

Called to Minister as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist



CALLED TO MINISTER AS AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST

"Eucharistic Ministers, yours is service at the Lord's Reconciling Table."

In this ministry, you must be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct; you must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love. Remember that, though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and one cup. As ministers of Holy Communion be, therefore, especially observant of the Lord's command to love your neighbor. For when he gave his body as food to his disciples, he said to them: "This is my commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you." (Book of Blessings #1875).

Eucharistic Ministers are called not only to minister the Body and Blood of Christ, but also to take on Christ's likeness. The Ministers accomplish this by strengthening their faith from within and sharing it with the faithful at communion time.

The role of Eucharistic Ministers seems simple enough - to minister the Body and Blood of Christ to the assembled faithful and to take the Eucharist to sick and/or housebound parishioners, who are unable to get to Mass. In reality, the role of each Eucharistic Minister is to draw faith from the people of God, to become more and more like the Body and Blood of Christ.

"Yours is a share in the work of the Lord's Spirit who makes of us one bread, one body, the cup of blessing. Yours is a work of ministering Christ's body and blood to the body of Christ, the Church. Yours is service at the Lord's reconciling table. You minister holy food to holy people in the holiest of all communions."

The above paragraphs highlight the Church's vision of Eucharistic ministry. The ongoing renewal of the liturgy invites us to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and its connection to our daily lives.

The building of the body of Christ which is his church, into which we begin our initiation by baptism, is completed and realised most perfectly in the Eucharist, the body of Christ, where Christ is most wonderfully formed in us. This relationship of baptism and Eucharist underpins our understanding of parish as a Eucharistic, worshipping community with a mission to our world.

A THEOLOGY OF LITURGY

A true theology of the liturgy helps us understand that God acts through Christ in the liturgy, and that we cannot act but through Him and with Him. Of ourselves, we cannot construct the way to God, and the paradox is that the way does not open up unless God Himself becomes the way. As the "work of God," liturgy effects our salvation, leading us to the Father as we respond to him in love and praise. Many aspects of the Church's life contribute to the growth in holiness of her members—the liturgy is meant to infuse them all, as the "font from which the Church's power flows." As the preface to *Sacrosanctam Consillium* puts it: *The liturgy, "through which the work of our redemption is accomplished," most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the*

faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.

It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek .

While the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit , to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ, at the same time it marvelously strengthens their power to preach Christ, and thus shows forth the Church to those who are outside as a sign lifted up among the nations under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together,until there is one sheepfold and one shepherd .

What that means is that in the liturgy, the Word Himself speaks to us; and not only does He speak, He comes with His Body, and His Soul, His Flesh and His Blood, His Divinity and His Humanity, in order to unite us to Himself, to make of us one single "body."

In the Christian liturgy, the whole history of salvation, even more, the whole history of human searching for God is present, assumed and brought to its goal. The Christian liturgy is a theo-drama, a cosmic liturgy – it embraces the whole of creation which "awaits with impatience the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8; 9).

Sacrosanctam Concilium, also points out that it is in Christ that a perfect reconciliation was achieved between God and humanity in history; therefore, His death and resurrection became the perfect act of worship acceptable to God.

The Church, the visible body of Christ, continues this worship in time by means of symbols and sacraments. Hence, liturgy is the re-enactment of the History of salvation with its climax in the paschal mystery.

Christ is always present whenever liturgy is celebrated. He is present in the sacraments, in church prayer and singing. He is present in the Word, in the Sacrament and in the community gathered together. Liturgy is above all the worship of the community. It is an action of Christ, the priest, and of His Body which is the Church. It is a sacred action surpassing all others. It is also a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy. That is why the community acclaim during the liturgical celebration: “we proclaim your death until you come in glory”.

We need to understand that the liturgy is the source from which all power flows and the summit of Christian life toward which the activity of the Church is directed.....Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He comes again. He has entrusted His spouse, the Church, this memorial of His death and Resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a body of charity where the Christian faithful eat and are filled with grace and to whom a pledge of future glory is given.

We, who participate in this mystery are not silent spectators or strangers. We are deeply engaged, we too offer Christ to the Father through the hands of the priest. An offering we make in union with Christ. Our personal spiritual life outside the liturgy makes the liturgy effective. Hence, spiritual life has two aspects, namely personal prayer and attitudinal change so as to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodily frame. We are to become ‘bread of heaven’ for

those we meet; we have to become living 'liturgies', living expressions of what real liturgy means. We have to become 'living sacrifices' to the Father, in union with Jesus. If you listen carefully to the words of the Eucharistic prayers, you will find we do not hear the sacrificial prayers of Christ, but those of the Church. The assembly offers through the priest and with the priest "this holy and living sacrifice," "the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world," "this holy and perfect sacrifice." In certain *epicleses* the priest asks that the Holy Spirit may descend not only on the gifts but also on us so that we may worthily receive the mysteries. Again, in other *epicleses* we ask that the receiving of the body and blood of Christ may result in our being sanctified by the Holy Spirit: "*Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit and become one body, one Spirit in Christ.*"

So liturgy is not something we 'do' in Church, it is something we seek to become, so that we may truly be Church: Living sacrifices of love in union with the living sacrifice of Love that is Jesus.

A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF LAY LITURGICAL MINISTRY

"But you are a 'chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pt. 2:9).

All liturgical ministers are, first and foremost, members of the Body of Christ. Through their baptism they are the "holy people and royal priesthood" whose right and privilege it is to participate in the ministry of Christ. How the lay faithful exercise this ministry in the world varies, but the fullest and most fundamental expression of it has always been "*conscious, active and fruitful participation in the*

mystery of the Eucharist" (General Instruction Of The Roman Missal - GIRM, Introduction #5).

Since the celebration of the Eucharist is the "*action of the whole Church*" (GIRM, Introduction #5), everyone in the assembly has "*an individual right and duty to contribute their participation*" (GIRM #58). Therefore our very presence at liturgy constitutes a service to the people of God. However, some of the faithful are called to serve God's people in a more particular way through one of the many liturgical ministries that have flourished in the Church since the Second Vatican Council.

This diversity of roles, functions and ministries enriches our celebrations and assists us in our prayer. Serving in one of these ministries is both an honour and a responsibility, and those who commit to it need nurturing and support. This handbook has been prepared to help you grow in a deeper understanding and love for the liturgy, your ministry and ultimately the Lord whom we all serve.

LAY MINISTRY AS EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it and giving it to his disciples said, 'Take and eat; this is my body'" (Mt. 26:26).

Of the many ways the faithful participate in the celebration of the Mass, none is more vital than "sharing together in the Lord's table" (GIRM, # 62). So important is this sharing that the practice of taking the Eucharist to those unable to attend the celebration has existed in the Church since ancient times. The earliest "communion ministers", although never designated by this term, were ordinary Christians

who carried the Eucharist to sick or imprisoned family and friends. Over the centuries, the practice of distributing Communion during Mass and carrying it to the sick became the sole responsibility of ordained ministers, but the need for all Christians to share in the Eucharist never diminished. In 1973, so that the faithful might have greater access to Holy Communion and share more fully in the fruits of the Mass, Pope Paul VI, in the instruction "*Immensae Caritatis*", once again extended to the lay faithful permission to assist priests in distributing Holy Communion.

Bishops, priests and deacons are the usual or "ordinary" ministers of communion since this is an intrinsic part of their role. The lay faithful are "extraordinary" ministers since they function only when recommended by their pastors and designated by the bishop. This is a ministry of both invitation and challenge, for when we place the bread or cup into the outstretched hands of our assemblies, we not only invite them to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we challenge them to become it as well.

Those who minister communion are likewise invited and challenged. We are invited to serve the Body of Christ at the Eucharistic table and challenged to build up the Body through the way we live. Our love for the Eucharist should be evident in a mature and lively faith which enables us to bring Christ to all we meet long after the liturgy has ended.

THE CHALLENGE OF LITURGY: REVERENCE AND DEVOTION.

A sense of reverence and devotion is conducive to interiorized active participation. Prominent among those who influence the congregation in this matter is the priest celebrant. But the altar servers, the readers, the choir and the extraordinary ministers of

Holy Communion, where they are really needed, do also influence the people by every move they make. Why is this important?

Because *“reverence is the exterior manifestation of faith. It should show our sense of adoration of God most holy and most high. And our belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist should come across in how the ministers handle the Blessed Sacrament, how they genuflect and how they recite the prescribed prayers.”* (Cardinal Arinze 2003). While this quote from Arinze refers to the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, it applies to those who have been called to participate as acolytes and as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

As an EMHC, you are called to bring to the heart of the liturgy this unique sense of reverence and love of the liturgy as the source and centre of your own life. You are there to assist the priest in ensuring that, as the community come to the table of the Lord, they can experience this communion with the Lord in an orderly and yet familial way. It is your demeanour, your reverence, your acceptance of the reality of God-with-us, in the form of bread and wine that will help your family in Christ to find their own.

As EMHC's you are most truly called to behold what you are in Christ: and moreover, you are to become what you yourselves receive in the Eucharist.

You are called to be Christ bearers to the community of faith. Because of that you are called to deepen your own understanding of liturgy and the Eucharist as the source and summit of your own life. In the spirit of Mary who carried Christ to the world, you are called to carry Christ to your brothers and sisters - in the reality of the Eucharist, and in the reality of your daily lives. You are called AND chosen to expand the living mission of the Church which finds its

expression in the Eucharist. You are called AND chosen to be bread and wine for a hungry world.

“Behold what you are: Become who you receive.” St. Augustine wrote of the Eucharist, and he went on to explain to his newly baptised community:

“I promised you, who have now been baptized, I promised you a sermon in which I would explain the Sacrament of the Lord’s Table, which you now look upon, and where you last night were made participants. You ought to know what you have received, what you are going to receive, and what you ought to receive daily. That Bread which you see on the altar, being blessed by the Word of God, is the Body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what is in that chalice, being blessed by the Word of God, is the Blood of Christ. Through that bread and wine, the Lord Christ gives to you His Body and Blood, which He poured out for us unto the forgiveness of sins. If you receive worthily, you are what you receive” (St. Augustine: Sermon 227).

In another sermon he says:

“Indeed, what you see is bread and a cup of wine; that’s what your eyes tell you. But what your faith asks to be instructed about is this: the bread is the body of Christ and the cup is the blood of Christ. Now, it took no time to say that, and indeed, that may be enough for faith: the bread is the body of Christ and the cup is the blood of Christ. As the prophet Isaiah says: “If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all” (Is. 7:9). But faith also desires instruction, and so, you can now say to me: “You have asked us to believe; but now explain, so that we may understand.” Some such thought as this, indeed, may cross everybody’s mind: “We know where our Lord Jesus Christ took flesh from; from the Virgin Mary. He was suckled as a baby . . . was reared . . . grew up. . . He came a man . . . suffered persecution . . . was hung on

the tree . . . was slain . . . was taken down . . . (and) buried . . . He rose again on the third day . . . (and) ascended into heaven . . . and that's where he's going to come from to judge the living and the dead. (But), how can bread be his body? And how can the cup, or what the cup contains, how can it be his blood?"

"Well, brothers and sisters, the reason these things are called sacraments is that in them one thing is seen . . . but another is to be understood. What can be seen has a bodily appearance (bread and wine) . . . what is to be understood provides spiritual fruit (the body and blood of Jesus Christ). So if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to what the Apostle Paul tells the faithful: "Now, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). So if it's you who are the body of Christ and members of it, then, the mystery here is that you have been placed on the Lord's table. It is this mystery to which you say "Amen," and by so replying you express your assent. What you hear, and what you see, is the body of Christ, and you answer, Amen. So, I invite you to be the member of the body of Christ that you are, so that your "Amen" may ring true!

"But, you ask, what role does the bread play? We have no theory of our own to propose here; listen, instead, to what St. Paul says about this sacrament: "The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor.10: 16-17). Understand and rejoice in this unity, in this truth, in this faithfulness, in this love. "One bread" . . . "One Body. " What is this one bread? Is it not the "one body," formed from many? Remember: bread doesn't come from a single grain, but from many. When you received exorcism, (at Baptism...Ed.) you were "ground" into flour. When you were baptized, you were

leavened." When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were "baked." Be what you can see, and receive what you are!

"That is what the apostle said about the bread. And he has already shown clearly enough what we should understand about the cup—"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ" (I Cor 10:16). After all, just as many grains are mixed into one loaf in order to produce the visible appearance of bread, so, too, with the wine. Brothers and sisters, just remind yourselves that wine is made from many grapes, all hanging in a bunch, but the juice of the grapes is poured together in one vessel. That too is how the Lord Christ signified us . . . how he wished us to belong to him."

"Therefore, I invite us all to turn to the Lord our God, the Father almighty, with pure hearts . . . giving God sincere and abundant thanks, as much as we can . . . beseeching God in his singular kindness with our whole soul, graciously to listen to our prayers . . . and by his power to drive out the enemy from our actions and thoughts, to increase our faith, to guide our minds, to grant us spiritual thoughts, and to lead us finally to God's own glory through Jesus Christ, his Son. Amen." (St. Augustine: Sermon 272). Therefore, "Behold what you are, become what you receive."

To take up the call to be an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist is actually to take up a vocation to become what you receive, to see what you yourself are, in the bread that is before you, and the wine that you drink. It is a vocation/ministry to be willing to be eucharist to and for others, which means being prepared to be ground into flour, pressed into wine, so that others may receive the food of life from you – not simply in the moment of Eucharist, but in the daily meetings of our lives.

It may well pay to reflect on Augustine's homilies, and then consider for yourself the following questions:

1. How might Augustine's statement "Behold what you are; become what you receive," impact upon your sense of your own dignity a) as a Christian, a member of this particular community of faith, and b) on the way you administer the Sacrament of the Eucharist to others?
2. How might your life be more expressive of the ministry to which you have been called? How can you be bread for the hungry and wine for those who thirst.
3. How do you see your role as an extraordinary minister as you stand at the Eucharistic table?
4. In your ministry of service to those who come to you to receive the gift of life at your hands, what do you feel towards them? How welcoming are you to the members of the Body of Christ as they come to you to receive from your hands the Body/Blood of the Lord?
5. "Be What You See. Receive Who You Are" "Become what you are; be what you receive!" How far have those statements been realized in your own life of union with God?

AN EDITED EXTRACT FROM A COMMENTARY ON SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS:

No one can encounter the living God and remain the same. And no person transformed profoundly by an encounter with God can continue to interact with others just as before. As the Eucharist

affects the life of the individual, it thereby affects the broader community. This twofold Eucharistic transformation forms the heart of Pope Benedict XVI's third and final part (#70-97) of his 2007 papal exhortation on the Eucharist following the Eleventh Ordinary Assembly of Bishops, entitled *Sacramentum Caritatis*. In this reflection on that third part, the focus is on the Holy Father's discussion of the Eucharist's effects on the life of the individual, and to point out that it is actually a statement about how the Eucharist impacts upon those who enter into a more profound experience of the liturgy through their acceptance of the call to be an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist

TOTAL REORIENTATION OF LIFE

One of the primary themes Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes in Part III of *Sacramentum Caritatis* is how the Eucharist renews the life of the individual through a reorientation to God in an all-inclusive way. The Eucharist transforms the whole of our lives because it transforms us - the core person we are - into an ever more alive and alert companion of God in the world. Incorporating the whole of our lives, it brings us into an intimate communion with the living God - a communion that does not merely endure only as long as we are in sacred space. God-with-us accompanies us as we go into the world to labour and live our everyday lives.

Christ's presence in the Eucharist is, however, not merely a static accompaniment. Christ enters our life to transform it at its very core. This theme is the foundation for Part III: "The Eucharist," since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible, day by day, the progressive transformation of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God. There is nothing authentically human-our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds-that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the

form it needs to be lived to the full" (SC, 71). We should note the uniquely Catholic nature of this claim in all its parts. That we can be transformed in who we are, that our reception of the Eucharist is essential to that transformation, and that the Eucharist fulfils our lives - are beliefs that Christians do not universally hold. It is a distinctively Catholic worldview.

After affirming how the Eucharist enables the fulfilment of all that makes up our lives, Pope Benedict identifies that process with the "spiritual worship acceptable to God" that Saint Paul speaks of in Romans 12:1. The Holy Father, thereby, links our authentic human fulfilment with the "making holy"-the "sanctification"-of the whole of our lives. And indeed, these two effects - fulfilment and sanctification - are two sides of one transformation the Eucharist works in our lives. As the Eucharist encompasses the whole of our being, we begin to order all that we do in life for God's glory.

"Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God" (SC, 71).

As Christian worship is ultimately oriented to the Resurrection commemorated on the Lord's Day, so does the reorientation of our lives around the Eucharist likewise centre us on the weekly Sabbath. This is an important point to the Holy Father: "Sunday is thus the day in which Christians rediscover the Eucharistic form which their lives are meant to have" (SC, 72). Since what is celebrated on the Lord's Day is Christ's triumph over sin and death, Sunday thus "gives rise to the Christian meaning of life and a new way of experiencing time, relationships, work, life and death"-celebrating it makes us "heralds and guardians of the true meaning of time" (SC, 73). That is no small task.

Along with a recovery of the authentic meaning of time, the Pope teaches that the Sabbath day, being a day of freedom from our work, "relativizes work and directs it to the person" (SC, 74). In this context, Benedict XVI acknowledges Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter, *Dies Domini*, for reminding us about the true significance of Sunday for the Christian. It is the discipline of Sunday rest that renews us and readies us to return to our daily labour. Without the Lord's Day, work and leisure become inordinate. Rather than making our observance of the Lord's Day revolve around our duties or our leisure, both Pontiffs remind us that it is our duties and our leisure that must revolve around the Lord's Day. That is the right ordering of a Christian's life, not the reverse. This is a prime example of how the Eucharist gives us a form of life that leads to our personal fulfillment and sanctification.

A SACRAMENT OF PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

Before all else, the Eucharist is the sacrament of the most intimate encounter we can have with God on earth. It is Jesus Christ truly made present to us. Yet, in a day and age when the culture circulates doubt about the divinity of Jesus and the efficacy of the sacraments, the real profundity of that encounter with Christ in the Eucharist is lost on many people. And if that reality is lost, the transformation of the individual is stagnated or altogether thwarted. The Pope speaks strongly on this point:

To live this requires "a new way of thinking," which is nothing less than "an integral part of the eucharistic form of the Christian life" (SC, 77).

Today there is a need to rediscover that Jesus Christ is not just a private conviction or an abstract idea, but a real person, whose becoming part of human history is capable of renewing the life of every man and woman. Hence the Eucharist, as the source and

summit of the Church's life and mission, must be translated into spirituality, into a life lived "according to the Spirit." (SC, 77)

A quick read of the above quotation might overlook the truly radical point the Pope is making. Note how the Pope defines spirituality. Eucharistic spirituality is often associated with various private practices of prayer centred on the Eucharist.

Defining spirituality as "a life lived according to the Spirit," the Pope strongly affirms that the Eucharist must not merely lead to private prayer, although also essential, but must be translated into how we live our daily lives. And how we carry out that "life lived according to the Spirit" must be along the lines of the Eucharistic form of the Christian life that the Pope outlined above. Thus, in the Pope's vision, authentic Eucharistic spirituality always leads to the Eucharist becoming the centre of our lives and totally reorienting how we live life around it.

While many elements of a life reoriented by the Eucharist are common to everyone, such as living the Lord's Day of rest, some aspects are specific to the individual. Just as God relates to each of us in the uniqueness that makes us who we are, so does God call us to follow a personalized path. The Holy Father dedicates separate paragraphs to how the Eucharist shapes and forms a diversity of vocations in the Church (cf. #79-81).

Speaking to the Christian laity, the Pope teaches that the Eucharist "meets each of us as we are, and makes our concrete existence the place where we experience daily the radical newness of the Christian life" (SC, 79). Spirituality, "life lived according to the Spirit," for the laity involves the task of offering all their work and prayer in union with the Eucharistic sacrifice- a word that means "making holy"- and translating the Eucharist they receive into Christian witness by the way they live their lives. "The Christian

laity . . . are called to live out the radical newness brought by Christ wherever they find themselves. They should cultivate a desire that the Eucharist have an ever deeper effect on their daily lives, making them convincing witnesses in the workplace and in society at large" (SC, 79). One may add the family to those contexts in light of the Pope's discussion of the Eucharist and marriage.

To those called to the ordained priesthood, the Pope offers fraternal direction on the relationship of the Eucharist and sacerdotal ministry. "Priestly spirituality is intrinsically Eucharistic," and thus if "celebrated in a faith-filled and attentive way, Mass is formative in the deepest sense of the word, since it fosters the priest's configuration to Christ and strengthens him in his vocation" (SC, 80). The Pope's broad understanding of Eucharistic spirituality is again apparent. In explaining how a seminarian should pursue the spiritual life, the Pope states, "He is called to seek God tirelessly, while remaining attuned to the concerns of his brothers and sisters" (SC, 80). It is at once a spirituality of personal prayer and of priestly service.

Those consecrated in religious life live Eucharistic spirituality by witnessing to a life of close union with God. All active charisms, according to the Pope, follow from that witness of close union with God. The Pope provides a broad principle to understand the character of the unique witness that consecrated persons give: "The essential contribution that the Church expects from consecrated persons is much more in the order of being than of doing" (SC, 81).

This is a distinction applicable to all the above vocations: some are called to witness to Eucharistic spirituality precisely by being different from the world in who they are as a sign to it, and others are called to witness to it not by being different in who they are but in how they act in the midst of the world. In either case, there is no question that the Pope teaches that anyone who draws closer in

relationship to God in the Eucharist must live a "Eucharistic form" of life in a way unique to them personally, which may be a witness of being or perhaps one of doing. It is by living that life that they grow in relationship to God, and thus begin to realize their personal fulfillment and sanctification in that Eucharistic relationship.

Essential to how we live the "Eucharistic form of the Christian life" is a radical change in how we relate to others in society. While we will focus on the effects of the Eucharist on society in the next reflection, we can see the foundation for it here in how the Eucharist transforms the relationship between individual and community.

Above all else, encountering God in the Eucharist is an encounter with love itself. As this "includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn," quoting his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, the Pope reaffirms that "A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented" (SC, 82). Our reception of the Eucharist must find expression in our actions toward others. This point is so important that the Pope repeats it: "The love we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all" (SC, 84). If there is one theme the Holy Father wants his reader to understand, it is this: after receiving the Eucharist, our actions must increasingly manifest Christ in us, otherwise, our communion with Christ is "fragmented," incomplete.

Here is another radical message that one may overlook in a first reading of the text. Since our reception of the Eucharist must be translated into the concrete practice of love for our complete reception of the Eucharist, then our sharing the love of Christ with others becomes a necessary condition for us to receive the fullness of Christ's Eucharistic presence. But what does it mean to make our living out of the love of Christ a necessary condition for receiving a Eucharist that is not "fragmented," that is complete?

Since the fullness of the Eucharist itself does not depend on us, it must be our reception of that fullness that depends on our outward actions. We only receive the fullness of the Eucharist when our actions flow from the Eucharist.

Those actions stand in radical opposition to how the world influences us to act. If we fully receive the Eucharist, there will be, by virtue of God's work in us, a different quality to our interactions than those of "non-Eucharistic" people. The very quality of our interactions with others will begin to speak of the One who is the centre of our lives.

The wonder we experience at the gift God has made to us in Christ gives new impulse to our lives and commits us to becoming witnesses of his love. We become witnesses when, through our actions, words and way of being, Another makes himself present (SC, 85).

The overt reference to the Mass here should not be missed. As the prayers of the priest through transubstantiation make Christ present through the Eucharistic species, so does the power given us by the Eucharist make Christ present through our words and actions. The quality of our interactions, reordered and reoriented by the Eucharist, begins to resemble Christ and thus are truly eucharistic in quality. The Holy Father leaves no room for ambiguity about the utter radicality of this calling to live as Eucharistic witnesses in the world when he reminds Christians of the extent to which some have been called to give in service to that witness as martyrs.

But revolutionizing our way of relating to others demands far more than the resources of our personal resolve. It requires nothing less than supernatural aid, the grace of God. The Eucharist is the supreme source of that grace. In fact, the Pope says, the Eucharist is

the principle of "moral energy" that allows us to act with love toward others, resembling how Christ himself would act. In this context, the Pope gives a concrete criterion of "Eucharistic consistency" (SC, 83) that considers how well our relationship to God carries over to our outward actions. If we have that consistency, our actions should follow from the form of life that the Eucharist gives us. This is yet another way the Eucharist shapes how we act in the world.

LIVING INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

Part III of *Sacramentum Caritatis* shows the broad strokes of Pope Benedict XVI's vision of how the Eucharist changes the life of the individual. First, the Pope speaks of how the Eucharist challenges the foundation of our lives by reorienting us to the life of God, which shifts our priorities and the very structure of our lives. Reoriented to God in our lives, we awaken to a new relationship with God. In that context, we open up to how God is shaping our lives in a particular vocation. That love we receive from God must be translated into a change in how we act in the world: acting with the love of Christ. Our new relationship with God thus entails a new relationship with others.

The culmination of this vision of the Eucharist's effects on the individual is how we grow in living our membership in and communion with the body of Christ. As we receive the Eucharist, we begin to be more conscious of how we are related to all others in the mystical body of Christ. As a final note on the Eucharist's effects on the individual, the reader should note the seamless connection between individual and community in the thought of Pope Benedict XVI.

At the heart of the transformation we undergo in receiving the Eucharist, is a fundamental change in how we each approach the

world. That is not merely incidental to our reception of the Eucharist - it is integral to it. Again, quoting his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict affirms:

The Eucharistic mystery thus gives rise to a service of charity towards neighbour, which "consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, affecting even my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ." (#88)

Acting with the mind and heart of Christ, the individual gradually becomes an agent of God's renewal of society. Hence, personal transformation in receiving Christ in the Eucharist is inherently interconnected with and essentially leads to transformation of the society in which the individual lives that renewed and reoriented life.

FOR REFLECTION

1. How could/does my service as extraordinary minister of the Eucharist lead me to a more Eucharistic life?
2. What are the challenges I face when trying to live a more Eucharistic life? In what ways would the moral energy from the Eucharist help to overcome those difficulties?
3. How do you see the connection between the Eucharist and your everyday life, particularly in light of the Holy Father's way of defining sacrifice, spirituality, and spiritual worship?
4. What might I do to "live according to the Lord's Day," that is, orient my life more around the Sunday Eucharistic celebration and

the Sabbath rest? How could I make my everyday life an authentic expression of the Eucharist and the Lord's Day?



WHAT IS THE EUCHARIST? ENTERING DEEPER

Jesus revealed His ministry very often to those who most needed it. He was criticized for eating with sinners. The wonder of Jesus is that there is always room for others at the table with Him. The very people, with whom He chose to share a meal, were the signs of all people's need for the healing ministry He offers them. He chose to continue to be present with us in this sacrificial meal we call Eucharist. He made himself present in such a simple way through bread and wine that even a young child can understand. The church, God's people, continues this table ministry of Jesus.

The Eucharistic liturgy is the place where we express, celebrate and become who we are - the church. All elements and ministries of the liturgy effect or formulate this: The Eucharist is truly the source and summit of our whole life. The Eucharist challenges us to grow more like Christ and to let ourselves be challenged by Him to live a more selfless life, dedicated as He was to the service of others ("as I have washed your feet, so must you do for one another.")

Bread is a symbol of all that nourishes our human life. Wine is a symbol of all that gladdens our human life: Like the bread and wine, so too with us. God starts with the human and brings out the *beyond - the - human*. We believe that the Eucharist permeates our whole being, so that we are in the process of becoming the spiritual food we eat, Christ Himself. This is what Christ has called us to be, his very presence, through the sharing of this ministry.

WHAT DO EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARISTIC DO?

Through baptism, we live out our lives as being followers of Christ. As Eucharistic Ministers we respond to the call of the spirit to use our

gifts in service to the church community. In accepting this position, we are challenged to: "be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct. You must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love. Remember that though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and one cup. (From the Rite of Commissioning Special Ministers of Communion)

Eucharistic ministers try to make the Lord's work more obvious. Their role is to deepen the Lord's "body - to - body" intimacy with the people He loves, even if they themselves have not yet fully grasped the wonder of what the Lord does.

In effect, the Eucharistic minister invites each communicant, to make an act of faith in the Lord, present under the sign of bread and wine. Their response of faith will strengthen the ability to call forth that response. The sole criteria of judging the Eucharistic Celebration: "Did it evoke the community to let their faith show?"

We must become what we give. We must become and live as the Body of Christ that we give to our brothers and sisters. We must both be and give the Body of Christ. For Eucharist charges us to be that sign of God's love.

Eucharistic ministers accept God's call to help this assembly, the Body of Christ made visible, and to be united with Christ their Lord in Holy Communion. Everything done and said by the Eucharistic minister should help others to receive the Lord Jesus more lovingly and reverently. We are attempting to consecrate ourselves into His Body as He has consecrated Himself into Bread for us.

A classic principle of spirituality teaches us that no person can give what he or she does not have. A minister who lacks faith can't offer a dynamic faith to others. The one who does not know Christ cannot lead others to know the Lord. Faith in the real Eucharistic presence

is the most critical quality for a minister of communion (and the whole assembly).

The positive interior qualities of the Eucharistic Minister (reverence for others, prayerfulness, faith, etc.) or their regrettable absence will likewise be evident to others in the worshipping community. There must be an essential unity between our life inside and outside the liturgy. Eucharistic ministers try to witness the faithfulness of God, to live in such a way that "one's life would not make sense if God did not exist.

THE CALL TO BE AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST

"The person who has been appointed to be an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion should distinguish himself/herself by his/her Christian life, faith, and morals. Let him/her strive to be worthy of this great office; let him/her cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show himself/herself as an example to the other faithful by his/her piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful."

(Immensae Caritatis)

Eucharistic ministers are a sign of the fact that they are constantly striving to be of greater service to the church and the world:- To be an embodiment of the community's hope for itself. A Eucharistic minister sets an example as one whose life is governed by the fullness of the Eucharist.

Eucharistic ministers do not stand as perfect examples but as a sign that our struggle to live the Christian life is not in vain.

God chose us in our humanness as frail earthen vessels. God calls us in our brokenness to share in the mission of His only Son. We are

conscious of our sinfulness and weakness but rely on God's grace to be the instruments He wants us to be. We are not above those in the assembly but identify ourselves with the assembly and act along with and for the assembly. We come forward as Eucharistic ministers not because we deserve this or are superior to others but because of the mystery of God's call. Whether we are the Pope or the bishop or a priest we all declare our unworthiness to receive this gift of Eucharist. It is only because the 'Lord says the word that we are healed.' As public servants, we do not put on a show for anyone, but rather humbly try to be authentic signs of Christ's presence and compassion by being fully human channels of grace for all those entrusted to our care. The Eucharistic minister is called to exemplify the life of service and charity to which the Christian community commits itself in the celebration of the Eucharist. We will depend on God's grace to fulfill this call. When we use the term 'servant' in secular life (e.g. armed service, civil service, public service) we stress that such people are 'ministers' to the public in general in its varying needs. Very often these (e.g. members of parliament) seem to be in a privileged position. Yet — as the Gospel says — when they do their duty, they are merely servants.

Ministry is about service, not status. In the coinage of the kingdom the leader is the one who serves (cf. Luke 22. 24-27). For that Jesus will no longer call us servants but friends (see John 15. 12-20) since — unlike slaves — we respond freely to his example.

In the Mass of Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in some Dioceses, it has been customary for the responsorial taken from the prophet Micah to be sung: *This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this; that you act justly, that you love*

tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God. This recognizes that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are called:

TO ACT JUSTLY : One of the senses in which the word ‘justly’ is used is “to do one’s duty” — to God, to one’s neighbour, to oneself — to give what is due. The great Roman virtue of “pietas”, the Christian value of “piety” — one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit — is a kindred notion. St. Joseph is described as a just man — who did faithfully and dutifully what was asked of him. This demands self-sacrifice. An Extraordinary Minister will treat everyone he/she serves without distinguishing persons. An Extraordinary Minister will dutifully carry out the rituals laid down, remembering he/she is a minister of the Church, allowing Christ to grow while he/she lessens the ‘ego’ that would show itself in celebrating oneself rather than Christ. One who acts justly will be one who acts obediently.

TO LOVE TENDERLY : Love is the true spirit of ministry. The Extraordinary Minister will radiate the warmth of Jesus himself, expressing the Eucharistic Sacrament of love in action. There cannot be, there must not be, a contradiction between the Sacrament that is brought and the one who brings it. The compassion, the healing presence, the outgoing concern of the heart of Jesus must characterise the respectful attitude of the minister towards the person to whom he/she ministers.

TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD : The Extraordinary Minister will show the disposition of Mary carrying in her womb the Incarnate Son of God on her way to visit Elizabeth, walking humbly with her God. Mary herself magnified the Lord for regarding the humility of his handmaid, and for thereby doing great things through her, working miracles of grace. God gives graces to the

humble, and repudiates the arrogant, the conceited, the proud and self-sufficient.

FOR REFLECTION

1.) How does being a Eucharistic minister affect how I now look at myself?

2.) What do you think is the most difficult point for people to grasp about being a Eucharistic minister?

3.) What difference has (or will) being a Eucharistic minister made (make) in your life and in your relationship to the Lord and others? How has this changed since you first begun?

4.) How do you think others will feel about you being a Eucharistic minister?

5.) What do you find most challenging about being a Eucharistic minister?

6.) Do you feel the role of a Eucharistic minister could become routine-how would you deal with that?

7.) What do you feel is the connection between this liturgical ministry and your daily life?

8.) What is your single greatest hope and expectation in being an Eucharistic minister?

9.) How is it possible in the very administration of the Eucharist to challenge others to become the Body of Christ?

10.) How will your role as Eucharistic minister influence your ability to accept others?

11.) How do you minister?

12.) How do you find Christ more clearly in others as a result of being a Eucharistic

13.) What goes through your mind as you are distributing Holy Communion?

14.) What aspect of distributing Holy Communion still leaves you most uncomfortable and why?

15.) How do you find yourself praying during Mass when you are serving as a Eucharistic minister? What nourishes or detracts from that prayer?

The lay faithful who are called to ministry have the right to adequate training from their parish communities before being assigned to service in the assembly. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion (EMHC's) require training in the details of how communion is distributed in the liturgical space where they will serve. Equally important is on-going formation that develops skills, deepens understanding of the Eucharist and encourages spiritual growth. On-going formation includes opportunities for:

- Understanding the importance of symbol and ritual in Catholic worship.
- Deepening knowledge of the theology and structure of the Mass.
- Deepening understanding of the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity and service.
- Deepening appreciation for the many modes of Christ's presence within the Christian community.
- Prayerful reflection on the Sunday readings.
- Scripture study to foster a greater love for God's word.
- Parish gatherings for prayer, reflection and fellowship on a regular basis throughout the liturgical year.

COMMISSIONING

Who can be commissioned as an EMHC?

EMHC's are to be fully initiated Catholics, at least 16 years of age, who manifest their love for the Eucharist by participating in the sacramental life of the Church and the activities of their parish.

Qualified persons who have been discerned as candidates for this ministry must receive an endorsement from the bishop. The pastor is to forward the names of these people to the chancery asking that they be named as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.

EMHC's are commissioned to function within their own parish for a period of three years. The commission expires after three years or if the person moves away from the parish. The commission may be renewed by again requesting endorsement from the bishop.

Commissioning should take place during a parish celebration according to the rite provided in the Book of Blessings.

PREPARATION

Those who exercise a liturgical ministry are expected to develop their ministerial skills by taking advantage of the training and formation opportunities offered by their parish or through the Office of Liturgy. In addition, they have a serious responsibility to prepare in a more immediate way for the liturgies at which they will serve.

For EMHC's this more immediate preparation includes:

- Arriving in enough time to become calm and unhurried before the liturgy and to check for any changes or special instructions.

- Dressing in a way that reflects the importance and dignity of this ministry.
- Serving when scheduled and notifying a responsible authority and/or arranging for a substitute when not available.

THE ROLE OF THE EMHC DURING THE LITURGY

The Entrance Procession

In Corpus Christi Parish EMHC's simply sit with the assembly until it is time to distribute communion.

THE COMMUNION RITE

In Corpus Christi Parish EMHC's approach the altar after exchanging the sign of peace with those around them. They come together at the foot of the steps to the sanctuary, bow and then move to stand behind the Celebrant. They should stand near the altar quietly and reverently.

EMHC's receive communion before ministering to the assembly. In this way, they more visibly fulfil the Lord's command to "take, eat and give."

- The Lord's Body and Blood are never left on the altar for communicants to take themselves, nor are they passed from one communicant to another.

After moving to their designated stations, EMHCs make eye contact with each person coming forward to receive communion. The consecrated host is held up for the person to see and the EMHC clearly says, "The Body of Christ". The communicant responds, "Amen". The host is placed firmly in

the hand or on the tongue of the communicant. Whether to receive in the hand or on the tongue is the choice of the person receiving.

The cup of consecrated wine is likewise held for the person to see while the EMHC says clearly, "The Blood of Christ". Again the response is "Amen." The EMHC places the cup entirely in the hands of the communicant. After the communicant has received, the EMHC takes the cup, wipes both sides of the rim with the purificator, turns the cup slightly and presents it to the next person.

- Since sharing in a common cup is a fuller sign of the unity which the Eucharist creates among Christians, separate cups for individual communicants are not used in the Roman Rite. Intinction (dipping the host) is not commonly permitted in this archdiocese.

Since communion under both kinds is a fuller sacramental sign, both bread and wine should ordinarily be offered. The words used in presenting the host or the cup are not to be changed or adapted in any way, even by the addition of personal names.

- **NB:** Since during the liturgy "all should do only, but all of, those parts that belong to them in virtue of their place within the people of God" (GIRM #5), EMHC's should not perform multiple ministries during the same celebration.

When the assembly has finished receiving, the EMHC's set the sacred vessels in their proper place, usually the altar, for cleansing.

Remaining consecrated wine should be reverently and unobtrusively consumed by the EMHC's.

When all is finished, and the unconsumed hosts are returned to the tabernacle, the EMHC's return to their seats and join the assembly in the post communion silence and the concluding rites.

- **NB:** The cleansing of the communion vessels is done by the acolyte or by the celebrant, not by the EMHC, unless specifically requested to do so.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

EMHC's also carry communion to the sick or homebound. Any one who regularly performs this aspect of the ministry likewise receives training, commissioning and on-going formation. To establish the connection between the Sunday assembly and those members who are absent, EMHC's ideally are sent to take communion to the sick and homebound directly from the Sunday celebration.

GLOSSARY

Alb: A long white robe worn over regular clothing that can be used by all liturgical ministers.

Ambo: A sacred place from which the word of God is proclaimed. It is reserved for the readings, the psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet), but may also be used for the homily and general intercessions.

Assembly: The people of God gathered for prayer and worship.

Book of the Gospels The book containing the Gospels that is carried in procession each Sunday and from which the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.

Chalice: The cup used to hold the wine for consecration during Mass.

Corporal: A small white cloth placed on top of the altar cloth to hold the sacred vessels used for the Eucharist.

Ciborium: A covered bowl used to hold consecrated hosts after Mass.

Credence Table: A small table placed to the side of the altar used to hold items used during Mass.

Lectionary: The book containing the scripture readings used on Sundays and the readings for Mass during the week.

Liturgical Minister: Someone who serves in a special role during a liturgical celebration.

Missal/Sacramentary: The book containing the prayers used by the priest during Mass.

Parts of the Mass: The Mass is divided into four main parts.

- Introductory Rites - The parts of the Mass before the scripture reading, from the entrance song through the opening prayer.
- Liturgy of the Word - From the first reading through the prayer of the faithful.
- Liturgy of the Eucharist - From the preparation of the gifts through the prayer after communion.
- Concluding Rite - The priest's greeting and blessing and the dismissal of the assembly.

Purificator: A clean cloth used for wiping the chalice during communion and cleaning it after Mass.

Pyx: A small covered container used to carry consecrated hosts to the sick.

Sanctuary: The sacred space around the altar usually set apart in some way from the rest of the church building.

TAKING COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

Prayer of Preparation for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Who take communion to those who are ill or homebound.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Father of mercies and the God of all Consolation. You comfort us in all our afflictions and thus enable us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we receive from you.

God of compassion, fill me with the power of your Word and the love of your Holy Spirit as I visit your suffering sons and daughters. Help me so that I may worthily and gracefully share your sacred presence with those who await your coming to them.

May the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ heal and comfort us, deepen our faith, and strengthen our hope in the imperishable inheritance you have promised to those who seek you. Father, I pray to you for myself and for those I visit, in the saving name of Jesus, our risen Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

A SIMPLE RITE OF COMMUNION IN THE HOME:

GREETING : "We ask God to bless this home and those who live here, especially N_____

Penitential Rite:

EMHC: We remember that God is with us here and that we can call on Him for mercy

and forgiveness; And so we pray:

"Lord Jesus, you healed the sick, Lord have mercy x 2

"Lord Jesus, you forgive sinners, Christ have mercy x 2

"Lord Jesus, You give us strength

of heart, Lord have mercy x 2

EMHC: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, And bring us to everlasting life." R: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

EMHC: Let us now listen to the good news, that comes to us today from the Gospel of St. Luke

"When the hour came, Jesus took His place at table with the apostles. He said to them, " I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer"...Then He took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them, saying "This is My Body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of Me."

EMHC: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Pause - and maybe a short comment. Leading into some prayers of intercession.

RITE OF COMMUNION

EMHC: And now, to get ready for Holy Communion let us pray together the great prayer that Jesus taught us : "Our Father, Who art in Heaven..... "

Then while raising the Host the Special Minister says;

"This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, Blessed are those who are called to His Supper."

R: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive You; only say the word, and I shall be healed."

EMHC: "The Body of Christ!" R:/ Amen

Allow for a short period of reflective silence then say:

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

EMHC: Let us pray; Lord God, thank You for giving us Your Son Jesus, Who comes to us in Holy Communion. May this sacrament bring us peace, reconciliation and comfort, and healing of those things that wound us. This we ask through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Blessing: "May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, remain with you and give you peace. Amen"



ALTERNATIVE GOSPEL PASSAGES FOR COMMUNION IN THE HOME:

A. The Faith of the Centurion Matthew 8:5-8

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."7 Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"8 The

centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.”

B. The Father Revealed in the Son: Matthew 11:25-30

25 At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. 27 “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

C. Trust in God: Luke 12: 20-26

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life[b]? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?



THE SHORT RITE OF COMMUNION OF THE SICK IN A HOSPITAL
OR INSTITUTION

Antiphon This rite may begin in the church, the hospital chapel, or the first room, where the EMHC says the following antiphon:

I am the living bread come down from heaven. If you eat this bread you will live forever. The bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

Greeting:

On entering each room, after greeting the resident/patient, and seeking if they and/or their visitors want communion, the EMHC may use the following greeting to begin the rite:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R/ And also with you.

The Lord's Prayer : **When circumstances permit, the EMHC is encouraged to lead the sick in the Lord's Prayer.**

Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us: Our Father.....

Our Father. . .

Communion

The EMHC shows the Eucharistic bread to those present, saying:

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who hunger and thirst, for they shall be satisfied.

The sick person and all who are to receive communion say:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

The EMHC goes to the sick person and, showing the Blessed Sacrament says:
The body of Christ. R: Amen.

Ensure that the person has a glass of water nearby in case he/she needs to it to help swallow the host.

CONCLUDING RITE

Concluding Prayer : **The concluding prayer may be said either in the last room visited, in the church, or chapel after putting away the Blessed Sacrament.** Let us pray.

All-powerful and ever-living God, may the body and blood of Christ your Son be for our brothers and sisters a lasting remedy for body and soul. Amen.

To carry the Lord to those who are sick or homebound is in itself a great ministry of charity.

Furthermore, in carrying Christ to our brothers and sisters we give witness to the service of the Eucharist to which we are called.

We do indeed become 'theotokoi' Christ bearers to the world.

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