

Guidelines for
ALTAR MINISTERS
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS
OF HOLY COMMUNION
ACOLYTES

Archdiocese of Perth
Liturgical Guidelines

Centre for Liturgy



Guidelines for
Junior and Senior Altar Ministers
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Acolytes

Archdiocese of Perth

The source of the call addressed to all members of the Mystical Body to participate actively in the mission and edification of the People of God, is to be found in the mystery of the Church. The People of God participate in this call through the dynamic of an organic communion in accord with their diverse ministries and charisms.

Pope Paul VI described the Eucharist as a testament of Christ's "immense love", a "wonderful gift", "the greatest gift of all".

Pope Paul VI, Immensae Caritatis, 25 January 1973

These guidelines are offered as the fruit of the experience of the Perth Church
In regard to the development of the ministries
of Altar Ministers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and Acolytes.

Approved for use in the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia, 19 April 1999.

2022 Revised Edition

CONTENTS

Historical Background	5
Theology of Ministry	6
Clarification of Roles and Their Complementary Relationship	8
Altar Ministers	10
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	13
Acolytes	18
Communion to the Sick	25
Ministry Review Sheet	28
Resource List	30
Appendix 1	31
Archdiocesan Guidelines for Communion under Both Kinds	
Appendix 2	35
Guidelines on Ministry of Holy Communion for those living with Coeliac disease or Gluten intolerance	
Appendix 3	37
Recommended Correct Hygiene Practice and Cleaning	
Appendix 4	
Rite of Commissioning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	38
Archdiocesan Policy and Legal Requirements	42

Historical Background

The Perth Story

1 January 1972 the Church implemented Pope Paul VI's decree of 15 August 1971 that the ministries of Acolyte and Lector would now be available to lay people. One of the roles for Acolytes would be to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.

25 January 1972, the Church issued the faculty by which lay people could assist with the distribution of Communion.

1974 some Perth priests petitioned Archbishop Goody for assistance with the distribution of Communion. The Archbishop decided that in the Archdiocese of Perth instituted acolytes (men only) would be the regular assistants to the priest in the distribution of Communion.

December 1986, in readiness for the large crowd attending the Belmont Mass of Pope John Paul II a large number of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion were specially trained.

In 1987, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion were introduced into Perth Archdiocesan parishes.

July 1992 Pope John Paul II confirmed a Vatican clarification that the 1983 Code of Canon Law allows both males and females of any age as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to assist at serving Mass.

January 2021 Motu proprio issued by Pope Francis modifying Canon 230#1 of the Code of Canon law that women have access to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte.

Theology of Ministry

The word “ministry” comes from the Latin word *ministro*, which means “to serve”. Ministries are the means by which members of the Church can use their talents to serve their communities.

CCC 162 Faith is an entirely free gift that God give to us. To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church. Serving our communities in ministry, especially those of the liturgy, enables ‘works of charity’ to bear fruit for both the minister and the members of the community. Jesus shows us how to serve; in humility and unconditional love.

The Eucharist is the expression of the supreme mystery of our Catholic faith. Accordingly it is called the source, summit and centre of Catholic life. In other words, all Catholic activity should be seen to flow from the Eucharist and to find its ultimate meaning in the Eucharist.

To perform a liturgical ministry within the Eucharistic celebration is a call to participate in a special way in this marvellous mystery: the dying of Jesus, his rising and coming again. Those to whom the Church entrusts this sacred ministry are called to a most "*important office of immense love*".

Pope Paul VI, Immensae Caritatis, 25 January 1973

Call and Selection of Candidates for Communion Ministries

The Roman document **Immensae Caritatis** outlines the following criteria for the selection of Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

“The person . . . should distinguish himself (herself) by Christian life, faith and morals; striving to be worthy of this great office, cultivating devotion to the Holy Eucharist and acting as an example to the other faithful by piety and reverence for this most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful.” 6

The candidate must be a baptised practising Catholic.

Theology of Ministry

Training and Formation for Ministry

“Those who serve at the altar exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought to discharge their office therefore, with the sincere devotion and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. Consequently, they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, in the measure proper to each one, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner.” **Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 29**

“Lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil their role.” **Canon 231, 1**

The term ‘Training’ refers to all that an individual needs to know to carry out their role with confidence and understanding. ‘Formation’ refers to other assistance given from time to time to help the person mature in the understanding of their ministry and role.

Clarification of Roles and Their Complementary Relationship

The prime characteristic of all that surrounds liturgical celebration is '*noble simplicity*'. **Sacrosanctum Concilium, 34**

The roles and tasks of those who serve within the liturgy are guided by and arise from this characteristic. Any gesture or movement or attitude that draws attention to itself and distracts the assembly from the central action of the Eucharist is to be discouraged.

This will be achieved firstly by the proper initial *training* of all persons *before* they perform any public ministry.

However, because anomalies and inappropriate actions can creep into liturgy even on the part of a small number of persons, it should be accepted practice that periodic reviews are conducted so that best practice is maintained. The aim of such a review should not be to find fault but to encourage the best standard of liturgy in accordance with the Church's hope for a truly spiritual experience by all who are present.

It is important that all members of a ministry group participate in these review sessions so that a consistent approach and attitude to Eucharistic ministry can be maintained.

Each ministry group – acolytes, ministers of the word, altar ministers, commentators, cantors, musicians, sacristans, ushers, collectors – will need periodic education on how their respective roles complement each other. New people joining these ministries should not be presumed to possess this understanding and should be appropriately instructed.

Each member of a ministry group should be required and continually reminded to accept personal responsibility for their attendance, their punctuality and preparedness, mindful that any negligence becomes a dis-service to the wider community. Before a liturgy commences the acolyte should be able to verify that all rostered persons are present for their duties.

Because each ministry's role is to contribute to the overall prayerful experience of the community, the number of altar ministers should be adequate but not superfluous for the number of tasks to be performed.

Clarification of Roles and Their Complementary Relationship

For example, a typical Sunday liturgy is likely to require one Acolyte, one Senior Minister, two Junior Ministers, and sufficient Extraordinary Ministers for the unhurried reception of Communion under two kinds. On the other hand, it is liturgically inappropriate in normal circumstances for the above categories of altar ministers to assume other roles at the same celebration such as reading, commentating, leading music etc.

“In liturgical celebrations each one, minister or lay person, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy.”

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 28

Altar Ministers: Junior and Senior

In July 1992 Pope John Paul II confirmed a Vatican clarification that the 1986 **Code of Canon Law #230** allows both males and females of any age to assist at serving Mass.

In the spirit of this clarification the role of the Junior and Senior Minister in the Archdiocese of Perth is outlined below:

Role

Junior Altar Ministers: Boys and Girls

The Altar Ministers' special ministry is to take part in the procession to and from the sanctuary and assist in areas pertaining to the altar and ambo allocated to them.

They assist with the smooth flow of the liturgical rite, enhancing the spirit of worship and prayer.

Altar Ministers enable the priest and the congregation to celebrate the Eucharist in a worthy manner.

Junior Altar Ministers should normally have made their first Holy Communion.

Senior Altar Ministers: Men and Women

Senior Ministers are Altar Ministers 18 years old or older.

Their formation and training should cover the same material as Junior Ministers, but designed for older participants.

Men and women may serve.

They may assist with the distribution of Communion if they are Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

They may assist with the distribution of Communion as an ad-hoc Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, if needed.

In the absence of an Acolyte for a particular liturgical celebration a Senior Minister does all that is required to facilitate the dignity of the celebration under the supervision of the parish priest or chaplain.

Altar Ministers: Junior and Senior

Training and Formation

Altar Ministers play a very visible part in parish liturgy. Their training and formation programs take place at parish level. In keeping with the special dignity of this ministry of service within the sanctuary, opportunities for continuing education, reflection and renewal need to be provided by the parish.

The proper training of ministers, especially the young, is most important and should be the responsibility of one or two people in the parish so that uniformity and consistency can be maintained.

Young ministers particularly need practical training and rehearsal of their roles especially for ceremonies with which they may not be familiar such as Holy Week or Christmas. This should be provided at regular intervals to ensure that standards are maintained.

For the young person, their time of altar ministry plays an important part in their personal spiritual growth. From time to time they should be given formation appropriate to their age through short reflections, seminars, social activities.

Vesture

Both Junior Altar Ministers and Senior Altar Ministers wear a white alb and cincture when assisting at a liturgical celebration.

Commencement of Ministry

Altar Ministers, Junior or Senior, may be introduced to the community when appropriate by information in the bulletin or a low-key reference at Mass.

Length of Service

Altar Ministers, Junior or Senior, should have the opportunity left open to them to cease service at any time and for whatever reason.

Altar Ministers: Junior and Senior

Ritual Actions

Carrying candles and cross in the entrance procession into the church and the procession leaving the church.

Assisting with the Sacramentary at the chair for the presider for the

Collect

Profession of Faith

General Intercessions

Prayer after Communion.

Assisting with the purification of the priest at the Altar.

Assisting with both setting up and clearing up.

Incensation when used.

A new publication is available to download from the Centre for Liturgy website to assist with the training of Altar Ministers in the Archdiocese of Perth:

Training Manual Altar Ministers: Junior and Senior.

<http://liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au/liturgical-guidelines/>

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Commissioned, Ad Hoc and Student

Role

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist the priest in giving Communion to the assembly. They may also take Communion to the sick and elderly at home or in hospitals. Immensae Caritatis, 1

“Ad hoc” Ministers of Communion may be called upon by priests when Acolytes or appointed Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are unavailable. “Ad hoc” Ministers include family members who may be appointed by the parish priest to give Communion to the ill, to a person with disabilities or a dying family member.

Student Ministers of Holy Communion assist the priest in distributing Communion at school Masses.

Age of Candidates

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for parishes in the Archdiocese of Perth (including “Ad hoc” Ministers) should be at least 18 years of age.

Student Ministers of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Perth should be at least 16 years of age.

Vesture

Respectful and appropriate dress is to be worn when distributing communion.

Length of Service

Parish Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned for a two year period. Certificates of Commissioning, available from the Centre for Liturgy, authorise Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to serve the particular parish named thereon for **two years**.

At the end of this time, the situation of the minister, local circumstances and the discretion of the parish priest will determine whether new or additional candidates are required, and whether existing ministers be asked to step down due to age or for other reasons.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Commissioned, Ad Hoc and Student

Re-commissioning certificates for a further two years are available to download from the Centre for Liturgy website:

www.liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au

Notwithstanding this:

- i) Priests may request a commissioned Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from other parishes to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion if there is a need.
- ii) Should an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion move permanently to another parish and is accepted for ministry there, he/she should receive a Certificate of Commissioning from the new parish priest.

Student Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion shall be commissioned for one year's service in a school.

Ritual Actions

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion do not participate in the procession to and from the altar. Also, they do not normally go to the tabernacle during the Eucharist.

The ministers approach the altar after the priest has received communion. They then move to an appropriate place on the sanctuary area to receive communion themselves.

After receiving Communion, they receive the vessel containing the Eucharistic species and move to their position for the distribution of the Body or Blood of the Lord.

After distribution of Communion, the minister takes the vessel to the place designated, and moves directly to their seat, presenting a minimum of distraction during the Post Communion reflection.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Commissioned for Parish

Selection Criteria

The selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is a parish initiative and responsibility. An individual should be invited by the parish priest or by a delegated member of his pastoral team. A public call for volunteers is not recommended, since to refuse an individual's offer may be pastorally difficult. Those invited into this ministry must be baptised practising Catholics.

Training and Formation

Whilst the usual Sunday to commission new ministers is on the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, in parish life for many reasons this is often not possible. The Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy offers a number of regional workshops for new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion throughout the year. New Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be given additional local training on how to approach the altar and all else to fulfil their ministry on a practical level. Parishes will receive information from the Centre for Liturgy for conducting an additional training session.

All commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be given opportunities to deepen their spirituality and understanding of their ministry. This formation may well take place in conjunction with Acolytes, Readers or other ministers.

Certificate for Completion of Training

Certificates for Commissioning will be issued from the Centre for Liturgy to the parish to be presented to the minister at the Commissioning Rite.

Commencement of Ministry

The recommended occasion for commissioning in a parish is the Solemn Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. The ceremony takes place after the Gospel during the Sunday Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Commissioned for School

Selection Criteria

Student Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can only be appointed upon the recommendation of the school chaplain (or parish priest representative on the school board where there is no chaplain). Students who are selected to assist as Extraordinary Ministers should meet the following criteria (following on from **Immensae Caritatis, 6**):

- be Catholic
- demonstrate Christian leadership in the school
- attend Mass each Sunday
- be well respected by their peers
- be recognized in the school community as accepting of all students regardless of ethnic, social or economic background or peer group
- be willing to accept the role of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and the responsibility it implies by the way they witness to the presence of Jesus in their lives.

Training and Formation

Before commissioning, Student Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion shall have completed a training program approved by the Archdiocese of Perth and conducted by a trained facilitator. The material for this training Program is available from the Catholic Education Office.

Commencement of Ministry

The recommended occasion for commissioning in a school is at a full school Eucharist or assembly; when the Altar Ministers are presented with Certificates of Commissioning (available from the Centre for Liturgy upon satisfactory completion of the training program).

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Ad Hoc

Ad Hoc

If “ad hoc” ministers are required it is best they be organized before the Eucharistic celebration and be properly instructed for their task. “Ad hoc” Ministers of Communion are to be commissioned with the following or similar formula:

“Today you are to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ to your sisters and brothers.

May the Lord bless you + (N_____).”

Blessing to be given by Eucharistic Ministers

People who cannot or do not want to receive Communion can request a blessing by taking part in the Communion procession with arms crossed on their chest. Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may give a simple blessing either by tracing the sign of the cross on the person's forehead or simply saying: ***“God bless you.”***

Acolytes

Role

January 2021 Motu proprio issued by Pope Francis modifying Canon 230#1 of the Code of Canon law that women have access to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte.

The liturgical ministry of the Acolyte is to assist the priest or deacon and for the service of the altar.

“An Acolyte is appointed to assist the deacon and to minister to the priest. It is his duty therefore to attend to the service of the altar, to assist the deacon and the priest in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of Mass. It also falls to him to distribute Holy Communion, as a minister . . . He may also, as the need arises, instruct those of the faithful who are temporarily appointed to assist the priest and deacon by carrying the missal, the cross or the candles or by performing other similar duties in liturgical celebrations . . . Since an Acolyte is especially destined for the service of the altar, he should familiarise himself with everything which pertains to divine worship and should endeavour to understand its spirit and its inner meaning.”

Pope Paul VI, Ministeria Quaedam, #6

The Ministry of the Instituted Acolyte

98 The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the Priest and Deacon. It is his place principally to prepare the altar and sacred vessels and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an extraordinary minister. If Communion is given under both kinds, in the absence of a Deacon, the acolyte administers the chalice.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal #188-193

In the Archdiocese of Perth the ministry of Altar Ministers both junior and senior is encouraged. In order to make sure that this ministry continues only **ONE** Acolyte, with the required number of altar ministers, will assist at parish Masses.

Acolytes

Five Year Faculty of Service

Terms of Institution into the Ministry of Acolyte

1. A candidate is instituted in the ministry of acolyte for his lifetime and is not required to be re-instituted.
2. In the Archdiocese of Perth, permission to regularly exercise the ministry is at the discretion of the Archbishop and at present is granted for a maximum period of five years, following which the Acolyte may apply for a further period of service.
3. The Archbishop reserves the right to withdraw the faculty of service at any time.
4. The Acolyte's faculty of service permits him to serve anywhere within the territory of the Archdiocese of Perth but always and only at the invitation of the priest in charge of the church or chapel.
5. An Acolyte taking up permanent residence outside the Archdiocese of Perth automatically surrenders his faculty to exercise his ministry within the Archdiocese and he is requested to notify the Centre for Liturgy of his departure.
6. An Acolyte from another diocese, taking up permanent residence and service in the Archdiocese, is asked to notify the Centre for Liturgy of the date and place of institution and provide a Working With Children Certificate so that a Five Year Faculty of Service can be issued.
7. All active Acolytes are expected to keep the Centre for Liturgy informed of any changes of address or if there is a change in the parish in which they are being invited to exercise their ministry as a permanent arrangement.
8. Any Acolyte wishing not to continue in the active ministry before the conclusion of five years is expected simply to notify his parish priest and the Centre for Liturgy of that fact.

Acolytes

Acolyte from Another Diocese

The procedure for an acolyte from another diocese, taking up permanent residence and service in the Archdiocese of Perth:

The Acolyte is to present to the parish:

- A copy of their Certificate of Institution
- A letter signed by the Bishop of their previous Diocese stating that they are instituted Acolyte.
- A valid Working with Children Clearance card.

The parish must then forward to the Centre for Liturgy:

- A completed acolyte ministry relocation Form A, available from the Centre for Liturgy.
- A copy of their Certificate of Institution.

Once this information is received the Acolyte's details will be entered into the Archdiocese of Perth Acolyte Database.

Age of Candidates

Acolytes are required to be at least 21 years of age.

Selection Criteria

The selection of new Acolytes is the responsibility of the Parish Priest. A public call for volunteers is not recommended, since to refuse an individual's offer may be pastorally difficult. Those invited into this ministry must be baptised practising Catholics.

Training and Formation

Training to become an Acolyte will include theology and scripture pertaining to this ministry, and a sound knowledge of the pastoral principles of liturgy as provided by the Church-documents.

Those wishing to become Acolytes are expected to have been trained at a Parish level and functioned as Senior Altar Ministers for at least three months before completing the introductory course drawn up by the Centre for Liturgy and approved by the Archbishop. Where this is not possible, alternative arrangements have to be made with the Centre for Liturgy.

Acolytes

During the introductory course the candidates are reminded that their decision to enter the ministry is to be made only after they have completed the course and understood the significance of their decision.

Because circumstances vary from parish to parish, the practical training of Acolytes is given largely at the parish level, keeping in view the principles and directions of the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal**.

Additionally, the Centre for Liturgy conducts annual workshops on areas related to the Acolyte ministry.

Acolyte formation takes place at the parish and at the diocesan level. They should be given regular opportunities for personal reflection and deeper appreciation of the ministry. This may well take place in conjunction with Acolytes from neighbouring parishes. It is highly recommended that they attend diocesan workshops conducted.

Vesture

Acolytes wear a white alb and cincture when assisting at a liturgical celebration.

Commencement of Ministry

New Acolytes will have been instituted by a bishop at a Cathedral ceremony or some other public occasion. No further ceremony is required therefore at the parish level although a simple recognition, such as a public presentation of their certificate, may be appropriate.

Instituted Acolytes taking up active service in the parish should be introduced. Similarly, Acolytes ceasing regular active duty through health, age, or transfer might well have their service acknowledged.

Length of Service

Acolytes are instituted in the ministry for their lifetime but in the Archdiocese of Perth they are required to serve under the terms of a five year (renewable) Faculty of Service from the Archbishop.

Acolytes

Ritual Actions

The technical description of an Acolyte as ministering “at the altar” should be interpreted as having a special role in helping with the prayerful and appropriate unfolding of the liturgical action.

It is not to be interpreted as “standing at” the altar during the Eucharistic Prayer, such as the deacon who physically stands next to the priest and assists him; nor does it imply the Acolyte sitting at the side of the priest. The priest’s chair symbolizes his unique presidential role, and is shared only by deacons if they are present. It is even less appropriate for altar ministers to sit alongside the priest.

The Functions of the Acolyte

187 The functions that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may occur at the same moment. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed ... If, in fact, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

The Introductory Rites

188 In procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers, with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, however, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it away in a dignified place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

189 Through the entire celebration, it is for the acolyte to approach the Priest or the Deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate that, insofar as possible, the acolyte should occupy a place from which he can easily carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

Acolytes

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

190 In the absence of a Deacon, after the Universal Prayer and while the Priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar.

Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the Priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the Priest. If incense is being used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the Priest and assists him while he incenses the offerings, the cross, and the altar. Then the Acolyte incenses the Priest and the people.

191 A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary minister, may if necessary, assist the Priest in distributing Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, in the absence of a Deacon, the Acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants.

192 Likewise, after the distribution of Communion is complete, a duly instituted acolyte helps the Priest or Deacon to purify and arrange the sacred vessels. In the absence of a Deacon, a duly instituted Acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies them, wipes them and arranges them as usual.

193 After the celebration of Mass, the Acolyte and other ministers, return together with the Deacon and the Priest in procession to the sacristy, in the same manner and in the same order in which they entered. **General Instruction of the Roman Missal.**

Acolytes and the Order of Communion

For the integration of Acolytes into the Communion order of the Mass the following is appropriate:

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 and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they share in the chalice, so that, likewise, by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a sharing in the sacrifice actually being offered.

Acolytes

If an occasion should arise when more particles than those consecrated at a particular Eucharist are needed, the tabernacle may be approached.

The number of consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle should be kept to a minimum to emphasize the actual Communion at a particular Mass. Also, it has significance for the sick e.g. to know that they are communicating from a particular Mass at which they have been prayed for.

During the distribution of Communion objects on the altar can be removed.

After the distribution of Communion, the gathering of the remaining particles into one vessel should be done discreetly at the credence table. Likewise, the consumption of the remaining contents of the chalice(s) is to be done by the celebrant, concelebrating priests and/or deacon at the altar, if possible. The vessels are then taken to the credence table for purification.

Good liturgical sense suggests that the calm of the Communion reflection be established as soon as possible, hence there should be a minimum of unnecessary movement on the part of Acolytes or Ministers. The priest moves to his chair at the earliest opportunity, thus showing that the time of prayer has commenced.

Ongoing Formation

It will be to the advantage to Acolytes, Altar Ministers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to have practical rehearsal training from time to time and to be kept abreast of training being given to respective groups.

Blessing to be given by Eucharistic Ministers

People who cannot or do not want to receive Communion can request a blessing by taking part in the Communion procession with arms crossed on their chest. Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may give a simple blessing either by tracing the sign of the cross on the person's forehead or simply saying: *“God bless you.”*

Communion to the Sick

Workshops are conducted for this Ministry on a regular basis. Please check the Centre for Liturgy website: www.liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au

Ministers Taking Communion to the Sick and Elderly

When Acolytes or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed to take Communion to the sick and elderly, care should be taken to preserve the ecclesial sense of continuity with both the community and the Eucharistic liturgy from which the Eucharist is brought to the sick person.

Ministers may be commissioned to take Communion to the sick and elderly in the midst of the Eucharistic Assembly, before the Closing Prayer. In this way the sick at home are given visibility at the Eucharist.

The following or similar formula may be used:

“We are united with our parishioners who through sickness or infirmity are not able to be with us today. This bread now broken is shared among us and with them, that we may all become one body, the body of Christ. Go now with this food of life and assure them of our prayer and blessing.”

The Minister’s Personal Preparation

The Church is called to be present to its sick members in a special way since they are most in need of our concern. The minister to the sick, therefore, will be a person of gentle sensitivity, loving concern, understanding and, above all, a good listener.

The minister also should be available to spend time with the sick person, encouraging them to unite their sufferings to those of the crucified Lord and to offer them for other needy members of Christ's body.

In the Eucharist the sick person is joined to Christ and the whole Church. It is for the minister of this sacrament then to convey something of the love, concern and gentleness of Christ and his Church by what is done and the way it is done.

Communion to the Sick

When bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, the minister should endeavour to be aware of the presence of the Lord on their own person and to remain in prayer with the Lord.

While being courteous to people whom they may meet by chance, the minister ought not to engage in superfluous conversation, explaining if need be, why they cannot delay.

The Ceremony

The Blessed Sacrament is to be carried in a pyx or other covered vessel.

The dress of the minister and the manner of carrying the Eucharist should be appropriate and in accord with local circumstances.

A suitable table ought to be prepared, with a covering and candles as appropriate to the circumstances.

When giving Communion to the sick person the minister may sometimes need to break off a small portion of the host rather than use the complete particle.

Some sick people may experience difficulty swallowing owing to dryness of the mouth. To help the patient swallow a sip of water may be offered immediately before or after giving Communion.

Alternatively, the minister may float a small particle of the host on a spoonful of water. The remainder of such a broken host is to be returned to the tabernacle if there are no others for Communion.

Small fragments that may remain after Communion are to be reverently gathered and placed in a vessel of water that may be drunk or poured out in a suitable place.

After distributing Holy Communion it can be helpful for the minister to pray with the sick person with prayers either read or spontaneous.

Warmth and kindness is a very telling way of communicating the love and mercy of Christ.

Communion to the Sick

The Text of the Ceremony

A Extraordinary Minister of Communion to the Sick should follow the rite outlined in the manual **Pastoral Care of The Sick**, (Chapter Three, pages 50 to 64)

The following is a summary of the rite, which can be adapted to the circumstances of the sick person:

- a) Greeting: “Peace be with you (this house) and all who live here” (or alternatives)
- b) Penitential rite: “Let us turn to the Lord and ask forgiveness for our sins” or “I confess etc.”
- c) Short form of the reading of the Word (**Pastoral Care of The Sick**, five options, pages 58-59)
- d) Holy Communion:
 - The Lord's Prayer is said together;
 - The host is held up:
 - “This is the Lamb of God etc...”
 - or
 - “This is the bread of life; taste and see that the Lord is good”
 - “Lord, I am not worthy etc ...”
 - Silent prayer or shared prayer
 - Concluding prayer (**PCS** three options pages 62 and 63).
 - Blessing (**PCS** pages 63 and 64).

Ministry Review Sheet

The Ministry Review sheet is a suggested resource that may need to be adapted further to be relevant to particular ministries.

This resource is offered as one way of gauging how Acolytes, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and Altar Ministers are feeling about their ministry, and if support is needed or changes made.

- Pray for guidance. The basis of ministry is to be open to God.
- Read: Ephesians 1:3-14

(It may be helpful to jot down some responses to the following topics)

God

As an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister has your faith and love of God in any way changed because of your commitment to your ministry? If so, how?

Church

As an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister has your appreciation of the Church generally in any way altered? If so, how?

Priest

As an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister has your relationship towards your parish priest(s) in any way changed? If so, how?

Parish

As an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister has your understanding of parishioners developed in any way? If so, how?

Ministry Review Sheet

Marriage

Has being an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister affected the relationship with your spouse in any way? If so, how?

Family

As an Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister on the sanctuary, and so not sitting in the congregation with your family, has this affected your relationship with them in any way? If so, how?

Support

Are there areas in your ministry where you feel you need more support or formation? If so, how and what?

Continuance

Do you wish to continue in the active ministry of the Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister. If so, why?

Discontinuance

Do you wish to discontinue in the active ministry of the Acolyte / Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister. If so, why?

Further Concerns

Are there any other issues and concerns you have about being an Acolyte Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion / Altar Minister? If so, what?

Resource List

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)

1963. Found in “The Liturgy Documents - A Parish Resource”, 3rd Ed., Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago 1991

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Final Text 2011, With Application for Australia. 2012. St Paul’s Publications, Australia

Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Ministry (Eucharisticum Mysterium), 25 May 1967. Found in “Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979”, Liturgical Press 1982

On Tonsure, Minor Orders, Subdiaconate (Ministeria Quaedam), 15 August 1972. Found in “Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979”, Liturgical Press 1982

Instruction on Facilitating Eucharistic Communion in Particular Circumstances (Immensae Caritatis), 25 January 1973. Found in Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979, Liturgical Press 1982

On Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside of Mass (Eucharistiae Sacramentum), 21 June 1973. Found in Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979, Liturgical Press 1982

Pastoral Care of the Sick - Rites of Anointing and Viaticum , Approved for use in Australia by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1982

An Important Office of Immense Love: A Handbook for Eucharistic Ministers, Joseph M Champlin, Paulist Press, 1980

Study Book for Special Ministers of the Holy Communion, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1980

One Bread, One Cup - The complete handbook for Special Ministers of Communion, The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane 1996

Communion of the Sick— The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane 1991 Revised 2012

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest [Australian Catholic Bishop Conference](#) - [Centre for Liturgy Website](#)

Appendix 1

Communion Under Both Kinds

*Implementation Guidelines for Communion under Both Kinds
in the Archdiocese of Perth*

Promulgated by the Archbishop of Perth - 22 April 1997

1. In the Archdiocese of Perth, the Guidelines for Distribution of Communion under Both Kinds issued by the Australian Conference of Bishops on 10 July 1986, are hereby adopted.
2. While the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal** outlines the occasions when Communion under both kinds is permitted, a later rescript from the Holy See (1986) allows local Bishops' Conferences to extend those occasions.
3. Communion under two kinds therefore, is permitted on a large number of occasions as listed in No. 283 of the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal** and at Masses on Sundays and Feast Days in Australia, if it can be given in an orderly and reverent way.
4. It will be noted that Communion from the chalice is preferred to any other form of ministering the Precious Blood. Intinction by the celebrant or the Eucharistic minister - not by the communicant - is permitted by the Guidelines, but not encouraged because it denies the legitimate option of receiving Communion in the hand.
5. **Preparation**
 - 5.1 Chalices and cups for the distribution of the Precious Blood should be worthy of their function. They should be metal or solid glass, not wood or unglazed pottery. Vessels with chips or scratches should never be used.
 - 5.2 To emphasize the sign of sharing in the "One Bread and One Cup", one major chalice should be used together with multiple cups situated slightly to one side of the main chalice so as not to obscure it from view.

Appendix 1

- 5.3 The additional cups may be prepared with wine before Mass, or be prepared from a large vessel filled with wine that can be brought up in procession at the preparation of the gifts.
- 5.4 A chalice must be used at the Consecration. A decanter cannot take its place as it is only a receptacle for the additional wine that is needed.
- 5.5 Sufficient cups, with purifiers, are to be provided for each Communion station. Experience indicates that two cups may be required at each location where hosts are distributed.
- 5.6 Purifiers are to be changed between Masses.

6. Distribution

- 6.1 Priests are the ordinary ministers of Communion. Acolytes and other extraordinary Eucharistic ministers may assist when needed.
- 6.2 Ministers of the Eucharist receive under two kinds before offering Communion to the faithful.
- 6.3 When ministers of the cup move to their stations they need to position themselves at some distance from the ministers distributing the Body of Christ, so as to allow an uncongested flow of the people receiving Communion.
- 6.4 Communicants should receive Communion in a reverential and prayerful way. In presenting the cup, the minister says: "The Blood of Christ". The communicant responds: "Amen" and then drinks a small portion from the cup before handing the cup back to the minister. The minister then wipes the cup thoroughly with the purifier, rotates the cup a quarter turn and presents it to the next communicant. The whole purifier should be used, not just the same part of it each time the cup is wiped.

Appendix 1

- 6.5 Eucharistic Ministers should not distribute Communion when suffering from a cold or other communicable virus. Similarly, communicants suffering from a cold or virus should refrain from drinking from the cup.
- 6.6 When the celebrant has an infection he should use a separate cup for his own Communion.
- 7. After Communion**
- 7.1 The purification of the sacred vessels may be completed after Mass in accordance with **General Instruction of the Roman Missal**. Purifying the vessels should not be a distraction during the Communion reflection time.
- 8. Catechesis**
- 8.1 The faithful are to be adequately instructed about Communion under both kinds. Its significance is clearly outlined in the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal**: *“The meaning of Communion is signified as clearly as possible when it is given under both kinds. In this form the meal aspect of the Eucharist is more fully manifested, and Christ’s intention that the new and eternal Covenant should be ratified in his Blood is better expressed. Also, the connection between the Eucharistic meal and the heavenly banquet in the Father’s Kingdom becomes easier to see”.*
- 8.2 The people may refrain from receiving from the chalice for personal reasons, such as hygiene. Their liberty in this matter is to be respected. After all, it is Catholic teaching that “the whole and living Christ is received under the form of the bread OR the wine alone”.
- 8.3 No authorization for the practice of intinction by the people is found in official Church documents. Arguments based on practicality or hygiene do not justify it.

Appendix 1

- 8.4 The question of hygiene is of increasing concern. Authorities disagree about the risk of infection from drinking from the chalice or from infection. In this climate of uncertainty every effort must be made to ensure the sacred vessels are thoroughly cleaned after every Mass, and that priests and other Eucharistic ministers take care to wash their hands before Mass.
- 8.5 It is important to give school students adequate and appropriate instruction for receiving Communion under both kinds. There is an expectation that parents will provide this instruction. **Guidelines for the Distribution of Communion under Both Kinds, Episcopal Liturgical Commission, 10 July 1986, 4.2**

Appendix 2

Guidelines on Ministry of Holy Communion for those living with Coeliac disease or Gluten Intolerance

Coeliac disease is an immune reaction to eating gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats. For those living with the disease, consuming gluten needs to be minimised or completely avoided. Failure to do so can lead to unpleasant and, often, serious health complications. As a sign of pastoral care and hospitality, ministers of Holy Communion need to be fully aware of the reality of the condition and be prepared to assist those living with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance who come to parishes and seek to receive Holy Communion.

Practical Steps

Communication between those living with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance, parish clergy, sacristans, servers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is important in order to establish commonly understood requirements and procedures before, during and after Mass.

The parish should obtain low gluten hosts from a Catholic supplier. The term “gluten free” hosts should not be used as the Catholic Church requires bread for the Mass to be made from wheat flour (containing gluten) and water [see Code of Canon Law, Can. 924.2; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter of 24 July 2003 (Prot n. 89/78-17498)].

Store low gluten breads separate from other breads to be used at Mass in order to avoid cross-contamination.

Before Mass, prepare a special pyx (a metal vessel for carrying hosts) for containing low gluten breads, avoiding contact with other breads, and place on the altar during the Preparation of the Offerings for consecration during the Eucharistic Prayer.

At Communion time, the communicant approaches the sanctuary to receive the pyx containing the host from the celebrant or an extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, replying “Amen” to “The Body of Christ”.

Appendix 2

If low gluten hosts cannot be consumed, the communicant should request to receive the Blood of Christ from a chalice first, before other communicants, in order to avoid cross-contamination.

Communicants should be aware that when they receive under the form of the consecrated bread alone or the consecrated wine alone, they receive the “whole Christ” [see General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2012) no. 282; Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) no. 1390.]

Cleansing of vessels and purifiers after Mass should take place in the customary way, avoiding any potential for cross-contamination.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference May 2020

Appendix 3

Recommended Correct Hygiene Practice and Cleaning Guidelines for Receiving Communion from the Cup

1. The material of the cup is to be metal or glass, not wood or unglazed pottery. Vessels with chips and scratches should not be used.
2. All vessels should have been washed thoroughly with hot water and cleaned before each Mass. If the vessels are washed immediately after the service, this will prevent possible colonies of bacteria having time to develop.
3. In the case of communicants drinking from the cup, the lip of the cup must be wiped with a purifier after each communicant.
4. The cup is to be turned (rotated) between communicants.
5. The purifier should be changed between Masses to avoid any bacteria possibly being passed on.
6. Ministers are to be instructed regarding personal hygiene practices, for example: washing hands with soap before Mass, refraining from distributing Communion when obviously suffering from a cold or other communicable conditions.
7. Should the Celebrant have an infection, for example a cold sore or flu, he should use a separate cup for his Communion.
8. Congregations should be well educated on the relevant issues of personal hygiene practices and their choices explained to them about receiving Communion under both kinds.

Appendix 4

The Rite of Commissioning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Archdiocese of Perth

Introduction

1. After candidates have completed the basic requirements for commissioning as Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, they are commissioned according to the following Rite.
2. The commissioning takes place at Mass after the Gospel and the Homily.
3. If the commissioning takes place on a Ferial Day of Ordinary Time, the Scripture Readings provided in Vol. III of the Lectionary (cfr p 110 no 1) pp. 786ff (Votive Mass of the Holy Eucharist) may be used. At other times, the readings provided for the day's liturgy are followed.
4. It is desirable that the community be well informed about the role of Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion prior to the Commissioning Day.
5. Before Mass, the candidates for commissioning take their place among the assembly at the front of the church.
6. After the Rite of Commissioning, it is appropriate that intentions concerning Extraordinary Ministry be included in the General Intercessions. Sample intentions are at the end of this document.
7. It is fitting that the newly-commissioned Extraordinary Ministers receive Holy Communion under both species.
8. In conformity with the usual norms, it is fitting that some of the newly-commissioned Extraordinary Ministers assist the priest(s) in the distribution of Holy Communion at the Mass of Commissioning.

Appendix 4

Rite of Commissioning

The commissioning takes place after the homily. The homily is an opportunity to speak briefly about the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (if that is the day commissioning), and a little about the role of Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion in the life of the parish community.

(The celebrant presents those chosen to serve as Extraordinary Ministers to the assembly.)

Dear friends in Christ,

Our brothers and sisters are to be entrusted with administering the Eucharist, with taking Communion to the sick, and with giving Viaticum to the dying.

(Then he addresses the candidates, who stand.)

In this ministry, you must be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct; you must grow in holiness through this Sacrament of unity and love. Remember that, though many, we are one body because we share the one Bread and one Cup.

As Ministers of Holy Communion be, therefore, especially observant of the Lord's commands to love your neighbour. For when he gave his Body as food to his disciples, he said to them: "this is my commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you".

Are you resolved to undertake the office of giving the Body and Blood of the Lord to your brothers and sisters, and so serve to build up the church?

They reply: I am.

(The candidates kneel. The celebrant invites the assembly to stand and pray.)

Appendix 4

Dear friends in Christ,

Let us pray with confidence as we ask God to bestow His blessings on our brothers and sisters, chosen to be extraordinary ministers of the Holy Communion.

(Pause for silent prayer. The celebrant then continues.)

Merciful Father,

Creator and guide of your family, bless + our brothers and sisters.

May they faithfully give the Bread of Life to your people.

Strengthened by this Sacrament,

may they come at last to the banquet of heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

General Intercessions

The following sample petitions may be included among the intentions of the General Intercessions on the day of Commissioning. Choose one or two.

- A. That the whole Church may be truly Eucharistic in praising God and bringing Christ to the world.
Let us pray to the Lord.

- B. That (N).....chosen to assist our priest(s), may give good example by their Christian lives.
Let us pray to the Lord.

- C. That they will be reverent and faithful in ministering the Body and Blood of Christ.
Let us pray to the Lord.

- D. That the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion chosen and commissioned today to assist our priests may be reverent and faithful in ministering the Body and Blood of Christ and give good example by their Christian lives.
Let us pray to the Lord.

Appendix 4

- E. That we will all grow in love for Jesus Christ, really present in the Eucharist.
Let us pray to the Lord.
- F. That the worthy celebration of the Sacred Liturgy in our Diocese may be developed, enriched and strengthened through the lives and work of all the Church's ministers.
Let us pray to the Lord.

If there is no other introduction and conclusion to the General Intercessions, the following may be used.

Introduction: Let us bring our intentions to the Father who gives his own Son in this sacrifice of peace and sacrament of love.

Conclusion: Loving God, grant the petitions of your people offering the saving sacrifice of your Son, one community in the mystery of his blessed body and blood.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Archdiocesan Policy and Legal Requirements

Archdiocesan Policy and Legal Requirements

All church workers (paid and unpaid) are required to adhere to the policies, guidelines, and procedures of the Perth Catholic Archdiocese.

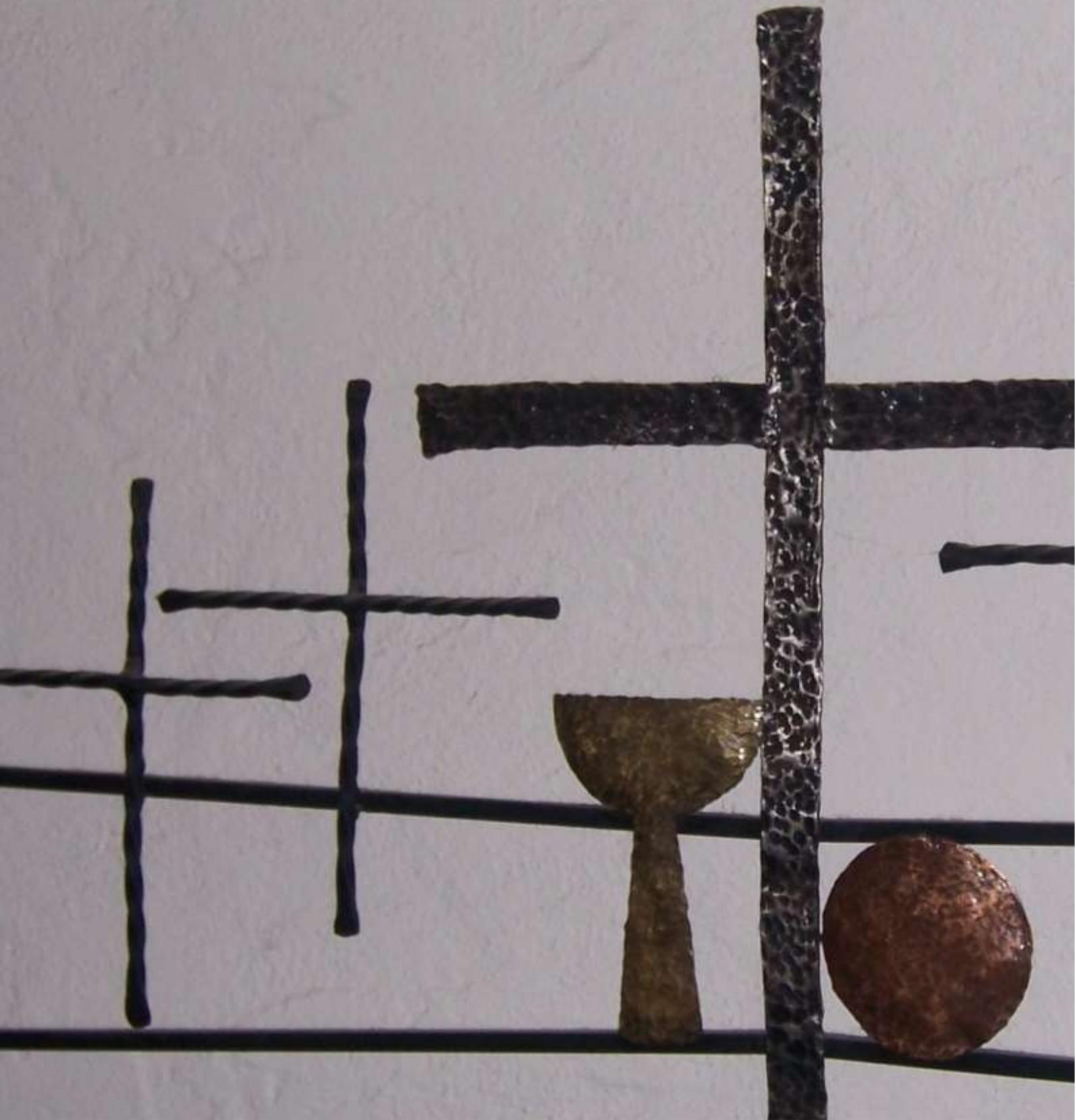
A 'Working with Children Check' card is required by Western Australian State Government legislation for all who are considered to work with children in the course of their duties, that is, for those who are working with any person under eighteen (18) years of age.

Information is available from your parish Safeguarding officer or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Office regarding policies, guidelines and procedures.

W: <http://safeguarding.perthcatholic.org.au/>

T: 9221 7762

E: safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au



Centre for Liturgy

28 Marda Way, Nollamara WA 6065

T: 08 92073350 E: cfl@perthcatholic.org.au

W: liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au