



NewsLetter

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Administrative Assistant
Mr. David K. Ringwald
Administrative Assistant

**USCCB Secretariat of
Divine Worship**
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: (202) 541-3060
Fax: (202) 541-3088
www.USCCB.org

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“Jesus, we behold you lying in the manger.
We see you as *close*, ever at our side: thank you Lord!
We see you as *poor*, in order to teach us
that true wealth does not reside in things but in persons,
and above all in the poor:
forgive us, if we have failed to acknowledge and serve you in them.
We see you as *concrete*, because your love for us is palpable.
Jesus, help us to give flesh and life to our faith. Amen.”

(Pope Francis, Homily at Christmas Eve Mass, 2022; © LEV)

The Committee on Divine Worship
and Secretariat of Divine Worship
Wish You a Holy and Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year 2024!

Rev. David R. Price Appointed as Secretariat Associate Director

Rev. Michael J.K. Fuller, USCCB General Secretary, has announced the appointment of Rev. David R. Price, a priest of the Diocese of Colorado Springs, as Associate Director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship, effective January 8, 2024. Fr. Price will serve alongside Rev. Dustin P. Dought, Executive Director; Matthew Godbey, Administrative Assistant; and David Ringwald, Administrative Assistant.

Ordained to the priesthood in 2010, Fr. Price served as rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Colorado Springs for ten years and director of the diocesan Office of Worship for twelve years. He holds a Master of Arts in Liturgy from the Liturgical Institute at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary.

The Secretariat welcomes Fr. Price to the Conference and looks forward to working with him in continuing to build up the liturgical life of the Church in the United States.

Hymn and Theme Song for the National Eucharistic Revival

The National Eucharistic Revival held a music contest in early 2023 to encourage the composition of new Eucharistic hymns. "Let the Earth Acclaim" by Kathleen Pluth was chosen as the winning hymn on June 15, alongside the revival's theme song, "We Do Believe, O Lord," written by Diane Mahoney.

Examining the new hymn more closely, the lyrics focus on the living presence of Christ, who continues to dwell with us in the Eucharist, as well as his entry into the world, on the altar, and into our lives. Christ transforms us by his sacrifice, death and resurrection. Each of the five stanzas are kerygmatic, proclaiming the different ways that Christ comes to redeem us. The first stanza highlights Christ's divine sonship, cross, and grace, and the second shares an image of the Lord knocking at the door. Our incorporation into the Lord's resurrection is the subject of the third, and stanzas four and five express praise and thanksgiving at the transforming power of God's goodness.

Well suited for liturgies like Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, the meter of "Let the Earth Acclaim" is 87 87 D, versatile enough to set to a variety of melodies. On the Eucharistic Revival website, the hymn is set to three familiar tunes: Hyfrydol, Hymn to Joy, and Nettleton. Lyrics and sheet music for both the hymn and theme song were released to the public on November 6 and are freely available in both English and Spanish at EucharisticRevival.org/post/sheet-music-available-for-new-eucharistic-hymns.

Hymn for the Jubilee Year 2025: "Pilgrims of Hope"

The cherished custom of pilgrimage to the Holy Door during a Jubilee Year has inspired the text of the hymn "Pilgrims of Hope" by Italian theologian and composer Pierangelo Sequeri. The lyrics echo passages from the Book of Isaiah and reflect the themes of pilgrimage, the universality of God's word, his tenderness, patience, and recreating work. Set to music by Francesco Meneghello of Padua, Italy, the work was selected from among 270 entries from 38 countries as the official hymn of the Jubilee Year 2025, whose theme is a "Holy Year of Hope."

Musical resources are available for the upcoming Jubilee at jubilaum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/inno-giubileo-2025.html. The hymn was translated into English by Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth, and its musical score is SATB with descant and organ. The Spanish version – for unison voice and organ – was translated by the Episcopal Conference of Spain. Audio recordings are available for download in both languages, and the English features the choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception of Washington, DC, directed by Peter Latona.

The Commissioning or Deputing of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

The Eucharist is intimately tied to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Church documents that treat the subject of the distribution of the Eucharist begin by recalling that priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Then, properly instituted acolytes are extraordinary ministers, and finally the diocesan bishop may grant the faculty of distributing Holy Communion to other qualified lay persons whenever necessity requires it and ordinary ministers are unavailable.¹

Purpose of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Immensae caritatis, an Instruction issued in 1973, states that local Ordinaries possess the faculty to permit “fit persons, each chosen by name as a special minister, in a given instance or for a set period or even permanently, to give communion to... the faithful and to carry it to the sick residing at home.”² While this instruction and the ritual book *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass* – each issued in 1973 – note that the appointment of extraordinary ministers belongs to local Ordinaries, the current mind of the Holy See, reflected in later instructions and the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*,³ is that the appointment belongs to the diocesan bishop and those to whom he has delegated this power.

The purpose of establishing extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is to facilitate the reception of Communion in circumstances when a priest or deacon is not available, as Viaticum to the sick, and when the number of faithful needing to receive is prohibitive: “The first measures to be taken are meant to prevent reception of communion from becoming either impossible or difficult because there are not enough ministers. Measures must be taken, secondly, to prevent exclusion of the sick from this great comfort of the spirit, the reception of communion.”⁴

Only a few years later, Pope St. Paul VI addressed some of the bishops of the United States on their *ad limina* visit with a reminder from his *Bicentennial Letter to the American Bishops*:

‘We are pleased to recall that the Holy See has authorized, under certain circumstances, the distribution of Holy Communion by extraordinary ministers duly deputed to this high task. But we wish to emphasize that this ministry remains an extraordinary ministry to be exercised in accordance with the precise norms of the Holy See. By its nature therefore the role of the extraordinary minister is different from those other roles of Eucharistic participation that are the ordinary expression of lay participation.’ To give the Eucharist to God’s people remains in general therefore an honored pastoral function. Extraordinary ministers are envisioned by the Instruction *Immensae caritatis* where there is a genuine lack of ministers, and under these conditions fulfill a providential role.⁵

The topic arises again with the interdicasterial instruction *Ecclesiae de mysterio* in 1997, and in *Redemptionis sacramentum* in 2004. These two more recent documents both emphasize that the distribution of Holy Communion is the proper role of the ordained ministry and that the use of extraordinary ministers is to be limited in scope. These ministers must be “fit” in that they are to be persons of respect in their local communities, properly formed in the faith, and “whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them.”⁶

¹ *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*, no. 17; cf. *Immensae caritatis* (1973), 1, I and II; *Book of Blessings* (1989), no. 1871; *Ecclesiae de mysterio* (1997), no. 1; *Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion under Both Kinds* (2002), no. 26; *Redemptionis sacramentum* (2004), no. 146.

² *Immensae caritatis*, 1, I.

³ Cf. *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Article 8, 2; *Roman Missal*, Appendix III, no. 1; *Redemptionis sacramentum*, no. 155.

⁴ *Immensae caritatis*, Introduction.

⁵ *Address of the Holy Father Paul VI to a group of Bishops of the United States on their ad limina visit*, June 15, 1978, quoting *Bicentennial Letter to the American Bishops*: AAS 68 (1976), pg. 410.

⁶ *Immensae caritatis*, 1, VI; cf. IV-VI.

The Role of the Bishop

These documents underline that the deputation of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion belongs to the diocesan bishop. He may delegate this power to others as well as grant to individual priests the faculty to depute members of the faithful on single occasions when there is genuine need, that is, in those cases outlined by *Immensæ caritatis*, I. Before appointment for a stable period occurs, however, there should be some measure of faith formation and examination into the character of the individual:

It is thus useful for the Diocesan Bishop to issue particular norms concerning extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion which, in complete harmony with the universal law of the Church, should regulate the exercise of this function in his diocese. Such norms should provide, amongst other things, for matters such as the instruction in eucharistic doctrine of those chosen to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the meaning of the service they provide, the rubrics to be observed, the reverence to be shown for such an august Sacrament and instruction concerning the discipline on admission to Holy Communion.⁷

Liturgical Forms for Commissioning or Deputing

Once this preliminary preparation has been completed and the diocesan bishop has given the faculty to each person by name and for a term,⁸ it is fitting to celebrate the Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as found in the *Book of Blessings*.⁹ This commissioning should not resemble the conferral of the sacrament of Holy Orders and, in fact, “does not necessarily take a liturgical form.”¹⁰

The Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion provides helpful instructions in the Introduction. Again, it reiterates that priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers, acolytes are extraordinary ministers, and the diocesan bishop “may give other extraordinary ministers the faculty to give Communion whenever it seems necessary for the pastoral benefit of the faithful and a Priest, Deacon, or acolyte is not available.”¹¹ The usual minister of this rite is the pastor of a parish, who in turn may delegate it to another priest, or to a deacon if the commissioning is done outside of Mass.¹²

While the above process concerns the appointment of extraordinary ministers in a stable way, the Church also provides for deputation in a single instance. Where diocesan bishops have granted individual priests the requisite faculty,¹³ “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.”¹⁴ In these instances, it is fitting to use the Rite of Deputing a Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion found in Appendix III of the *Roman Missal*. This form may also be used instead of the one from the *Book of Blessings* if the diocesan bishop has given a mandate for only one occasion. The blessing is given during Mass after the celebrant’s Communion, but before the extraordinary minister receives, if he or she is going to receive at that Mass.¹⁵

Conclusion

Fundamentally the authority to designate extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion resides with the diocesan bishop. While the priest with the appropriate faculty may depute someone to serve on a single occasion, people regularly assisting the clergy as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in a parish or to the sick must be deputed by the bishop. Preparation for this ministry may be done at the parish level, respecting the norms of the diocesan bishop and including a pastoral discernment of the suitability of candidates. Then, it is praiseworthy for the commission or deputation to be given in a liturgical celebration before the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion begin their service.

⁷ *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Article 8, 2; cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 §3 and can. 910 §2.

⁸ Cf. *Immensæ caritatis*, 1, I.

⁹ Chapter 63 (nos. 1871-1896).

¹⁰ Cf. no. 155.

¹¹ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1871.

¹² Cf. *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1872-1873.

¹³ Cf. *Roman Missal*, Appendix III, no. 1; *Immensæ caritatis*, 1, II.

¹⁴ *Redemptionis sacramentum*, no. 155.

¹⁵ *Roman Missal*, Appendix III, nos. 3-4.