

The Church of the Immaculate Conception  
26 John Street  
Stony Point NY 109890

October 4, 2019

Dear Minister of Holy Communion,

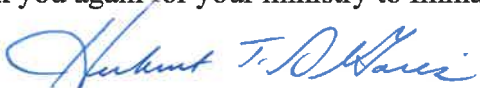
On behalf of Deacon Marino and myself, we thank you for your ministry! Because of the recent change in the Sanctuary, with the Blessed Sacrament moved to the center of the church, we began with moving the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the same pew as the Lector. For some time now I have been looking to follow more closely the Guideline of Ministers of Holy Communion and Lectors according to the practice of the Archdiocese of New York. We will start with these changes on December 1, 2019, the First Sunday of Advent.

This packet included after my letter is the 'norms' of this ministry provided from the Office of Liturgy of the Archdiocese of New York. Whatever is highlighted in **YELLOW** are minor changes for the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Listed below is a summary of those changes for your ministry.

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:**

- A simple reminder that only ONE ministry can be performed by a minister at each mass.
- Although you will read in the first guideline that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not form a part of the entrance procession or recessional, at Immaculate we will continue to have ALL ministers in our processions. **The Lector will be the first minister, if there is no Deacon, followed by the Extraordinary Ministers of Communion.**
- Extraordinary **Ministers will approach the altar AFTER the celebrant has received Holy Communion.**
- If a minister wishes not to receive the Precious Blood, they should cross their hands over their chest so the priest or deacon will pass them, going to the next minister.
- The ritual formulas "The Body of Christ" and "The Blood of Christ" will be used, with no alterations or additions, (such as 'Thomas, the Body of Christ').
- Once the distribution of Holy Communion has ended, all ministers should return to the altar vessels, either placing them on the altar, or handing them to a priest or deacon. To purify your fingers, the purification bowl has been moved to the credence table, beside the altar.

Thank you again for your ministry to Immaculate,



Fr. Herbert T. DeGaris  
Pastor

# Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Overview of Ministry

Archdiocese of New York  
Office of Liturgy

## The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at Mass

When Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are employed at Mass, the following procedures should be followed (see Norms for The Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in The Dioceses of The United States of America):

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not form a part of the entrance procession or recessional. However, they should be seated in a location close to the sanctuary, so as to facilitate their ministry. No special vesture is necessary for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. However, they should be dressed in a dignified manner which befits their service. "It is never licit for laypersons to assume the role or the vesture of a Priest or a Deacon or other clothing similar to such vesture" (Redemptionis Sacramentum, 153).

2. If needed, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should approach the altar after the priest has received Holy Communion. After the priest distributes Holy Communion to the deacon and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, he then hands the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to those who will assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. The deacon may assist in the distribution of these vessels.

3. The ministers of Holy Communion then proceed to their assigned places to distribute communion to the faithful. The ritual formulas "The Body of Christ" and "The Blood of Christ" should be used, with no alterations or additions. The decision to receive the host on the tongue or in the hand is made by the communicant, and not the minister (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 161).

"However, special care should be taken to ensure that the host is consumed by the communicant in the presence of the minister, so that no one goes away carrying the Eucharistic species in his hand" (Redemptionis Sacramentum, 92).

When distributing the Precious Blood, ministers should allow the communicant to take the chalice into his or her own hands, and then wipe and turn the chalice after each communicant has received the Precious Blood. At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who assist with the chalice may consume any remaining Precious Blood.

4. Once the distribution of Holy Communion has ended, all ministers should return to the altar or credence table with their vessels, either placing them on the corporal, or handing them to a priest or deacon. Those who have participated in distributing hosts may wish to purify their fingers of any particles that may have clung to them by wiping their fingers over the ciborium. Additionally, a small bowl of water may be provided at the credence table or next to the tabernacle for this purpose (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 278).

5. Once they have deposited their vessels, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion return to their seats. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may not assist in the purification of the vessels, unless they are instituted acolytes (e.g. seminarians or candidates for the permanent diaconate).

6. If a person is involved in more than one ministry, they should ordinarily serve in only one of these ministries at any given celebration (e.g., should not serve both as lector and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at the same Mass).

7. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may minister both at Mass and to those at home or in a health care facility, provided he or she is properly qualified and prepared for each role.

### **Ministering to the Sick and Homebound**

When Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are sent from a parish to the home of the sick or a health care institution, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should be provided by the parish or institution with a pyx in which to carry the Eucharist, as well as a copy of the Rite of Communion of the Sick.

2. A priest or other custodian of the key to the tabernacle should place the required number of hosts into the pyx for the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. If this takes place during Mass, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should remain for the final blessing. No special rite of sending forth is necessary.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not come forward with their pyxes during the Communion procession at Mass, as the one distributing Holy Communion may not be familiar with those who are mandated as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

3. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should proceed directly to the home or healthcare facility, without any extraneous stops to run errands, etc. (CIC, 935). The journey from the church to the sick should be considered a time of prayer. If the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion travels by car, it is appropriate to refrain from listening to the radio and unnecessary telephone conversations while carrying the Eucharist.

4. Those who are with the sick should be asked to prepare a suitable table, covered with a cloth. Candles are also to be provided, except in cases where an open flame is prohibited. A vessel of holy water may also be prepared. (Pastoral Care of the Sick, 74)

5. After arriving at the location, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should greet the sick person and any friends or family members in a warm and friendly manner. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should be knowledgeable as to when the Ordinary Rite of Communion to the Sick is appropriate (e.g., in communal celebrations in healthcare facilities; in private homes; where possible with individual patients in hospitals or nursing homes), and when the shorter Rite of Communion in a Hospital or Institution should be used (e.g., when the person receiving the Eucharist would find it difficult to participate in a prolonged rite or when the number of individuals to be visited is many).

6. At the conclusion of the Rite, the Extraordinary Minister should assure the sick person and those also gathered of the prayers of the community. After taking leave of the sick person, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should immediately return any hosts which remain to the church or institution from which the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

was sent. If this is not possible, the remaining hosts should be consumed by the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. The pyx should be purified, either by an Ordinary or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, 62).

## **Questions and Answers Concerning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

### **1. May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion go to the tabernacle?**

In the celebration of Mass, a priest or deacon goes to the tabernacle (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 163; Ceremonial of Bishops, 165).

When bringing Holy Communion to the sick, a priest or other custodian of the key to the tabernacle should place the needed number of hosts in a pyx for the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (see Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, 10).

### **2. May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion bring the Blessed Sacrament home and reserve it there for a time later that day or later in the week when he or she will bring Holy Communion to another sick person?**

No. It is never permissible for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to bring the Blessed Sacrament home, except for the purpose of administering Holy Communion to the sick at that location.

### **3. What is the eucharistic fast required for a sick person?**

The eucharistic fast for a sick person is fifteen minutes, if possible (*Immensae Caritatis*, III). If, for any reason, this is not possible, no fast is required. The fast of fifteen minutes also applies to Roman Catholic family members or health attendants who are properly disposed and who wish to receive Holy Communion with the person to whom the sacrament is being brought.

### **4. Can the Precious Blood be reserved and given to a sick person?**

Yes. "Sick people who are unable to receive communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine alone. If the wine is consecrated at a Mass not celebrated in the presence of the sick person, the blood of the Lord is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after communion. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel which is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains, it should be consumed by the minister, who should also see to it that the vessel is properly purified" (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 74).

### **5. What is the proper procedure to follow when a sick person is unable to consume the host?**

If a sick person is unable to consume an entire small host, a smaller piece may be given to them. A glass of water may be provided to assist the sick person in consuming the host. If the host is rejected, it should be wrapped in a purificator, and brought to the church or chapel from which the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion was sent. There, a priest

or deacon should dissolve the host in a small bowl of water. Once dissolved, this water should be poured down the sacrarium.

#### **6. Who may purify the communion vessels at Mass?**

The most recent legislation states that only priests, deacons, and instituted acolytes (e.g., seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate) may purify the communion vessels (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 279). This may occur after the distribution of Holy Communion. Alternatively, vessels which need to be purified may be left on a corporal and covered, either on the altar or credence table, and then purified immediately after Mass (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 163).

#### **7. May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion consume any remaining**

Precious Blood at the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion?

Yes. In the Archdiocese of New York, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may directly consume any Precious Blood which remains at the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion. Under no circumstances should remaining Precious Blood be poured into the sacrarium (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 107). The consumption of remaining Precious Blood should be done reverently, at the altar or credence table, but never while walking back to the sanctuary.

#### **8. Is it proper for the celebrant to give the host to the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion before his own communion at Mass?**

No. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive Holy Communion after the celebrant has received the Eucharist.

#### **9. Is it proper for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to approach the sanctuary during the Agnus Dei?**

No. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not approach the sanctuary until after the celebrant has received Holy Communion.

#### **10. Is it proper for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to go to the altar and give Communion to themselves?**

No. The Eucharist should always be ministered to, not picked up and received by individual communicants (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 160).

#### **11. May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion assist with the breaking of the Eucharistic host?**

No. The fraction of the Eucharistic host is performed by a priest, with the assistance of a priest or a deacon, when required (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 240).

#### **12. Should an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion give a blessing to one who comes forward in the Communion procession, but who does not wish to receive the Eucharist?**

No. In this case, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should direct the individual who wishes to receive a blessing to the nearest priest or deacon. In general, the practice

of giving blessings in the course of distributing Holy Communion is discouraged (see Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, Protocol No. 930/08/L).

**13. What is the proper procedure to follow when a host is dropped or the Precious Blood is spilled?**

"If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently; and if any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 280).

**14. May Holy Communion be given to someone who wishes to kneel?**

**Yes.** While the norm for the (arch)dioceses of the United States is that Holy Communion is received standing, an individual member of the faithful may receive Communion while kneeling (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 160; Redemptionis Sacramentum, 91).

**15. May Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion?**

Parish policy should be followed in this case. If it is desired that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion sanitize their hands, this should be done in an inconspicuous manner, outside the view of the congregation.

**Archdiocese of New York**  
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