

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION AS PER THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE ROMAN MISSAL FOR ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

(Revised 10-14-05)

General Principles

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. (1) (SSV, (2) 27).

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 also depute suitable faithful for this single occasion (GIRM 162)."

The ordinary ministers of the Eucharist are the priest, the deacon and the instituted acolyte (normally a step a seminarian makes in preparation for the priesthood). When they are present they will always be the first ministers of Holy Communion. The priest is the minister of the Host and the deacon ministers the Precious Blood.

In the United States lay persons have been granted permission to be ***Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)*** to assist when enough ordinary ministers are not available.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. In all matters they should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop (Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America, NDRHC, no. 28).

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 (IBID).

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. [GIRM, 280]." (NDRHC, 29).

Spiritual Preparation

In the Eucharist, God starts with the human – the bread and wine on the altar, and the bread and wine of our human lives – and he brings out the beyond-the-human, the divine, in them. Bread and wine, the work of human hands, becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. But the change doesn't end there: by sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ, we become what we receive!

For ministers of Holy Communion, there is another dignity and responsibility: you must become what you give. You must become and live as the Body of Christ that you give to your brothers and sisters.

Prepare spiritually before Mass to minister the Eucharist. As you awake and prepare for the day, realize that you will be ministering Christ that day. Yours are the hands that will bring Christ to His people. This God who fashioned the universe will be here today for me to receive and then for me to minister to my brothers and sisters.

Arriving at Church

Arrive about 5-10 minutes before Mass time; sign your name on the Liturgical Ministries Check-In Sheet located next to the red commentator's book in the vesting sacristy.

1. If you are unable to serve, please arrange for a substitute. If you are a substitute, please indicate that on the sign-in sheet.
2. One person will need to sign in as the Minister of the Hosts next to the designation of "Hosts". The Minister of the Hosts is responsible for checking to make sure the tabernacle key is in the tabernacle before Mass. If it is not, they should get it from the cupboard in the working sacristy and put it in the tabernacle before Mass begins.
3. Two people will need to sign in as Ministers of the Cup. If a deacon is present, he will always be a Minister of the Cup

At Communion Time

1. After the "Sign of Peace", before the "Lamb of God", the **priest** may bring the ciborium from the tabernacle and place it on the altar if there is a need.

NB: Hosts from the ciborium are only to be used when the hosts consecrated at Mass have all been consumed.

2. During the "Lamb of God" the EMHC can proceed down the aisles and stand by the first pew in the center aisle. The EMHC go up to the altar only **after** the priest has consumed the host after "Lamb of God/Agnus Dei".
3. The Minister of the Hosts will stand behind and to the right of the priest. The two Ministers of the Cup will stand behind and to the left of the priest.
4. The priest (and deacon, if needed) will divide the newly consecrated hosts onto two patens. The "main" larger chalice and a smaller communion cup are both used for distributing the Blood of Christ.
5. The priest will minister the hosts to the EMHC and the altar servers.
6. Then the priest (or the deacon, if present) will offer the Precious Blood to each of the Ministers of the Cup; one of them will then offer it to the Minister of the Hosts and then the servers. Only a priest can consume the Body and Blood of Christ directly from the altar. The Body and Blood of Christ must be "ministered" by a priest to the deacon and by a priest or deacon to the EMHC.

NB: Deacons are always to be Ministers of the Cup.

7. To distribute the Blood of Christ, please stand as far as possible to the side aisle to make plenty of room for people to receive communion.

8. After everyone has received, the priest will give the Minister of the Hosts the paten.
9. One of the Ministers of the Cup will accompany the priest to a station and the other will accompany the Minister of the Hosts to the other station. Please stand at the head of the side aisles to minister. This gives plenty of space for the communion procession to move.
10. 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).
11. Be conscious as you are ministering that you are "feeding" God's children.
 - ❖ Make eye contact
 - ❖ Say "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ" with conviction. Be reverent but intentional. You may use their name if you like – "Pat, the Body of Christ."
 - ❖ If receiving in the hand, physically touch their hand when you place the Host in it.

After Communion

1. **Minister of the Hosts:** After communion, the Minister of the Hosts will take the paten with any remaining consecrated hosts to the altar. The priest or deacon will combine any remnants into the ciborium. The **priest** will take the ciborium from the altar to the tabernacle. Take any empty patens to the credence table to be purified after mass. Return to your seat.
2. **Ministers of the Cup:** After communion, the Ministers of the Cup will take the empty communion cups to the credence table to be purified after mass.

Generally, if there is any Precious Blood remaining in the cup, they should bring the cup to the altar and have the priest or deacon consume the remaining Precious Blood. After it has been consumed, place the purificator over the opening of the cup. You will purify the vessels after mass. Return to your seats.

After Mass

1. Bring the decanter, chalice, cups, patens and purificators from the credence table back to the working sacristy for purification. Place the vessels in the sacrarium.
2. To purify the decanter – pour a small amount of water into the decanter and swish it around. Since it does not contain any remnant of the Blood of Christ, the water can be poured down the drain. Dry the exterior of the decanter.
3. To purify the paten - inspect the paten for remaining particles of the Eucharist. If there are any, add a bit of water to the paten, swish around and empty into one of the cups/chalices. Repeat if necessary. Wipe the patens out with a new, clean purificator.
4. To purify the chalice & cups - rinse with a bit of water, swish around, drink the water and wipe out the cup with the purificator.
5. Make sure the Finger Washing bowl is emptied into the sink and the cruet is filled with water.
6. Put the soiled purificators in the laundry basket.

7. In the unusual case when the purificator has absorbed a large amount of Precious Blood, rinse it out with running water into the sacrarium. Then, wring the purificator dry and place it in the laundry bag.

Set-up for next Mass (if you are serving at the 7:30, 9:00 or 10:30 masses)

1. Leave the key in the tabernacle for the next Mass; if it is the 5:30pm Saturday mass or the 12:00pm Sunday mass return it to the cabinet in the working sacristy.
2. Pour wine into the glass decanter – only up to the very bottom of the handle.
3. Put the pre-counted small hosts from the plastic zip-lock bag into the large gold paten bowl.
4. Take the glass decanter of wine and the large gold paten bowl to the gifts table by the baptismal font.
5. Make sure the credence table (behind the presider's chair) is set up with the following items:
 - The smaller gold paten bowl
 - One small gold communion cup with a clean purificator folded inside it
 - The large main gold chalice with a clean purificator folded inside of it
 - Small glass cruet filled with water
 - Empty small glass finger washing bowl
 - White terrycloth finger washing towel
 - Folded (into thirds) Corporal cloth – this is the large white square clothe with a small red cross on it which is placed in the center of altar

Special Circumstances

1. Host falls on the floor - pick it up immediately; if the person indicates that they will receive it, place it in their hand; otherwise, consume it yourself. If you don't wish to consume it, hold it in your hand, under the paten, until you are finished giving Communion. Take the Host to the priest and he will consume it. Make sure no particles remain on the floor. If the Host is soiled, for example it fell off of the person's tongue; keep it in your hand until communion is over. Take it to the priest; he will put it in the chalice. When Mass is over he will add water to dissolve it and pour it in the sacrarium.
2. Precious Blood spills on the floor – immediately cover it with a purificator(s); enough to absorb all of the Precious Blood. After Mass rinse the purificators in the sacrarium and hang them to dry by the soiled linens bag. Use a wet purificator to wipe-up the area of the floor where the spill took place.
3. “Blessings” in the Communion line – If someone comes up in the line with their hands folded across their chest, it is a sign that they can't receive communion and would like a blessing. Only priests or deacons can give a formal blessing of the church. However, just say a simple, “God Bless You”, and bow your head to them.

Additional Notes

1. **Self-Communication** – The priest, deacon or another Communion minister will always offer you the Host and Precious Blood. We are not to give it to ourselves. This is called self-communicating and that is reserved only for presiding and concelebrating priests.
2. **Intinction** – the dipping of the Host into the Precious Blood is to be done only by the Communion minister. The person receiving Communion is not to do it. If someone indicates that this is what he or she would like - the minister of the Precious Blood would dip the Host into the cup and place the Host on the person's tongue. Generally, we will not do this here at St. Patrick's Parish. It is discouraged.
3. **Worthiness** – Communion ministers do not need to determine the worthiness of the person receiving Holy Communion that is the duty of the priest. For instance, you think that Mable's visiting son hasn't been to church since he left for college 25 years ago and there he is in your Communion line or you know that Jeff and Lucy were not married in the Church and here is Lucy in the Communion line. Minister to them and after Mass make the priest aware of the situation.

On the other hand – and only in a very rare occasion - if someone is coming forward to receive Communion and you have good reason to think that they will **desecrate** the Host, you may choose not to offer it to them. If this happens, please tell the presiding priest immediately after Mass.