

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Instruction for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

(Updated February 23, 2016)



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Theology

In celebrating the Holy Eucharist, Catholics follow Christ's invitation: "Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup... 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Mt. 26:26-28). They also follow his command: "Do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19).

In the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, Catholics enter into communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16). In the Holy Mass, by means of the Body and Blood of Christ, Catholics proclaim the Lord who died and who rose to life again. This is the mystery of faith. Catholics believe that Christ is truly and really present in the Blessed Sacrament, under the appearances of bread and wine.

The various ministers of Holy Communion perform a service to the Church by distributing that greatest Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist. It is important for all ministers to recall that they are ministers of the Church, administering a treasure of the Church. With this in mind, **ministers should conduct themselves reverently and follow the rites established by the Church.**



Introduction

The ordinary manner by which the faithful partake of Holy Communion is from the hands of an ordained minister (bishop, priest, or deacon). The clergy are designated as “Ordinary Ministers”. ‘Ordinary’ carries a precise meaning. It does not refer to some of the more common definitions of ‘ordinary’: of no special quality, commonplace, undistinguished, somewhat inferior, customary, or usual. Rather, it refers to proper jurisdiction or authority. As ordinary ministers, the clergy most properly distribute Holy Communion because it is within their authority and jurisdiction to do so.

This is contrasted with the delegation given to certain members of the lay faithful. Those who are delegated to assist the clergy in distribution of Holy Communion are designated as “Extraordinary Ministers” (sometimes they are also called “Communion Ministers”). Likewise, this carries a precise meaning. It refers to the temporary and supplementary nature by which the laity assist the ordinary ministers.

Extraordinary ministers (EM) assist in the distribution of Holy Communion when:

- (a) there is an insufficient number of ordinary ministers, -or-
- (b) the ordinary ministers are impeded from their function (e.g. illness), -or-
- (c) there are particularly large numbers of the faithful which would excessively prolong the distribution of Holy Communion.

Qualification of Candidates

1. Candidates must be mature, practicing Catholics who, ordinarily, are at least 21.
2. Candidates should have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
3. Candidates who are converts should be active members of the Church at least 3 years.
4. Candidates who are married must be in a valid marriage.
5. Candidates must not be under any censure.
6. The public life of the candidate must reflect the teachings of the Church.
7. Newly registered parishioners must ordinarily wait 1 year before applying.

Qualified candidates are nominated by the pastor and appointed by the Archbishop to **serve only in their own parishes for a period of three years**. Once appointed, EM’s must be trained, and may serve after being commissioned in a special ceremony at Mass.

EM’s have been entrusted with an important task and so must be exemplary models of Christian living in faith and conduct. At Baptism, Christians enter a life that demands holiness. How much more so for those who draw most near the Blessed Sacrament?



Before Mass

Schedule

During the last week of a month, a Liturgical Minister Schedule is available for the upcoming month on the wall next to the left of the sign in area of the Gathering Space.

You are responsible for learning of your assignment, as well as finding another EM to replace you if you cannot be present when assigned for any reason (e.g., travel, illness, etc.). In the event that you must find a replacement: contact another EM whom you know, check the schedule for other names to contact, or check the list of commissioned EM's, which is located in the same area as the schedule.

For Masses on Holy Days, feasts, and holidays, there is no Liturgical Minister Schedule posted. However, if you will be available on such a day, you are asked to volunteer for such Masses by signing up online. The web address and instructions will be provided each time.

Preparation

Everyone should prepare himself to receive Holy Communion. Preparation becomes even more appropriate for those who will distribute Holy Communion.

Spiritual Preparation

- Confession helps us to be more worthy recipients of Holy Communion
- Pray for holiness because we handle the Most Blessed Sacrament
- Read and study the readings for Mass, so as to better participate.

Physical Preparation

- Our hands should be clean and presentable.
- You are fulfilling an important role at Mass. You should look the part. Please dress appropriately. Shorts, tank tops, plunging necklines, short skirts, spaghetti-strap dresses, t-shirts, sneakers, and the like are not proper for God's house. Appropriate clothing would be collared shirts, slacks, dress shoes, dresses and blouses, sweaters, and jackets.
Modesty is the rule.

Remember the focus of the Sacred Liturgy is Christ. At the same time, we should realize that we are indeed being watched by others, and if we as EM's are not dressed appropriately, the congregation will view it as acceptable attire for all.

Number of EM's Needed

For most large Masses at St. John's we use 12 EM's:

- 4 help distribute Holy Communion (with one going to the upper sitting area, the Blessed Sacrament chapel, and the cry room, usually with the deacon if present).
- 8 distribute the Precious Blood (none leave the sanctuary).



During Mass

Procession

Place one of the crosses from the basket at the check-in table around your neck, and take one of the hymnals.

Process into church in the following order:

- Thurifer (carries the incense if used)
- Crucifer (Cross bearer)
- Candle bearers
- **Lead EM's (first two names on the schedule)**
- **Other EM's**
- Lectors (if no Deacon is present, one of the lectors will carry the book of Gospels).
- Deacon
- Priest

Lineup two abreast and follow the procession. Sing the hymn and bless yourself with holy water as you enter.

Do not stop to bow to the altar. Lead EM's proceed to just outside of the front pew nearest the baptistry. Other EM's proceed to just outside the front pew on the right hand side of the sanctuary.

Along with the priest, bow to the altar, and then turn towards the tabernacle and bow (do not genuflect) when the priest genuflects

Move into the front pews.

Distribution of Holy Communion

After the Our Father and **before the sign of peace**, Lead EM's should proceed to the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament chapel. Following the sign of peace, the other EM's line-up just outside of the front right pew.

The Lead EM's:

- Open the tabernacle door, and **genuflect**.
- Remove all ciboria and close the tabernacle door.
- Bring the ciboria to the altar

When no Deacon is present

If there is no deacon, place them on the corporal (small square cloth on center of the altar) on the right side of the priest. Please do not remove the lids yourself. Then step back, just to the left and in front of the altar servers.



After the priest receives both Species, he will give each of the Lead EM's the Body of Christ. Then he will give the Precious Blood to the first Lead EM, who will receive and then take the purificator from the priest, wipe the chalice, and give the Precious Blood to the other Lead EM. The 2nd Lead EM gives the chalice back to the 1st Lead EM.

The priest will then give a ciborium to the second Lead EM, who will then distribute the Body of Christ to the altar servers and then go down and distribute to the other EM's. The Lead EM with the chalice follows and distributes to the altar servers and then to the other EM's. When distributing to the other EM's, stand on the church floor next to the bottom step of the sanctuary, and the other EM's will step forward and line up facing you.

After distributing to the other EM's, the Lead EM with the ciborium positions himself at the baptistry ciborium station (see map).

After each EM receives the Precious Blood, they approach the priest who will give them a ciborium or a chalice and instruct them which station to go to (see map).

The last EM will be given a ciborium and should proceed up the stairs next to the baptistry distributing to those in the Blessed Sacrament chapel, the upper seating area and the cry room. Then, return to the sanctuary to one of "assist" station (usually A or B - see map).

The Lead EM with the chalice should position himself in the only remaining open chalice station --- almost always station number 2 (see map).

When a Deacon is present

If there is a deacon, he will turn and bow to the Body of Christ you are holding, and then take the ciboria from you. Then, take your place at the front of the line with the other EM's, just outside of the far right front pew.

The priest will come to where the EM's are standing and distribute the Body of Christ.

The deacon will follow and distribute the Precious Blood and a purificator to the first Lead EM. This EM will then step forward next to the bottom step of the sanctuary.

Other EM's (including the other Lead EM) will step forward forming a line, and receive the Precious Blood.

After each EM receives the Precious Blood they approach the deacon who will give them a ciborium or a chalice and instruct them as to which station to go to.

The last EM will be given a ciborium and assist the deacon in distributing to those upstairs. Then, return to the sanctuary to one of "assist" station (usually A or B - see map).

The Lead EM with the chalice goes to chalice station 2, or an open station if already filled.

Those with chalices either stand next to the pew or the altar step. Ask, if you are uncertain.



When a communicant stops in front of you, raise the Host or place the chalice within his reach as you say **only the following words**:

“The Body of Christ” or

“The Blood of Christ”

As a commissioned EM, we are to follow the words chosen by the Catholic Church. Do not alter the words, use additional phrases, or say the names of those communicants you know. The communicant should respond “Amen” as an affirmation of belief in the Sacrament. If such an affirmation is not given, gently remind the communicant that we say “Amen”.

Place the Host on the communicant’s hand or on his tongue firmly enough that he knows he now has possession of it. Children and adults who approach you with their arms crossed over their chest are expecting a blessing instead of Holy Communion. Do not bless them using the words or gestures a priest uses or by making the sign of the cross on their forehead. Simply say “May God Bless You” while extending your hand slightly towards them.

With distributing the Precious Blood, let the communicant take it with both hands. You may have to guide the chalice to the lips of young children or the elderly. After the communicant finishes, wipe the rim of the chalice, so that the rim and a bit of the inside are cleaned, and then turn it about ¼ turn for the next person. You may unfold the purificator. If it becomes soiled (e.g. with lipstick) find a clean area of it to wipe the chalice.

When you finish, if there are still many communicants at another station, go there and assist with the distribution of Holy Communion or the Precious Blood.

If you distribute all of the Precious Blood in your chalice, place the purificator over the rim, with your hand over the purificator, and step forward next to the bottom step of the sanctuary and face the altar.

Intinction is the manner of receiving Holy Communion whereby a portion of the Host is dipped into the Precious Blood. The approved method includes having an altar server hold a paten to protect from spills and accidents. Since we do not use patens at St. John's, **Intinction is not allowed in our Church**. If someone comes to you with a Host in hand, advise him to consume it before offering him the Precious Blood.

Do not give additional Hosts to communicants unless the person requesting them has a pyx, and is from the Choir. The Body of Christ cannot be carried in one’s hands to distribute to someone else. Others with a pyx should be directed to see a priest or deacon after Mass.

Accidents with the Holy Eucharist or the Precious Blood

If a Host is dropped, immediately pick it up and consume it, or if it falls from a communicant’s mouth hold it in your hand until it can be properly disposed of by a sacristan in the sacristy.

If the Precious Blood is spilled, immediately cover the spill with your purificator, soaking it up. Leave the purificator on the spill, ask the communicant to wait there for a moment, and then get another purificator from the altar or from the sacristy and return to your station. Inform



the communicant he may go, and then step over the purificator so that it is behind you and safe from foot traffic. There should be a sacristan at each Mass who will properly clean any spills. If not, leave the spill covered and alert the priest or deacon after Mass. Remember, this is Christ's Precious Blood - honor and reverence are called for.

Ignorance of the Holy Eucharist by Communicants

Your responsibility also involves the duty to guard against anyone abusing the Body and Blood of Christ. If a person looks confused, as if he does not know what is happening in the Communion line, if someone tries to grab the Host improperly, this may be a sign that he is not Catholic.

It is appropriate that everyone receive Holy Communion only in the manner set forth by the Church. Do not allow people to take the Host from you; they may receive it, not take it. They may either open their mouth to receive on the tongue or hold their hands, one over the other, raised and open. Exercising good judgment, you may have to inquire whether someone is Catholic or not. If not, they are not to be given Holy Communion.

Watch to see that communicants actually consume what is given to them. If not, they are to be stopped immediately, even if that means going down an aisle after them. It is not unreasonable to inquire whether someone who has walked off with a Host is Catholic. If he is not, he should be instructed to give the Host back to you. Do not invite such a person to simply consume the Host. Treat the Host as a soiled Host.

Unfortunately, some people, even Catholics, may try to walk off with a Host for various strange or even sinful purposes. Your attention to your surroundings can greatly minimize such sacrilege.

Conclusion of the Communion Service

EM's with ciboria return to the altar and place the ciboria on the corporal. Cleanse your fingers in the ablution dish and dry them with the cloth. If you have a soiled host, place it on the cloth in the sacristy next to the returned chalices. Return to your seat, except the Lead EM that had the ciborium should remain at the altar, in the position where you first gave the ciborium to the deacon/priest.

EM's with chalices go to the sacristy and consume the remaining Precious Blood in silence. Place the Chalice on the cloth on the counter and put the soiled purificators in the linen basket on the counter. Do not pour any of the contents down the sink or the sacrarium. The Lead EM with the chalice should return to the altar area where they first gave the ciboria to the deacon/priest. Other EM's return to your seat, unless when you exit the sacristy you see the Lead EM's are enroute returning the ciboria to the tabernacle. If they are, then pause just outside of the sacristy until the Lead EM's have entered the Blessed Sacrament chapel.

The deacon (or the priest if no deacon is present) will hand the Lead EM's any ciboria that need to be returned to the tabernacle. Bow before reaching for the ciboria. After taking the ciboria, allow the priest/deacon to bow and then go to the Blessed Sacrament chapel, open the tabernacle door, place the ciboria inside, **genuflect**, close the door, and return to your seat.



Recession

With your hymnal, follow the servers up the center aisle two abreast. Stop and turn toward the altar when the servers do. Reverence the altar with the priest (bowing) and bow toward the tabernacle when the priest genuflects.

Then turn and process up the main aisle.

Lead EM's should collect the crosses and put them back into the basket at the sign in area. Return the hymnals to the sign in area.



Weekday Mass

Before Mass, check to see that the following is set out on the table (near the outside door)

- The brown basket with tongs and a supply of hosts
- A ciborium and large host in it (these hosts are smaller than the ones used for Sunday Mass, but larger than the regular hosts).
- The glass cruets filled with water and wine (from the refrigerator in the Ministers Room).

Then check that the following is on the altar:

- Two chalices (on the side nearest the ambo)
- Two purificators (one on the left side and one on the right side of the altar)
- A corporal, unfolded and centered on the altar cloth
- The Sacramentary (Book of Prayers)

Then, check that the two candles on the altar are lit. The lighters can be found on the back shelf of the credence table behind the ambo.

After the priest receives both Species, any two volunteer EM's go to opposite sides of the altar. The priest will distribute Holy Communion and the Precious Blood to you. After receiving the Precious Blood, take the chalice and a purificator and go to the far side of the raised sanctuary nearest you.

When finished distributing the Precious Blood, consume any that remains and return the vessels to where the priest is (either at the credence table or the altar). If the priest is at the altar, one EM should bring the cruet of water to him.

Remain with the priest. The priest will clean and dry the ciboria and the chalices, or may give them to you to dry with the purificator after he has cleaned them. If the priest remains at the altar while doing this, place the cleaned and dried vessels on the credence table, with the purificators over (or in) the chalices. If the priest remains at the credence table while doing this, he may still give you the vessels to dry and place back on the credence table as he returns to the altar..

When done, return to your seat, reverencing the altar with a bow.

After Mass:

- Return the sacred vessels to the cabinet where they were before Mass
- Place the soiled purificators in the basket in the cabinet
- Extinguish the candles
- Fold up the corporal (placing it in the cabinet with the vessels), or in the basket if soiled
- Return the Sacramentary to the cabinet.
- Return the unconsecrated hosts to the plastic container in the cabinet
- Return the basket and tongs to the cabinet.
- Return the wine and water cruets to the refrigerator in the Minister's Room.



Definitions

Ablution dish: Ours is a small clear glass bowl holding water with a gold lid. It is on a rectangular glass dish. It is used to cleanse the fingers after distributing Communion.

Ambo: The stand where the Lector reads from and where the Gospel is proclaimed.

Chalice: The “cup” used by the Priest which holds the Sacred Blood of Jesus, and also the cups that resemble chalices which are used by ministers to distribute the Precious Blood to the faithful.

Ciborium: A large container or bowl that holds the consecrated hosts and is used to distribute Communion. **Ciboria** is the plural form..

Corporal: A large square piece of linen placed in the center of the altar upon which the Eucharist is consecrated. It is folded into nine squares. Everything placed on the corporal during Mass should be consecrated.

Credence table: A table near the altar, which holds some of the items necessary for the celebration of the Mass.

Paten: For purposes of this document, a small gold-plated (or other precious metal) disc with a handle. It is held by an altar server below a communicant's hands (or chin if receiving on the tongue). The purpose is to catch any Host that is dropped. More common is the paten used by the priest to hold the large consecrated Host, usually of the same precious metal and design as the chalice.

Purificator: A folded piece of rectangular white linen that is used to purify the chalice and paten when Communion is over. Also used by the Communion ministers to wipe the chalice after communicant uses it.

Pyx: A small container that is used to take Communion to the sick and those confined to their homes.

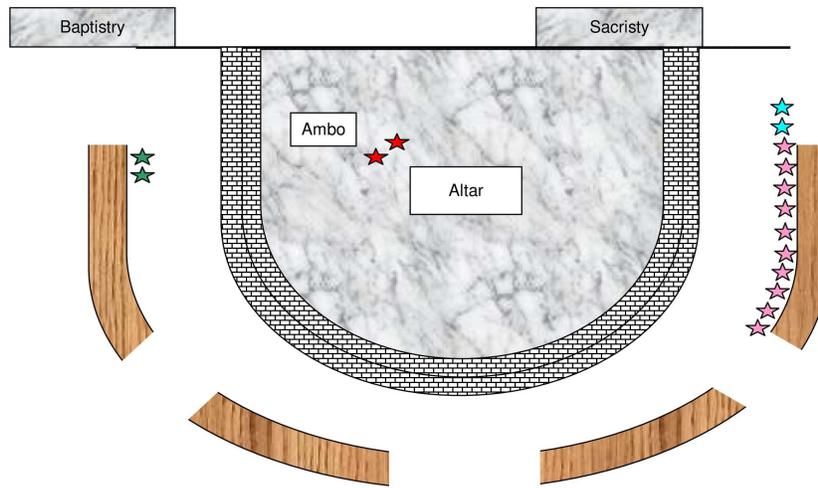
Tabernacle: A large “safe” like container in a church that holds the remaining unused consecrated Hosts

Sacrarium: The “sink” next to the regular sink in the sacristy that allows blessed and sacred items to go into the earth under the church rather than into the sewer system.

Sanctuary: The part of the church, which contains the altar, the presider's chair, the tabernacle, the credence table, etc. The holiest part of the church building.



Positions Following the Procession and for Receiving Holy Communion



Lead EM's position following the procession



Other EM's position following the procession, and also for receiving Holy Communion



Lead EM's position for receiving Holy Communion if Deacon is present



Lead EM's position for receiving Holy Communion if Deacon is NOT present

