
no one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said to him:
“Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.”

John 15:4

Remain in me, as I remain in you.
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own
unless it remains on the vine,
so, neither can you unless you remain in me.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

1 John 4:16

We have come to know and believe in the love
God has for us.
God is love, and whoever remains in love
remains in God and God in him.

Universal Prayer

The minister introduces the Universal Prayer using these or similar words.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us direct the prayers of our heart
to God our Father:

For the holy Church of God, that the Lord graciously watch over
her and care for her, let us pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those suffering because of the outbreak of the corona virus, and for the unemployed, that their needs may be satisfied, and their faith strengthened, we pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer.

For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who serve the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding, we pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer.

For ourselves and our community, that the Lord may receive us as a sacrifice acceptable to him, we pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died, that they will find their place in the Father's house, we pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer

For our own personal requests, we pray to the Lord.

℞. Lord, hear our prayer.

The minister concludes:

O God, our refuge and strength, hear the prayers of your Church. Grant, we pray, that what we ask in faith we may truly obtain.

Through Christ our Lord.

HOLY COMMUNION

30. After the Universal Prayer the minister goes to the place where the sacrament is reserved, takes the ciborium containing the body of the Lord, places it on the altar, removes the ciborium cover and genuflects. If the monstrance is on the altar, then the minister places the ciborium to the side of the altar, next to the monstrance. He then introduces the Lord's Prayer in these words:

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

Our Father...

32. The minister genuflects. Taking the host, he raises it slightly over the vessel or pyx and, facing the people, says:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

℞. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and I my soul shall be healed.

33. Priests DO NOT receive communion at a communion service. When the service is led by a deacon, he receives communion saying quietly: May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life. He reverently consumes the Body of Christ

The minister sanitizes his hands before distributing Holy Communion.

34. Then he takes the vessel or pyx and goes to the communicants. He takes a host for each one, raises it slightly, and says:

The Body of Christ.

The communicant answers: Amen and receives communion.

36. After communion, the minister puts any particle left on the plate into the pyx, and he may wash his hands. He returns any remaining hosts to the tabernacle and genuflects.

37. A period of silence may now be observed.

38. The minister then says the concluding prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, Jesus Christ,

you gave us the Eucharist

as the memorial of your suffering and death.

May our worship of this sacrament of your Body and Blood

help us to experience the salvation you won for us

and the peace of the kingdom

where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

℞. Amen

OR:

Father,

you have brought to fulfillment the work of our redemption
through the Easter mystery of Christ your Son.

May we who faithfully proclaim his death and resurrection
in these sacramental signs

experience the constant growth of your salvation in our lives.

Through Christ our Lord.

OR:

Lord,

you have nourished us with one bread from heaven.

Fill us with your Spirit,

and make us one in peace and love.

Through Christ our Lord.

OR:

All-powerful God,

you renew us with your sacraments.

Help us to thank you by lives of faithful service.

Through Christ our Lord.

OR:

God our Father,

you give us a share in the one bread

and make us one in Christ.

Help us to bring your salvation and joy

to all the world.

Through Christ our Lord.

OR:

CONCLUDING RITE

39. If the minister facing the people, says:

The Lord be with you.

℞. And with your Spirit.

He blesses the people with these words:

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit.

℞. Amen.

41. Finally the minister says:

Go in the peace of Christ.

℞. Thanks be to God.

Then after the customary reverence, the minister leaves.