

A CATECHETICAL AND LITURGICAL MOMENT  
“RECEIVING COMMUNION FROM THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS”

For centuries, the Church has maintained (or reserved) the consecrated Body of Christ in every church tabernacle around the world. Along with the consecrated, Blessed Sacrament host for the Liturgy of Eucharistic Adoration, a small number of reserved consecrated hosts are to be maintained in the locked tabernacle to be distributed, after the liturgy of the Mass, to the homebound, hospitalized, etc., by a Priest, Deacon, or parish-level, specially trained and validly mandated Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC).

Of note however, some parishes within the United States have sadly made it a routine (daily or weekly) practice to bring the ciborium of reserved consecrated hosts from the tabernacle to the altar and then utilize the reserved hosts during the Liturgy of the Mass to facilitate Holy Communion to the Mass gathered assembly. Of note, from the Church’s liturgical documents:

*“At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the gifts which will become Christ’s Body and Blood are brought to the altar. ... Even money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the Church, are acceptable; given their purpose, they are to be put in a suitable place away from the Eucharistic table [altar]” (GIRM #73).*

*“Since the celebration of the Eucharist is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that in accordance with the Lord’s command, his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by those of the faithful who are properly disposed” (GIRM #80).*

*“It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass [emphasis added] ...” (GIRM #85).*

*“This is one of the most important articles of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief) in the GIRM and yet at the same time is one of the most ignored instructions to the detriment of the Church’s ritual enactment and celebration. ... In popular parlance, the instruction means that parishes have to stop [routinely] going to the tabernacle to get hosts for the Communion of the faithful; this should only be done as an exception when an unforeseen number of the faithful will be receiving Holy Communion, and such cases should be rare” (GIRM Commentary, p. 70).*

*“While the practice of regularly distributing only what has been consecrated at that Mass requires oversight, maintenance and monitoring, it is not overly burdensome to implement and sustain. ... Considering that this practice has been called for, at least since 1742, by Pope Benedict XIV in *Certiores Effecti*, it would seem the time has come to finally implement this [long-standing] reform” (GIRM Commentary, p. 71-72).*

Therefore, in closing, I respectfully request ALL SACRISTANS to the best of their human ability (understanding late Mass arrivals are simply out of our control) ensure the amount of hosts brought forward during the Presentation of Gifts for consecration is sufficient for the number of the gathered assembly, as much as possible. We leave the rest up to God!

Thank you so very much for your generous Sacristan service via your time, talents and skills.

(SR: The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), 3d Edition and Pastoral Commentary on the GIRM, by Joseph DeGrocco @2011)