

Redemptionis Sacramentum

The Sacrament of Redemption

A Summary Guide

This is an unofficial summary and guide to the Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. It has been produced to assist those with responsibility for liturgical formation.

- It is a **Summary** —the text has been considerably shortened and therefore the original text should always be consulted for both its the fuller application and the wider context.
- It is a **Guide** — the text has been reordered to offer a way of easily identifying issues. The contents on page 2 show the outline of this summary.

It in no way replaces the *Instruction* which should always be referred to.

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Purpose of Document

In the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* Pop John Paul II asked that this Instruction be prepared. The purpose of the document is not to provide a compendium of norms but to ensure a deeper appreciation of the liturgical norms so that the whole Church, Bishops, Priests, Deacons and lay faithful can carry them out according to their responsibility. [2]

There is a clear link between the liturgy of the Church and its faith. The use of unapproved rites or texts corrupts this link. [10]

The Church's faithful have the right to expect that the liturgy, especially the Mass, should be celebrated according to the Church's norms. [12]

All the norms in this document are concerned with the mission of the Church which has to be vigilant about such an important matter. [13]

Complaints Regarding Abuses in Liturgical Matters

All should do everything in their power to ensure that the Eucharist is celebrated properly. [183]

Any Catholic has the right to lodge a complaint to either their diocesan bishop or the Holy See. It should first be to their diocesan bishop. All should be done in truth and charity. [184]

Role of Congregation for Divine Worship

The Congregation on receiving notice of an abuse will inform the diocesan bishop so that he can investigate. Where serious, the bishop will report back to the Congregation indicating the penalty where necessary. [181]

In more serious cases the diocesan bishop should seek the advice of the Congregation which should be followed diligently. [182]

Role of diocesan bishop in dealing with abuses

The diocesan bishop has the authority to issue liturgical norms. [176]

The bishop is bound to uphold and promote ecclesiastical laws. [177]

An ordinary should set up an investigation of any plausible notice of an abuse of the Eucharist. [178]

Matters such as *graviora delicta* should be referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. [179]

The ordinary should follow the canonical norms in any investigation. [180]

List of Abuses

Graviora delicta

Graviora delicta against the sanctity of the Most August Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Eucharist are to be handled in accordance with the 'Norms concerning *graviora delicta* reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith', namely:

- a) taking away or retaining the consecrated species for sacrilegious ends, or the throwing them away;
- b) the attempted celebration of the liturgical action of the Eucharistic Sacrifice or the simulation of the same;
- c) the forbidden concelebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice with ministers of Ecclesial Communities that do not have the apostolic succession nor acknowledge the sacramental dignity of priestly Ordination;
- d) the consecration for sacrilegious ends of one matter without the other in the celebration of the Eucharist or even of both outside the celebration of the Eucharist. [172]

Grave Matters §

Although the gravity of a matter is to be judged in accordance with the common teaching of the Church and the norms established by her, objectively to be considered among grave matters is anything that puts at risk the validity and dignity of the Most Holy Eucharist: namely, anything that contravenes what is set out above in:

- 48–50 The matter of the Most Holy Eucharist.7
- 51–52 The Eucharistic Prayer—use of authorised texts and proclamation by an ordained minister.9
- 56 The omission of the Pope or diocesan bishop from the Eucharistic Prayer. 9
- 76 The joining together of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.8
- 77 The joining together of the Eucharist with a meal.8
- 79 Using elements from other religions within Holy Mass.8
- 91 Denying those rightly disposed Holy Communion.10
- 92 Care that Holy Communion is consumed by the communicant.10
- 94 The faithful taking, or handing to one another Holy Communion.10
- 96 Distribution of foodstuff or unconsecrated hosts in the manner of communion.10
- 101–2 Holy Communion under both kinds not to be administered to the faithful where there is a danger of profanation or other issues.10
- 104 Communicants cannot intinct the host themselves.10
- 106 To avoid the pouring of the Precious Blood. Not to use flagons, bowls or other vessels for the Precious Blood.10
- 109 The Celebration of Mass in a non-Christian sacred place.7
- 111 Priests should be allowed to concelebrate.8
- 115 The suspension of celebration of the Eucharist on the pretext of promoting a ‘fast from the Eucharist’.8
- 117 Sacred vessels should follow the norms laid down in GIRM.7
- 126 Ordained ministers must wear vestments to celebrate Mass.7
- 131 The place of reservation must be secure.10
- 132 No one can carry the Most Holy Eucharist home or to another place contrary to the norm of law.11
- 133 Ministers taking Communion to the sick must go there directly.11
- 138 The exposed Eucharist must never be left unattended.11
- 153 Laypersons must never assume the vesture of a priest or deacon.7
- 168 Those who have left the clerical state should not celebrate the sacraments, except in exceptional cases noted by law, nor be given any office or duty within the Liturgy.7

Moreover, attention should be given to the other prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law, and especially what is laid down by canons 1364, 1369, 1373, 1376, 1380, 1384, 1385, 1386, and 1398. [173]

Other Abuses

Other abuses, including those listed in this document, should be avoided and corrected. [174]

This document does not cover every abuse which should be corrected. [175]

Roles & Responsibilities

The Conference of Bishops

Neither a bishop nor the Conference of Bishops may permit liturgical experimentation without the permission of the Congregation applied for in writing by a Conference. [27]

Liturgical norms issued by a Conference must have received *recognitio* from the Congregation for Divine Worship. [28]

The Bishop

The regulation of the liturgy rests with the Holy See and with the diocesan bishop where this is allowed for. [14]

The pre-eminent manifestation of the Church is the celebration of the Mass by the bishop surrounded by priests, deacons, and other ministers, and the entire people of God in his cathedral.

Every celebration of the Eucharist is directed by the bishop who may set laws according to the needs of his diocese. [20]

The diocesan bishop can set forth liturgical norms for his diocese but they should not remove the liberty to adapt according to particular circumstances. [21]

The diocesan bishop has the right to oversee the liturgy of religious houses where the faithful attend. [23]

Diocesan bishops should be expected by the faithful to prevent occurrences of abuses. [24]

Liturgy Commissions

- should act in accordance with the intentions and the norms of the Bishop.
- Bishops should keep the commission under review.
- Members should be sound Catholics with evident expertise in theological and cultural matters. [25]

Priests

It is the responsibility of the Priest to preside at the Eucharist, to provide witness to and service of the local and universal Church.

Mis-guided creativity and adaptation that followed the Council were a source of suffering to many. [30]

Priests should go to the trouble of properly cultivating their liturgical knowledge and ability. [33]

Lay Faithful

Participation in the liturgy is more than mere presence, still less a passive one, but an exercise of true faith and baptismal dignity. [37]

This participation is fostered through:

- acclamations of the people, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and canticles, as well as actions or movements and gestures, and silence at the proper times.
- ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity to allow each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to the established liturgical norms.
- the songs, melodies, choice of prayers and readings, homily, preparation of the prayer of the faithful, occasional explanatory remarks, and the decoration of the Church building according to the various seasons, provide ample possibility for introducing variety, in keeping with pastoral requirements, to the celebration that will foster the recollection of the participants.

The power of the liturgical celebrations does not however consist in altering the rites, but in probing more deeply the word of God and the mystery being celebrated. [39]

Ministry of Lay Faithful

Members of the laity have exercised liturgical ministries for the good of the community and of the whole Church of God.

- Various ministries or different parts of the same ministry can be distributed among a number of people. [43]
- All should only exercise their own office or ministry exclusively and fully. In the liturgical celebration itself as well as in its preparation, they should do what is necessary so that the Church's Liturgy will be carried out worthily and appropriately. [44]
- There should be clear distinction between lay persons and clerics so as not to obscure their complementary relationship — avoiding the “clericalization” of lay people and vice versa. [45]

Altar Servers

Boys or youths are to be encouraged as servers. Girls or women may also be admitted to this service of the altar, at the discretion of the diocesan Bishop. [47]

Extraordinary Functions of the Lay Faithful

Particular importance is to be attached to the training of catechists. [148]

Pastoral Assistants

Pastoral assistants have undoubtedly served the good of the Church by providing assistance to the Bishop, Priests and Deacons in the carrying out of their pastoral activity.

- Attention should be paid to ensuring that “pastoral assistants” do not take upon themselves what is proper to the ministry of the sacred ministers. [149]
- The activity of a pastoral assistant should be directed to facilitating the ministry of Priests and Deacons, to ensuring that vocations to the Priesthood and Diaconate are awakened and that lay members in each community are carefully trained for the various liturgical functions. [150]

Priests should not alternate indiscriminately in shifts of pastoral service with Deacons or laypersons, thus confusing what is specific to each. (i.e., care of the sick, or the baptism of children, or assistance at weddings or the celebration of Christian funerals, matters which pertain in the first place to Priests assisted by Deacons.) [152]

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

The name “minister of the Eucharist” belongs properly to the Priest alone. By reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon. [154]

- In addition there is the instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass.
- If, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay person may be delegated by the diocesan Bishop, for one occasion or for a specified time.
- Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist. [155]

This function is to be understood according to the name by which it is known: extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist”. [156]

Where there are a sufficient number of priests extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be used. [157]

An 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. [158]

An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion cannot delegate anyone else to administer the Eucharist. [159]

The diocesan Bishop should review current practice and establish special norms where necessary. [160]

Those who have left the clerical state

§ Those who have left the clerical state may not licitly celebrate any sacrament, except in those circumstance noted in Canon Law, nor take any duty or office within the sacred liturgy. [168]

The Eucharistic Celebration and its Symbols

The Matter of the Eucharist

§ Bread used in the Mass should be purely wheat and unleavened. [48]

§ Wine should be natural from grapes. No other drinks may be admitted. [50]

Sacred Vessels

§ Sacred Vessels should be made in conformity to GIRM 329. [117]

Vessels should be blessed before use. [118]

Linen

Altar linen, especially those which will receive the sacred species, should be kept clean. [120]

Liturgical Vesture

The proper vestments for the Priest celebrant at Mass are chasuble, alb and stole. [123]

Deacons should be encouraged to wear the dalmatic. [125]

§ The wearing of just a stole over monastic habit or ordinary clothes is reprobated. Ordinaries should check that churches have an adequate supply of vestments so that priest wear appropriate sacred vestments for Mass and other rites. [126]

§ Lay persons can never assume the vesture of a priest or a deacon. [153]

The Celebration of Mass

General Points

Christ's faithful should expect, particularly on Sundays, that there should be music, and an altar, vestments and linen that are dignified, proper and clean. [57]

The alteration of texts by Priests, Deacons or the faithful must cease. [59]

The parts of the Mass must be celebrated as one celebration and not separated in time or place. [60]

Terms such as “celebrating community” or “celebrating assembly” and similar terms should not be used injudiciously. [42]

- see also section on *Preparation* [58]

Place of Celebration

Mass is to be carried out in a sacred place. In particular circumstances in a decent place.

The diocesan bishop should judge on a case by case basis. [108]

§ It is unlawful to celebrate in a temple or sacred place of any non-Christian religion. [109]

Language of Celebration

Priests are always permitted to celebrate in Latin. They may not change a Mass scheduled to take place in the language of the people. [112]

Concelebrated Mass should be celebrated in a language known to both priests and gathered people. Where some priests do not know the language and cannot pronounce the Eucharistic Prayer they should not concelebrate but instead attend the celebration in choir dress. [113]

Various Circumstances

Priest should celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice frequently, even daily — even where the faithful cannot be present. [110]

§ A priest should be permitted to celebrate or concelebrate the Eucharist but should, as necessary, be able to provide a *celebret*. Bishops should take measures to stop contrary practices. [111]

Priests if present at Mass should take part as a concelebrant; they should not participate, as regards to externals, in the manner of the lay faithful. [128]

Different groups, movements, religious communities etc. are not exempt from liturgical norms. [114]

§ The abuse of suspending celebrating Holy Mass on the pretext of fasting from the Eucharist is reprobated. [115]

Masses are not to be multiplied contrary to the norm of law, and as regards Mass stipends, all those things are to be observed which are otherwise laid down by law. [116]

Particular Circumstances

First Communion

First Communion must be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution. It should always be administered by a priest and within Mass. It is inappropriate on Holy Thursday, other days are more appropriate. [87]

Mass & Sacrament of Penance

§ The Sacrament of Penance may not be joined to Mass [76]

Mass & Meals

§ Mass should not take place in the setting or context of a meal. [77]

Mass & Events

Mass should not be linked to political or secular events or events inconsistent with the Magisterium. [78]

Interfaith

§ It is an abuse to introduce into Mass elements from other religions that are contrary to the liturgical books [79]

- see also *Place of Celebration* [109]

Preparation

Christ's faithful should expect that the liturgy has been properly prepared. That the word is properly proclaimed, and texts and rites are chosen and carried out with care so that faith is nourished. [58]

It is appropriate that priests be assisted by members of the faithful in the preparation of liturgical celebrations but he should not cede anything proper to his own office. [32]

Liturgy of the Word

The biblical texts may not be omitted or substituted, especially by non-biblical texts. [62]

The reading of the Gospel is reserved to ordained ministers. [63]

Homily

The diocesan bishop must oversee and should provide guidelines and resources to help with preaching the homily. [68]

The homily is ordinarily given by the Priest celebrant. It is never given by a layperson. [64]

Previous norms that may have admitted the non-ordained faithful to give the homily are considered abrogated. [65]

Laypersons who cannot give the homily include seminarians, theology students, pastoral assistants. [66]

Laypersons may be allowed to preach other forms of preaching outside Mass with the permission of the Ordinary [161]

Profession of Faith

Only Professions of Faith found in the liturgical books may be used. [69]

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of Gifts

The gifts given, as well as bread and wine, may include money and other things for the sake of the poor. [70]

The Eucharistic Prayer

§ Only approved Eucharistic Prayers may be used. [51]

§ The proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer belongs solely to the priest. [52]

The host must never be broken at the time of consecration. [55]

§ The names of the Pope and diocesan Bishop may not be omitted. [56]

Sign of Peace

In the Roman Rite peace is shared shortly before Communion. [71]

The sign of peace is given only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner. The Priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. He does likewise if for a just reason he wishes to extend the sign of peace to some few of the faithful. [72]

Breaking of Bread

The Breaking of Bread should be carried out with reverence but not unduly prolonged or given undue emphasis. Lay people may not assist in the breaking. [73]

Communion of Priests

A priest must communicate at the beginning of Communion and before distributing to the faithful. [97]

Concelebrants receive communion from hosts consecrated at the same Mass. A priest or deacon does not pronounce the words “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ” when handing Holy Communion to concelebrants. [98]

Communion under both kinds is always permitted “to Priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate Mass”. [99]

Reception of Communion

When Mass is celebrated for a large crowd Pastors should explain the disciplines surrounding reception of Holy Communion. [84]

Distribution of Holy Communion

The faithful should receive Communion at the moment laid down in the rite. It is the responsibility of the Priest celebrant to minister communion. Mass should not be resumed before all have received Communion. [88]

“So that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the Sacrifice being celebrated”, it is preferable that the faithful be able to receive hosts consecrated in the same Mass. [89]

§ Some of the faithful should receive some part of the Eucharistic Bread coming from the fraction. Small hosts are not ruled out. [49]

The faithful should receive kneeling or standing, following the Conference norms. There should be an act of reverence, according to these norms, where communion is received standing. [90]

§ Any baptised Catholic who is not prevented by law may be admitted to Holy Communion. It should not be refused because of posture. [91]

§ Communicants may receive on the tongue, or hand where permitted. Care should be taken that it is consumed in the presence of the minister. [92]

The Communion-plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling. [93]

§ The faithful may not take for themselves or hand to one another the sacred host or chalice. [94]

§ Unconsecrated hosts or other edible or inedible substances may not be distributed either during or before Mass in the manner of Communion. [96]

Communion under both kinds

Christ's faithful can be admitted to Communion under both kinds. There should be proper catechesis. [100]

§ The Bishops' Conference should issue norms. Communion under both kinds should be excluded where there is a danger of profanation. [101]

§ Communion from the chalice should not be administered when there is such a large number of communicants it is difficult to estimate the amount of wine needed (too little or too much); where it would be difficult to arrange; where there are not enough ministers — sacred or extraordinary — or where a large number of faithful will not receive negating the sign of unity. [102]

The option for Intinction always remains. The hosts should be suitable and the communicant receive from the priest on the tongue. [103]

§ The communicant cannot intinct the host from the chalice or receive an intincted host in the hand. [104]

If one chalice is not sufficient for Communion to be distributed to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, there is no reason why several chalices should not be used. [105]

§ Pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration should be avoided. Flagons or bowls should not be used. [106]

The Blood of Christ must be entirely and immediately consumed at the end of communion. The consecrated hosts must be either consumed or reserved in the place of reservation. [107]

Purification

Vessels should be cleansed after the distribution of Communion as laid down in GIRM. [119]

Testimonies

Where it is necessary for a layperson to give instruction or testimony it is preferable that it is done outside Mass. For serious reasons it may be given after the Prayer after Communion. The homily should not be dispensed with on account of this. [74]

Reservation of the Holy Eucharist

The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in place appropriate to the building. It should be noble, prominent, visible, and adorned in a dignified manner. It should be suitable for prayer by its quietness of location, space in front of the tabernacle and provision of seats and kneelers. The norms should be followed to avoid profanation. [130]

§ The place must be secure. [131]

§ The Blessed Sacrament may not be taken away to any place contrary to the law. Removing or retaining the consecrated species for sacrilegious purpose or casting them away are *graviora delicta*. [132]

§ Those taking communion to the sick should go there directly. [133]

A church in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved should be open for prayer for at least some hours each day, unless there is grave reason to the contrary. [135]

The Ordinary should encourage Eucharistic adoration. [136]

Exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist must always follow the prescribed liturgical books. [137]

§ During exposition the Eucharist must never be left unattended. [138]

Christ's faithful have the right to visit the Blessed Sacrament for adoration frequently and take part in part in exposition at least some time in the year where the diocesan bishop has ministers he can assign to this purpose. [139]

Diocesan bishops should designate a church in cities and larger towns for perpetual adoration. It is fitting that the host exposed for adoration should be consecrated at Mass immediately preceding adoration, preferably each day. [140]

Eucharistic Processions

It is for the diocesan bishop to establish regulations for Eucharistic processions and to promote adoration by the faithful. [142]

Whenever possible, in the judgement of the diocesan bishop, a procession through the streets, particularly on Corpus Christi should be held. [143]

This cannot be done in some places. So that the tradition is not lost new ways of holding them should be explored. [144]

Particular Celebrations carried out in the absence of a Priest

Because of its importance Christ's faithful have a right for Mass to be celebrated for them on Sundays and Holydays. Where this is difficult the bishop and his priests should consider appropriate remedies. Among such solutions will be that other Priests be called upon for this purpose, or that the faithful transfer to a church in a nearby place so to participate in the Mass. [162]

Priests are ordained for the sake of others and so should be willing to satisfy a request from the faithful for a celebration of Mass that fulfils obligation. [163]

Where celebration of the Eucharist is impossible then the faithful have the right that the bishop provide as far as he is able some celebration according the Church's norms. Such celebrations should be regarded as extraordinary. They should keep alive a hunger for the Eucharist. [164]

It is necessary to avoid any confusion between Mass and such Celebrations. The diocesan bishop should discern whether the Communion should be distributed. The matter should be coordinated by the Conference and put into effect after *recognitio* from the Holy See. In the absence of a Deacon the ministries should be shared among the faithful and no one person should be referred to as presiding. [165]

The diocesan Bishop to whom such competence belongs, must not easily grant permission for weekday celebrations especially where communion is distributed. [166]

Diocesan bishops cannot substitute ecumenical celebration in lieu of Sunday obligation. [167]