

Decree of Promulgation

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). After many years of preparation, the third typical edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* was approved in English translation on March 17, 2003. This document provides the framework of our celebration of the Sacred Mysteries and guides us that we may celebrate the Holy Sacrifice in unity and peace. On March 25, 2004 the Holy See issued a further instruction on the Eucharist entitled, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (the Sacrament of Redemption) to provide greater clarity to certain matters regarding the Most Holy Eucharist and “to preserve this mystery of faith with reverence, care, devotion and love.”

It is with this in mind that I have the joy of promulgating the following liturgical norms for the Diocese of Charlotte. They are outlined here for the benefit of all the Christian faithful of our Diocese and are to be considered normative for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy on Holy Thursday, March 24, 2005, the beginning of the Triduum of Easter.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Charlotte, March 3, 2005.

✠The Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis, J.C.D.
Bishop of Charlotte

Liturgical Norms Of the Diocese of Charlotte

General Norms

1. It is the right of all of Christ’s faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes, according to the stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms.¹ The norms set forth here, therefore, are presented to insure the prayerful and worthy celebration of the Sacred Mysteries within the Diocese of Charlotte so that all of God’s faithful might celebrate with one heart and one voice.
2. **Any construction or significant alteration of a sanctuary requires the approval of the bishop.**
3. The preference is that the tabernacle should be located in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of sacrifice in an appropriate place, not excluding an older altar no longer used for celebration. The tabernacle is to be immovable and non-transparent and locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented to the greatest extent possible.² The sanctuary as defined by the *General Instruction* is the place where the altar stands, where the word of God is proclaimed, and where the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers exercise their offices.³
4. There is to be a crucifix permanently displayed near the altar and visible to the congrega-

¹ Congregation for Divine Worship, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 25 March 2004, 11-12.

² Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (Third Typical Edition)*, 17 March 2003, 314; RS 130.

³ GIRM 295.

tion. There should be only one crucifix prominently displayed in the sanctuary. If a processional crucifix is used, it should not remain in the sanctuary during the celebration of Mass.⁴

5. All parish churches and chapels are to have kneelers so that the faithful might kneel for both the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and private devotion.
6. **The words of prayers, responses and readings are to be utilized as they appear in the approved Mass texts. For example, The Nicene Creed, the response at the *Orate fratres*, and the preface dialogue, and other Mass texts are not to be altered. No foreign elements are to be introduced into the liturgy other than those that are called for by the liturgical norms, e.g. liturgical dance.**⁵
7. Sacred song is prayer “prayed twice.”⁶ The people’s participation in sacred song should be carefully nurtured and a parish repertory of sacred music should be developed over time. Purely secular lyrics have no place in the sacred liturgy.⁷
8. Silence can foster reverence and reflection. Before Mass begins, a time of silence is commendable in the church, the sacristy, and in adjacent areas so that all may be disposed to carry out the sacred actions in a devout and fitting manner. Sacred silence, as a part of the celebration, is also to be observed at the designated times: for example, after each invitation to pray, at the conclusion of each reading, after the homily, and after Communion.⁸
9. All presidential texts are to be spoken or sung in a loud and clear voice so that everyone might hear them. While the presiding priest is speaking these texts, the organ or other musical instruments should be silent.⁹
10. With the exception of the altar cloth, which should usually remain on the altar at all times, the altar should be as bare as possible before Mass begins. No vessels or books should be on the altar before Mass. If the altar candles block the people’s view, they should be placed near, but not on the altar.¹⁰
11. When altar coverings other than white are used, the uppermost cloth must be white.¹¹ The corporal, which is the cloth placed immediately beneath the chalice and paten for the celebration of the Mass, should be unfolded and placed on the altar at the Presentation of the Gifts,¹² and should be removed from the altar at the end of the Communion Rite for proper laundering. “Permanent” corporals that remain on the altar from Mass to Mass are not appropriate. It may be necessary to use several corporals on which are placed the extra ciboria and communion cups.
12. Planning for the Mass should include providing for a sufficient number of hosts to be consecrated so that all can receive hosts consecrated during that Mass, underlining the connection between consecration and communion. **Generally, reserved hosts should not be brought from the tabernacle unless needed at a particular Mass.**¹³
13. The sacred vessels should be made of precious metal; Materials that break easily may not be used; e.g., glass, ceramic, porcelain, & crystal.¹⁴ Materials that are deemed precious to a region, e.g. hardwoods, may be used only if they are lined with precious metal.

⁴ Cf. GIRM 117, 122, 308.

⁵ GIRM, 399; RS, 11-12, 59; *Notitiae* 11 (1975) 202-205; *Canon Law Digest*, Vol. VIII, pp. 78-82

⁶ St. Augustine.

⁷ GIRM 41, 48, 111, 393, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 112ff, *Musicam sacram*.

⁸ GIRM 45.

⁹ GIRM 32.

¹⁰ GIRM 306, 307.

¹¹ GIRM 117, 304.

¹² GIRM 73, 118, 139.

¹³ GIRM 85.

¹⁴ RS 117.

14. It is a praiseworthy practice to cover the chalice with a veil, which may be either the color of the day or white.¹⁵
15. Appropriate public and private devotion to the Eucharist outside Mass should also be encouraged.¹⁶
16. It is preferable that priests who are present at a Eucharistic Celebration participate as concelebrants. If not, they should participate wearing their proper choir dress or a surplice over a cassock.¹⁷
17. Proper liturgical vesture should be used for the celebration. For priests: the alb, the stole and the chasuble. For the deacon: the alb, the stole, and the dalmatic. If there are not a sufficient number of chasubles for concelebrants, they may concelebrate with the alb and stole.¹⁸

Introductory Rites

18. The procession of the priest(s), deacon(s), and servers though the midst of the people is a striking sign of ministry in the midst of God's people and is highly recommended for Masses celebrated on Sundays and Solemnities, as well as other Masses, when practical. The Book of the Gospels may be carried in procession. This is the role of the deacon if he is present; otherwise, The Book of the Gospels may be carried by a lector. The Lectionary is never processed.¹⁹
19. When the Eucharist is reserved in the sanctuary:²⁰
 - the priests and ministers genuflect as they enter the sanctuary;
 - those carrying incense, the processional cross, or candles simply bow their heads.
 - The deacon or lector carrying the Book of the Gospels approaches the altar and places the book on it, without a bow of the head.²¹
20. When the Eucharist is reserved in a place outside the sanctuary:²²
 - the priests and ministers make a profound bow to the altar as they enter the sanctuary²³;
 - those carrying incense, the processional cross, or candles simply bow their heads.²⁴
 - The deacon or lector carrying the Book of the Gospels approaches the altar and places the book on it, without a bow of the head.²⁵
21. The Lectionary is placed on the ambo before Mass and is never carried in the entrance procession or in the recessional.²⁶
22. The Book of the Gospels may be carried in the entrance procession, slightly elevated, by the deacon, or, in the absence of a deacon, by a lector (reader).²⁷
23. The Book of Gospels is placed at the center of the altar until it is carried to the ambo by the deacon, or in his absence, by the priest who will proclaim the gospel.²⁸

¹⁵ GIRM 118.

¹⁶ RS 134-141.

¹⁷ GIRM 114; RS 128

¹⁸ GIRM 119, 209; RS 123, 125.

¹⁹ GIRM, 120d.

²⁰ GIRM 49, 274.

²¹ GIRM 173, 195.

²² GIRM 49.

²³ GIRM 49.

²⁴ GIRM 274.

²⁵ GIRM 173, 195.

²⁶ GIRM 118b, 120d.

²⁷ GIRM 120, 172, 194.

²⁸ GIRM 117, 122, 173, 194.

24. After the Sign of the Cross and the Greeting, the presiding priest, the deacon or a lay minister may briefly introduce the Mass of the day. Only the presiding priest, however, may invite the people to take part in the penitential rite.
25. The presiding priest leads Forms A and B, both of which are followed by the (non-sacramental) absolution and the *Kyrie*. Neither the priest nor the people should make a sign of the cross at this point. The presiding priest, the deacon, or a cantor may lead Form C, which incorporates the *Kyrie*.²⁹
26. The Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water may replace the Penitential Rite at Sunday Mass. Other introductory rites for special occasions (e.g., the blessing of palms on Passion Sunday, or the blessing of candles on the Presentation) take the place of the Penitential Rite, which is then omitted.
27. Since the *Gloria* is a hymn, it should ordinarily be sung rather than recited, when required by the rubrics. If it cannot be sung, the *Gloria* is recited rather than omitted. It may not be replaced by any other hymn of praise.³⁰

Liturgy of the Word

28. The readings proclaimed as the Word of God must always be taken from Sacred Scripture, according to the norms laid out in the Lectionary.³¹
29. There should be only one ambo. It is used for the proclamation of the Word of God, including the Scripture readings and Responsorial Psalm, as well as the homily and Prayers of the Faithful. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should go up to it. **Announcements, presentations, and testimonials are not to be given from the ambo.**³²
30. The Responsorial Psalm should be sung, especially on Sundays and Solemnities. If it is not sung, it is recited. As the Psalms are the Word of God, they may not be replaced by songs or non-biblical texts.³³
31. The Gospel Acclamation may be omitted if not sung.³⁴
32. If a deacon is present and ministering at Mass, he should proclaim the Gospel. In his absence, a concelebrating priest may proclaim the Gospel; if there is none of the above, the presiding priest proclaims the Gospel.
33. The homily is required on Sundays and holy days of obligation at Masses celebrated with a congregation and is highly desirable at all Masses. The homily is reserved to the ordained;³⁵ only bishops, priests or deacons may preach the homily at Mass. The presiding priest should normally give the homily, which is properly a reflection on the Scriptural readings or feast of the day, applied to the concrete situation of the community. He may, however, delegate the homily to a deacon or to a concelebrating priest, for a good reason. While laypersons may not deliver the homily, they may translate the homily as it is being delivered by the ordained minister.
34. The Creed is obligatory on Sundays and Solemnities.
35. The proper Profession of Faith on Sundays and Solemnities is the Nicene Creed.³⁶ During the proclamation of the Nicene Creed, all bow at the words: “by the power of Holy Spirit... and

²⁹ GIRM 51, 52. cf. *Order of Mass*

³⁰ GIRM 53.

³¹ GIRM 57.

³² GIRM 309.

³³ GIRM, 61.

³⁴ GIRM 63c.

³⁵ GIRM 66; RS 64, 65, 66.

³⁶ GIRM 67; *Order of the Mass* 19.

became man”; on the Solemnities of the Annunciation and Nativity of the Lord, all genuflect during these words.

36. The presiding priest invites the congregation to join in the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions), addressing the people directly, with hands folded. The deacon is the proper minister of the petitions; in his absence a reader or another member of the lay faithful may announce the petitions.³⁷ The series of intentions in the Prayer of the Faithful follows this order:

- For the needs of the Church;
- For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- For those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- For the local community.³⁸

37. The presiding priest concludes the Prayers of the Faithful with a prayer, with his hands extended.³⁹

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

38. **The bread and wine to be consecrated, and the offerings for the Church and for the poor are to be brought up in the offertory procession.**⁴⁰ The priest may be assisted by the deacon or other ministers in receiving the gifts. Only the bread and wine are to be placed **by the priest** on the altar; the other offerings are to be placed away from the Eucharistic table. Nothing should be placed on the main corporal until it is handed to the priest.⁴¹
39. **The bread used at Mass must be made only from wheat, recently baked and, according to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, unleavened.**⁴²
40. **The wine used must be “from the fruit of the grape vine,” natural and unadulterated, that is, without admixture of extraneous substances.**⁴³
41. The private prayers of the priest at the Preparation of the Gifts are made only in his name and are to be prayed quietly.⁴⁴ Only prayers beginning with “Blessed are you, Lord...” may be said aloud if there is no music at this point. If there is music or singing it should continue and the prayers said inaudibly. The chalice and paten are raised only slightly from the altar during these prayers.
42. The main chalice should be larger and more prominent than any other cups used; they are all prepared at this time. A drop of water is poured into the main chalice alone. At celebrations involving a large number of cups, they should be filled beforehand and brought to the altar at this time.
43. The pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is to be avoided, “lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery.” Flasks, bowls, and other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms should not be used as containers for the Precious Blood.⁴⁵

³⁷ GIRM, 71.

³⁸ GIRM 70.

³⁹ GIRM 71, 138.

⁴⁰ GIRM 73, 140; *Redemptionis sacramentum* 70.

⁴¹ GIRM, 141.

⁴² GIRM 320. The use of wheaten bread is necessary for validity; RS 48.

⁴³ GIRM 322; RS 50.

⁴⁴ GIRM 33.

⁴⁵ *Redemptionis sacramentum*, nos.105-106.

44. After the presiding priest washes his hands (lavabo),⁴⁶ **the people are to stand when the presiding priest says “pray brethren” (*Orate Fratres*).**⁴⁷

Eucharistic Prayer

45. In the dioceses of the United States of America, the people should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the *Holy, Holy (Sanctus)* until after the *Amen* of the Eucharistic prayer, except when prevented on occasion by reason of health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or another good cause. Those who do not kneel should make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the consecrations.⁴⁸
46. **The words of the Eucharistic Prayer belong to the whole Church and are not to be supplemented or altered by the presiding priest.** Only approved Eucharistic prayers may be prayed.⁴⁹
47. Instrumental music is not allowed while the celebrant prays the Eucharistic Prayer.
48. **The deacon(s) assisting at Mass kneel from the *epiclesis* until the priest shows the chalice to the people, just before the *Mystery of Faith*.**⁵⁰ This rubric does not apply to deacons unable to kneel for reasons of health or age.
49. At the *epiclesis*, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful. According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the host and then the chalice.⁵¹
50. The presiding priest does not break the host at the time of the consecration. The fraction rite occurs later in the Mass at the *Lamb of God*.⁵²
51. The words of institution are to be said clearly and distinctly as their meaning demands.
52. At the final doxology (“Through him, with him...”), a deacon stands next to the priest elevating the chalice while the priest elevates the paten with the host. The deacon elevates the chalice to the same height as the priest does the host. If there is no deacon but there is a concelebrating priest, he may elevate the chalice. **This elevation is of one paten and one cup.** The faithful do not to join in saying or singing the final doxology with the priest.⁵³

Communion

53. **Holding hands during the *Our Father* is not found in the *Order of the Mass*.**
54. At the Rite of Peace following the *Our Father*, “it is suitable that each person offer the sign of peace only to those nearby and in a dignified manner.”⁵⁴
55. **The priest should ordinarily not leave the sanctuary during the sign of peace (except on special occasions, e.g. funerals and then only to greet the family of the deceased).**⁵⁵ The gift of peace should not seem to flow from the ordained to the laity.
56. **The fraction rite (breaking the bread) is reserved to the priest and deacon. Lay persons do not participate in this rite.** The *Agnus Dei* litany is sung during this rite. It may be repeated until the fraction is completed, but its last petition is always “grant us peace.” Other tropes may replace the phrase “Lamb of God” during such repetitions.⁵⁶

⁴⁶ GIRM 145.

⁴⁷ See GIRM 146.

⁴⁸ GIRM 43.

⁴⁹ Eucharistic Prayers 1 (Roman Canon), II (Hippolytus), III (Vatican II), and IV (St. Basil); Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation I and II; Eucharistic Prayers for Children I, II, and III.

⁵⁰ GIRM 179.

⁵¹ GIRM 150.

⁵² GIRM, 83; *Redemptionis sacramentum*, 55.

⁵³ GIRM 236.

⁵⁴ GIRM 82.

⁵⁵ GIRM 154.

⁵⁶ GIRM 83.

57. The fraction takes place before the showing of the host. The host is broken over the paten and should never be broken in such a way that particles of the Eucharist might be scattered or desecrated in any way.
58. The faithful kneel after the *Agnus Dei*.⁵⁷
59. All concelebrating priests must receive a host consecrated at the same Mass,⁵⁸ and must receive the Precious Blood consecrated at the same Mass.⁵⁹
60. Concelebrating priests genuflect before they receive from the chalice at the altar,⁶⁰ if they are able to do so.
61. The Communion Song should begin when the presiding priest receives Communion.⁶¹
62. The priest may be assisted by extraordinary ministers in the distribution of Communion, if other priests or deacons are not available and there is a large number of communicants. Extraordinary ministers in order of preference for such occasions are: duly instituted acolytes, and then others who have been deputed or commissioned for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may depute suitable faithful persons for a single occasion from the congregation.⁶² Pastorally, extraordinary ministers are commissioned for three years at a time. This allows others to participate—especially in large parishes.⁶³
63. **Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not approach the altar until after the priest receives both species, they may, however, approach the sanctuary before the priest receives Communion.**⁶⁴ The location for the extraordinary ministers prior to receiving Communion is somewhat determined by the physical structure of the building.
64. Communion ministers, as a rule, should receive under both kinds.
65. **Extraordinary ministers are always to receive the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist from the hands of the presiding priest, a deacon or another priest.**⁶⁵
66. **Neither deacons nor extraordinary ministers may ever receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest.** The practice of priests and extraordinary ministers waiting to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution of Communion to the congregation is not in accord with liturgical law.⁶⁶
67. If Communion is given under both kinds, the administration of the cup belongs to the deacon(s).⁶⁷ If there are several stations for the consecrated hosts and for the Precious Blood, it is acceptable for the deacon(s) to assist the priest(s) in distributing the consecrated hosts.
68. **“The Church’s custom shows that it is necessary for each person to examine himself at depth, and that anyone who is conscious of grave sin should not celebrate or receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession, except for grave reason when the possibility of confession is lacking; in this case he will remember that he is bound by the obligation of making an act of perfect contrition, which includes the intention to confess as soon as possible.”**⁶⁸

⁵⁷ GIRM 43.

⁵⁸ GIRM 85.

⁵⁹ Cf. GIRM 242-249.

⁶⁰ GIRM 246.

⁶¹ GIRM 86, 159.

⁶² GIRM 162.

⁶³ Cf. *Diocese of Charlotte Administrative Guidelines*.

⁶⁴ GIRM 162.

⁶⁵ GIRM 162, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 40.

⁶⁶ *Norms*, 39, GIRM 182, 244, 246, 284.

⁶⁷ GIRM 182.

⁶⁸ RS 81.

69. **Catholic ministers licitly administer the Sacraments only to the Catholic faithful, who likewise receive them licitly only from Catholic ministers. Hence, in general non-Catholics are not admitted to Holy Communion in the Catholic Church, and Catholics are not to receive communion in churches that are not Catholic.**⁶⁹
70. At Communion, the faithful are not permitted to take the host or the chalice by themselves, and still less to hand them on to one another.
The normative posture for the reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing. However, communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel.⁷⁰
71. **When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.**⁷¹
72. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand at the discretion of each communicant.⁷² **When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart,”⁷³ but rather place one hand as a throne beneath the other, then step to one side and using the lower hand receive the host taking care that nothing is lost.**
73. **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.**⁷⁴
74. If Communion from the chalice is carried out by intinction, each communicant, holding a communion plate under the chin, approaches the priest who holds a vessel with the hosts, a minister standing at his side and holding the chalice. Self-intinction is not permitted and one who receives Communion by intinction may never receive in the hand. The hosts that are used must be consecrated, and it is altogether forbidden to use non-consecrated bread or other matter.⁷⁵
75. As circumstances allow, after communicants have returned to their places, they may kneel or sit while the period of sacred silence after Communion is observed.⁷⁶
76. Care must be taken that whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ after the distribution of Communion is consumed immediately and completely at the altar.⁷⁷ This function is normally reserved to the priest and deacon; however, in the Diocese of Charlotte, they may be assisted if they choose by the instituted acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who distributed the chalices.⁷⁸
77. The empty sacred vessels are purified by the priest at the altar or credence table.⁷⁹ The deacon purifies at the credence table. If purification is delayed until the dismissal of the people, they should be placed on a corporal and covered. They are to be purified immediately after the dismissal of the people.⁸⁰

⁶⁹ Canon 844; RS 85.

⁷⁰ GIRM 160, *Redemptionis sacramentum* 91.

⁷¹ GIRM 160.

⁷² GIRM 160.

⁷³ *Norms* 41.

⁷⁴ GIRM 118; *Redemptionis sacramentum* 93.

⁷⁵ GIRM, 287; *Redemptionis sacramentum*, 104.

⁷⁶ GIRM 43.

⁷⁷ GIRM 279.

⁷⁸ GIRM 284; *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, 52.

⁷⁹ GIRM 163.

⁸⁰ GIRM 183.

78. **While it is the norm for priests and/or deacons to perform the required purification of the sacred vessels following Communion, in virtue of the indult granted to the Bishops of the United States, in cases of real necessity extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may assist with this task.⁸¹ When the assistance of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is employed, the purifications should take place at the credence table immediately after Communion or immediately following the dismissal of the people.**
79. The Prayer after Communion ends the Communion rite; **no announcements or other activities (including second collections) that might distract from this solemn moment should be made or take place until this prayer has been offered.**⁸² If a layperson offers a reflection (e.g. a missionary appeal), it should be given *after* this prayer is concluded. **Second collections are proper either immediately following the first collection or following the Prayer after Communion.**
80. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion being sent to care for those unable to participate with the community should be sent forth from the celebration by the presiding priest. This emphasizes the connection of the reception of Holy Communion outside of Mass by the sick with the Holy Sacrifice.⁸³

Concluding Rite

81. Only the presiding priest and the deacon(s) of the Mass kiss the altar at the end of Mass.
82. When the Eucharist is reserved in the sanctuary:
- the presiding priest and ministers genuflect as they leave the sanctuary;
 - those carrying incense, cross, or candles bow their heads.⁸⁴
83. **Neither the Book of Gospels nor the Lectionary is carried out in the recessional.**⁸⁵

⁸¹ Indult of March 22, 2002 (Prot. 1383/01/L).

⁸² GIRM 166.

⁸³ Cf. *Worship of the Holy Eucharist Outside of Mass*, nos. 13-15.

⁸⁴ GIRM 274.

⁸⁵ GIRM 175.