

Extra-ordinary Minister of Holy Communion Guidelines

(Revised 7/2008)

First and most important is a sense of the sacred. The saying "familiarity breeds contempt" is often all too true. Each time you participate in Mass and serve as Extra-ordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMs or Ministers) you should grow in the awe of the real presence of Jesus Christ. Remind yourself daily that the Eucharistic is not merely symbolic, and that you, as a Minister of Holy Communion, share in this tremendous mystery of faith more deeply. As you grow in the sense of the sacred, it will show in the care with which you exercise your ministry. Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must exercise their ministry with the greatest of reverence, dignity, and awe that you are holding Jesus Christ in your hands. When we serve as EMs, we should be an example of holiness and devotion. It is characterized by the little things we do.

Ministers Responsibilities

Ministers are scheduled to serve once or twice a month. If you cannot be at the Mass you are scheduled for, please arrange for a substitute in advance. You can find the names and telephone numbers of those who typically serve at your particular Mass time on the list provided to each of you with the schedule. Please keep calling people until you find someone to substitute for you. If you are at Mass where there are not enough EMs, please volunteer. However, wait a few minutes to make sure all who are scheduled have had enough time to go forward to the Altar. If a deacon is present with the celebrating priest, eight ministers are needed each Mass. If a deacon is not present, 9 are needed.

All EMs should arrive at the Church about 15 minutes prior to Mass beginning and pick up a medallion (or cross) from the storage rack. Ministers should go to their seat in the pews and silently pray to prepare for the sacred ministry they are about to be part of.

Ministers should always be dressed properly and modestly when distributing Communion or serving in any ministry of the Mass. This means at least a shirt with a collar and dress pants for men and a dress or pant outfit for women (no short skirts, shorts, belly shirts, tank tops, cleavage showing, or t-shirts with writing). Since last minute substitutes are sometimes needed, EMs are always encouraged to dress as if they were scheduled to serve. Please remove your coat prior to going to serve.

Preparation for Distribution of Communion

Preparation should include personal prayer and/or scripture meditation that you will adequately minister the Body and Blood of Christ. After everyone has exchanged the sign of peace with those around them, all EMs should proceed to the main Altar 'step and, after all are present in a line, make a profound bow and go directly to the step behind the priest. After the priest and deacon have received Communion, the priest will distribute the Body of Christ to each of the Altar Servers and the EMs. Then, the priest or deacon will hand each of the ministers either the cup with the Blood of Christ or a bowl with the Body of Christ. The priest or deacon will begin by giving the cup with the Blood of Christ along with a purificator to those selected to be Ministers of the Cup. Those individuals should receive arid drink from the cup, wipe the cup (inside & outside the rim where they have drank) and then offer the Blood of Christ to those either on your right or left who will be ministers of the Body of Christ. Ministers of the cup closest to the Altar Servers should offer the Blood of Christ to them before proceeding to your serving location.

Distribution of Communion

If there are handicapped people, minister to them before the rest of the congregation.

The EMs should position themselves as follows:

4 Bowls containing the Body of Christ:

(1) At the beginning of the aisle on the left of the Altar between the 2 rows of pews,

(1) At the beginning of the aisle on the right between the 2 rows of pews and (2)The deacon and priest will each administer the Body of Christ in the center aisle, unless they direct one of the ministers to that position .

6 Cups containing the Blood of Christ:

(1) By the Sacristy and hallway door

(2) left of center aisle (by Ambo and other by pew)

(2) right of center aisle (one in front of the Altar and one by the pew) (1) By the music room door

To prevent congestion, it is very important for the Ministers of the Cup to stand away from the Ministers of the Bowl.

Remember you are serving your fellow parishioners the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Distribution of the Body of Christ

The Minister holding up the Body of Christ should make eye contact and say "the Body of Christ."

Pause for the "Amen" response and then place the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue as indicated by the communicant. The Body of Christ should be given with great respect and love to each communicant. Watch to see that the communicant consumes the Body of Christ and if not, remind him/her to do so prior to leaving the Altar. If they do not consume the host, try to find them after you finish ministering to retrieve the Body of Christ and also notify the priest.

It is encouraged that the Ministers of the Body of Christ bestow a Blessing on children and any other person who indicates they are not going to receive the Body of Christ (usually arms are crossed over the chest). Simply place your open hand on/over their head and say "God Bless you: or a silent prayer. Do NOT make the sign of the cross or give a blessing saying "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," This type of blessing should only be given by a deacon or priest. This blessing is important and, to avoid confusion, it should be bestowed on children prior to ministering the Body of Christ to adults holding the children.

Once you have administered Communion to everyone in your line, you may proceed to assist in other areas if possible. If not, wait in your area until everyone has received Communion. Then, proceed to the Altar and hand the bowl to the deacon or priest or place it on the Altar. **Distribution of the Precious Blood**
Ministers of the Blood of Christ should follow the same process above, except to say "the Blood of Christ," wait for their response and then hand the Cup to the communicant. Do not try to hold the Cup yourself while they drink (always exceptions, full Cup and young child or someone who is physically impaired). When the Cup is returned to you, wipe the Cup thoroughly both inside and outside the rim with the purificator and then rotate the Cup about 14 turn. Use different parts of the purificator to wipe the cup.

Do not allow communicants to dip the Host into the Cup (Intinction). Place your hand over the cup if necessary. Intinction is not allowed.

If you run out of the Blood of Christ prior to the end of -Communion, return the Cup to the credence table. Do not put the purificator into the Cup. Place both on the table.

If everyone in your area has received the Body of Christ and there is still the Blood of Christ remaining in the Cup, move closer to the other ministers of the Cup to assist.

Once everyone has received Communion, return the Cup to the credence table, wait for the other ministers to finish, proceed to the front of the Altar, bow and return to your seat. If there is the Blood of Christ remaining in the Cup, consume it or ask another minister to assist you if you are unable to consume it.

After Mass has Ended

After Mass, it is the responsibility of all the Eucharistic Ministers to wash the vessels used for Mass. The priest or deacon has already "purified" the vessels which may have contained the Body or Blood of Christ. After the closing song, return your medallion to the storage rack and assist the altar servers in taking the Communion vessels into the Sacristy. The vessels should be washed with soap, rinsed and dried. They should be returned to the appropriate cupboards.

Practical Tips

1. If a host is dropped, the minister should immediately pick it up, consume it or place it in the hand holding the bowl, then give the communicant a different Host. The Body of Christ must be consumed or disposed of in the sequorium located in the Sacristy (This is a special sink which drains directly into the ground beneath the Church designed especially for this purpose). Under no circumstances should a dropped Host be placed back in the bowl for distribution or thrown away with other trash items.
2. In the event of a Blood spill, even a drop, the minister should immediately wipe up the spill with a portion of the purificator which will not be used to wipe the Cup, and continue offering the Cup. If the spill is larger than a few drops, cover the spot with the purificator until after Mass, when it must be cleaned up using a moist purificator. If this happens, you will need to get another purificator from the Sacristy and then continue.
3. If you distribute all of the Body of Christ, ask the person in the front of the line to wait, and then obtain more of the Body of Christ from the Ciborium on the Altar or in the Tabernacle. If there are no extra in the Ciborium, then ask the other Ministers to share what they have. You may also break the hosts into pieces if necessary.
4. As stated before, if you run out of the Blood of Christ, return the Cup to the credence table. If there are still a number of communicants waiting to receive, you may return to your pew.
5. As stated before, Ministers of the Body or Blood of Christ on the side aisles should move in to help at the center aisle after all communicants at the side aisles have received. Move to the center aisle and stand adjacent to the end of the front pew. This allows communicants to continue to receive from the priest or deacon, as well as you, while maintaining room for communicants to exit without congestion.
6. Do NOT refuse Communion to anyone lest we set ourselves up to be judges. It is NOT our position to judge the condition of another person's relationship to God. The only exceptions would be when someone is "clearly" not in the prayer state to receive.
7. Always bow when crossing in front of the Altar except when you are carrying the Precious Body or Blood.
8. Remember no food or drink is allowed in the Sacristy. Also, no loud discussions or loud laughing should take place in the Sacristy lest we interfere with someone's time along with God out in the Church .