Handbook for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

in the churches of
Sts. Peter & Paul, Strasburg, ND
and
St. Mary, Hague, ND
Contents

Distributing Holy Communion During Mass ........................................ 1
Bringing Holy Communion to the Homebound ............................... 6
Exposition, Reposition for Eucharistic Adoration ......................... 10
Additional Information, For Your Benefit .................................. 11
Excerpts from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal ...... 13
**Distributing Holy Communion During Mass**

When scheduled as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (henceforth “EMHC”) to distribute Holy Communion on a weekend, please dress appropriately with modesty and in clothing appropriate for such a duty.

After you give the sign of peace to those around you, and as the musicians begin the “Lamb of God” come up to the sanctuary and enter the sacristy to wash your hands. At St. Mary’s, please enter the sacristy via the stairwell so as to avoid unnecessarily walking through the sanctuary. Walk reverently with hands folded, pausing briefly to bow slightly if you pass in front of the altar or approach it.

Remain in the sacristy until after Father has received both the Body and Blood of Christ, then come out and line up, leaving enough room to allow the Mass servers to stand beside you in a line without being crowded.

Father will give each of you the Body of Christ and will hand chalices to two of you. Those with the chalice offer the Blood to the other EMHCs and Mass servers and then take their positions on either the left or right aisles. The other EMHC will help Father distribute the Hosts in the middle aisle. Do not “hand off” or “trade” the chalices and ciboria handed to you.

To distribute the Hosts: Hold the ciborium in your left hand, and pick up a Host with your right hand. Hold it above the ciborium, in view of the recipient, and say “The Body of Christ.” The recipient should respond “Amen.” Then, give the Host to the recipient by placing it either on their tongue or into their hand, being very careful not to drop the Host.
Here are some hints for dealing with unusual circumstances involving hosts:

- When children or people crossing their arms over their chests come forward in the line for Holy Communion, they sometimes expect a “blessing.” This is not the time for a blessing and laypersons are not to offer blessings during the liturgy. Therefore, we should use this practice: extend your right hand toward the person without touching them (you’re handling the Eucharist, so you shouldn’t touch people’s hair, etc.) and offer this short prayer: “May you receive the Lord Jesus in your heart.” Note this practice may change in the future if guidance is given by our diocese’s Office of Worship.

- If a person approaches with a pyx and asks for a certain number of hosts, do not comply. If they are an EMHC in the parish they already know how to retrieve the hosts after Mass. If the individual is trying to bring Communion to someone who is homebound, they should talk to a priest or an EMHC after Mass so they can bring Communion to that person.

- If a host is dropped onto the floor as you offer it to a recipient, calmly pick it up and offer it to the individual again. If it has become dirty in some way and the person refuses to consume it, either consume it yourself or ask a priest to handle it. If it cannot be consumed, it may be dissolved in water and, eventually, poured into the ground.

- If you notice someone chewing gum, please encourage them not to receive Holy Communion with gum in their mouth. You might say “Are you chewing gum? You should not receive Communion with gum in your mouth.”
• If you notice someone walk away without consuming the host, please stop them if you can, and ask them “Are you Catholic?” and “Are you going to consume that?” If not, ask them to give you the host and place it back into the ciborium. If you notice this but are unable to approach the individual, please tell one of the priests nearby immediately.

To distribute the Precious Blood: Hold the chalice in your right hand, and the purificator in your left. When the recipient approaches you, hold up the chalice and say “The Blood of Christ.” The recipient should respond “Amen.” Very carefully hand them the chalice. When they hand it back to you, wipe the rim of the chalice with the purificator and slightly turn the chalice so the next person receives from a different portion of the rim, being careful not to unscrew the cup of the chalice from the base. You may also wish to use different areas of the purificator to wipe the chalice.

• If there is a spill of the precious blood, let a priest know immediately. The area should be soaked with clean water and wiped up with purificators. The water should then be poured into the earth, and the purificators laundered in the appropriate manner.

If the chalice becomes empty before everyone has gone through the Communion line, set the empty chalice and purificator on the altar, atop the corporal, and go into the sacristy. If there is Precious Blood remaining, walk over to the credence table, which is close to where the servers sit, consume the Blood of Christ, and set the empty chalice on the altar, atop the corporal. If it is too much for you to consume, set it on the altar, atop the corporal, and Father will consume it, or he will ask another EMHC to assist him.

• Do not place the purificators into the chalices after Communion, as they may soak up any remaining Precious Blood that should be consumed.
At Sts. Peter & Paul either during the Lamb of God or after Communion, while Father is purifying the vessels, the EMHCs should empty the offertory basket into one of the red bags that will be on the sacristy counter. Then, place the bags into the drop safe, which is in the right most closet in the sacristy. This should not be done by a solitary individual.

At Sts. Peter & Paul, the EMHCs may then take the purified vessels from the servers and return them to the cupboard in the sacristy. The EMHCs should not, however, walk out to the altar to retrieve the chalices, etc., unless there are no servers present. Place the used linens in the marked drawer or hang damp linens on the metal rack attached to the wall. After that, you may return to your pews, as always walking with hands folded and with reverence, bowing to the altar at the base of the sanctuary steps before walking back to the pew.

Communion for Choir Members in Sts. Peter & Paul Parish

Ideally, there is an EMHC assigned just for the choir. If not, after everyone who comes forward for Communion has received and gone back to their pews, one of the EMHCs should take a small pyx containing hosts to the choir loft. Once in the choir loft, stand where the choir director can see that you are present but do not interrupt the choir. When they have completed the Communion songs, they will approach you. Give them Holy Communion in the usual way. Ideally, you have the exact number of hosts necessary for the choir and the pyx is then empty. If there are not enough hosts, you may break them into smaller pieces. If there are too many, you may give multiple hosts at once to an individual. The pyx should be empty. Return it to the countertop in the sacristy after Mass is over so that a priest can purify it and put it away.
Communion for Choir Members in St. Mary Parish

In the Church of Saint Mary, choir members typically come down from the choir loft and are the first to receive Communion. They then return to the loft to begin the Communion Hymn. If an organist or pianist remains in the choir loft, an EMHC may be asked to bring a pyx containing a host upstairs for that individual to receive. The pyx should then be left on the countertop in the sacristy for Father to purify after Mass is over.
Bringing Holy Communion to the Homebound

As an EMHC, you may be called upon to bring Holy Communion to those who are unable to attend Mass. Only bishops, priests, deacons, instituted acolytes, and deputized EMHCs are permitted to take Communion from the church, and there are specific rites that must be followed when this is done. Please also note that EMHCs are only “deputized” to distribute Communion in a specific parish. An EMHC from a Bismarck parish, for example, does not have permission from the bishop to distribute Holy Communion in our parishes or to retrieve hosts from our tabernacles. Our EMHCs, likewise, do not have permission to do the same in other parishes.

If you sense that a person you are visiting desires or needs a visit from a priest for the anointing of the sick, confession, or some other reason, please let the pastor know.

Note that it is not necessary for the sick and homebound to observe the usual one hour fast prior to receiving Holy Communion. If they are eating when you arrive, they may still receive Holy Communion.

Rite for the Distribution of Communion to the Homebound

Obtain a clean pyx from the appropriate drawer or cupboard in the sacristy. You should also have a burse in which to place the pyx as you carry it. Retrieve the key for the tabernacle.

Approach the tabernacle and set the pyx on the altar in front of the tabernacle. Open the tabernacle door and then genuflect. Take only the number of hosts you need, and place them into the pyx. Place the pyx into a burse and then keep it on your person in a secure place such as a breast pocket or hanging over your neck, if the burse has a string for that purpose. It does not seem
appropriate to merely place a pyx into a handbag with many other assorted items.

Close the tabernacle door. Genuflection is not necessary, as you have the Eucharist on your person at this point. Return the tabernacle key to its appropriate place and lock any doors you opened. Travel immediately to the place where you will distribute Holy Communion. Do not run errands or spend time visiting along the way, except with the ones to whom you bring Communion. You are carrying the Body of Christ!

Once at the destination, greet the person briefly but do not begin casual conversation. If they begin a conversation, kindly redirect the conversation by saying something like, “Let’s pray first.” Conversation may resume after Holy Communion and a brief moment of silence for prayer.

Ideally the person will have a candle and crucifix set out, though it’s not essential. You may also bring a corporal (also not essential) and unfold it on a clean surface. Set the pyx onto the surface, atop the corporal.

*The minister begins by making the Sign of the Cross and saying:*

> In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

> Brethren, let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

*Pause for a moment. Then, all say together:*

> I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The minister concludes:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

The minister then introduces the Lord’s Prayer in these words:

At the Savior’s command, and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All say:

Our Father . . .

Then the minister shows the Holy Eucharist, saying:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

The sick person and the other communicants say once:

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The minister goes to the sick person and, showing them the Sacrament, says:

The Body of Christ

The sick person answers
Amen,

and receives Communion. If there are Catholic family members present, they may also receive Holy Communion if they wish. It may be necessary to break the host into smaller pieces if it is too large for an ill person to swallow, or if there are not enough hosts. Be careful, however, not to drop any particles of the host.

The minister then says the concluding prayer:

Let us pray. Father, you give us food from heaven. By our sharing in this mystery teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and to love the things of heaven. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

The people answer

Amen

Then the minister invokes God’s blessing and, crossing him or herself, says:

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All say

Amen

If hosts remain, they should be returned to the tabernacle in the church. The pyx should be returned to the sacristy and Father should be told that the pyx needs to be purified.
**Exposition, Reposition for Eucharistic Adoration**

For Exposition
- The minister does not wear any particular vesture.
- The altar is prepared in advance. A clean corporal should be unfolded in the center of the altar and the monstrance placed atop it. Candles are set atop the altar, beside the monstrance. Adoration may take place either with the Sacrament in the ciborium, or in a monstrance. If in the ciborium, two candles are lit. If in the monstrance, the monstrance is prepared in advance on the corporal with 4 or 6 candles. (cf. HCWEO 85)
- The minister brings the Sacrament from the tabernacle to the altar, either the ciborium or the luna to be placed in the monstrance.
- A hymn (such as *O Salutaris Hostia*) may be sung while the minister places the sacrament on the altar.
- If the sacrament is exposed in the monstrance, the sacrament should be incensed. (cf. HCWEO 85)

For Reposition
- A simple devotion or recitation of some portion of the Liturgy of the Hours may take place during adoration.
- Before reposition, a Eucharistic hymn (e.g. *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum*) may be sung.
- At the end of the period of adoration, the minister approaches the altar and genuflects. The minister removes the sacrament from the monstrance or takes the ciborium and returns it to the tabernacle and genuflects. An acclamation (like the Divine Praises) may be said. (cf. HCWEO 100)
Additional Information, For Your Benefit

Terminology

Chalice
The blessed gold or gilded silver cup used to hold the Precious Blood.

Paten
A consecrated gold or gilded silver plate on which the Sacred Host is laid. There are several kinds of patens. A paten may be bowl-shaped, for holding a large number of small hosts for the people. It may be a simple metal disk for holding only the larger host of the priest (as pictured). Or it may be a “Communion paten” (also pictured) which has a handle and is held under the chin of one receiving the Eucharist so that in case the Host is dropped, it won’t fall to the floor. Except the Church of St. Michael, we do not make use of Communion patens at this time.

Ciborium
A chalice-shaped vessel with a lid used to hold consecrated Hosts for distribution during the Communion of the faithful. It is kept in the Tabernacle between Masses, sometimes covered with a white veil.

Cruets
These vessels hold the water and wine before Consecration. They are often made of clear glass or metal.
**Monstrance** (or "Ostensorium" or "Ostensory")
A gold or silver vessel, often in a sunburst shape, with a clear glass area, called a “luna,” for viewing the Sacrament. The Host is kept in place inside the crystal or glass frame by a crescent or circular shaped gold or silver gilded clip called a “lunette.” The monstrance is used during Benedictions and processions, etc., for adoration by the faithful.

**Aspersory and Aspergillum (or “Aspergill”)**
The Aspersory is a container for holding Holy Water. The Aspergillum is a stick-shaped implement with holes in it to dip into the Aspersory and catch the Holy Water for sprinkling the people and things.

**Thurible (or “Censer”) and Boat**
A thurible is the incense burner used at Mass. It hangs from chains so it can be swung to incense people and things. The boat is where the incense is stored until it is placed in the thurible.

**Pyx**
A small container used to carry the Sacred Host when taking it to the sick and homebound. It is made of the same material as the Ciborium and should be gilt on the inside.

**Purificator**
Rectangular piece of linen used to wipe the Chalice.

**Pall**
A stiff square piece of linen, sometimes decorated with a Cross or other embroidery, used to cover the Chalice to prevent impurities (such as insects) from falling into it. Another type of pall is the cloth used to cover coffins at funeral Masses.
**Finger Towels**
These may be made of any material and are used at the lavabo (the washing of the priest’s hands) and after Communion.

**Corporal**
A square linen cloth which is spread out by the priest in the middle of the Altar. It is folded into three equal parts, both in its length and in its width, i.e. the anterior part is folded over the middle; then the posterior part is turned down over the anterior part; after this the part at the priest’s right is folded over the middle, and finally the part at the priest’s left is folded over these. Sometimes (at St. Michael) the corporal is placed in a burse in such a manner that the edge of the last fold is towards the opening of the burse.

**Burse**
A 10-inch square container to hold the Corporal. The burse covers the chalice before the Mass, with the opening of the burse facing toward the priest. This is currently used only at St. Michael. The leather pouch used to hold the pyx is also called a burse.

---

**Excerpts from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal**

**The Minister of Holy Communion**
26. By virtue of his sacred ordination, the Bishop or Priest offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church. He receives gifts of bread and wine from the faithful, offers the sacrifice to God, and returns to them the very Body and Blood of Christ, as from the hands of Christ himself. Thus Bishops and Priests are considered the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. In addition the Deacon who assists the Bishop or Priest in distributing Communion is an ordinary minister of Holy Communion. When the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, “the Deacon himself administers the chalice.”
27. In every celebration of the Eucharist there should be a sufficient number of ministers for Holy Communion so that it can be distributed in an orderly and reverent manner. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

28. When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the Bishop, Priest, or Deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other Bishops, Priests, or Deacons. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, “the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, that is, duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been duly deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the Priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion.” Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. When recourse is had to Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, especially in the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, their number should not be increased beyond what is required for the orderly and reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord. In all matters such Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should follow the guidance of the Diocesan Bishop.

**Reverence**

29. All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine. Should there be any mishap—as when, for example, the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice—then the affected “area... should be washed with water, and this water should be then poured into the sacrarium.”
At the Breaking of the Bread

38. If Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they should not approach the altar before the Priest has received Communion. After the Priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the Deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.

39. All receive Holy Communion in the manner described by the General Instruction to the Roman Missal, whether Priest concelebrants (cf. GIRM, nos. 159, 242, 243, 246), Deacons (cf. GIRM, nos. 182, 244, 246), or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (cf. GIRM, no. 284). Neither Deacons nor lay ministers may ever receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating Priest. The practice of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion waiting to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution of Holy Communion is not in accord with liturgical law.

40. After all Eucharistic ministers have received Communion, the Bishop or Priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the Deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Deacon may assist the Priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord

41. Holy Communion under the form of bread is offered to the communicant with the words “The Body of Christ.” The communicant may choose whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is
about to receive the King. Then receive him, taking care that nothing is lost.”

43. The chalice is offered to the communicant with the words “The Blood of Christ,” to which the communicant responds, “Amen.”

44. The chalice may never be left on the altar or another place to be picked up by the communicant for self-communication (except in the case of concelebrating bishops or Priests), nor may the chalice be passed from one communicant to another. There shall always be a minister of the chalice.

45. After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the minister turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood.

46. It is the choice of the communicant, not the minister, to receive from the chalice.

47. Children are encouraged to receive Communion under both kinds provided that they are properly instructed and that they are old enough to receive from the chalice.

50. The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. Communion under either form, bread or wine, must always be given by an ordinary or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

**Purification of Sacred Vessels**

51. After Communion the consecrated bread that remains is to be reserved in the tabernacle. Care should be taken with any fragments remaining on the corporal or in the sacred vessels. The
Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest and collects and consumes any remaining fragments.

52. When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for Communion, and if not consumed by the Bishop or Priest celebrant, the Deacon, standing at the altar, “immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests.” When there are extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, they may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their chalice of distribution with permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

53. The sacred vessels are to be purified by the Priest, the Deacon or an instituted acolyte. …

55. The reverence due to the Precious Blood of the Lord demands that it be fully consumed after Communion is completed and never be poured into the ground or the sacrarium.

Conclusion
56. The norms and directives established by the Church for the celebration of any liturgical rite always have as their immediate goal the proper and careful celebration of those rites. However, such directives also have as their purpose the fostering of celebrations that glorify God and deepen the faith, hope, and charity of the participants in liturgical worship. The ordered preparation and celebration of the Mass, and of Holy Communion in particular, should always profoundly affect the faith of communicants in all its aspects and dimensions. In the case of the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, Christian faith in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist can only be renewed and deepened in the life of the faithful by this esteemed practice.