

# Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



**St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church**

**Woodstock GA**

**Archdiocese of Atlanta**



# Who is an Extraordinary Minister?

- An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is a lay person or religious who has been deputed by the bishop for a period of time, or by a priest or deacon for a single occasion, to assist the priest and deacon in distributing Holy Communion to the faithful on those occasions where a shortage of ordained clergy makes it impossible for them to distribute Holy Communion to all the faithful in a reasonable way.
- It is thus a privilege to which the Church invites certain individuals under given circumstances, and not a right.
- To touch the sacred species and to distribute them with their own hands is a privilege of the ordained, one which indicates an active participation in the ministry of the Eucharist. The Church can grant this faculty to those who are neither priests nor deacons, as is the case with acolytes in the exercise of their ministry, especially if they are destined for future ordination, or with other lay people who are chosen for this to meet a just need, but always after an adequate preparation.

# Certification of Extraordinary Ministers

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion serve the Church in a public capacity, it is necessary that an individual be certified before beginning service as an Extraordinary Minister.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are certified for an extended period of up to three years. This is done by the Archbishop, upon request by the pastor of the parish. The pastor is responsible for selecting the individuals designated to serve and for verifying that they are in good standing with the Church (not in an invalid marriage or a situation of cohabitation, not an ex-priest, etc.), and that their selection would not scandalize the faithful.
- After the individuals have been selected and trained, the pastor then submits a list to the Office of Divine Worship. When they receive their certification, they are able to begin functioning as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion until their certification expires.

# Qualifications to Serve as an Extraordinary Minister

- The faithful who are extraordinary ministers of communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them.
- Foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar.
- If married, must be married within the Catholic Church, have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and be at least 16 years of age.
- The goal is to choose individuals whose exemplary Catholic life and morals will reflect well upon the Church and show the dignity and importance of Holy Communion.

# Way of Life of an Extraordinary Minister

- Those called to serve should demonstrate an exemplary Catholic life before becoming an Extraordinary Minister. It is important that they cultivate these virtues after they have been appointed for the position of service to the parish Church.
- An Extraordinary Minister should seek to cultivate holiness, especially through frequent confession, personal prayer, adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and attendance of daily Mass if or when possible.
- They should also seek to have a good knowledge and appreciation for the thought and beliefs of the Church, especially through study of scripture and Church teaching.
- If an extraordinary minister finds it difficult to live a life appropriate to ministry, he/she might recuse themselves for a time from the distribution of Holy Communion, or, if necessary, a pastor might find it necessary to ask him or her not to continue in this service.
- An individual should recuse himself or herself if there's anything that prevents him or her from receiving Holy Communion. i.e. grave sin, failure to attend Sunday mass, or a choice not to maintain communion with the teachings and life of the Church.

# Preparation for Serving as an Extraordinary Minister

- There are two types of preparation for serving as an extraordinary minister: remote and proximate.
- Remote preparation includes the prayer and study that aid in appreciating the great gift of the Eucharist and in its distribution with proper care.
- Proximate preparation is when the minister makes sure that he/she is prepared to receive communion – that is in a state of grace, and having fasted before mass according to the norms of the Church .
- It is important to arrive at the church early, not only to sign in and find the assigned station, but also to take time in prayer before mass to prepare for service.

# Personal Appearance & Dress

- Extraordinary Ministers should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the function they are carrying out.
- Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Blessed Sacrament, generally by being more formal.
- Any clothing that exposes the legs, upper arms, or other inappropriate parts of the anatomy should not be worn, nor should any clothing bearing prominent logos or slogans.
- Clothing should not be distracting; the focus of the communicant should be on the Blessed Sacrament, not on the person distributing communion or his/her dress.

# Proper Terminology for the Blessed Sacrament

The way we speak both reflects and shapes the way we believe, and so it is important that our language regarding the Blessed Sacrament reflect our understanding of its nature, and our faith in the real presence of Christ.

Although all of Christ is present under each species, it is customary to refer to the host after consecration as either simply “the host,” or “the sacred body.” Likewise, the chalice may be referred to simply as “the chalice” or as “the precious blood.” The terms “bread” and “wine” should be used to refer to the bread and wine brought forward as gifts, but not to the consecrated species, which are no longer bread or wine, but the body and blood of the Lord.

# Serving Guidelines

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass if you would like to serve. Check in with the Mass Captain. Sign in the book and get a cross.
- During the Mass, the EMHC sits with the rest of the faithful, near the front and preferably at the left transept.
- Participate fully in the Mass listening to the readings, and joining the community in prayer and responses.
- At the Lamb of God go to the bottom of the handicap ramp to line up. After the Priest has received, process up the ramp behind the altar and stand behind Priest and Deacon to receive Holy Communion.
- Be clear for the Priest whether you are receiving on the hand or on the tongue.
- After all ministers have received, you proceed to your station.

# Communion Distribution

- Giving the Eucharist

Hold up the Eucharist and say: “Body of Christ” the person should respond “Amen”. Place the Eucharist either on communicant’s hand or tongue. If they receive on the hand , be sure they put the Eucharist in their mouth before they walk away. If they don’t, ask them to consume the Eucharist right then and there.

- If you should drop the Eucharist, pick it up immediately and consume it.

- Blessings

When child or adult approaches with their arms crossed or a finger to their lips. You can give them a blessing saying “God Bless You” Hold your hand over their heads without touching the individual.

# Communion Distribution

## Stations for the Eucharist

Priest & Deacon in front of the Altar (EMHC if there is no Deacon). EMHC distribute at the transepts one on each side in front center of the aisle. Distribute back and forth between the two lines. When finished at the Transept you can then go to the station on that side by the front pew and continue to assist with distribution.

## Minister for the Handicap and Choir

Minister will receive the small ciborium and an usher will escort you up the center aisle. The usher will point out those who are handicapped in the back of the church and wish to receive. The Usher will also escort you to cry room and then to the choir loft. You can use the elevator or stairs. When you are finished with the distribution, the usher will escort you back down the center aisle. Go up the altar steps and place the ciborium on the left side of the altar. Proceed to the Sacristy and wait for the other ministers.

# Communion Distribution

## After Distribution

When everyone is finished distributing Communion, bring the ciborium to the left side of the altar. Proceed to the Sacristy. Purify your fingers in the ablution bowl with water on the counter. Return the Cross to the drawer and wait and watch for the Priest or Deacon to return the reserve Eucharist back in the Tabernacle. Once the Priest or Deacon begins to proceed back to their places, at this point all EMHC leave the Sacristy and line up on the left side (Blessed Virgin Mary) make a profound bow towards Tabernacle and exit down using the ramp to return to their seats.

# Daily Mass Guidelines

## Daily Weekday Mass

If you distribute the Eucharist from the ciborium (when there is no Deacon), you will stand in front of the altar beside the Priest. After distribution, return your ciborium to the left side of the altar. You will then go purify your fingers in the ablution bowl beside the tabernacle, bow and return to your seat.

If you distribute the Precious Blood, you should stand in front of the transepts . After each person consumes the Precious Blood, wipe the cup with the purificator and turn the cup a quarter turn for the next person. If there is any Precious Blood remaining after the last communicant, consume it all after before returning the cup to the Altar. Place the cup on the left side of the Altar, fold the purificator and place it beside the cup. Bow and return to your seat.

**Note: If Precious Blood is spilled, use part of your purificator and wipe up the spill. After the Mass let the Sacristan know if it was a large spill and they will clean it up appropriately.**

# Vessels & Cloths



**Ciborium**



**Paten & Host**



**Chalice**

**Pall**



**Purificator**



**Corporal**



# Tabernacle & Sacrarium



**Tabernacle**



**Sacrarium**

**Ablution Bowl**

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Transept

Transept

Center