

**SAINT PETER CHURCH
GUIDELINES FOR
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

The Eucharist is the Supreme Treasure of the Church as it is the Risen Lord Himself – Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. In the early days of the Church, according to the writings of St. Justin, Hippolytus and others, laity would receive the Eucharist at Mass and then bring it to the homebound. In time the Church reserved this to sacred ministers in order to ensure the respect due to the Sacrament. In more recent decades the Church has allowed for distribution, where needed, by non-ordained *extraordinary* ministers. Bishops, Priests and Deacons are the *ordinary* ministers of the Eucharist by virtue of their ordination. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EM), is any other member of the faithful who is commissioned by the Pastor to assist in the distribution of the Eucharist. This means that a priest or deacon at Mass will always distribute before an *extraordinary minister*.

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- a. All ministers of Holy Communion must show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the Body and Blood of Christ.
- b. Minimum Suggested Dress: Men – shirt and tie, no shorts, jeans, sandals, athletic shoes. Women – skirt or dress of appropriate length or pantsuit, appropriate tops with a modest neckline. No form fitting dresses, please.
- c. Terms Used:
CORPORAL - Square cloth placed on altar under the chalice and paten. Folded envelope style to keep dropped particles from falling out.
CHALICE(S) - the cup(s) for the Precious Blood used at Mass.
PURIFICATOR - The rectangular folded cloth used by ministers to wipe the rim of the cups when distributing the Precious Blood.
CIBORIUM (CIBORIA, pl.) - the vessels used to hold the hosts for distribution.
- d. “EM-1”: The extraordinary minister who distributes the Body of Christ beside the Priest.
- e. “EM-2”: The extraordinary minister who distributes the Precious Blood, normally on the Water Street side of the Church.
- f. “EM-3”: The extraordinary minister who distributes the Precious Blood, normally on the rectory side of the Church.

II. EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

- a. Please arrive at least ten minutes before Mass and check your name off the liturgical ministry sheet [on table behind last pew] so that the Celebrant knows that you are present.
- b. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO DISTRIBUTE AT YOUR ASSIGNED MASS PLEASE CALL A SUBSTITUTE.

- c. ALL EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS WILL APPROACH THE ALTAR AFTER THE CELEBRANT CONSUMES THE BODY OF CHRIST – AS HE IS DRINKING FROM THE CHALICE.
- d. Proceed from your seat, bow at the foot of the steps, and proceed to assigned area (no need to wait at the steps for the other extraordinary ministers).
- e. EM-1 should go directly to the credence table and use the hand sanitizer that is there. EMs will all line up on the credence table side of the altar. EM-1 closest to the pews, then EM-2, EM-3, with the servers being closest to the High Altar.
- f. If you notice that less than three extraordinary ministers are walking up to help distribute and there is only the Celebrant at the altar, please come forward to assist with distribution.
- g. If a Deacon is present, he will distribute the Precious Blood from the Celebrant's chalice, to the Servers and others who must enter the sanctuary for the Eucharist.
- h. If a Deacon is ***not*** present, the Celebrant will give the Body to EM-1, and then the chalice containing the Precious Blood. EM-1 will then follow the celebrant with the chalice, distributing the Precious Blood from the Celebrant's chalice, to the Servers and others who must enter the sanctuary for the Eucharist. Then, EM-1 returns the Celebrant's chalice and purificator to the center of the altar.
- i. The Celebrant or Deacon will then hand a side chalice and purificator to one or more of the EM's. The Celebrant will give EM-1 a ciborium containing the Body. Then, all of those who are distributing the Eucharist go to their respective positions.
- j. The Celebrant and EM-1 go to the front of the altar, on the step at the center aisle. EM-1 stands to the Celebrant's right. An altar server will normally accompany them and hold a paten underneath as they distribute Holy Communion. The appropriate words for distributing the Host are: "The Body of Christ".
- k. If an EM does not have enough of the Body, he or she should request more from the Priest. As a last resort, hosts may be broken into two pieces.
- l. If a communicant does not consume the host, tell the Priest and ask for guidance.
- m. Those distributing Precious Blood go to their respective corner of the sanctuary. The appropriate words for distributing the Cup are: "The Blood of Christ". After each person receives from the chalice, wipe the inside *and* outside edge of the chalice rim with the purificator.

- n. If all of the Precious Blood is consumed before Communion is complete, bring the empty chalice back to the altar and then return to your seat. Note: If a Deacon is present, bring the empty chalice and purificator to the credence table.

- o. Instructions in the event of an accident:

If a Consecrated Host is dropped on the floor, promptly pick it up and hand it to the priest or place it on the server's paten and continue distribution. The Celebrant will consume it when distribution is completed.

If there is a spill of the Precious Blood, the EM should open up the purificator and place it over the spill. If there is still Precious Blood left, consume or place on the altar. Then inform the Celebrant or Deacon of the spill at the conclusion of Communion so that he can clean up the spill as soon as possible.

When Distribution of the Eucharist is Complete:

- a. EM-1 will return the ciborium to the center of the altar, and return to his or her seat. Distributors of the host should either brush any crumbs off their fingers over the ciborium or wipe their fingers on the purificator of the main chalice when they return to the altar.
- b. If possible, EM-2 and EM-3 will consume any excess Precious Blood at their positions. Otherwise, they will leave it for the Celebrant or Deacon to consume.
- c. EM-2 and EM-3 will return the side chalices and purificators to the credence table side of the altar (if a deacon is present, bring them to the credence table). Lay the folded purificator across the chalice (do not stuff the purificator into the chalice - the chalice must be purified). Then, the EMs return to their seats.
- d. The Celebrant will normally purify all of the sacred vessels at the altar, unless a Deacon is present, who will purify the side chalices at the credence table.

Additional Guidance:

- a. In the event that one or more extra (concelebrating) priests are present, or a deacon is assisting at Mass, fewer extraordinary ministers are required. In this event, starting with EM-3, the same number of EMs on the list for that Mass should remain seated.
- b. If one or more priests arrive during Mass simply to distribute the Eucharist, the same number of EMs (starting with EM-3) should remain seated.
- c. *Intinction is not permitted.* Intinction is the dipping of the Body into the chalice of Precious Blood. There is a good chance of Precious Blood dripping on the floor and so this is reserved to the priest. He may intinct himself, or intinct and give to another person, but no one is allowed to intinct the host themselves. Thus, if you

see someone starting to put their host in the chalice from which you are distributing, cover it with your hand and say, “This is not allowed here.” If they persist tell them to please see the pastor after Mass. If they get it in before you have time to cover the chalice, just let them go through with it, but still tell them that “this is not allowed here.”

- d. *Occasionally people will take the chalice but not consume.* This is acceptable. In fact, our servers are instructed to still take the cup from the minister, saying “Amen”, and then return it, if they are not receiving from the cup that day since everyone on the altar should still be uniform in action.
- e. *Occasionally people will kneel on the first step to receive the Body.* This is acceptable. Simply step back to allow adequate room to place the Body on the tongue.
- f. *Occasionally people come forward with their arms crossed over their bodies to receive a simple blessing from the Celebrant or Deacon.* This is acceptable, but EMs do not confer blessings.
- g. If for some reason you cannot meet your commitment, it is your responsibility to obtain a substitute. Please post the dates on your calendar when you are scheduled to be an Extraordinary Minister as soon as the schedule arrives to avoid conflict.

III. EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY TO THE HOMEBOUND

Through this important Eucharistic ministry, even those who are unable to attend the Sacred Liturgy can avail themselves of Christ’s Divine Presence. This ministry also requires extra diligence in the manner in which the Eucharist is received, transported and administered. This ensures that the proper reverence and care are practiced.

- a. Please bring your pyx (small container for hosts when travelling) to Sunday Mass and come forward when the priest asks for those bringing communion to the homebound. If you plan on staying for coffee and donuts or other parish activities, one should arrange to receive the Blessed Sacrament later.
- b. After receiving the Blessed Sacrament, one may either leave the Mass directly for the homebound or stay for the conclusion of Mass.
- c. One who stays for the conclusion of Mass must depart as quickly (though politely) as possible, always mindful of carrying and being in the presence of Our Lord.
- d. Proceed directly from the Church to the place of ministry. EMs must NEVER take the Eucharist to someone if he or she intends to stop for breakfast or for some quick shopping, etc., enroute.

- e. We must be conscious of the incredible gift that we are carrying when we bring Communion. This includes being aware of our conversation if we are travelling with someone. It is better to commit to praying some prayers, decade of the Rosary, etc. when travelling with someone if there is danger that our conversation might turn to something unworthy of our Lord's Presence.
- f. If extra hosts remain at the end of the trip – either immediately return them to the Church, or if this is not possible, reverently consume them yourself. Under no circumstances should the Eucharist be stored in the home or car awaiting a more opportune time for ministry – this is the Living God. There is grave danger in forgetting this and becoming carefree and is one of the reasons the Church did not allow this type of ministry for centuries. Therefore, be extremely diligent regarding the care and handling of the Blessed Sacrament.
- g. **Pyx and Booklet** – It is recommended that EMs utilize the prescribed prayers for homebound visits contained in *Administration of Communion and Viaticum by an Extraordinary Minister*. Copies may be available in the Priests' Sacristy. Extra pyx for carrying the Blessed Sacrament may also be found in the Priests' Sacristy. Please see Dcn. Hauser or Fr. Hahn to arrange for picking these up for ministry.

IV. EUCHARISTIC ADORATION BY EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Those who perform this holy ministry are expected to maintain a particularly strong bond of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. This is why all parishioners - especially those who perform this ministry for the Church - are strongly encouraged to commit to observing a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament each week. In this way, one can grow spiritually, in reverence and awe for this great mystery, by spending time in His Presence. This reverence will naturally carry over in the way one serves when ministering the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is scheduled from Tuesdays at 6:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Thursday in the Infant of Prague Eucharistic Adoration Chapel (in the rear of the Convent). Additionally, Exposition occurs following the Thursday 5:30 P.M. Mass in the church, until Benediction at 8:55 P.M. the same evening. If possible, all are encouraged to make a scheduled commitment to a particular day and hour by contacting the parish office. If you cannot make it during those periods, know that the Church is open *every* day from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

V. SERVING WITHOUT SCANDAL

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are expected to live a life of grace in the Church. This means among other things – if married – being so in a valid marriage recognized by the Church (before a priest or deacon). This also means not living with a boyfriend or girlfriend, not taking public stances for things considered intrinsically immoral by the Church (e.g. abortion, homosexual marriage, etc.), in a word not living a

life that could give rise to public scandal. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should be living a Christian life worthy of imitation and should have deep devotion and reverence for Our Eucharistic Lord.

Thank you for serving Christ and His Church in this capacity as an Extraordinary Minister. May it always be received as a great task and a great blessing!