

Background on New Liturgical Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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NORM: Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion can and should purify the pyxes they use in ministry to the sick, hospitalized, and homebound.

BACKGROUND: In the section of the *Pastoral Care of the Sick, "Communion in a Hospital or Institution,"* the final rubric reads, "the blessing is omitted and the minister cleanses the vessel as usual" (n. 98). The "minister" in question is presumed to be an extraordinary minister, based on the *praenotanda* to this rite that specifies the priest's responsibility to see to it that the faithful have access to the Blessed Sacrament, and to ensure this "it may be necessary to ensure that the community has a sufficient number of ministers of communion. The communion minister should wear attire appropriate to this ministry" (n. 72). The *praenotanda* that deals directly with "Communion in a Hospital or Institution" is likewise written from the standpoint that the minister is an extraordinary minister, hence the excising of any mention of a blessing. Thus, in situations when an extraordinary minister brings Holy Communion to the sick in a hospital or other institution, the rubric indicates that the EMHC "cleanses the vessel as usual," meaning that he or she consumes whatever particles remain in the pyx. This is the same indication given in the section entitled "Communion in Ordinary Circumstances" (n. 88).

NORM: Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion with surplus consecrated hosts after visiting the sick, homebound or hospitalized may reverently consume the surplus hosts if it is inconvenient for the ministers to bring the surplus hosts back to a tabernacle. Ministers should continue to take care that enough consecrated hosts are brought for the communicants, but not to bring excess insofar as it is possible.

BACKGROUND: In *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion,* regarding the bringing of the Precious Blood to the sick, it states, "If some of the Precious Blood remains after the sick person has received Communion, it should be consumed by the minister." (n. 54) As at Mass, ministers of Holy Communion can consume surplus consecrated elements, especially when they cannot be reserved lawfully in a tabernacle. Based on this precedent, if it is convenient for the EMHC to bring surplus hosts back to the tabernacle, then that is preferred. If it is inconvenient due to time constraints, accessibility of the parish church, or other logistical concerns, the surplus Blessed Sacrament can be consumed by the minister.