

The Reserved Sacrament – Bishop’s Guidance for the Diocese of Athabasca

January 2023

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A number of parishes in the Diocese of Athabasca are currently without priests, which inhibits them in a number of ways of which a very notable one is the provisioning of Holy Communion.

To resolve this issue, the Regional Deans have been regularly canvassing the priests in their deanery to try and ensure that Holy Communion is offered to parishes at least monthly.

Recognizing that we are Eucharistic People, another option is to provide, in extreme circumstances as it were, Reserved Sacrament. Reserved Sacrament (the providing of the body and blood of Christ via bread and wine which has already been consecrated by a priest) is already allowed to be provided to the sick and those shut-in, by priests, deacons, and specifically trained Lay Readers. The distribution of Reserved Sacrament to an entire congregation is a special case and would be for worship bodies which are facing a prolonged absence of Holy Eucharist.

The person providing the distribution of Reserved Sacrament needs to be specifically licensed by the bishop, and the congregation involved needs to have received explicit permission by the bishop for the period of time involved.

Reserved Sacrament is not the same as Holy Communion. The priest has been ordained by the laying on of hands by the bishop, in an apostolic succession reaching back to Christ. As part of that ordination, the priest is empowered and commissioned to consecrate ordinary bread and wine, inviting the Holy Spirit to spiritually transform them into the blood and body of Christ. We then eat and drink of those, having Christ abide in us. Just as the physical molecules of bread and wine become part of our bodies,

Christ spiritually becomes part of us through the Holy Spirit. We abide in Him, and He abides in us (John 14:20-21, 15:4-17).

Holy Communion is therefore a hugely important event, in which the presence of Christ comes into and renews the community gathered there.

Reserved Sacrament is an extension of that community renewal. When it is taken to the sick and those shut-in, it is saying “you are part of this community – we are less when you do not celebrate and renew with us, so we bring this to you, confirming that you are part of our community and one with us in Christ. Be renewed as we are renewed.”

Likewise, when Reserved Sacrament is given to a congregation gathered in worship, it does not replace or create a new Holy Communion – it is an extension of the original Holy Communion in which the bread and wine were consecrated to Christ. It is therefore a joining of two communities, whether they be separated by distance, time, or both, whether they have totally different membership or not. The community receiving the Reserved Sacrament joins with the originating community as one in Christ. This is a powerful statement of how we are one in Christ across our diocese, having been given entrance to the Family of Christ by our baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The distribution of Reserved Sacrament to a congregation or gathered body of worshipers will be restricted to deacons and specifically licensed Lay Readers. All must receive appropriate training before they are permitted to provide this gift of the church. The only permitted liturgies for providing this are in this document.

There are two forms of Reserved Sacrament given here. Form A is for the Public Distribution of Reserved Sacrament To a Community Gathered in Worship and who do not have access to a Priest for an extended period of time. Form B is for the use of an individual or very small group who are shut-in and unable to attend community worship. In both cases, the celebrant may be a Deacon or a specially licensed lay person. Form A must be explicitly permitted by the Bishop for the congregation in question.

+David

December, 2022 A.D.

Form A: Public Distribution of Reserved Sacrament To a Community Gathered in Worship

This service may be conducted by a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop.

This form is intended for use in parishes who shall be without Holy Eucharist for extended periods of time, after authorization has been given by the diocesan bishop for that congregation.

The Gathering of the Community

All stand. The presiding celebrant greets the community

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

People And also with you.

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Celebrant May his grace and peace be with you.

People May he fill our hearts with joy.

The following prayer may be said.

Celebrant Almighty God,

All to you all hearts are open,

all desires known,

and from you no secrets are hidden.

Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts

by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you,

and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then may follow an act of praise: one of the following hymns, or a canticle or other hymn. It is appropriate that the hymn Glory to God be

used during the Christmas season and from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, but not during the seasons of Advent and Lent. During Lent it is appropriate that Kyrie Eleison or the Trisagion be used. Other canticles may be found on pp. 72–95 of the BAS.

Glory to God

Celebrant Glory to God in the highest,
All and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly king,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Kyrie Eleison

May be sung in three-fold, six-fold, or nine-fold form.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Or Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Trisagion

May be sung three times or antiphonally, and may include Glory to the Father.

Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy upon us.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The celebrant then sings or says the collect, after which the people respond, Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

The Readings

A first reading as appointed.

Reader A reading from . . .

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Silence may be kept. Then shall follow a psalm as appointed.

On Sundays and major festivals a second reading as appointed is read.

Reader A reading from . . .

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to . . .

People Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,
The Gospel of Christ.
People Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A Sermon may be given.

A silence for reflection may follow.

The Nicene Creed shall be said on major festivals. On Sundays either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed is appropriate.

The Nicene Creed

The celebrant may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.

Celebrant Let us confess our faith, as we say,
All We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
Holy Eucharist 189
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.
With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic
and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-- Or --

The Apostles' Creed

The celebrant may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.

Celebrant Let us confess the faith of our baptism,
as we say,
All I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

A deacon or lay member of the community leads the Prayers of the People after the following model. Intercession or thanksgiving may be offered for the Church

the Queen and all in authority
the world
the local community
those in need
the departed.

A short litany may be selected from pp. 110–127. Other prayers are found on pp. 675–684. These prayers may be modified in accordance with local need, or extempore forms of prayer may be used.

Confession and Prayer for Forgiveness

The following prayers may be used here if the Penitential Rite was not used before the Gathering of the Community, or if penitential intercessions were not used in the Prayers of the People.

The people are invited to confession in these or similar words.

Celebrant Dear friends in Christ,
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy;
he welcomes sinners
and invites them to his table.
Let us confess our sins,
confident in God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept.

Celebrant Most merciful God,
All we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us,
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People Amen.

The Peace

All stand, and the presiding celebrant addresses the people.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

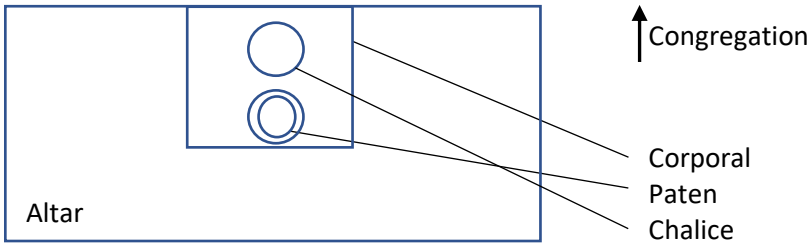
**The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another
in the name of the Lord.**

The Celebration of the Reserved Sacrament

The Preparation of the Gifts

It is appropriate that a hymn be sung during the offertory. The Representatives of the people may present money and other gifts for the needs and responsibilities of the Church to the celebrant before the altar. If the service is being held outside of the community worship centre, a table may be used.

The celebrant brings the consecrated bread and wine from the aumbry and places it on the altar. They lay out a corporal on the altar, placing a paten and chalice on top of the corporal as per this diagram:



The appropriate amount of bread is placed on the paten and covered with a clean purificator and the appropriate amount of wine is poured into the chalice and covered with a clean pall.

The remainder of the consecrated bread and wine is returned to the aumbry.

The Prayer over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant says the Prayer over the Gifts, following which the people say, Amen.

Standing between the altar and the congregation, the celebrant addresses the people.

This bread and wine were previously consecrated by the Reverend <parish priest> at <parish name> on <date of consecration>. As such, our celebration here is not an event unique unto itself, but through this reserved sacrament we join ourselves to the community of worship in that place and time, communing in Christ with them. In this way we are joined through Him with all who have eaten the body of Christ, and drunk His blood, since the time of the first Apostles.

Let us therefore join together in gratitude and ...

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant ... as our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

All Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen.

Or

Celebrant ... as our Saviour Christ has taught us, boldly say,

All Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Silence

The Communion

The celebrant invites the people to share in communion and may say,
The gifts of God for the People of God.
People Thanks be to God.

The celebrant and people then receive communion. The sacrament is given with the following words.

The body of Christ (given for you).
The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

The communicant responds each time, Amen.

During the breaking of the bread and the communion, psalms, hymns, and anthems such as those on pp. 226–228 may be sung.

At the conclusion of the communion, silence may be kept. Remaining bread may be consumed by the celebrant and their assistants or returned to the aumbry. Any wine remaining on the altar is consumed by the celebrant (and their assistants as appropriate) and not returned to the aumbry.

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant Let us pray.

Standing, the community prays in silence. The celebrant may say the Prayer after Communion appointed for the day. At the conclusion of the prayer the congregation says, Amen.

Then the following doxology may be said.

Celebrant Glory to God,

All whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.

Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Or instead of the Prayer after Communion and the doxology, the following may be said.

Celebrant All your works praise you, O Lord.

All And your faithful servants bless you.

Gracious God

we thank you for feeding us

with the body and blood of your Son

Jesus Christ.

May we, who share his body,

live his risen life;

we, who drink his cup,

bring life to others;

we, whom the Spirit lights,

give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,

so that we and all your children shall be free,

and the whole earth live to praise your name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people, saying in these or similar words,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

Or the following:

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Or the following:

Leader Go forth into the world,

rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People Thanks be to God.

Or the following:

Leader Let us bless the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, Alleluia is added to the dismissal and the people's response.

Communion under Special Circumstances

For those not present at the celebration

This service may be conducted by a priest, or by a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop.

This form is intended for use with those who for reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the eucharist.

When persons are unable to be present for extended periods, it is desirable that the priest arrange to celebrate the eucharist with them from time to time on a regular basis, using the Proper of the Day. At other times, or when desired, such persons may receive communion brought to them from a celebration of the eucharist, or from the reserved sacrament, using the following form. It is desirable that fellow parishioners, relatives, and friends be present, when possible, to communicate with them.

The minister conducting the service greets those present in these or similar words.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
God calls us to faithful service
by the proclamation of the word,
and sustains us with the sacrament
of the body and blood of Christ.
Hear now God's word,
and receive this holy food from the Lord's table.

A passage of scripture appropriate to the day or occasion, or one of the following passages is read.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3.16

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6.35

Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." *John 6.51, 55–56*

Jesus said, "Abide in me, as I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." *John 15.4-5a, 8–9*

After the reading, the minister may comment on it briefly. Suitable prayers may be offered.

A confession of sin may follow. The following or some other form is used.

Minister Most merciful God,

***All* we confess that we have sinned against you**

in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done,

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

have mercy on us and forgive us,

that we may delight in your will,

and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your name. Amen.

A priest says,

Almighty God have mercy upon you,

pardon and deliver you from all your sins,

confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,

and keep you in eternal life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

A deacon or lay person using the preceding form substitutes us for you and our for your.

The Peace may then be exchanged.

The presiding celebrant addresses the people.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

The members present may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The celebrant addresses the people.

This bread and wine were previously consecrated by the Reverend <parish priest> at <parish name> on <date of consecration>. As such, our celebration here is not an event unique unto itself, but through this reserved sacrament we join ourselves to the community of worship in that place and time, communing in Christ with them. In this way we are joined through Him with all who have eaten the body of Christ, and drunk His blood, since the time of the first Apostles.

Let us therefore join together in gratitude and ...

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant ... as our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

All Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen.

Or

Celebrant ... as our Saviour Christ has taught us, boldly say,
All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Silence

The minister may say the following invitation.

The gifts of God for the People of God.

People Thanks be to God.

The sacrament is given with the following words.

The body of Christ (given for you).

The blood of Christ (shed for you).

Or The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

The communicant responds each time, Amen.

The following doxology may be said.

Minister Glory to God,

People whose power, working in us,

can do infinitely more

than we can ask or imagine.

Glory to God from generation to generation,

in the Church and in Christ Jesus,

for ever and ever. Amen.

A priest may bless those present. The service concludes with a dismissal.

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

(with thanks to the Venerable Canon Terry Leer, and *The Use of the Reserved Sacrament* by the Reverend Paul Gibson, April 1987).

The first mention of the use of the reserved sacrament is from about 160 A.D. (Justin Martyr). It is referred to throughout the second to the fourth centuries. The reserved sacrament was originally kept not in the place of worship but in the homes or even on the persons of devout and faithful people. Reception of communion was, in fact, part of their daily prayer, usually a private act done in isolation from the Christian assembly.

The sacrament was also reserved in the sense that some of it was retained after the liturgy to be carried by ministers of the church to the sick and the imprisoned and others who could not be present at a celebration of the eucharist. Eventually it was reserved in the place of worship for such delivery at a later time, or for the communion of those who gathered for worship on occasions when the eucharist was not celebrated, either for reasons of custom or because a priest was not available.

In medieval monasteries and convents, it was customary for the abbot or abbess to distribute communion on weekdays, and in some parts of the Christian world certain days were regarded as unsuitable for the celebrations of the eucharist and communion was distributed from the reserved sacrament in conjunction with a liturgy of the word.

The practice of distributing the sacrament without limiting it to the sick and infirm continued to the fourteenth century.

Reservation of the sacrament has traditionally been treated with some official suspicion among Anglicans. The Book of Common Prayer of 1549 provided for the sacrament to be reserved at a celebration of the eucharist and carried directly to the sick as soon as possible, but reservation vanished from the Prayer Books of 1552 and 1559, and Article 28 of the 39 Articles notes that, "The sacrament of the Lord's supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped," but stopped short of forbidding the practice of reservation. By the beginning of the nineteenth century reservation had largely ceased in the Church of England.

Liturgy, like justice, should not only be done but should be seen to be done - vividly, and with integrity. Minimalist approaches to liturgy, in which people ask how little they have to do to make sure the rite is valid, reflect a misunderstanding of its very nature. If baptism is a washing, and a dying and rising, in water, then water should be present in quantity and its use should be visible and audible. If the eucharist is the gathering of the church at the table of Christ's Kingdom, the holy meal should be apparent: food should be brought, blessed, broken, and received.

There is no question that communion received from the reserved sacrament at a celebration of the eucharist is true communion. The question is whether it is appropriate. (Food from a banquet consumed in private may be nourishing, but it loses the value of the banquet as a celebration based on a common sharing - as St. Paul was quick to note.)

Abuses spring from small violations of the integrity of liturgical acts; they cause much misunderstanding and are reformed only with pain and difficulty. The purpose of reservation is always to extend the eucharistic celebration to include in its communion

those who cannot be present for the whole. The eucharist is an event; it is not a mechanism for confecting the sacrament as though it could have an existence apart from the event. Reservation extends the event.

Perhaps the best form of reservation is that which was proposed by the first Prayer Book and is now commended by The Book of Alternative Services: the sacrament is taken directly from a celebration of the eucharist to communicants who are unable to be present. An advantage of this form of communion in special circumstances is that it associates those who are absent with a particular celebration of the eucharist by a particular community and also provides opportunity for trained and authorized lay people, their fellow communicants, to share in a beautiful and sometimes moving aspect of pastoral ministry. However, reservation of the sacrament for extended periods of time, for communion of congregations when a priest is not present as well as for communion of the sick is legitimate when circumstances demand it, and appropriate lay ministers may be involved in this as well.

Appendix B: The Care of the Reserved Sacrament

Reserved Sacrament is to be treated with reverence – it is the body and blood of our Lord.

Normally Reserved Sacrament is stored in the Church Worship Centre, where an appropriate aumbry / tabernacle is provided, well built and with a strong lid or door attached. The sacrament is not to be kept in an open cupboard where anyone can get at it, nor simply left open in the sacristy or casually in someone's home.

When transporting Reserved Sacrament have it in hygienic closed containers which are secured against accident or spillage.

We have strong sacramental theology as a church and if there are those who desire to reserve the sacrament, let it be done decently and in order.