

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

(Updated May 2018)

General Principles

But you are a 'chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Pt. 2:9)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification." (CCC 1360)

All liturgical ministers are, first and foremost, members of the Body of Christ. Through their baptism they are the "holy people and royal priesthood" whose right and privilege it is to participate in the ministry of Christ. How the lay faithful exercise this ministry in the world varies, but the fullest and most fundamental expression of it has always been "conscious, active, and fruitful participation in the mystery of the Eucharist." (General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 5)

In 1973, Pope Paul VI issued the instruction *Immensae caritatis*. With this instruction, the diocesan bishop was given permission to designate lay men and women to distribute the Eucharist as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It stated that "this faculty may be used whenever there is no priest, deacon or instituted acolyte present, or when the ordinary minister is prevented from administering Communion because of other pastoral obligations, ill health, or advanced age, or when the number of the faithful is so great that, unless Extraordinary Ministers assist in the distribution, the celebration would be unduly prolonged." It should also be noted that when Communion under both kinds is offered, the deacon, if present at Mass, is the ordinary minister of the Sacred Cup.

In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. (Norms for the Distribution of and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States (NDRHC))

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, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may depute some suitable members of the faithful for this single occasion." (GIRM 162)

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 and wine. (NDRHC 29).

General Ministry Information

All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are nominated by the pastor and commissioned by the bishop for a term of two years. The commission expires after two years or if the person moves away from the parish. The commission may be renewed again by the pastor requesting endorsement from the bishop. Ministers should be fully initiated Catholics who manifest their love for the Eucharist by participating in the sacramental life of the Church and activities of this parish.

Those invited to serve in this ministry are designated only for service in this parish.

Your respect for the ministry should be reflected in your appearance and attire. Appropriate attire includes being properly groomed and dressed. Please note: no jeans or shorts at any time! Any clothing which would be distracting to the assembly should not be worn. Extraordinary Ministers can ask what their clothing selection communicates. Does it project a sense of reverence? Is my attire “appropriate and dignified” and “befitting this sacred ministry?”

Scheduling

1. All scheduling is now handled using the Ministry Scheduling Pro software. Information about the software, and the schedules themselves, are posted online at spxreynoldsburg.com/schedules-handbooks.html (or click on “Ministry Schedules” from the St. Pius X home page),
2. **Planning ahead:** Schedules are prepared quarterly. Each minister is responsible (a) to look ahead each calendar quarter and identify Sundays for which he or she should not be scheduled, and (b) to enter “cannot serve times” for the quarter by a deadline. The deadline for entering “cannot serve times” each quarter will be announced via email and in the bulletin. If you do not use the internet or email, call the parish office at 614-866-2859 by the deadline to communicate your unavailable dates.
3. **Remember, it is your responsibility to secure a substitute should you have a schedule conflict.** The software allows users to request substitutes electronically after the schedule is published. Those who do not use the software can call the parish office at 614-866-2859 to ask that a request for a substitute be generated for them.

4. Beginning in July, the schedule will designate the one minister who is the Leader for that Mass, and the two others who will clean the cups after Mass, like so:

	EMHC
<u>Saturday</u> <u>5:00 PM</u> Evening Mass	Pat Miles - Pulpit Host Patti Sperry - Pulpit Cup Marilyn Wikoff - Pulpit Cup John Beyer - Organ Host Cyndi Williams - Organ Host Brenda Beyer - Organ Cup Holly High - Organ Cup Leah Kelly - Organ Cup Carol Summa - Pulpit Host - Leader Lisa Herbert - Pulpit Cup - Clean Cups Theresa Wiseman - Pulpit Cup - Clean Cups



These names will appear in **bold-faced type** in the bulletin. These individuals' responsibilities are addressed below.

Before Mass Information

1. On the day you are assigned to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, it is appropriate and good practice to develop the habit of taking time to prepare for your service with quiet prayer, and if possible, a reflective reading of Scripture.
2. The person designated on the schedule as the "Leader" is in charge of ensuring that there are enough Extraordinary Ministers. It is that person's responsibility to check that all ministers have arrived and to recruit substitutes, if necessary. Arrive early enough (at least 15 minutes) so you can check everyone off or get substitutes, if necessary.
3. **Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled Mass time.** Check your name off the posted schedule or insert your name for the person you are substituting, and double-check which side of the altar you are assigned. Then go to your seat in the assembly. This allows the person in charge to know that you (or your substitute) are present for your assigned Mass and able to fulfill your ministry. If you are not assigned for a particular Mass, check in anyway so the person in charge knows that there is someone available, dressed properly and ready to go, should a minister not show up.

4. Your hands should be clean. It is good practice to wash your hands with soap and water before Mass. This is particularly important if you are a smoker and in cold and flu season.

At Mass Information

1. Sit in the assembly close enough to the altar to move there easily. Please try to sit on the same side as your Communion station.
2. Move to the altar during the Sign of Peace and sanitize your hands using the dispenser behind the mosaic. Time your arrival to precede the Celebrant's readiness to begin the Breaking of the Bread, as this is a significant liturgical action.
3. Ministers should come forward, and **stand on the side of the altar (pulpit or organ side) you have been assigned**. Once at the altar, if you find that you are on the wrong side, or for some reason, too many people are on the altar, **STAY WHERE YOU ARE!** Once you have received Holy Communion, return to your seat as the rest of the ministers go to their stations.
4. The person designated as the Leader is assigned to go to the tabernacle. **Ask the priest or deacon if you should go before you go to the altar**. Usually, the deacon will go to the tabernacle during the Sign of Peace, so you will be responsible to return the ciborium to the tabernacle after Communion. If there is no deacon at the Mass, you should go to the tabernacle as you approach the altar.
5. All ministers receive Holy Communion from the priest prior to administering to the assembly. A minister should **NEVER** take the Lord's Body and Blood themselves, nor pass dishes or cups from one minister to another. The dishes and cups are handed out by the priest, deacon, or designee.
6. Stand closest to the altar if you are to distribute the Sacred Hosts and stand behind if you are to distribute the Sacred Cup. **Where you stand will determine where you go in the assembly to distribute.**
For 5:00, 8:30, and 12:00 Masses:
 - If you distribute hosts, are on the end (person closest to the congregation), and there are three bread ministers per side (including priest and deacon), you go directly to the center back of the Church, leaving the altar so you are **ahead** of the priest or deacon. The person behind you, with the cup, follows you to the same area.
 - The next person goes to the side front and the person behind them (with cup) follows to that station as well.
 - The remaining cup bearer goes to the front middle to be the cup for the priest's or deacon's station.

For 10:15 Mass:

- If there are four ministers of the hosts and cups on each side (including priest and deacon), the person on the end (person closest to the congregation) goes to the **side rear**, and the person behind them follows to the same station.
- The remaining ministers follow as for 5:00, 8:30, and 12:00 Masses; i.e., center back and then side front.

If you have gone to the wrong spot, **stop**, check to see where a minister is needed and then proceed to that position. Most of the time, an usher will direct you to a position not filled.

7. As you leave the altar, **REMEMBER WHO YOU HAVE IN YOUR HANDS!** Put a hand over the dish so the Sacred Hosts do not fall. Put your purificator over the cup so the Precious Blood does not spill. When passing the altar, if you are carrying **JESUS** -- i.e. Sacred Host, Precious Blood -- **DO NOT BOW to the altar. The only time you bow to the altar is when you have nothing in your hands as you go by to return to your seat.**
8. Sometimes an usher will direct an Extraordinary Minister to a parishioner who cannot leave the pew because of a disability. Follow the usher's lead, give Communion to the person in the pew, and then proceed to your station
9. Ministers of the cup should position themselves a sufficient distance from the minister of the hosts to ensure a smooth flow of the Communion procession. Ministers of the cup in the front center should stand at the bottom of the handrails on each side.
10. When offering the Sacred Host, state in a clear, audible, but not loud voice, "**The Body of Christ.**" This is a faith statement and should not be modified in any way under the guise of making it more meaningful. The communicant may elect to receive on the tongue or in the hand. Do not elevate the host -- maintain eye contact.
11. When offering the Sacred Cup, hold the cup before each communicant and say, "**The Blood of Christ.**" Do not modify this statement, either. Do not elevate the cup -- maintain eye contact.
12. When offering Holy Communion, do not state a person's name, even if you know it. This fragments the unity of the assembly. When you say some names and not others, it implies some are more important than others.
13. Remember, you are bearing Christ to each person, so smile kindly and refrain from appearing annoyed or stern or in a hurry.
14. Allow each communicant a moment to respond "**Amen.**"

15. Wipe the rim of the cup carefully with the purificator (inside and out) and turn the cup a quarter turn for the next person. (The easiest way to do this is to be sure the purificator is already opened. It should already be opened if you have used it to cover the cup as you moved to your spot in the assembly.)
16. During Communion, you may have someone approach you with a small metal container, which is called a Pyx. A Pyx is used to take Holy Communion to those who cannot attend Mass, usually the sick or infirm. Simply place the host into the Pyx.
17. If you notice that a communicant is walking away with the Sacred Host without consuming it, stop distributing, approach the individual, and ask him or her to please consume the host or give it back.
18. Ministers of the cup should be aware that **intinction is not permitted**. Intinction is the practice of dipping the Sacred Host in the Precious Blood. If a communicant attempts to dip a host into the cup, cover the cup with the purificator, and politely explain that you are not permitted to allow that.
19. If you or a communicant drops the Sacred Host – **DO NOT PANIC!** Your calm demeanor at this moment can calm or assure an anxious and embarrassed person. Pick up the host and hold it until you have completed distributing. Do not give it to a communicant. When you are finished distributing, you may consume this host yourself or bring it to the altar and inform the priest or deacon (whoever is at the altar) that it was dropped. The consecrated bread may be consumed or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium.
20. If some of the Precious Blood spills – **DO NOT PANIC!** Your calm demeanor will reassure the communicants in line and, in particular, the person who may have caused the spill. Stop what you are doing. If the spill is small, your purificator may be all you need to blot the spill. If it is a large spill, go to the sacristy for a large towel or cloth to cover the spill. Continue distributing away from the spot where the towel is. After the liturgy, get a cold wet cloth and carefully scrub the place where the spill occurred. The cloths used to soak up the original spill should be placed with the purificators to be rinsed out in the appropriate manner.
21. Extraordinary Ministers who finish distributing before others can move to assist those Extraordinary Ministers who still have communicants to serve.
22. If all of the Precious Blood is consumed before the end of Communion, return the empty cup to the credence table. If a distributor of Sacred Hosts runs out while there are still people in line, ask another Extraordinary Minister for hosts.
23. When you are finished distributing, return the dish with remaining Sacred Hosts to the altar. Cup bearers return the cups to the credence table. As you return, put a hand over the dish so the Sacred Hosts do not fall. Hold your purificator over the

cup so the Precious Blood does not spill. As you return the Sacred Hosts to the altar or the Precious Blood to the credence table, **DO NOT BOW TO THE ALTAR.**

24. The Extraordinary Minister who was in charge of checking in Extraordinary Ministers before Mass (designated on the schedule as “Leader”) waits at the altar to return the ciborium to the tabernacle. Wait for the priest or deacon to hand you the ciborium.
25. Extraordinary Ministers returning cups to the credence table are to **consume the remaining Precious Blood**. Place the purificators on the credence table. **PLEASE DO NOT PLACE THE PURIFICATORS IN THE CUPS.** Also, please place only three cups on each platter. If there are more than six cups, place the additional cups on the credence table by themselves.
26. As you return to your seat in the assembly, now bow to the altar as a sign of reverence.

After Mass Information

After Mass, the two cup bearers designated on the schedule to “clean cups” are responsible for bringing the cups from the credence table to the sacristy for cleaning. **Take care that all of the Precious Blood has been consumed before carrying the cups back.** Please carry only three cups per tray, to prevent their being dropped.

Ministry to the Sick / Homebound

A parish is to have sufficient ministers trained and prepared for the Ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, whose responsibility is not only for the assistance in the distribution of Communion at Masses, but to homebound parishioners and those in hospitals and nursing centers, as well. We have a specific Ministry of Pastoral Visitation to the Sick and Homebound in which visitors are specifically trained in pastoral visitation, including offering Communion when desired and requested to the homebound parishioner or in nursing centers or hospitals. Please contact Leah Kelly in the rectory office if you are interested in this ministry.

Miscellaneous Information

1. If you are taking the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, you approach the tabernacle, open the door, genuflect (or deeply bow, if unable to genuflect), then remove the ciborium. Place the key on the ledge next to the tabernacle while the tabernacle is open

2. If you are taking the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle, you open the door (unless it was left open) place the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, genuflect (or deeply bow if you are unable to genuflect), and close and lock the tabernacle door. Leave the key in the door.
3. Since during the liturgy “each one should carry out solely but completely that which pertains to him or her, in virtue of the rank of each within the people of God” (GIRM 5), Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should **NOT** perform multiple ministries during the same celebration. Thus, for example, if you are performing the function of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, you may not also perform the function of Lector at the same Mass.
4. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be asked to assist with the distribution of ashes on **Ash Wednesday**. If you are assigned to assist in one of the Ash Wednesday services, you should check in at the sacristy and determine from the Celebrant, where you will be located to distribute the ashes and what script you will use: “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel,” or “Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return.” Mark each person's forehead with the sign of the cross with your thumb while saying one of the scripts. Be sure to wash your hands after administering the ashes.

Tips for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Almost every minister strives for excellence. Most want to be the best they can be, and put a lot of effort into doing their job well. Here are some suggestions that will help ministers strive for excellence.

1. **Focus on the right things.** Some ministers can lose focus when they get near the tabernacle or the altar. Maybe they are nervous, or worried about getting things right. The focus of our attention is the Body and Blood of Christ! Try to minimize all other distractions and focus on Him.
2. **Smile.** This seems like such a trivial thing, but it is important. It might even be considered an act of revelation. The liturgy, as you know, is two parts: Word and Eucharist. Communion should look and feel as if we’ve just heard Good News. As ministers, we need to work hard at presenting a pleasant and inviting smile, revealing God’s loving face to each communicant.
3. **Be a team player.** Some Sunday, one of your fellow ministers is going to wind up in the wrong place. If all ministers take responsibility for looking out for each other and working together, minor difficulties will go completely unnoticed. But if, as sometimes happens, we let inconveniences fluster and frustrate us, the liturgy will be disrupted. An easy and relaxed attitude helps everyone do a better job.

4. **Take your time.** Communion is a profound moment of the Mass. Do not rush as though you have something more pressing waiting.

PRAYER FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus, bless these hands you have chosen
as your tools.

Jesus, always keep us aware and in awe
of our sacred mission.

Jesus, make us worthy of this great
ministry we have humbly accepted.

Jesus, send us out into the world
to distribute your love.

Resources

Immensae caritatis, January 29, 1973

General Instruction on the Roman Missal

**Committee on the Liturgy
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

Parish Life Focus, Communion Minister Training Supplement