

**GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**  
**ST. MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH**

Revised 06/07/2015 by Fr Jeremy Gries

## **I. Overview**

These guidelines are intended to assist our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMs) as servants to our faith community. They reflect current documents and policies of the Archdiocese and Church Universal pertaining to accepted practices of the Liturgy.

Our objective is to define the procedures for our ministers to use that will offer uniformity and order in the distribution of the Eucharist to our faith community.

## **II. Scheduling**

Schedules are prepared each month and are sent by e-mail or mailed to your home. Each minister is scheduled according to the information sheet on file with the parish. After this training, you can expect to begin your rotation as an EM the next month. Until then, you are encouraged to check in with the priest prior to Mass to see if any substitutes are needed for that Mass.

When you receive the schedule, if you foresee a conflict, it is *each minister's responsibility to find a substitute* for your scheduled time.

## **III. Preparation for Serving Communion**

Keeping your focus on a reverence for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist helps when everything at Mass is not going perfectly! Daily prayer, scripture study and reflection, attendance at weekday Masses, and periodic retreats are encouraged for all ministers and ministries.

At times, you may come to Mass with a heavy heart or with a troubled mind. At such times try to work with faith and prayerfulness allowing the Spirit of Christ to shine through you to those whom you serve. Remember that each person to whom you offer the Eucharist is also a part of the Body of Christ.

In preparing for Mass, remember appearance is important. Please adhere to the **Dress Code**. Dress should be "business casual" or nicer. Avoid distracting and/or inappropriate apparel, such as halter/tank tops, mini-skirts, tight clothing, flashy jewelry and shirts and/or pants with large graphic designs/words, jeans, flip-flops and sports jerseys. Keep in mind that each Mass is attended by a cross-section of our parish. Please choose apparel that is simple, respectful, and appropriate for the community whom you are to serve. Please be groomed and clean. If you are not dressed appropriately, you should not serve as an EM at that Mass.

#### IV. Preparation for Mass

##### A. General Notes

- 1) EMs are welcome (not required) to join in prayer with the priest, lector(s), and servers in the Narthex or Sacristy prior to Mass to prepare prayerfully for the liturgy.
- 2) EMs should determine ahead of time their specific positions and duties (paten or chalice).
- 3) When necessary, find substitute ministers. Substitutions should be completed 10 minutes before the start of Mass.

##### B. Set-Up

- 1) Arrive 15 minutes before Mass. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SET-UP BEFORE MASS.**
- 2) Check in with the priest.
- 3) First EM present is to check the tabernacle to determine how many hosts are in reserve in the Ciborium.
  - a. The key to the tabernacle can be found in the center cabinet in the Sacristy.
  - b. Leave the key in the tabernacle in preparation for Mass.
  - c. Do not put the key in your pocket or take it home, please!
  - d. *If* two Ciboria are in the Tabernacle and *if* both are needed on the altar during Mass, a second minister should be assigned before Mass begins.
- 4) In the Sacristy:
  - a. Ask the priest about any special, different, or specific requirements of the day.
  - b. Count out the number of hosts required and place them in the two communion bowls.
  - c. Place the Priest's Host (large host) in the large communion bowl on top of the other hosts.
  - d. For Sunday Masses, fill the cruet up to the glass ring.
  - e. Check that the water cruet is full. Please use bottled water from refrigerator.
  - f. Place the large communion bowl containing hosts and the cruet of wine on the counter in Sacristy for servers to take back.
- 5) The following items are to be placed on the Credence Table prior to Mass:
  - a) Priest's Chalice
    - i. purificator
    - ii. Pall
    - iii. Corporal
  - b) Two (2) Communion Cups with purificators
  - c) Communion bowl with unconsecrated hosts
  - d) Pitcher of water
  - e) Ablution bowl and abluion towel

#### V. Your Role During Mass

##### A. The Sign of Peace & Entry into Sanctuary

- i. All ministers will approach the altar **after** exchanging the sign of peace
- ii. All together stop at the foot of the steps and bow together before entering the Sanctuary.
- iii. One minister will stand in line with servers in front of the bench on the St Mary side of the sanctuary
- iv. Two Ministers will stand in line with the server in front of the bench on the St Joseph side of the sanctuary

## **B. Reception of Holy Communion**

- i. The Priest is the first to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
- ii. The Priest will then distribute the Body of Christ to each individual minister and servers. Bow reverently and consume immediately.
- iii. The priest will distribute the Precious Blood to the two (2) cup ministers.
- iv. One cup minister will distribute the Precious Blood to the other Precious Body minister
- v. Cup ministers will distribute the Precious Blood to the servers.
- vi. The Precious Body minister will then step forward to receive communion bowl from the Priest. Do not approach altar and take the bowl.

## **C. Distribution of Communion**

Please move slowly, with reverence and care.

### **1. Precious Blood and Body Ministers**

- a. Please distribute Communion to any of our sick, infirmed, or non-ambulatory parishioners first. They typically sit in the first few pews and may motion for the minister.
- b. When your station has been served, look at the other stations next to yours to see if you are needed there. Do not pass your cup to another wine minister. Never pour the Precious Blood from cup to cup.
- c. The Precious Body and Precious Blood Ministers on the Ambo side are to distribute Holy Communion to the cantor(s), choir, and musicians once the communion hymn is completed. Please don't forget our important music ministers!
- d. If you are no longer needed to distribute, consume any extra Precious Blood at the altar. Then place your empty vessel on the altar for purification.

### **2. Precious Blood Ministers**

- a. Present the Communion Cup to the Communicant at eye level, professing "The Blood of Christ." When the communicant responds "Amen," present the cup to them. Those who are very young or infirmed may need help in handling the cup, to prevent spillage. For the infirmed, you may want to place the purificator underneath the cup to prevent spillage on their clothing. After the communicant returns the cup, wipe the rim of the cup with the purificator and rotate one-quarter turn before presenting the cup to the next communicant.
- b. **Intinction**: Intinction is the process of receiving both species at once by dipping the host into the consecrated wine. *This act can only be performed by a priest.* If a communicant indicates a desire to receive in this manner, politely decline by asking them to consume their host and then offer them the cup.
- c. Continue to distribute until either your section has been served or your communion cup is empty.

### 3. Precious Body Ministers

- a. Hold the Eucharist just below a line of eye contact with the Communicant and profess “The Body of Christ”. After the Communicant responds with “Amen”, place the Eucharist in the hand of the Communicant with enough firmness so that they know it is in hand. Some communicants will receive on their tongue.
- b. Ask for God’s blessing upon infants and small children who are not receiving Communion, as well as adults who approach with arms crossed over their chest.
  1. Gently rub your fingers from you distributing hand of the Body of Christ over the paten (i.e., bowl) to knock any crumbs into the paten and not drop them on the floor.
  2. Extend your right hand toward or over the non-communicant’s head. No contact is necessary.
    - i. Invite God’s blessing upon a child by saying the following (Cf., *Book of Blessings*, #173).  
*May the Lord Jesus, who loved children, bless you and keep you in His love, now and forever.*
    - ii. As a multipurpose option for all persons – children and adult, the following may be said.  
*May the Lord Jesus, bless you and keep, now and forever.*
    - iii. Do not make the sign of the cross in the air, since that is reserved for ordained ministers
- c. If there are only one or two Communicants more than your supply, you may break hosts in half. Otherwise, ask the next person in line to wait while you retrieve additional hosts from the ciborium on the altar. The ciborium is to remain on the altar. Use all the hosts in your bowl before returning to the altar.

### D. Completion of Communion

1. After distribution of Communion, the remaining consecrated hosts are placed in the ciborium. Move with reverence and care. Precious Body minister will place the consecrated hosts in the ciborium leaving any broken ones or pieces in the bowl for consumption by the Presider or ministers. Once all remaining Hosts are in the ciborium the minister will return it to the tabernacle, locking the door, and returning the tabernacle key to the sacristy cabinet. **Do not take key home!**
2. Precious Blood ministers, once you are finished distributing Communion, consume any extra Precious Blood at the altar. Then place your empty vessel on the altar for purification by the priest. All Precious Blood is to be consumed and not placed in the tabernacle.
3. Once all Ems have returned to the sanctuary, all together go down steps, form line, and bow to altar together, then return to pews

## VI. RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER MASS

1. All Ministers are responsible for clean-up.
2. Return all chalices, communion bowls, pitchers, purificators, corporal, ablution bowl and towel to the sacristy cabinets. Vessels are washed weekly with soap and hot water. Place soiled linens in laundry basket on counter. Please spread wet cloths over basket edge to dry.
3. Please keep the Sacristy clean and organized.

## VII. SPILLS

1. **Precious Blood:** For a small spills of Precious Blood, wipe it up immediately with your purificator. Leave the purificator on the floor and obtain another purificator. Return to your station and position yourself in front of the purificator to protect the area from traffic. Leave the purificator over the spill until the end of the Mass. For larger spills, place your purificator over the area – go to the sacristy and obtain a terrycloth towel. Use this towel to absorb all of the spilled Precious Blood. *Remember to remain calm and be reverent.* Cover the area with a purificator. Take the terrycloth towel(s) to the sacristy. After Mass, return to the spilled location with water and another towel. Cleanse/purify the area.

**Rinse as much of the spilled Precious Blood as possible in the sacrarium. Ask a Priest to help/assist you with this process.**

2. **Bread:** If a consecrated host falls from your bowl to the floor, the simplest procedure is to consume it immediately yourself. Should a consecrated host not be consumable, (falls out of someone's mouth), cover with an extra purificator, place it on the altar, and bring it to the Sacristy immediately after you finish serving. **Ask a priest for assistance to dissolve the host.** *If you find a host on the floor or anywhere in the church area, always assume that it is consecrated and follow the above procedures.*

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Let the joy you feel in serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion show as you look into the eyes of each Communicant. Take enough time to see each person as a particular person, like yourself, a faith-filled member of the Body of Christ.

The people of St. Mary are indebted to our Extraordinary Ministers for the gifts of themselves that they share with us in our liturgies. Your prayerful preparation for this ministry and your participation as a lay minister during Mass are very important to all of us. If you have questions concerning the information in these guidelines, please call the pastor/parish administrator.