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GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS
OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Revised November 2014)



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**Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion
under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America**

PART I

Holy Communion: The Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus

The Mystery of the Holy Eucharist

1. On the night before he died, Christ gathered his Apostles in the upper room to celebrate the Last Supper and to give us the inestimable gift of his Body and Blood. "He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection. . . ." ⁽¹⁾ Thus, in the Eucharistic Liturgy we are joined with Christ on the altar of the cross and at the table of the upper room in "the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and [in] the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood." ⁽²⁾

2. Like all acts of the sacred Liturgy, the Eucharist uses signs to convey sacred realities. *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that "the sanctification of man is manifested by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which is proper to each of these signs." ⁽³⁾ In a preeminent way the Eucharistic Liturgy uses the signs of bread and wine in obedience to the Lord's command and after their transformation gives them to us as the Body and Blood of Christ in the act of communion. It is by taking and sharing the Eucharistic bread and chalice --"signs perceptible to the senses"--that we obey the Lord's command and grow in the likeness of the Lord whose Body and Blood they both signify and contain.

3. The Eucharist constitutes "the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread." ⁽⁴⁾ It is the "sacrament of sacraments." ⁽⁵⁾ Through it "the work of our redemption is accomplished." ⁽⁶⁾ He who is the "living bread that came down from heaven" (Jn. 6:51) assures us, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn. 6:54-55).

4. The eyes of faith enable the believer to recognize the ineffable depths of the mystery that is the Holy Eucharist. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers us a number of images from our tradition to refer to this most sacred reality: Eucharistic assembly (*synaxis*), action of thanksgiving, breaking of the bread, memorial, holy sacrifice, Lord's Supper, holy and divine Liturgy, Holy Communion, and Holy Mass. ⁽⁷⁾ The Eucharistic species of bread and wine derive from the work of human hands. In the action of the Eucharist this bread and this wine are transformed and become our spiritual food and

drink. It is Christ, the true vine, who gives life to the branches (cf. Jn. 15:1-6). As bread from heaven (cf. Jn. 6:41), bread of angels, the chalice of salvation, and the medicine of immortality,⁽⁸⁾ the Eucharist is the promise of eternal life to all who eat and drink it (cf. Jn. 6:50-51). The Eucharist is a sacred meal, "a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity"⁽⁹⁾ in which Christ calls us as his friends to share in the banquet of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Jn. 15:15). This bread and chalice were given to his disciples at the Last Supper. This spiritual food has been the daily bread and sustenance for his disciples throughout the ages. The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper--his Body and Blood--as broken and poured out constitute the irreplaceable food for the journey of the "pilgrim church on earth."⁽¹⁰⁾ The Eucharist perpetuates the sacrifice of Christ, offered once and for all for us and for our salvation, making present the victory and triumph of Christ's death and resurrection.⁽¹¹⁾ It is strength for those who journey in hope through this life and who desire to dwell with God in the life to come. Our final sharing in the Eucharist is *viaticum*, the food for the final journey of the believer to heaven itself. Through these many images, the Church helps us to see the Eucharist as union with Christ from whom she came, through whom she lives, and towards whom she directs her life.⁽¹²⁾

Holy Communion

5. While the heart of the celebration of the Eucharist is the Eucharistic Prayer, the consummation of the Mass is found in Holy Communion, whereby the people purchased for the Father by his beloved Son eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ. They are thereby joined together as members of Christ's mystical Body, sharing the one life of the Spirit. In the great sacrament of the altar, they are joined to Christ Jesus and to one another.

It was also Christ's will that this sacrament be received as the soul's spiritual food to sustain and build up those who live with his life, as he said, "He who eats me, he also shall live because of me" (Jn. 6:57). This sacrament is also to be a remedy to free us from our daily defects and to keep us from mortal sin. It was Christ's will, moreover, that this sacrament be a pledge of our future glory and our everlasting happiness and, likewise, a symbol of that one body of which he is the head (cf. Lk. 22:19 and 1 Cor. 11:3). He willed that we, as members of this body should be united to it by firm bonds of faith, hope and love, so that we might all say the same thing, and that there might be no dissensions among us (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10).⁽¹³⁾

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all. [\(14\)](#)

Union with Christ

6. The Lord himself gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Eucharistic sacrifice "is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion." [\(15\)](#) It is Christ himself who is received in Holy Communion, who said to his disciples, "Take and eat, this is my body." Giving thanks, he then took the chalice and said: "Take and drink, this is the cup of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me" (Mt 26:26-27; 1 Cor. 11:25).

7. Bread and wine are presented by the faithful and placed upon the altar by the priest. These are simple gifts, but they were foreshadowed in the Old Testament and chosen by Christ himself for the Eucharistic sacrifice. When these gifts of bread and wine are offered by the priest in the name of the Church to the Father in the great Eucharistic Prayer of thanksgiving, they are transformed by the Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of the only-begotten Son of the Father. Finally, when the one bread is broken, "the unity of the faithful is expressed . . . [and through Communion they] receive from the one bread the Lord's body and blood in the same way the apostles received them from Christ's own hands." [\(16\)](#) Hence the import of the words of the hymn adapted from the *Didache*:

As grain once scattered on the hillsides
was in this broken bread made one so
from all lands your church be gathered
into your kingdom by your Son. [\(17\)](#)

Christ Himself Is Present in the Eucharistic Species

8. Christ is "truly, really, and substantially contained" ⁽¹⁸⁾ in Holy Communion. His presence is not momentary nor simply signified, but wholly and permanently real under each of the consecrated species of bread and wine. ⁽¹⁹⁾

9. The Council of Trent teaches that "the true body and blood of our Lord, together with his soul and divinity, exist under the species of bread and wine. His body exists under the species of bread and his blood under the species of wine, according to the import of his words." ⁽²⁰⁾

10. The Church also teaches and believes that "immediately after the consecration the true body of our Lord and his true blood exist along with his soul and divinity under the form of bread and wine. The body is present under the form of bread and the blood under the form of wine, by virtue of the words [of Christ]. The same body, however, is under the form of wine and the blood under the form of bread, and the soul under either form, by virtue of the natural link and concomitance by which the parts of Christ the Lord, who has now risen from the dead and will die no more, are mutually united." ⁽²¹⁾

11. Since, however, by reason of the sign value, sharing in both Eucharistic species reflects more fully the sacred realities that the Liturgy signifies, the Church in her wisdom has made provisions in recent years so that more frequent Eucharistic participation from both the sacred host and the chalice of salvation might be made possible for the laity in the Latin Church.

Holy Communion as an Act of Faith

12. Christ's presence in the Eucharist challenges human understanding, logic, and ultimately reason. His presence cannot be known by the senses, but only through faith ⁽²²⁾ -a faith that is continually deepened through that communion which takes place between the Lord and his faithful in the very act of the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus the Fathers frequently warned the faithful that by relying solely on their senses they would see only bread and wine. Rather, they exhorted the members of the Church to recall the word of Christ by whose power the bread and wine have been transformed into his own Body and Blood. ⁽²³⁾

13. The teaching of St. Cyril of Jerusalem assists the Church even today in understanding this great mystery:

We have been instructed in these matters and filled with an unshakable faith that what seems to be bread is not bread, though it tastes like it, but the Body of Christ, and that what seems to be wine is not wine, though it tastes like it, but the Blood of Christ. [\(24\)](#)

14. The act of Communion, therefore, is also an act of faith. For when the minister says, "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ," the communicant's "Amen" is a profession in the presence of the saving Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity, who now gives life to the believer.

15. The communicant makes this act of faith in the total presence of the Lord Jesus Christ whether in Communion under one form or in Communion under both kinds. It should never be construed, therefore, that Communion under the form of bread alone or Communion under the form of wine alone is somehow an incomplete act or that Christ is not fully present to the communicant. The Church's unchanging teaching from the time of the Fathers through the ages--notably in the ecumenical councils of Lateran IV, Constance, Florence, Trent, and Vatican II--has witnessed to a constant unity of faith in the presence of Christ in both elements. [\(25\)](#) Clearly there are some pastoral circumstances that require Eucharistic sharing in one species only, such as when Communion is brought to the sick or when one is unable to receive either the Body of the Lord or the Precious Blood due to an illness. Even in the earliest days of the Church's life, when Communion under both species was the norm, there were always instances when the Eucharist was received under only the form of bread or wine. Those who received Holy Communion at home or who were sick would usually receive under only one species, as would the whole Church during the Good Friday Liturgy. [\(26\)](#) Thus, the Church has always taught the doctrine of concomitance, by which we know that under each species alone, the whole Christ is sacramentally present and we "receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace." [\(27\)](#)

16. At the same time an appreciation for reception of "the whole Christ" through one species should not diminish in any way the fuller sign value of reception of Holy Communion under both kinds. For just as Christ offered his whole self, body and blood, as a sacrifice for our sins, so too is our reception of his Body and Blood under both kinds an especially fitting participation in his memorial of eternal life.

Holy Communion Under Both Kinds

17. From the first days of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion consisted of the reception of both species in fulfillment of the Lord's command to "take and eat . . . take and drink." The distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful under both kinds was thus the norm for more than a millennium of Catholic liturgical practice.

18. The practice of Holy Communion under both kinds at Mass continued until the late eleventh century, when the custom of distributing the Eucharist to the faithful under the form of bread alone began to grow. By the twelfth century theologians such as Peter Cantor speak of Communion under one kind as a "custom" of the Church.⁽²⁸⁾ This practice spread until the Council of Constance in 1415 decreed that Holy Communion under the form of bread alone would be distributed to the faithful.

19. In 1963, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council authorized the extension of the faculty for Holy Communion under both kinds in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact, Communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See. . . .⁽²⁹⁾

20. The Council's decision to restore Holy Communion under both kinds at the bishop's discretion took expression in the first edition of the *Missale Romanum* and enjoys an even more generous application in the third typical edition of the *Missale Romanum*:

Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds. For in this manner of reception a fuller sign of the Eucharistic banquet shines forth. Moreover there is a clearer expression of that will by which the new and everlasting covenant is ratified in the blood of the Lord and of the relationship of the Eucharistic banquet to the eschatological banquet in the Father's kingdom.⁽³⁰⁾

The *General Instruction* further states that "at the same time the faithful should be guided toward a desire to take part more intensely in a sacred rite in which the sign of the Eucharistic meal stands out more explicitly."⁽³¹⁾

21. The extension of the faculty for the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds does not represent a change in the Church's immemorial beliefs concerning the

Holy Eucharist. Rather, today the Church finds it salutary to restore a practice, when appropriate, that for various reasons was not opportune when the Council of Trent was convened in 1545.⁽³²⁾ But with the passing of time, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the reform of the Second Vatican Council has resulted in the restoration of a practice by which the faithful are again able to experience "a fuller sign of the Eucharistic banquet."⁽³³⁾

PART II

Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds

The Purpose of These Norms

22. In response to a provision of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops herein describes "the methods of distributing Holy Communion to the faithful under both kinds" and approves the following "norms, with the proper *recognitio* of the Apostolic See."⁽³⁴⁾ The purpose of these norms is to ensure the reverent and careful distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds.

When Communion Under Both Kinds May Be Given

23. The revised *Missale Romanum*, third typical edition, significantly expands those opportunities when Holy Communion may be offered under both kinds. In addition to those instances specified by individual ritual books, the *General Instruction* states that Communion under both kinds may be permitted as follows:

- a. for priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate
- b. for the deacon and others who perform some role at Mass
- c. for community members at their conventual Mass or what in some places is known as the "community" Mass, for seminarians, [and] for all who are on retreat or are participating in a spiritual or pastoral gathering.⁽³⁵⁾

24. The *General Instruction* then indicates that the diocesan Bishop may lay down norms for the distribution of Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which must be observed. . . . The diocesan Bishop also has the faculty to allow Communion under both kinds, whenever it seems appropriate to the priest to whom charge of a given community has been entrusted as [its] own pastor, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of the profanation of the Sacrament or that the rite would be difficult to carry out on account of the number of participants or for some other reason. [\(36\)](#)

In practice, the need to avoid obscuring the role of the priest and the deacon as the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion by an excessive use of extraordinary minister might in some circumstances constitute a reason either for limiting the distribution of Holy Communion under both species or for using intinction instead of distributing the Precious Blood from the chalice.

Norms established by the diocesan bishop must be observed wherever the Eucharist is celebrated in the diocese, "even in the churches of religious orders and in celebrations with small groups." [\(37\)](#)

Catechesis for Receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord

25. When Communion under both kinds is first introduced by the diocesan bishop and also whenever the opportunity for instruction is present, the faithful should be properly catechized on the following matters in the light of the teaching and directives of the *General Instruction*:

- a. the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist as the common possession of the whole Church;
- b. the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, his death and resurrection, and as the sacred banquet;
- c. the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, whole and entire-- in each element of consecrated bread and wine (the doctrine of concomitance);
- d. the kinds of reverence due at all times to the sacrament, whether within the Eucharistic Liturgy or outside the celebration; [\(38\)](#) and
- e. the role that ordinary and, if necessary, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are assigned in the Eucharistic assembly

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.⁽³⁹⁾ 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 ministers the chalice."⁽⁴⁰⁾

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.⁽⁴¹⁾

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.⁽⁴²⁾ If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, "the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., formally instituted acolytes or even some of the faithful who have been commissioned according to the prescribed rite. In case of necessity, the priest may also commission suitable members of the faithful for the occasion."⁽⁴³⁾ 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 Minister 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 and the water poured into the sacrarium."⁽⁴⁴⁾

Planning

30. When Holy Communion is to be distributed under both species, careful planning should be undertaken so that:

- enough bread and wine are made ready for the communication of the faithful at each Mass. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ As a general rule, Holy Communion is given from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and not from those reserved in the tabernacle. Precious Blood may not be reserved at one Mass for use at another ⁽⁴⁶⁾; and
- a suitable number of ministers of Holy Communion are provided at each Mass. For Communion from the chalice, it is desirable that there be generally two ministers of the Precious Blood for each minister of the Body of Christ, lest the liturgical celebration be unduly prolonged.

31. Even when Communion will be ministered in the form of bread alone to the congregation, care should be taken that sufficient amounts of the elements are consecrated so that the Precious Blood may be distributed to all concelebrating priests.

Preparations

32. Before Mass begins, wine and hosts should be provided in vessels of appropriate size and number. The presence on the altar of a single chalice and one large paten can signify the one bread and one chalice by which we are gathered "into the one Body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise." ⁽⁴⁷⁾ When this is not possible, care should be taken that the number of vessels should not exceed the need.

33. The unity of all in the one bread will be better expressed when the bread to be broken is of sufficient size that at least some of the faithful are able to receive a piece broken from it. When the number of the faithful is great, however, a single large bread may be used for the breaking of the bread with small breads provided for the rest of the faithful.

⁽⁴⁸⁾

34. Sacred vessels, which "hold a place of honor," should be of noble materials, appropriate to their use, and in conformity to the requirements of liturgical law, as specified in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 327-332.

35. Before being used, vessels for the celebration must be blessed by the bishop or priest according to the *Rite of Blessing a Chalice and Paten*.⁽⁴⁹⁾

At the Preparation of the Gifts

36. The altar is prepared with corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice (unless the chalice is prepared at a side table) by the deacon and the servers. The gifts of bread and wine are brought forward by the faithful and received by the priest or deacon or at a convenient place.(Cf.GIRM, no.333). If one chalice is not sufficient for Holy Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, several chalices are placed on a corporal on the altar in an appropriate place, filled with wine. It is praiseworthy that the main chalice be larger than the other chalices prepared for distribution.⁽⁵⁰⁾

At the Breaking of the Bread

37. As the *Agnus Dei* or *Lamb of God* is begun, the Bishop or priest alone, or with the assistance of the deacon, and if necessary of concelebrating priests, breaks the Eucharistic bread. Other empty ciboria or patens are then brought to the altar if this is necessary. The deacon or priest places the consecrated bread in several ciboria or patens, if necessary, as required for the distribution of Holy Communion. If it is not possible to accomplish this distribution in a reasonable time, the celebrant may call upon the assistance of other deacons or concelebrating priests.

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." [\(51\)](#)

42. Among the ways of ministering the Precious Blood as prescribed by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Communion from the chalice is generally the preferred form in the Latin Church, provided that it can be carried out properly according to the norms and without any risk of even apparent irreverence toward the Blood of Christ. [\(52\)](#)

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.

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 immediately and reverently consumes at the altar all of the Blood of Christ which remains; he may be assisted, if needs dictate, by other deacons and priests." ⁽⁵⁴⁾ 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 chalice and other vessels may be taken to a side table, where they are cleansed and arranged in the usual way. Other sacred vessels that held the Precious Blood are purified in the same way as chalices. Provided the remaining consecrated bread has been consumed or reserved and the remaining Precious Blood has been consumed, "it is permissible to leave the vessels . . . suitably covered and at a side table on a corporal, to be cleansed immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people." ⁽⁵⁶⁾

54. The Precious Blood may not be reserved, except for giving Communion to someone who is sick. Only sick people who are unable to receive Communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine alone at the discretion of the priest. If not consecrated at a Mass in the presence of the sick person, the Blood of the Lord is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after Communion. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel that is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains after the sick person has received Communion, it should be consumed by the minister, who should also see to it that the vessel is properly purified.

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.

57. In all other matters pertaining to the Rite of Communion under both kinds, the directives of the *General Instruction*, nos. 281-287, are to be consulted.

1. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [SC] (December 4, 1963), no. 47. (All Vatican II citations here refer to the following edition: Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* [New York: Guild Press, 1966].)

2. United States Catholic Conference-Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] (2000), no. 1382.

3. SC, no. 7.

4. Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum Ordinis: Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* [PO] (December 7, 1965), no. 5.

5. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] (2000), no. 368.

6. *Sacramentary*, Prayer Over the Gifts, Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, p. 138.

7. CCC, nos. 1328-1332.

8. Cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad. Eph.*, 20, 2.

9. SC, no. 47.

10. *Sacramentary*, Eucharistic Prayer III, p. 554.

11. SC, no. 6.

12. Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (November 21, 1964), no. 3.

13. Council of Trent, Session xiii (October 11, 1551), *De ratione institutionis ss. huius sacramenti*. (Latin text in Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* [DS] [Barcinone: Herder, 1976], 1638. English text in John F. Clarkson et al., *The Church Teaches* [TCT] [St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder, 1955], 720.)

14. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Guidelines for the Reception of Communion* (Washington, D.C., 1996).

15. CCC, no. 1382.

16. GIRM, no. 72(3).

17. F. Bland Tucker, trans., "Father, We Thank Thee, Who Hast Planted," a hymn adapted from the *Didache*, c. 110 (The Church Pension Fund, 1940).

18. Council of Trent, Session xiii (October 11, 1551), *Canones de ss. Eucharistiae sacramento*, can. 1 (DS 1651; TCT 728).

19. Cf. Council of Trent, Session xiii (October 11, 1551), *Decretum de ss. Eucharistiae sacramento*, cap. IV, *De transubstantione* (DS 1642; TCT 722): "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread (see Matthew 26:26ff.; Mark 14:22ff.; Luke 22:19ff.; 1 Corinthians 11:24ff.), it has always been the conviction of the Church, and this holy council now again declares it that, by the consecration of the bread and wine a change takes place in which the whole substance of bread is changed into the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church fittingly and properly names transubstantiation."

20. Council of Trent, Session xiii (October 11, 1551), *Decretum de ss. Eucharistiae sacramento*, cap. III, *De excellentia ss. Eucharistiae super reliqua sacramenta* (DS 1640; TCT 721).

21. Ibid. (DS 1640; Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2: *Trent to Vatican II* [London: Sheed & Ward, 1990], 695.)

22. Cf. CCC, no. 1381.

23. Cf. Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei: On the Doctrine and Worship of the Eucharist* (September 3, 1965), no. 47 (in International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* [DOL] [1982] 176, no. 1192).

24. Ibid., no. 48 (DOL 176, no. 1193).

25. Cf. GIRM, no. 281.

26. Cf. St. Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 25, on Communion of infants and children; on Communion of the sick and dying, cf. *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, can. 76.

27. CCC, no. 1390.

28. Cf. Petrus Cantor, *Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis*, ed. J.-A. Dugauquier, *Analecta Medievalis Namurcensia*, vol. 4 (Louvain/Lille, 1954), I, 144.

29. SC, no. 55.

30. GIRM, no. 281. The GIRM goes on to say, "For the faithful who take part in the rite or are present at it, pastors should take care to call to mind as appropriately as possible Catholic teaching according to the Council of Trent on the manner of Communion. Above all they should instruct the Christian faithful that, according to Catholic faith, Christ, whole and entire, as well as the true Sacrament are received under one kind only; that, therefore, as far as the effects are concerned, those who receive in this manner are not deprived of any grace necessary for salvation.

"Pastors are also to teach that the Church has the power in its stewardship of the sacraments, provided their substance remains intact, to make those rules and changes

that, in view of the different conditions, times, and places, it decides to be in the interest of reverence for the sacraments or the well-being of the recipients" (no. 282).⁽³¹⁾

31. IGRM, no. 282

32. Ibid., no. 282.

33. Cf. Council of Trent, Session xxi (July 16, 1562), *De doctrina de communione sub utraque specie et parvulorum* (DS 1725-1734; TCT 739-745).

34. Ibid.

35. GIRM, no. 283.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Cf. Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium: On Worship of the Eucharist* [EM] (May 25, 1967), part I, "General Principles to Be Given Prominence in Catechizing the People on the Eucharistic Mystery" (DOL 179, nos. 1234-1244).

40. Cf. GIRM, no. 93.

41. GIRM, no. 162.

42. Cf. GIRM, no. 108.

43. Cf. GIRM, no. 162.

44. GIRM, no. 162. Cf. also Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Immensae Caritatis: Instruction on Facilitating Reception of Communion in Certain Circumstances*, section 1.I.c (DOL 264, no. 2075).

45. GIRM, no. 280.

46. Cf. EM, no. 31 (DOL 179, no. 1260): "The faithful share more fully in the celebration of the eucharist through sacramental communion. It is strongly recommended that they should receive it as a rule in the Mass itself and at that point in the celebration which is prescribed by the rite, that is, right after the communion of the priest celebrant.

"In order that the communion may stand out more clearly even through signs as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated, steps should be taken that enable the faithful to receive hosts consecrated at that Mass."

47. Cf. GIRM, no. 284b: "Whatever happens to remain of the Blood [after the distribution of Holy Communion] is consumed at the altar by the priest or deacon or instituted acolyte who ministered the chalice. . . ."

48. *Sacramentary*, Eucharistic Prayer IV.

49. Cf. GIRM, no. 321.

50. Cf. GIRM, no. 333.

51. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 73.

52. *Cat. Myst.* V, 21-22.

53. Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Sacramentali Communione: Instruction Extending the Practice of Communion Under Both Kinds* (June 29, 1970), no. 6 (DOL 270, no. 2115).

54. GIRM, no. 287.

55. GIRM, no. 279.

56. GIRM, no. 182.

PART III Parish Guidelines

MEMBERSHIP AND FORMATION

- The ministry of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is open to all practicing Catholics 18 years or older and of good moral standing.
- To become a minister, you must:
 - a) follow a process of discernment
 - b) receive training in the Theology of the Eucharist and practical steps on the distribution of Holy Communion,
 - c) be commissioned to serve in this ministry
- Those who are interested in becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion can give their names and contact information to the head minister or the parish office. The coordinator will contact you and give you the necessary information and formation to become one.
- Once you have completed the discernment and training, you will then be commissioned by the bishop.

SCHEDULING

The EMHC liturgical assignments are made at the beginning of the first week of the month for the **next two** months. The coordinator will send out a schedule to the Ministers who are to serve at Mass through email. It is important that you provide the updated email to the coordinator. If for some reason you need a sub for the weekend Masses, first find someone who serves at that Mass to take your place. If you cannot find someone to replace you, let the coordinator/scheduler know so that he can help you find a substitute. A hard copy of these scheduled assignments can be found in the work sacristy at least one week before the next two months of scheduled assignments begin. Currently, schedules are for Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, etc.. The Sunday bulletin displays only the scheduled assignments for the following week.

ATTIRE

"All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their attire." Our dress should appear respectful of the ministry, of the sacred space, and of the people to whom we will be ministering. Dress for ministry at Mass should be Sunday best. So, obviously no shorts, flip-flops, cutoffs, sloppy jeans, body shirts, tank tops, revealing clothing, or anything else that might be distracting. It is a good idea always to attend Mass dressed appropriately for ministry, because we never know when we might be called on to fill in for someone who was unable to be present.

In this parish, the prescribed attire for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is as follows:

- LADIES: modest dresses, Coordinated Ensembles, or shirts/blouses with pants.
- GENTLEMEN: suit or coat and tie.

ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN BEFORE MASS

- Please arrive and be signed in the work sacristy 15 to 20 minutes before Mass starts. Take your seat (you may mark it or have someone save it for you) near the sanctuary. If you arrive ten minutes or later before Mass time, OR fail to sign-in, the coordinator or sacristan may find a replacement for you. NOTE: All EMHCs who are willing to serve, upon arrival, are encouraged to check with the sacristan to see if additional EMHCs are needed.

PROCEDURE FOR the DISTRIBUTION of HOLY COMMUNION

I. EMHC PREPARATION

After the sign of peace, proceed to the steps of the sanctuary. Cleanse your hands with the sanitizer gel at the cleaning stations, and then form 2 lines as follow:

1. Ministers who will distribute the Body line up on the Choir Side.
2. Ministers who will distribute the Blood line up on the Altar Servers' side.

II. APPROACHING THE ALTAR

After the Presider has consumed the Body and Blood of Christ, the EMHCs approach the altar and proceed around to the back of the altar to form a tightly knit horseshoe.

1. Ministers who will distribute the precious Body line up on the Choir Side (left) of the Altar.
2. Ministers who will distribute the Blood line up on the Altar Servers' side (right) of the Altar.

IMPORTANT: Greeting or shaking hands with other ministers should be avoided.

III. RECEIVING COMMUNION AT THE ALTAR

After the Priest and Deacon (Instituted Acolyte, if no Deacon) have received Communion, the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will receive communion as follows:

1. The Priest offers ***the Body of Christ*** to the Ministers of the Body first and works his way around to give Holy Communion to the Ministers of the Blood.
2. The Deacon (Instituted Acolyte, if no Deacon) holding the ***main chalice*** follows the Priest and distributes the Precious Blood to the ministers of the Body first and works his way around to give Holy Communion to the Ministers of the Blood.
3. Then the priest gives each Minister of the Body a ciborium with the Precious Body, while the 24 Deacon gives a chalice

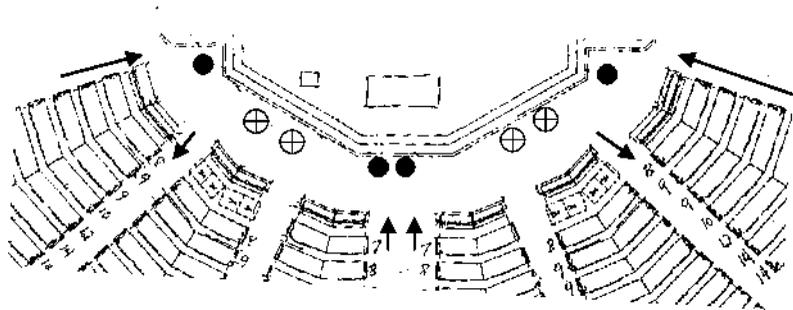
to each Minister of the Blood. NOTE: If there is no Deacon present, the priest himself gives a chalice to each Minister of the Blood.

IV. DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION

1. **The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion then go to their assigned stations.** Two different formats are used for ministering the Eucharistic Bread and Precious Blood at St. Mary Magdalene:

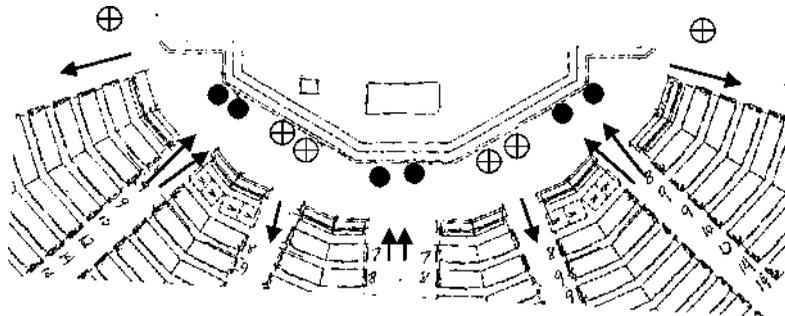
A. SAT. 5:30 p.m., SUN. 7:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., & 7:00 p.m. liturgies.

- 4 Eucharistic Bread positions
- ⊕ 4 Precious Blood positions.



B. SUN. 9:00, 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. liturgies.

- 6 Eucharistic Bread positions
- ⊕ 6 Precious Blood positions.



The white board in the work sacristy where an EMHC signs up for his/her position at a particular Mass shows these 2 formats.

2. The Presider or Deacon will usually try to serve any handicapped individuals sitting in the front, first. Please insure that these individuals are not forgotten. They should be offered Communion under both species.
3. The Eucharistic Bread is offered to the communicant with the specific words, "THE BODY OF **CHRIST.**" **Please do not use any other form.** You should avoid saying one's name or any form of treatment to make a select few special. Let us remember each of us is equal in God's eyes.
4. The same is true for the Precious Blood. The chalice is offered to the communicant with the words, "THE BLOOD OF CHRIST." After each communicant has received the Precious Blood, the minister carefully wipes the lip of the chalice both inside and outside with a purificator, using the entire surface of the purificator so that the same spot is not used repeatedly to wipe the chalice. This action is a manner of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the minister turns the cup 1/4 of a turn before ministering to the next communicant.
5. When you have completed ministering the Sacred Host or the Precious Blood to all communicants in your line, each EMHC should check to see if other EMHCs need assistance.

Notes:

- Be sure to check with the liturgical musicians on when they are receiving Holy Communion.
 - Ministers assisting in the distribution of the Sacred Host at other stations are to stand next to the first pews facing the aisles allowing communicants to pass between you and the other ministers distributing the Sacred Host to maintain the flow and avoid criss-crossing.
6. Once all of the Precious Blood in an EMHC's chalice has been consumed, that minister should return the chalice, covered with the purificator, to the credence table in the work sacristy.
Should the Minister of the Body run out of Sacred Hosts, he/she should go to another EMHC, if available, or to an **ordained minister (priest or deacon)** and ask for additional Eucharistic Bread, head back to his station and continue distributing the Sacred Hosts.

V. AFTER COMMUNION

1. After everyone has received Holy Communion, the sacred vessels are to be returned to the work sacristy in this manner:

A. If you are a Minister of the Precious Blood and you have remaining Precious Blood:

1. Turn toward the altar and consume the remaining Precious Blood prior to returning chalice to the work sacristy.
2. Process to the credence table in the work sacristy, not the altar, with your purificator covering the chalice. If there is congestion due to people lining up for communion, stand on the first step until you can move freely to the work sacristy. NOTE: If you are stationed on the Altar Servers' side of the sanctuary, go directly to the work sacristy. If you are stationed on the Choir side of the sanctuary, go to the work sacristy through the rooms behind the altar.
3. Place your chalice on the corporal and cover the sacred vessel with your purificator.
4. Then, prayerfully return to your seat. Please do not stay in the work sacristy and chat with other ministers. If there are issues to be discussed, this will have to be done outside the Mass.

B. If you are a Minister of the Precious Blood and your chalice is empty:

1. Process to the credence table in the work sacristy, not the altar, with your purificator covering the chalice. If there is congestion due to people lining up for communion, stand on the first step until you can move freely to the work sacristy. NOTE: If you are stationed on the Altar Servers' side of the sanctuary, go directly to the work sacristy. If you are stationed on the Choir side of the sanctuary, go to the work sacristy through the rooms behind the altar.
2. Place your chalice on the corporal and cover the sacred vessel with your purificator.
3. Then, prayerfully return to your seat. Please do not stay in the work sacristy and chat with other ministers. If there

are issues to be discussed, this will have to be done outside of Mass.

C. If you are a Minister of the Sacred Host and you have remaining consecrated bread:

1. Return to the altar and place your bowl on the corporal.
2. Wait for the sacred vessel to be emptied by the Priest or Deacon and handed back to you . Then take your bowl credence table in the work sacristy and place it on the corporal. NOTE: Do not stack the bowls to avoid getting fragments of Hosts on the bottom.
3. Use the finger bowl and purificator on the credence table to clean and dry your fingers.
4. Then, prayerfully return to your seat. Please do not stay in the work sacristy and chat with other ministers. If there are issues to be discussed, this will have to be done outside the Mass.

D. If you are a Minister of the Sacred Host and your bowl is empty:

1. Proceed directly to the credence table in the work sacristy.
2. Place your bowl on the corporal.
3. Use the finger bowl and purificator on the credence table to clean and dry your fingers.
4. Then, prayerfully return to your seat. Please do not stay in the work sacristy and chat with other ministers. If there are issues to be discussed, this will have to be done outside the Mass.

2. **IMPORTANT:** The sacred vessels can only be purified by a priest, a deacon, or an instituted acolyte after Communion or after Mass, insofar as possible at the credence table.

An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion cannot help with any part of the purification of the vessels.

VI. AFTER MASS

Sacristans will continue to designate a couple of ministers to retrieve the purified sacred vessels from the credence table after communion or after Mass to be properly washed and stored. The extraordinary ministers will assist by washing the vessels and helping the sacristan prepare them for the next Mass or store them in their proper place.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Can I use a different phrase when offering the consecrated host and wine?

- The proper and only permissible form for distributing Holy Communion is
- to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "**The Body of Christ**" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "**The Blood of Christ.**" No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287).

Q. Should I say the name of the person to whom I am giving communion?

- The minister who says, "The Body of Christ" is making a statement of faith to which the communicant gives assent by saying, "Amen." Nothing should dilute or diffuse that action. While naming a friend or family member in the parish may seem more hospitable to them, it may unintentionally make a person whose name is not said feel less welcome.

Q. What should I do if I drop the consecrated host?

- If the Eucharistic bread or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up reverently by the minister. The consecrated bread may be consumed or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the *sacrarium*. If there is no *sacrarium*, the water should be poured back to the ground in a desolate area near the church's foundation.

Q. How do we handle spills of the Precious Blood? (GIRM p93)

- Clean with water and purificator right away. Then cover with extra purificator. Do not worry about continuing with communion, get help from sacristan or usher if needed. Do not neglect your chalice.

Q. What do I do if there is still some Precious Blood from my cup after distribution?

- In those instances when there remains more consecrated wine than was necessary, if needs dictate, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution with the permission of the diocesan bishop.
- It is strictly forbidden to pour the Precious Blood into the ground or into the *sacrarium*. (NDRHC, 51-55).
- Similarly, "consecrated hosts are to be reserved in a ciborium or vessel in sufficient quantity for the needs of the faithful; they are to be frequently renewed and the old hosts properly consumed" (*Code of Canon Law, no. 939*). *Burying hosts or consecrated Eucharistic bread is strictly forbidden.*

Q. Should EMHCs bless children and adults who are not able to receive communion?

What are we doing at this time? We are going to Communion! (Book of blessings #28). Only Bishop, Priest, or Deacon give the formal blessing of the church if present at liturgy. Lay ministers should say something like, "God be with you" and never make the sign of the cross. Further, we should not touch heads and faces, especially children and elderly and then give people something to eat. We are spreading germs!

Q. May EMHCs assist with the purification of the sacred vessels?

Only the priest or deacon (with the assistance of an instituted acolyte) will do the purification.

Q. Are EMHCs judges of who shall or shall not receive Holy Communion?

They should discern, without interrogation, whether someone who is hesitant or appears uncertain is a practicing Catholic. EMHC should not be afraid to invite those with questions to discuss with a parish clergy after Mass. That said,

EMHCs are not judges of an individual's interior disposition to receive Holy Communion. We are only talking about individuals who clearly do not appear to be of appropriate age or Catholic. We as ministers of Holy Communion do not judge another person's heart, but we are to make decisions about giving the Blessed Sacrament away to a non-Catholic or someone who has not yet celebrated his/her first Holy Communion. In these instances, simply ask if they are Catholic or if they have made their First Holy Communion. If they are not or have not, do not give them the Sacrament. If there are any questions, you may direct them to the Deacon or Priest after Mass.

Q. What do we do when the communicant does not immediately consume the Host?

It is the responsibility of the EMHC to ensure that each and every communicant places the Holy Communion in the mouth before paying attention to the next communicant in line. If you do not actually see the Holy Communion go into the mouth, leave your post and politely request that the Holy Communion be put into your hands. This is a most serious responsibility. Each and every transaction must be completed to the Church's satisfaction. You are the Church's minister. The Church simply says that each communicant "immediately consumes the Host." Further this is done one person at a time, minister to communicant. We do not give Holy Communion to groups or to several folks at a time. One person - one Host, immediate consumption

Part IV COMMUNION OF THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

- The Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion are also called to bring communion for the sick. Only those who are trained to do this may perform this task. Please check with your ministry leader for training information.
- The trained Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion follow a rite to use when bringing communion for the sick. The rite will be provided for you during the training.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required to have their own pyx. Pyxes may be acquired from the religious gift shop or any Catholic goods supplier.