

GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are given the singular privilege of handling the Body and Blood of Christ, a privilege once reserved only to the priest celebrant¹. We should always approach the exercise of this ministry in a spirit of prayer and humility, of awe and wonder of the Sacred.

Assignments are made in a rotation and frequency that varies depending on which Mass the minister has selected. A monthly schedule of assignments is placed in the Bulletin on the last Sunday of the calendar month for the next month. You may wish to review the dates for the upcoming month and mark them on your calendar or write them in your scheduler or day-timer.

If you are unable to fulfill your assigned date, please find a substitute. A list of Eucharistic Ministers is available in the back of the Church. At the very least, if a last minute conflict arises, ask someone to write “need substitute” next to your name so that a volunteer may take your place. Please do not inconvenience the priest, deacon or ushers by leaving it to them to find your substitute.

Please be present at least 15 minutes before Mass begins and check your name off the list in the back of the Church. If you have not checked your name within 5 minutes of the beginning of Mass, a volunteer substitute will be found. Please appreciate that this is a last minute and extra burden for others so your cooperation in finding a substitute is greatly appreciated.

Dress “UP”...neatly, conservatively and modestly. Collarless shirts, shorts, and blue jeans are inappropriate attire. Flip flops, tennis shoes and sandals for men are not appropriate footwear. Sit near the front.

After the Sign of Peace, the priest or deacon will bring the ciborium² to the altar and place it on the corporal³. Ministers of Holy Communion should

¹ The Real Presence, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of the Risen Lord, is fully present in each of the consecrated species whether under the appearance of bread or wine. To the extent the terms, “Body of Christ” and “Blood of Christ” might suggest that only Christ’s body is in the Host or that only His blood is in the chalice is misleading. It is only in the last quarter century that the privilege of receiving Holy Communion under both species has been extended to the Laity.

² Container that holds consecrated Hosts. Plural is ‘ciboria’.

³ Large square stiff white cloth on which the chalices and ciboria rest during the Mass.

walk forward to take their places after the Sign of Peace as the choir and congregation begin the “Lamb of God”. Do not come on to the altar and cross behind the celebrant. If you approach the altar from a side opposite from where you will be standing to receive the ciboria or chalice, stop in the middle, reverence the altar with a simple head bow and approach your position to receive Holy Communion.

To receive Holy Communion, the ministers of the Body of Christ stand on the floor, level with the altar between the pulpit and the altar and facing the altar; ministers of the Precious Blood stand on the floor, level with the altar on the Tabernacle side facing the altar.

The priest or deacon will communicate the Host and Precious Blood to the Eucharistic Ministers. When all ministers have communicated, the priest or deacon will hand them a ciborium or chalice as appropriate. Eucharistic Ministers should not approach the altar to receive the ciborium or chalice but rather wait and allow the priest or deacon to bring the ciboria and chalices to them.

NOTE: When the choir is present, it is important for the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to take their position near the baptismal font quickly so that the choir members may receive prior to the congregation.

MINISTERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST: In distributing Holy Communion, position yourselves according to the diagram below. If a deacon or second priest is present, he normally will stand in the center with the priest-celebrant.

If your line is finished, and there are still people receiving in the center aisle, you may help out there by standing at a right angle to the aisle a step or two away so that the flow of people continues smoothly and does not become a “traffic jam”.

If you run out of Hosts, go to a priest or deacon, and he will either give you some from his ciborium, or he may hand you his ciborium and replenish the empty ciborium from a reserve supply kept in a ciborium on the altar. Do not replenish your Hosts yourself from the ciborium on the altar.

When you are through, place your ciborium on the corporal. The priest will then consolidate the extra Hosts in a single ciborium and hand you the empty

ciborium to place on the credence table. Do not purify or rinse the ciboria or wipe it with a purificator. The priest or deacon will purify the vessels if not during Mass then immediately thereafter.

You may dip your fingers in the small crystal container on the left side of the credence table to remove any minute sacred particles that may be on your fingers.

MINISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD: Hand the chalice to each communicant. Do not attempt to hold the chalice for them, though for small children, it is a good idea to keep one hand below the chalice in case the child quickly releases it without handing it back. After each Communion, wipe only the outside of the chalice and along the top edge. Take care that the purificator does not go inside the chalice.

When your chalice is empty, go to the credence table, set the chalice down and lay the folded purificator over it. Do not purify or rinse out the chalice.

Should you have any Precious Blood remaining in the chalice at the end of Holy Communion, go to the altar and consume it before proceeding to the credence table. If you do not wish to consume it, ask the deacon or one of the other EM's to consume it.

DROPPED HOSTS AND SPILLS: During the distribution of Holy Communion, be alert and very careful. If a Host is dropped, it should be picked up and consumed immediately by the minister. If the Precious Blood is spilled, use your purificator to blot up the spill, leaving the purificator over the spot to be cared for after the Mass. Before continuing, go to the back sacristy and get a clean purificator from the drawer to the right of the sink.

DIAGRAM: New Ministers of Holy Communion should study the diagram below. There are six ministers of the Precious Blood at the 5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass and at both the 9:15 a.m. and 12:00 noon Sunday Masses. Three should stand on either side between the ministers of the Body of Christ in the center and the minister on the far side.