**GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

A Eucharistic Minister serves, distributes and administers the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during Holy Communion. They are referred to more accurately as "Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion" (the "ordinary" minister being the priest celebrant).

From here, "Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion” will me abbreviated “EMHC”.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, “The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption and sanctification” (*CCC* 1360).

Catholics actively participate in the Eucharist as the source and summit of their Christian life. This active participation manifests itself by:

* Gathering with a community of believers each Sunday and holy day
* Praying together at Mass in, word, gesture, and song
* Listening together to God’s Word
* Giving thanks and praise to God together for the gifts of creation, and in a special way, for the gift of Jesus Christ - His life, Death, and Resurrection
* Sharing in and becoming the Body of Christ through receiving Eucharist at Mass

Catholics believe that through active participation in the Mass and in a special way, through the reception of Holy Communion at Mass, they are filled with the real presence of Christ, and are therefore sent to be Christ’s presence in the world until he comes again in glory.

The Eucharist is the most central expression of our Catholic faith – our source and summit. It is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father for the gifts of creation and the gift of his Son. Jesus is truly present in the Bread and Wine consecrated through the priest.

The entire Christ is really present to the faithful receiving sacramental Holy Communion. Through the reception of the Eucharist at Mass we share in and become the Body of Christ.

Through the Eucharist we participate in Christ's sacrifice for the world. We surrender ourselves to the transforming power of his passion, death and resurrection in our lives.

The Eucharist is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. At the Eucharistic table we are joined with the communion of Christians around the world and the communion of angels and saints who praise God at the heavenly banquet.

The bread of heaven, the food of eternal life, gives us the divine life that makes us children of God. It fills us with the life of the Holy Spirit, who forgives our sins, brings us to life, unites us in love and energizes us for service.

The Eucharist is given to us as strength and nourishment so we may carry on the work of Jesus: to proclaim the good news of salvation and to reconcile the world to God in Christ in our ordinary lives. Like the Lord, whose body was broken and whose life was poured out for us, we continue his mission of service through participation in Holy Communion. We are sent forth to be broken and poured out like Christ in order to feed the hungry and satisfy the thirsty.

The Eucharist binds us together as one body. It renews our participation in the life of Christ that we share in the Church. We enter into deeper communion with Christ, with the divine life of the Trinity, and with each other in the whole Body of Christ over time and space.

**THOSE WHO MAY SERVE IN THIS MINISTRY:** A Confirmed Catholic who attends Mass weekly and lives according to the teachings of the church. You must foster your own devotion to the Eucharist and show an example to the rest of the faithful by your own devotion and reverent and prayerful manner.

**COMMITMENT:** EMHC’s are asked to attend Mass when scheduled. And, as mentioned, you must be a practicing confirmed Catholic in good standing with the Catholic church. Maintain and nourish your own spiritual life and growth through such means as: daily prayer and reflection, devotions, liturgy of the hours, personal retreats, and holy hour during times of Adoration.

**TO BECOME AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION:** Talk to the Pastor. A short training video is required followed by the Rite of Commission signed by the pastor and bishop. You will be commissioned for a term of service, after which you will need to renew the training and be recommissioned.

* **You are required to watch the DVD located in the office that contains the catechism of the liturgy.**

**BEFORE YOU MINISTER:** Please understand that an EMHC should be in a state of grace (not conscious of an unconfessed mortal sin) and fully initiated into the sacramental life of the Church. (i.e. having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist) and not prevented by law (in a marriage not recognized by the Church, for example.)

**SCHEDULE**: The monthly schedules are mailed to your home and copies are located on the bulletin board in the narthex. The upcoming week’s schedule is found in the bulletin as a gentle reminder. If unable to serve in this ministry when scheduled, it is the Extraordinary Minister’s responsibility to call someone else listed in the schedule who serves in that ministry and at that Mass time. If you know ahead of time that you will not be available to serve, contact Kim Garrow in the office **before** the 20th of the month. It is best to send her an email, text, or note as keeping track of all verbal communication from so many people is quite difficult. Please be aware that no one is perfect and sometimes you may mistakenly be put on the schedule. If you are listed on the schedule then you are expected to arrive and serve 15 minutes before Mass begins or find a substitute. If you are unable to find a substitute, please inform the sacristan. If you are the substitute serving, please inform the sacristan.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Through baptism, we live out our lives as being followers of Christ. As EMHC’s we respond to the call of the spirit to use our gifts in service to the Parish. In accepting this position, we are challenged to "be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct. You must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love. Remember that though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and one cup.”

* EMHC help the distribution of Holy Communion to proceed smoothly.
* The "ordinary' ministers of Communion are those who are ordained — bishop, priest and deacon.
* For all of the ordained, the ministry of Communion is an expected part of their role at Mass.
  + But in their absence or when not enough of them are present, the Bishop commissions "extraordinary" ministers of Communion to assist with the distribution of Communion when the number of people in the assembly, or the disability of the celebrant, or some other pastoral necessity makes it necessary for them to assist the presider
* Because of their close association with the Eucharist, EMHC are called to represent Christ. They must become what they give, that is, they must become and live as the Body of Christ they give to their brothers and sisters. Such ministers are obliged to set an example for the parish by their devotion toward the Eucharist.
* This is shown when exhibiting the following qualities:
  + Humility – serving the assembly instead of drawing attention to oneself.
  + Hospitality – making everyone feel welcome at God's table (Communion anticipates the heavenly banquet where all are honored guests). Be attentive, relaxed, smile, give eye contact, distribute at an unhurried pace.
  + Gratitude – "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word for "thanks." The Eucharist is about giving thanks and praise to God by remembering God's actions throughout history. This keeps us grateful and hopeful because what God has done in the past he will continue to do. In the Eucharist we express personal gratitude for what God has done in our lives. We receive the gift of the Lord's presence with grateful hearts and share that gift and his blessings generously and joyfully with others.
  + Reverence – shown in our approach to the altar, how we handle the Blessed Sacrament, how we dress, our posture and our gestures.
  + EMHC care for the Body of Christ that is the Church - our fellow parishioners. They recognize the presence of Christ in the communicants who come before them. They sense our unity in Christ through the ritual that all of us share. The Eucharist unites the Church in love in all our diversity so that Christ might be everything in all of us.

**A COUPLE MORE POINTS:**

* Be reliable. Each EMHC is responsible for serving when scheduled. Please be courteous: if you cannot serve when assigned, please arrange for a substitute
* Dress "UP" neatly and conservatively. (Flip-Flops, tennis shoes, sun dresses, tank tops, Tshirts, low-cut tops, shorts, and blue jeans are inappropriate for Sunday Mass.)
* PARTICIPATE in the liturgy by truly entering into a spirit of prayer. Sing and respond.
  + This is not the time to be talking among yourselves. You are called upon to set a good example.
* It is expected that those who serve as EMHC will arrive a **MINIMUM OF 15 MINUTES BEFORE MASS**.
* Except in an emergency, a liturgical minister may perform only one liturgical ministry at a time at Mass. Thus, if you are called to minister as a EMHC, you may not also perform the function of a lector or an usher at the same Mass. *However, you may participate in more than one ministry, just not at the same Mass. Permission* ***must*** *be received from the priest to perform the function of more than one ministry at a Mass.*
* After the priest has consumed the host, EMHC’s come forward and sanitize your hands. Before taking your first step up, please bow to the altar before entering the sanctuary.
* In most cases we will need four people to distribute Communion. The Priest and Deacon, if present, are the ordinary ministers. If we have a priest and a deacon, we will need two EMHC. If there is not Deacon, we will need three. If you notice we are short and are able to volunteer, please come up as quickly and reverently as you can.
* EMHC will come forward as mentioned above and line up on the sides of the sanctuary between the altar and the tabernacle. Do not cross in front of the altar.
* After the priest has received Eucharist, he will distribute the Body of Christ to the Altar Servers and then to the EMHC. He will then distribute the Precious Blood to the Altar Servers and then to the EMHC. The chalice and purificator will be given to the EMHC who are responsible for distributing the Precious Blood. The ciborium will be given to the EMHC who is responsible for distributing the Body of Christ.
  + Priest at the head of the main aisle.
  + One Body distributer next to the priest.
    - This will be the Deacon if he is present.
  + Cup stations are down the steps to the side and front of the altar on each side.
  + Distributor of the Body: The usher will be the last in line to receive communion, if an usher informs you, go to the back of the church to distribute Communion to those with special needs.
    - Chalice **does not** take the Precious Blood to the back of the church.
* Please wait until everyone in the sanctuary has received Eucharist to proceed down to the aisle a half step behind the priest.
* When ministering the Body and Blood of Christ, allow time for the individual to bow, make eye contact with the person receiving and say: “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ”. No other words may be used.
  + Do not call someone by name when they come forward to receive.

**IMPORTANT NOTES ON DISTRIBUTING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST:**

* How to distribute the Body of Christ:
  + Hold the host in front of the communicant's eyes.
  + Say, “The Body of Christ”
  + Keep holding the host until he/she responds "Amen."
  + Place the host in the hands or on the tongue.
* How to distribute the Blood of Christ:
  + Present the cup to the communicant.
  + Say, "The Blood of Christ"
  + Wait until he/she responds "Amen." .
  + Allow the communicant to hold the chalice and drink
    - Note: Do not allow people to dip the host into the blood (intinction.) Simply explain, “It is not our tradition to dip the host.” Try not to make a scene. We don’t want any drops of the precious blood to fall on the ground.
  + Receive the Chalice back, and wipe it with the purificator after each individual receives the Blood of Christ. Turn the Chalice slightly for the next person. While the person is receiving from the chalice slightly shift the spot where you will wipe with the purificator.

**IMPORTANT NOTES ON RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST:**

* Receive the host. Depending on the church and your personal preference, you can either have the host fed to you or handed to you.
  + If the host is fed to you. Open your mouth and extend your tongue so that the host does not fall. The host will be placed on your tongue. Close your mouth and allow the host to dissolve on your tongue while thinking of the sacrifice made.
  + If you wish to have the host handed to you, hold out your hands, left on top of right. Do not take the host from the priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister, but rather allow them to place it in your hand.
  + When you approach the priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister, he/she will proclaim "the Body of Christ,". You proclaim your faith, both in word and in a gesture: as you say "Amen." (meaning I believe it!) you also bow as a way of showing your respect and faith. (People will also bow before they receive when they are second in line.)
* Receive the Precious Blood. After receiving the host, you may choose to receive the Blood of Christ.
  + Take a small drink from the chalice that is offered to you. The person offering the cup will say “the Blood of Christ,” and you should respond (as above) with a bow and a proclamation of your faith: "Amen."
  + The lip of the chalice is wiped off and slightly turned after each member receives the blood as a way to limit germs, but if you know you are contagious, refrain from receiving from the Cup.

**IMPORTANT NOTES ON THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

* If any consecrated wine is spilled on the floor at any time, stop distributing, cover the spill with the purificator and make sure that no one walks on that spot. Put your chalice back on the corporal on the altar and go stand by the spill so that no one steps on the spot. Do not place the soiled purificator back on the altar as it may stain the altar cloth. If the Blood spills on a person, ask them to talk to Father after Mass for instructions on proper cleaning. You will have to get another purificator before proceeding. At the end of Mass stand nearby to prevent anyone from stepping on that area until it is purified. The priest or deacon will clean the area after Mass.
* If you drop a host, reverently pick it up from the floor and either place it in the palm of your hand or consume it. After communion is finished, if not consumed, place the host on the corporal on the altar and let the priest know. He will consume it.
* Many children and some adults do not receive communion. In the context of blessings during the communion , the Church really only gives the authority to offer blessings to ordained ministers . Those who approach with their arms crossed over their chest should receive a simple acknowledgement by saying “May God continue to bless you” or “Jesus loves you.” Please do not say “May God bless you in the name of the Father…” nor make the sign of the cross over them. Please do not put out your hand or touch the individuals. When we are distributing communion we should not touch people because of the particles of the Eucharist that may be on the fingers. Also, putting out your hand or making the sign of the cross denotes a formal blessing… these are not appropriate for a lay person to do in this circumstance. Parents have authority to bless their children or their family members, but that is in a different setting. In the communion line only clergy should give a blessing. If someone wants a blessing they should go to the priest or deacon.
* There are occasions when many non-Catholics are present for Mass, (funerals, weddings, Christmas, Easter) in those cases the priest will make an announcement helping these people to know what to do during communion. If EMHC’s are distributing communion and someone approaches for a blessing, simply say: “May Jesus be in your heart”, or “Jesus loves you.”
* Cup Distributors: After distributing from the cup, walk to the altar, place the chalice on the altar (on the glass) and then return to your place. If there is Precious Blood left in the chalice, reverently consume the rest of the Precious Blood at the credence table making sure to stay out of the way of the altar servers so they may do their job. If you are unable to consume the Precious Blood, quietly ask (or motion) for another EMHC to help you or place the chalice on the altar and the presider will consume it. If the chalice is empty before the distribution of communion is finished, take the chalice to the altar (place it and the purificator on the glass) and return to your pew. Place the purificator beside the chalice – DO NOT place the purificator in the cup.
* Host Distributors: Place the ciborium on the altar on top of the corporal. If either the deacon or adult altar server are present at that Mass then return to your seat. If neither the deacon or adult altar server are present at Mass then stand slightly back from the altar on the left side and wait for the priest to move the ciborium towards your side of the altar. After he does that, reverently place the ciborium inside the tabernacle. He/she genuflects after closing the tabernacle door. Take the key out and return to the altar place the key on it, then return to your seat.
  + If you are present in the sanctuary when the minister is placing the ciborium into the tabernacle, please turn toward the tabernacle as he goes to it as a sign of reverence for the Holy Eucharist, genuflecting or bowing as the minister at the tabernacle does so.
  + When the priest/deacon closes the tabernacle door, you may then turn and return to your places, remembering to bow to the altar when you reach the bottom steps of the sanctuary.
  + Always remember to bow when entering or leaving the sanctuary.
* If someone has a pyx and would like to bring communion to someone, they should go to the priest’s line. Please ask them to see Father after Mass if they have a question. If they come to an EMHC, the EMHC should instruct them to go to the priest.

**GENERAL NORMS:**

* No self-Communicating (Do not give yourself the body or blood of Christ)
* Reverence for the Eucharist is the ultimate goal of all the practices we do.
* There is a difference between ordinary and extra-ordinary, that is, non-ordinary ministers of communion (church distinguishes).
* Dress for the occasion, in a non-distracting way.
* This ministry is done for the people not for ourselves.

**ALL EMHC’s HELP AFTER MASS:**

* If any of the Precious Body or Blood remains in any of the vessels, you may not wash the vessels.
  + They need to be purified by a priest or deacon before being washed.
  + Our priest and deacon do this during the liturgy
    - Please be aware of this for any visiting priests.
* Wash the chalices and the communion bowls with soap and water in the sacristy sink.
* Please wash and dry all vessels very gently and carefully.
* Wash and dry: water cruet, water pitcher, lavabo bowl, chalice, ciboriums and wine carafe.
  + When placing the ciboriums and Lavabo Bowl back on the tray, add paper towel between and stack.
* Leave the covered Ablution Cup on the Credence Table.
* Place the cruet upside down on the towel next to the refrigerator with the top next to it.
* Place used purificators on the black tray. Unfold and lay flat.
* If there is any wine left in the wine carafe, leave contents for the sacristan on the sacristy counter.
* When vessels have been washed and placed on the tray
  + Cover them with white linen.
* Chalices, paten, pall, and tabernacle key
  + VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS

**ONE LAST NOTE:** At the Last Supper Jesus Himself provided the example of service when he washed the feet of the Apostles. When you offer your service as an EMHC, you are responding to Christ's example. View your ministry as an act of prayer, an attempt to witness to the living Christ. In so doing you will begin to see the face of Christ in the faces of those whom you serve.

**A PRAYER FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION:**

Gracious Lord, you nourish me with the body and blood of your Son, that I might have eternal life. As I give the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation to your faithful people, may the saving mysteries lead me to the joys of eternal life.

Gracious God, you gather us around the banquet table to taste and see your goodness and great love. Teach us to cherish the paschal mystery, the dying and rising of your Son, Jesus. Bless us as we share the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation with those who long to be united with you. Increase the gifts of grace in us so that we may freely share them with all through Christ our Lord. Amen.