

General Principles for Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers

Faithful Liturgical Ministers are those who practice their faith regularly and strive to be good examples to others by their “good standing” with the Catholic Church.

Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers are appointed by the Bishop at the recommendation of the Pastor for a period of three (3) years and may be renewed. Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers serve the precious Body and Blood of the Lord to the People of God at Mass or to the sick and elderly in their homes or institutions. In fulfilling this ministry, you become a public figure to whom others look. Through your reverence and your manner of ministry, your reverential manner of handling and distributing Holy Communion can make a difference in the way the People of God adore the Lord and how the Body and Blood of Christ impact their daily life.

1. You are asked to dress professionally. The “dress -down” look has its place but not in the liturgy unless it is a special liturgy that takes place at or in the midst of a recreational event, such as a children’s camp, etc. In the summer, shorts, tee shirts and other casual attire are not appropriate. During the winter months, the church should be sufficiently heated so that hats and coats can be removed. Also, now that we have new floor coverings, please make every effort to clear snow and sand from your shoes. In **emergency situations** ... when the need arises and you are asked by the celebrant on the spur of the moment to fill in for an absent *Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers*, the “need” supersedes the way you may be dressed.
2. Maintain proper posture and reverent walking. This includes a head and shoulder bow to the tabernacle/ the altar when you pass in front of it.
3. Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers should make every effort to build a strong devotion of the Eucharist through practicing adoration and spiritual reading.
4. Always participate fully in the assembly’s prayer whenever you attend or minister at Mass.

EUCHARISTIC (COMMUNION) MINISTERS - PROCEDURE

Personal Preparation:

If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, **you** are expected to find your own replacement.

Before Mass:

To ease the concern of the celebrant that there are enough ministers, arrive 10 minutes before Mass, sign in the sacristy, and then take your place in church.

At the Exchange of Peace:

All *Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers* are asked to proceed to the sanctuary IMMEDIATELY when the “sign of peace” has begun and stand behind the altar. Do not get in the custom of waiting for others to begin making your way to the altar. As you approach the sanctuary, reverence the altar by bowing. Go to the back of the altar.

Receiving Communion:

All Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers are to receive communion in the ordinary way ... make a reverential bow/sign of the cross and receive in the hand (one hand under the other). Then, the Presider offers each minister a ciborium. All ministers are asked to precede the celebrant to their communion station.

Distributing the Body of Christ:

Hold the Body of Christ at eye level while saying **ONLY** "The Body of Christ" to the communicant. At the option of each communicant, place the Eucharist either on the tongue or in the hand of the communicant.

Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers are NOT PERMITTED to deny Communion on the tongue under any circumstances.

Blessings: When approached by a member of the congregation with their arms crossed over their chest asking for a blessing, Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers make the sign of the cross with a finger on a person's forehead or simply lay your hand on their head and say "God bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Do not use the priestly gesture of blessing, please!

Communion for Disabled in Handicapped Pews: The Eucharistic (Communion) Minister who distributes communion standing next to the Presider in the middle aisle is assigned to the disabled at all masses. At communion time, go **first** to the disabled pew/s and then return to front and stand next to the Presider in the middle aisle. Do not distribute communion to other persons on your way to or from the disabled pew. Do not go the choir loft (see below).

Choir Loft: This Eucharistic (Communion) Minister is assigned by the Choir Director and will not appear on the ministry schedule. This minister takes communion to the choir loft whenever the choir sings. A large pyx will be placed on the credence table. At the Rite of Peace go down to the sanctuary, take your place with the other ministers, receive communion, and the celebrant will hand you the pyx for the choir loft. Go to the choir loft. Return the empty pyx to the sacristy after Mass is completed. *Do not distribute communion to other persons on your way to the choir loft.*

After Communion: After all in your communion line have received communion, take the ciborium and *hand it to the celebrant – DO NOT place your ciborium on the altar. If the celebrant is not there, wait for him to hand the ciborium to him.* Celebrant will consolidate the ciboria and return the Eucharist to the tabernacle.

Important: Should you accidentally drop a host, it should be picked up and consumed at once. If you do not wish to consume the dropped host yourself, please hand the dropped host to the celebrant IMMEDIATELY after communion

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE EUCHARISTIC (COMMUNION) MINISTERS WHO BRING COMMUNION FROM MASS TO THE SICK:

Please check with celebrant for the number of hosts needed. Place your pyx on the credence table BEFORE Mass. Immediately after Mass, please come forward and take your pyx from the altar of sacrifice and bring Communion to the sick/shut in immediately. *Eucharistic (Communion) Ministers who bring communion from mass to the sick: are not permitted to make stops ... coffee and donuts ... do errands, etc. with the blessed sacrament in their possession.*