Handbook for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Our Lady Queen of Peace Branchville, New Jersey

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Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

In accord with canons 910 §2 and 230 §3, the inter-dicasterial instruction approved by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II in forma specifica Ecclesia de Mysterio Art. 8, and the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament’s instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum 154-160, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist the priest and deacon in the distribution of Holy Communion when there is need for their assistance, such as at Sunday Masses and cooperating in the pastoral care of the sick and homebound. The Church has been very clear that this ministry is only to occur when there is a true need because of lack of clergy or to avoid undue delays in the celebration of the Mass. (See Ecclesia de Mysterio 8 §2) Here, at Our Lady Queen of Peace, where there is only one priest and no deacon, there is the need at Sunday Masses to have extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion and to assist the priest with visits to the sick and homebound, especially at our nursing homes, Newton Medical Center (formerly Newton Memorial Hospital) and the Sunrise Rehabilitation Center. The parish greatly thanks you for your willingness to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ who desire to receive our Lord in the Eucharist.

This special ministry provides you as the lay faithful with a unique opportunity to pray with the sick and homebound and, in accord with the prescribed Rite in the liturgical books of the Church, to make a profound connection in faith, hope and love with those to whom you minister. We want you to have a real, positive effect on the lives of those people you are sent to pray with, proclaim the Scriptures and administer Holy Communion.

In order to be most effective, the following is offered as directives for this extraordinary ministry.

It should go without saying that one’s attire at Mass must be modest and ought to be “Sunday Best”. Nothing less than Country Club Casual for men, no shorts or sandals/flip-flops. For women: capris, dresses, dress pants. No plunging neck lines, tube-tops or halter-tops or bare midriffs. Lady’s please wear appropriate foot wear. If something is not explicitly mentioned here the general concept has been conveyed, please make your choices appropriately. Thank You!

At Mass

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be used for ministering the two cups of the Precious Blood at the far ends of the nave and the Body of Christ in the center aisle with the priest.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should move from the pew into the Sanctuary during the “Lamb of God”, not before.
3. If there are concelebrant priests or deacons present, then they are the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and you are relieved of your duties at that Mass.
4. While we encourage strong bonds of friendship amongst our parishioners, it is not appropriate to say the person’s name while giving them the chalice or the host. This is a ritual and it is appropriate to follow the ritual.

5. After administering Holy Communion in the Host, it is appropriate to make sure that the person consumes the Host. If they do not and the Eucharist seems to be in danger, then you can ask the person to consume the Host in your presence or get the priest and let him know. After administering the Precious Blood in the chalice, you wipe the area of the chalice with the purificator before the next person receives.

6. While a legitimate practice in the Eastern Catholic Churches, the practice of Intinction (placing the Host in the Precious Blood) is not proper in the Latin Church.

7. When finished administering the Precious Blood, please place the chalice on the altar on the corporal. If there is still Precious Blood remaining in the chalice, please consume the left-over Precious Blood before returning it to the altar. Do this by approaching the side of the altar, face the Crucifix, and consume the remaining Precious Blood.

8. When finished administering the Body of Christ, please return the ciborium to the Altar and wait for the priest who will attempt to place all the Hosts in a singular ciborium and place it in the tabernacle. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion can bring the empty ciboria to the credence table.

9. If the Precious Blood is spilled, immediately tell the priest and he will cover the area with a Purificator (extra purificators are located on the shelf of the credence table) or, if the Host is dropped, let the priest know and he will consume the host and re-administer Holy Communion to that person.

**Communion to the Sick or Homebound**

1. Always come to Rectory first before going to the tabernacle to receive the Body of Christ to bring to the sick or homebound. The priest or someone from the parish office should know that you are going to bring Holy Communion to the sick or homebound, because the parish should always know of those who are sick or homebound so that we can provide full pastoral care for those persons.

2. Either the priest or another parish staff member will accompany you to the tabernacle to fill your pyx with Hosts, unless you received the Hosts at Mass.

3. After having received the Hosts to bring to the sick or homebound, it is absolutely prohibited to go anywhere else except directly to those the persons. The Eucharist is God and it is inappropriate for God to sit in the car or in your purse or bag while you have breakfast at a diner, go shopping, etc. Come to the Church to receive Jesus in the Eucharist when you are ready to go directly to those whom you will administer Holy Communion. Thank You!

4. In administering Holy Communion to the sick or homebound one needs to always use the prescribed Rite of Holy Communion Outside Mass in the liturgical books. No one has permission to add, modify, delete or create. The sacred liturgy belongs to the whole Church and is the official prayer of the
Church, thus only the Supreme Authority of the Church can alter the sacred liturgical texts and how they are celebrated. After the official ritual, feel free to converse, pray with and evangelize.

5. If the person is incapable of consuming the Body of Christ, do not try and force them. If they spit it out, then you need to either consume it yourself or carry it back with you to put in a jar of holy war to be left in the tabernacle until it dissolves and can be poured down the sacrarium. Therefore, don’t administer Holy Communion to anyone you cannot be reasonable sure is capable of consuming the Eucharist. If the person is incapable of receiving the Eucharist, the Anointing of the Sick may be the more appropriate sacrament. Only a priest, not even a deacon, can administer the Anointing of the Sick.

6. If you have extra Hosts after you finish your pastoral visits, please come directly back to the Church to return the Hosts to the tabernacle.

7. When you are finished, it is helpful to give a brief report to a member of the parish staff so that we are aware of the condition of those to whom you ministered.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the parish office: 973-948-3185.