

GUIDELINES AND NORMS FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are bishops, priests, and deacons. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are those men and women mandated by the archbishop of Saint Louis to share in the apostolic work of the Church when a true pastoral need (extraordinary) exists as determined by the pastor.

PROPER TITLE

“Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion” is correct terminology. The titles “Eucharistic” or “Communion” minister blur the distinction between the ordained and the non-ordained.

The responsibilities of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion include the reverent and secure distribution of Holy Communion. Extraordinary Ministers are not authorized to go to the tabernacle to remove or repose the Blessed Sacrament and purify the sacred vessels.

SERVING AS NEEDED

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion do not distribute Communion when a sufficient number of Ordinary Ministers are present at the Eucharist.

A genuine pastoral need may arise when the number of faithful receiving Holy Communion at Mass is so great the liturgy would be unduly prolonged. Another need may arise when Ordinary Ministers are unable to administer Holy Communion conveniently because of health or advanced age.

RECEIVING MANDATION OR COMMISSIONING

Mandation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is granted by the archbishop, to whom a written request is made by the pastor. Additionally provided are the names of candidates, an assurance that all those for whom mandation is being requested have been fully initiated into the Church with the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation, and an assurance they are of sufficient Christian maturity with a definite relationship to the parish to be served.

All candidates must be at least 18 years of age. Those seeking to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must publicly affirm the Magisterium of the Church and be in good standing in the Church.

Those who serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must always ensure their lives are in conformity with the teachings of the Church, including the teaching on married life.

ONGOING TRAINING

Individuals are to be given sufficient formation and training for the role to be undertaken. Instruction in the Theology of the Eucharist, the proper nature of this ministry as extraordinary, and prayerful Eucharistic spirituality should be part of the training required for all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive, on a regular basis, ongoing theological and spiritual formation for this holy and important undertaking. Minimally, this formation occurs once every three years; yearly formation is highly encouraged.