

GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

The ministry of distributing Holy Communion is the responsibility of priests and deacons. It is understood that at regularly scheduled parish Masses, concelebrating priests and the deacons present and assisting at that Mass (unless impeded by physical reasons or other sufficient cause) will participate in the distribution of Holy Communion.

If these ordinary ministers are not sufficient to distribute the Sacrament within a reasonable amount of time, then extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may be invited to assist them.

Canon 910.2: The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is an acolyte or other member of the Christian faithful deputed in accord with Canon 230.3.

Canon 230.3: When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescripts of the law.

The following policies are to be followed in the Archdiocese of New Orleans in regard to these extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in parish celebrations. In instances other than parochial settings, the Office of Worship will be consulted.

1. Only adults (18 years and older) are to serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Special permission has been granted by Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond which permits High School seniors to serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion after completing specialized training. This special permission expires upon graduation. Any student wishing to continue service as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must complete training for adults.
2. The general qualifications of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are that:
 - a) they should manifest a devotion to the Eucharist in both their public and private lives of prayer;
 - b) they manifest a sense of presence and self-confidence in their liturgical decorum and in their relationships with others;
 - c) they be exemplary in their living out the Christian life, faith and morals;

- a. they be aware of and responsive to the Church's view of the importance of lay ministries;
 - b. they be in good standing with the local Church community;
 - d) they be fully initiated into the Catholic Church (i.e., have received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation).
3. The number of ministers for each parish should depend upon the number of Masses celebrated each weekend, the usual number of communicants, and the number of Communion stations for each Mass. When both species are distributed, usually two chalices are required at each Communion station. Alternating weekends, substitutes, and the number of ministers needed to bring Communion to the sick should also be taken into account.
 4. Age, sex, and ethnic background should all be taken into consideration in choosing candidates to insure that a cross-section of all groups of the parish family is selected.
 5. Liturgical ministers should serve in one capacity only (i.e. as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion OR readers OR ministers of hospitality, etc.).

All, therefore, whether ordained ministers or lay Christian faithful, in fulfilling their function or their duty, should carry out solely but totally that which pertains to them. GIRM. 91

6. All certification requests for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are made by the pastor to the Office of Worship. The Office of Worship will present the requests to the archbishop for his approval.
7. Those serving as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must be suitably prepared for their ministry. The training of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is coordinated through the Office of Worship and is to be completed before candidates begin to minister in the liturgy or bring Communion to the sick. Please contact the Office of Worship to plan needed sessions in the parish.
8. The term for designation as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in this archdiocese is five years. This can be renewed on request of the pastor (cf., Canon 230.2). When extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion move or choose to cease service or are deceased, the pastor is to notify the Office of Worship.

9. Designation for service as an extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is valid only within the parish of appointment. Those who move in from another diocese and wish to function here need to be designated by the Archbishop of New Orleans. NOTE: When applying for appointment, the pastor will send the Office of Worship the candidate's full name and title (e.g. Mr., Mrs., Sister, etc.).
10. After being trained and designated, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to be commissioned by the pastor for service in the parish. This commissioning is done at one of the parish's regularly scheduled Sunday liturgies. (See Book of Blessings, Chapter 63, "Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion".)
11. It is neither necessary nor desirable that extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion wear special dress or insignia. In fact, any semblance of a "stole" is not to be worn by them since the stole is the symbol of an ordained office of the Church. If extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion wear any particular dress, an alb is the ordinary vesture (cf., GIRM. 339), but it should be worn by extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion only if also worn by other liturgical ministers. "Sunday best" should be satisfactory for all liturgical lay ministers.