

GIRM 2002 Highlights

Notes as of 7/9/03

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	GIRM	Notes
1. Altar to be of stone or wood, and fixed.	<p>...the table of a fixed altar is to be of stone and indeed of natural stone. In the dioceses of the United States of America, however, wood which is worthy, solid, and well-crafted may be used provided that the altar is structurally immobile (301). It is desirable to have a fixed altar in every church... But in other places set aside for sacred celebrations, the altar may be movable (298). (Also 299)</p>	<p>The norm is for altars to be fixed and immovable. New construction and renovation will need to address this requirement. Substantial, well-crafted altars that are not actually fixed but are nonetheless not easily moved, as exist in several of our churches, need not be replaced. The intent is not to use an easily portable altar as the normal altar in a church.</p>

<p>2. Altar to be covered with white cloth.</p>	<p>The altar is to be covered with at least one white cloth (117). ...at least one white cloth should be placed on an altar where this memorial is celebrated. The shape, size, and decoration of the altar cloth should be in keeping with the design of the altar. When, in the dioceses of the United States of America, other cloths are used in addition to the altar cloth, then those cloths may be of other colors possessing Christian honorific or festive significance according to longstanding local usage, provided that the uppermost cloth covering the mensa (i.e., the altar cloth itself) is always white in color (304).</p>	<p>This is distinct from the corporal.</p>
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<p>3. Crucifix required, either as the stationary symbol above/near the altar, or in the processional cross (which then remains in the sanctuary).</p>	<p>On or close to the altar, there is to be a cross with a figure of Christ crucified. Furthermore...the cross adorned with a figure of Christ crucified may also be carried in the entrance procession (117).</p> <p>There is also to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, either on the altar or near it. This cross is to be clearly visible to the people gathered together. It is desirable that such a cross...remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations (308).</p>	<p>This may be “grandfathered” where neither a stationary nor a processional crucifix is in use.</p> <p>In many cases it will be preferable to place a crucifix <i>near</i> the altar rather than <i>on</i> it, as explained in <i>Built of Living Stones</i> (#91): “Since a crucifix placed <i>on</i> the altar and large enough to be seen by the congregation might well obstruct the view of the action taking place on the altar, other alternatives may be more appropriate. The crucifix may be suspended over the altar or affixed to the sanctuary wall. A processional cross of sufficient size, placed in a stand visible to the people following the entrance procession, is another option.”</p>
<p>4. Book of the Gospels may be on altar at beginning of Mass or it may be carried in (by deacon or reader) during the entrance procession.</p>	<p>The Book of the Gospels, distinct from the book of other readings, may be placed on the altar (117).</p> <p>[In a Mass without a deacon], a reader...may carry the Book of Gospels, though not the Lectionary, slightly elevated (120, d).</p>	<p>No actual change, but the custom of carrying the lectionary in procession should be dropped.</p> <p>Neither the Gospel Book nor the lectionary is ever carried out; rather, “the Gospel is carried out in the hearts of the faithful.”</p>

<p>5. The people are to stand immediately after the “Pray, brethren” (“<i>Orate, fratres</i>”) and then make their response.</p>	<p>...the priest...invites the people to pray, saying, <i>Pray, brethren</i>. The people rise and make their response: <i>May the Lord accept this sacrifice</i> (146).</p>	<p>This is a change for the people; what will be their “cue” to saying the prayer? A suggestion is that, after washing his hands, the presider say, “Let us stand” and then add “Pray, brethren.” In that way, the assembly is already standing for its response.</p>
<p>6. People to kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer, with certain exceptions.</p>	<p>In the dioceses of the United States of America, they [the faithful] should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the <i>Sanctus</i> until after the <i>Amen</i> of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion by reasons of health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or some other good reason. Those who do not kneel at the consecration, however, should make a profound bow while the priest is genuflecting after the consecration (43).</p>	<p>Toledo diocesan policy will be to interpret the occasions to remain standing through the Eucharistic Prayer expansively. “Some other good reason” would include most pontifical celebrations, weddings, funerals, churches without kneelers, occasions where the concelebrating priests would be blocking the view of the faithful, etc. Churches without kneelers need not install them until major renovations are undertaken.</p>

<p>7. Deacon kneels from the epiclesis until the showing of the chalice.</p>	<p>From the epiclesis until the priest shows the chalice, the deacon normally remains kneeling (179).</p>	<p>Outside the U.S.A., the faithful generally stand throughout the Eucharistic Prayer and are to kneel only for the dominical words of institution (the consecration narrative). The role of the deacon as envisioned in #179 is to be a visual cue to the people of when to kneel and when to stand. Since in the U.S.A., the people are already kneeling or will remain standing throughout, neither should the deacon kneel for the words of consecration. But he should bow when the priest genuflects (and so should a standing congregation) as noted in #43.</p>
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<p>8. Priest is to remain in the sanctuary for the sign of peace, with some latitude.</p>	<p>The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers, but always remains within the sanctuary, so that the celebration not be disturbed. In the dioceses of the United States of America, for a good reason, on special occasions (for example, in the case of a funeral, a wedding, or when civic leaders are present) the priest may offer the sign of peace to a few of the faithful near the sanctuary. At the same time, in accord with the decisions of the Conference of Bishops, all offer one another a sign that expresses peace, communion, and charity (154; cf. also 181).</p>	<p>The sign of peace is an action belonging to the entire assembly. What is to be avoided is any semblance that it must be tactilely handed down from the presider. All people should exchange it at the same time with those near them; this includes the presider, deacon, and other ministers. It is in no wise necessary for the presider (or anyone else) to “take it” from the sanctuary to the assembly, and that impression is always to be avoided.</p>
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<p>9. Posture during the "This is the Lamb of God"</p>	<p>The faithful kneel at the <i>Ecce Agnus Dei</i> unless the Diocesan Bishop determines otherwise (43).</p> <p>The uniformity in posture, which must be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the Sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the mind and spiritual attitude of the participants (42).</p>	<p>In the Diocese of Toledo, while standing is the preferred posture, the decision is left to the parish; the congregation may kneel if that is the agreed practice of the community and the same posture is assumed by all the faithful.</p>
<p>10. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not to approach the altar until after the presider has received Communion.</p>	<p>These [extraordinary] ministers should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion (162)</p>	<p>Extraordinary ministers may enter the sanctuary (but not approach the altar itself) during the Lamb of God, to make it easier for the priest (and deacon) to distribute Communion to them after the presider himself has received. If, at that time, they come close to the altar, if at all possible they should avoid arranging themselves behind the altar in the manner of concelebrating priests. The position where they stand to receive Communion will be determined most exactly by the size and floor plan of the church.</p>

<p>11. Only priests and deacons are to apportion the Body and Blood of Christ into ciboria and chalices.</p>	<p>These [extraordinary] ministers should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion (162).</p> <p>In all that pertains to Communion under both kinds, the <i>Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America</i> are to be followed (see nos. 22-54) (283).</p>	<p>“As the <i>Agnus Dei</i> or <i>Lamb of God</i> is begun, the bishop or priest alone, or with the assistance of the deacon, and if necessary of concelebrating priests, breaks the eucharistic bread” (<i>Norms</i>, #37).</p> <p>“Other empty chalices and ciboria or patens are then brought to the altar if this is necessary. <u>The deacon or priest</u> places the consecrated bread in several ciboria or patens and, if necessary, pours the Precious Blood into enough additional chalices... If it is not possible to accomplish this distribution in a reasonable time, the celebrant may call upon the assistance of <u>other deacons or concelebrating priests</u>” (<i>Norms</i>, #37).</p> <p>In a letter from Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez to Bishop Wilton Gregory dated Mar. 22, 2002, the cardinal insisted that deputation of extraordinary ministers not be extended to the apportionment of the Body or Blood of Christ. To the question, “We have no deacon at our parish. If Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can’t help</p>
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		<p>with the distribution to ancillary chalices, won't this unduly lengthen this part of the Mass?", the answer was "Presuming as many as eight chalices for distribution to the faithful, practice has shown the filling of these chalices by one person takes less than ten seconds per chalice. During the additional minute and a half added to this rite additional tropes may be added to the singing of the <i>Lamb of God</i>" (USCCB Newsletter, Oct. 2002, p. 99).</p> <p>If the number of chalices is exceptionally large, a priest or deacon might <i>initiate</i> the pouring into the ancillary chalices, and have an extraordinary minister complete the process. "In the case of large assemblies, it may be done at the side table within the sanctuary (<i>presbyterium</i>)" (<i>Norms</i>, #37).</p>
<p>12. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to receive Communion before distributing to the assembly.</p>	<p>In all that pertains to Communion under both kinds, the <i>Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America</i> are to be followed (see nos. 22-54) (283).</p>	<p>"The practice of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion waiting to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution of Holy Communion is not in accord with liturgical law" (<i>Norms</i>, #39).</p>

<p>13. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to receive their vessels from the hands of the priest or deacon.</p>	<p>These [extraordinary] ministers...always accept from the hands of the priest celebrant the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful (162).</p>	<p>“After all eucharistic ministers have received Communion, the bishop or priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The deacon may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion” (<i>Norms</i>, #40).</p> <p>If there is no deacon, the priest should initiate the handing of vessels to the eucharistic ministers, but be assisted by one or another of the eucharistic ministers. However, in no circumstances should a eucharistic minister take a vessel directly from the altar; the pattern should always be to receive rather than to take.</p>
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<p>14 The faithful are to stand when receiving Communion.</p>	<p>The norm for reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing. Communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for this norm (160).</p>	<p>(a) Standing to receive Communion in the United States, and (b) the uniformity of posture mentioned in #42 to express the unity of the assembly take precedence over idiosyncratic expressions of individual piety or spirituality.</p>
<p>15. Sign of reverence to be made just before receiving Communion; the sign should be uniform for the whole assembly.</p>	<p>When receiving Holy Communion standing, 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 (160).</p>	<p>For most people, this is new. A slight bow (nod), as one is presented with the Body or Blood of Christ, is the agreed, common, and acceptable sign for congregations in the USA; this gesture will take a moment This same sign should be used by all in keeping with #42. This sign, then, is in preference over alternative signs of reverence (such as genuflecting or making the sign of the cross) that have been suggested.</p>

<p>16. Other than concelebrating priests, the faithful may not take Communion from the altar themselves nor pass the chalice from one to another. For the faithful, there is always a minister of Holy Communion.</p>	<p>The faithful are not permitted to take the consecrated bread or the sacred chalice by themselves or, even less, to hand them from one to another (160).</p>	<p>“The chalice may never be left on the altar or another place to be picked up by the communicant for self-communication (except in the case of concelebrating bishops or priests), nor may the chalice be passed from one communicant to another. There shall always be a minister of the chalice” (<i>Norms, #44</i>).</p> <p>“The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. Communion under either form, bread or wine, must always be given by an ordinary or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion” (<i>Norms, #50</i>).</p>
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<p>17. The Body of Christ may be received on the tongue or in the hand.</p>	<p>...the priest shows it to each, saying, <i>The Body of Christ</i>. The communicant replies, <i>Amen</i>, and receives the Sacrament either on the tongue or, where this is allowed, in the hand, if the communicant so chooses (161).</p>	<p>Continued pastoral catechesis is needed on those who may appropriately receive the Eucharist and on the manner of receiving the Body of Christ. Receiving in the hand is preferred, and reminders of how to hold one's hands are useful. At the same time, the proper way to receive on the tongue should also be explained. The description in the <i>Norms</i> is helpful: "Holy Communion under the form of bread is offered to the communicant with the words 'The Body of Christ.' The communicant may choose whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue. 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, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive him, taking care that nothing is lost' " (#41).</p>
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<p>18. The vessels may be purified by extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. (This includes consuming the remaining Precious Blood and the consecrated Body of Christ.)</p>	<p>...whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ is consumed at the altar by the priest or deacon or by a duly instituted acolyte, who ministered the chalice and who then cleanses, wipes, and arranges the sacred vessels in the customary way (284 b).</p>	<p>Extraordinary ministers may also assist in purifying the vessels after Mass, as stipulated in <i>Norms, #52</i>.</p>
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<p>19. Vessels must be made of metal or other worthy materials fashioned with artistic merit.</p>	<p>Sacred vessels are to be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, then ordinarily they should be gilded on the inside (328).</p> <p>In the Dioceses of the United States of America, sacred vessels may also be made from other solid materials that, according to the common estimation in each region, are precious, e.g., ebony or other hard woods, as long as they are suited to sacred use. In such cases, preference is always to be given to materials that do not easily break or deteriorate. This applies to all vessels which are intended to hold hosts such as the paten, the ciborium, the pyx, the monstrance, and other things of this kind (329).</p> <p>Chalices and other vessels that are intended to serve as receptacles for the Blood of the Lord are to have bowls of nonabsorbent material. The base may be of any other solid and worthy material (330).</p>	<p>When vessels are neither made of gold nor gilt, they should still be made of materials that are considered locally valuable, fashioned with artistic merit, not especially fragile, and, particularly in the case of chalices, made with an impermeable bowl.</p>
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<p>20. Concelebration</p>	<p>In accordance with the norm of law, it is for the Bishop to regulate the discipline for concelebration in all churches and oratories of his diocese (202).</p>	<p>The rite for concelebrated Masses is discussed at some length in GIRM #199-251. The Toledo Diocesan Pastoral Handbook (pp. S-9 through S-12) and the fuller “Guidelines for Concelebration” (2000) will be revised to reflect more completely both the universal norms and Toledo custom. A few points worth reiterating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Those concelebrating must be wearing appropriate vestments, be gathered in one place that does not block the view of the faithful, be present at the beginning of the Mass. b. It must always be evident that there is only one presider; the concelebrants must not obscure this presiding role by their vesture, their position, their voices during the Eucharistic Prayer, etc. c. All are to join in the same hand gestures during the epiclesis and the consecration of the bread and the consecration
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<p>21. Vesture of acolytes, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.</p>	<p>In the dioceses of the United States of America, acolytes, altar servers, readers, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other suitable vesture or other appropriate and dignified clothing (339).</p>	<p>of the wine.</p> <p>“Servers are to wear the same liturgical vesture and the alb is the preferred vestment” (<i>Pastoral Policy Handbook</i>, IV.H.2.e, p. S-39).</p> <p>“[Extraordinary ministers of the Holy Communion] are to dress according to their state in life in a style that reflects respect for the Eucharist and the community. Alb, cassock, and surplice, choir gown, stole, etc., are not allowed” (<i>Pastoral Policy Handbook</i>, VIII.B.2.o, p. S-56).</p> <p>The norm for lectors’ apparel is the same as for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.</p>
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<p>22. Singing of parts of the Mass (especially those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer provided with musical notation).</p>	<p>For this reason...great importance should be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass. Although it is not always necessary to sing all the texts that are of themselves meant to be sung (e.g., in weekday Masses), every care must be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and holy days of obligation (40).</p> <p>It is very appropriate that the priest sing those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer for which musical notation is provided (147).</p>	
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<p>23. Training, appointment, and installation of altar servers</p>	<p>In the absence of an instituted acolyte, lay ministers may be commissioned to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. They may carry the cross, the candles, the censer (thurible), the bread, the wine, and the water (100).</p> <p>The liturgical functions that are not proper to the priest or deacon and are listed above (nos. 100-106) may also be entrusted by a liturgical blessing or a temporary deputation to suitable lay people chosen by the pastor or rector of the church. All should observe the norms established by the Bishop for his diocese regarding the office of those who serve the priest at the altar (107).</p>	<p>The Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook will be amended to read: “Trained servers are to carry out the functions listed in no. 100 of the GIRM. Such servers are to be chosen by the pastor or rector of the church and entrusted with their duties by a liturgical blessing. The following guidelines regarding the ministry of servers or acolytes are normative...” (IV.H.2, currently p. S-39).</p> <p>The Order of Blessing Altar Servers is found in the <i>Book of Blessings</i>, Part VI, Chapter 62. Carrying out this blessing during a Sunday liturgy will impress both the servers and the assembly with the importance of the Mass and those who minister during it. (The same can be said for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and for lectors.)</p>
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<p>24. Criteria for the building or renovation of churches</p>	<p>All who are involved in the construction, restoration, and remodeling of sacred buildings are to consult the diocesan Commission on the Sacred Liturgy and Sacred Art. The diocesan Bishop, moreover, is to use the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important issues (291).</p>	<p>A clarification will be added to the <i>Pastoral Policy Handbook</i>, noting that <i>Built of Living Stones</i> is a normative for the suitability of various plans in submitting plans to the Toledo Diocesan Liturgical Commission and the Bishop for consultation and approval.</p>
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