



# Praenotanda

From the Office of Divine Worship

Purification of Sacred Vessels

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests of the Diocese of Rockford

FROM: The Most Reverend Thomas G. Doran, D.D., J.C.D.  
Bishop of Rockford

DATE: November 1, 2006

RE: Purification of Sacred Vessels after Holy Communion

In a letter dated October 12, 2006 from Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, to Bishop William S. Skylstad, President of the USCCB, the Cardinal conveyed that the Holy Father has not granted the continuance of the indult

(permission) to allow Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers to purify the sacred vessels after Mass. Cardinal Arinze references paragraph 279 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal that states "sacred vessels are to be purified by the priest, the deacon or an instituted acolyte."

The Cardinal's rationale for this decision is based on the fact that the "status of the text as legislation has recently been clarified by the Pontifical Council for legislative texts. It does not seem feasible, therefore, for the Congregation to grant the requested indult from this directive in the general law of the Latin Church." While this may cause pain or difficulty for some of the laity who have undertaken this duty in years past, paragraph 279 of the General Instruction seems to reflect those instances where the Eucharist was not given its due respect and reverence in the purification process of the sacred vessels.

Therefore in keeping with this decree and the pastoral explanations that will be necessary to help transition the good and faithful people of your parishes, I ask you to take the month of November as a period of catechesis and careful planning to implement paragraph 279 of the General Instruction by no later than the first Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2006.

Along with this memo I include both Cardinal Arinze's letter and the "Seven Questions on the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds" put together by the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy for your own reference and source document for necessary catechesis.

You may recall that as Cardinal Arinze recounts the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops twice asked for an extension of the indult for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to purify the sacred vessels after Mass. A careful reading of Cardinal Arinze's letter will reveal the concern of our Holy Father for reverence for the sacred elements that make up the external sign of the Holy Eucharist on the part of clergy and laity alike.

It is, therefore, a question of filial piety and loyalty that these changes in our practice are to be made. If the matter is presented to practicing Catholic people in this spirit it will, I think, be readily if not happily accepted. The numerous writings of Cardinal Ratzinger, before his elevation to the Supreme Pontificate, brilliantly clarify what the Second Vatican Council said about the Holy Eucharist, that it is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. Our Holy Father asks us to make this manifest in the recent directive.