

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



Ministry Manual

2018

*The Most Holy Eucharist
is the sacrament by which Jesus Christ
shares Himself as God and as Man
with everyone who receives Him:
He offers himself to His heavenly Father
as the most appropriate offering
and invites every human being present
to do the same.*

*The faithful around the table
are animated by the graces of the sacrament
to growth in belief and understanding of God
and so live a life ever so close
to the intent of the Father.*

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QUALIFICATIONS FOR BECOMING AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Ordinary minister of Holy Communion is a bishop, priest or deacon. However, other members of the faithful, known as extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, may be commissioned to assist with the distribution of the Sacrament.

Any confirmed Catholic adult 16 years and older who has received all their sacraments and is of good moral standing (this includes a valid sacramental marriage in the Catholic Church) wishing to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is welcome to sign up for this ministry.

Training is required prior to serving at Mass. Workshops are scheduled by the ministry coordinators on a regular basis. All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required to attend one of these seminars/workshops to acquaint them with their duties at Mass.

In order to be properly disposed to receive communion, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, like all other Catholics, should not be conscious of grave sin and should have fasted for one hour. It is encouraged that all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should in every way **demonstrate by their reverence for the Holy Eucharist that they truly believe that this is not just bread and wine, but the very Body and Blood of the risen Lord.**

One should not accept this obligation of responsibility unless he or she is willing to carry it out with deep faith, and an awe inspired sense of God's presence. Your respectful silence, grace-filled movement, and care with the Sacred Species are observed by all the people.

CLOTHING: The way a minister dresses conveys a message to the congregation and speaks about the importance of his/her ministry. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are asked to dress respectfully for this ministry. The receiver of Holy Communion should be taken in by Jesus, whom he/she receives, and not be distracted by the person who offers Communion. Extraordinary ministers are asked to dress with modest clothing, no low cut tops, no mini-skirts, no shorts and no T-shirts with inappropriate sayings or logos.

PRE-MASS PREPARATION

All Ministers

The current schedule will be posted on the bulletin board in the Cry Room at the back of the Church. A two month schedule will be emailed to all Ministers in advance and will also be available on the parish website.

All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should **arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass** begins and are encouraged to participate in welcoming parishioners to the celebration.

Please check off your name on the posted ministry schedule to indicate you are present and able to serve.

All Ministers are responsible for being present at their scheduled time. If you are unable to attend, you are responsible to obtain a replacement.

Lead Minister

During the training sessions everyone will be trained for all positions. The name that appears first on the schedule will be known as the Lead Minister.

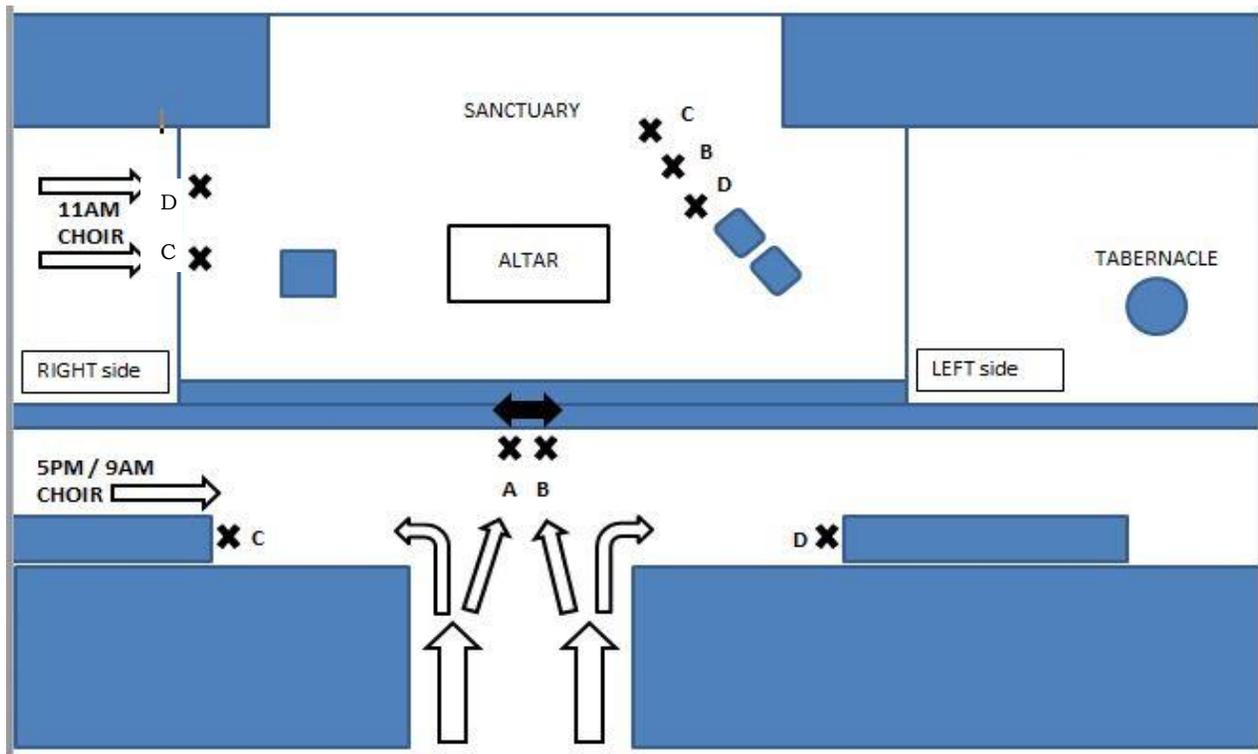
When a Deacon is present at Mass with the Priest, he will bring the ciborium from the tabernacle to the altar and the lead minister will return them at the end of communion. When a Deacon is not present the lead minister will bring the Sacrament from the tabernacle to the altar as well.

The Lead Minister will be responsible to ensure that all positions for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are filled, and if need be, recruit from the congregation if any scheduled Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are missing.

MASS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion process in at the beginning of Mass. They are positioned behind the Proclaimers of the Word directly in front of the deacon and priest. As they reach the front, they move to the left and right to allow the Priest (and Deacon) to come to the centre. Everyone in the procession bows together and the Communion Ministers then return to their seats.

Hands are to be washed before mass. No alcohol hand sanitizer is to be used as it damages the ciborium.



If the Deacon is present: after the 'sign of peace' the Extra-Ordinary Ministers proceed to the front of the Sanctuary bow and go directly to their positions adjacent to the altar (on Father's left)

If the Deacon is not present: after the 'sign of peace' all ministers proceed to front of the Sanctuary bow and go to the tabernacle. *Please observe silence.* The Lead Minister opens the tabernacle, all ministers bow or genuflect. The Lead Minister retrieves the ciboria from the tabernacle, closes the doors (one of the other ministers can do this) and delivers the ciboria, placing them at the priest's left side. The ministers line up as shown in diagram below. After the priest receives Holy Communion he will distribute the Body of Christ to the Extraordinary Ministers and the Altar Servers. After receiving communion, ministers are to step forward to receive the *Ciboria* from the priest. Once this is completed they will go to their assigned places and offer the Sacred Species to the people.

Father will distribute from position A. When a deacon or con-celebrating priest is present, Father will distribute from position B. The intention is to have Father alternating positions each week to provide equal service to each side of the congregation.

At the 11am Mass: The Lead Minister (B) distributes Communion alongside the Priest (if Deacon is not present) the Second (C) and Third (D) Ministers proceed to the choir side of the Sanctuary and distributes to the Choir (as shown in diagram) and then takes their place in front of the first pew to distribute to the congregation.

At the 5pm and 9am Mass: the Lead Minister (B) distributes Communion alongside the Priest (if Deacon is not present). The Second Minister (C) proceeds directly to their place in front of the first pew on the choir side and distributes to the choir and then to the congregation, the Third Minister (D) proceeds directly to their position in front of the front pew on the left.

DISTRUBUTION PROTOCOL:

For the distribution of the *Precious Body*, the Minister holds up the host and says to the communicant, "*The Body of Christ.*" Wait for the communicant to respond with a bow and "*Amen*". If the communicant fails to respond, say "*Amen*" for them. Do not alter the words. Place the *Host* reverently in the person's hands or on the tongue of the communicant. If you observe someone not consuming the host immediately, say "Please consume the Host" or some similar statement.

If you have a "pyx" in your ciboria, hold up the pyx and say to the communicant, "The Body of Christ" then place the unopened pyx in the communicant's hand. Pyxis are usually distributed from position A.

If you are unsure about whether a child has received First Holy Communion, ask the parent. Communion is not to be refused to anyone. If you have any concerns they are to be expressed to the parish priest in private.

After all have received communion, the ministers will return their *ciborium* to the altar and place it on the *corporal* (*Altar cloth*).

It is the responsibility of the priest or deacon to transfer the Blessed Species from one ciborium to another at the Altar. This is to ensure that no particles are dropped and that each ciborium is cleaned properly.

The Priest will give the *ciboria* to the Lead Minister and he/she will return the *Precious Body* to the tabernacle. All ministers bow or genuflect before closing the door.

The Tabernacle key is to be returned to the Altar by the Lead Minister before joining the other ministers at the front of the Sanctuary. All ministers bow together and return to their seats.

After the final dismissal, the Extra-Ordinary Ministers return to the front and join in the Recessional. The Ministers bow together with the others and proceed down the aisle, immediately in front of the Celebrant.

BLESSING for NON-COMMUNICANTS:

Non-communicants who come forward during Communion with arms crossed are requesting a blessing. You may extend your hand over the person's shoulder and say "The Blessing of Christ be upon you" or "May God bless you" but do not make the Sign of the Cross on the forehead and/or give the Priestly

blessing which is: “May Almighty God bless you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”, (NOTE: only ordained ministers can give this blessing during Mass).

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. If there is a visiting priest, he will be informed of the procedures for communion by the Lead Minister. An instructional checklist is posted with the schedule on the bulletin board in the cry room.
2. Persons with severe food allergies who need to avoid cross-contamination (ie: peanuts, gluten) or receive low gluten hosts will place a pyx with their name on it in the ciborium at the gifts station at the entrance of the Church before mass to be carried up at the procession of the gifts.

After consecration, the priest will place the pyx in the ciborium for position A. ***The pyx will always be distributed from position A.*** If a Deacon is present, he will be given the ciborium with the pyx and distribute from position A (on the priest’s right). If a Deacon is not in attendance, the priest will distribute communion (and any pyx) from position A and the lead minister will serve from position B. As the priest alternates positions each week, this will provide the gluten-sensitive / allergic communicant the opportunity to receive the Eucharist from the priest every other week.

3. Should a Host fall to the ground:

You may let the communicant retrieve the host and consume it. If they do not, you are to retrieve it and consume it or place it in the hand that you are using to hold the *ciborium*. When finished serving, return the *ciborium* to the altar and inform the priest about the situation and he will consume the host.

4. If a person comes to you with a pyx and asks for a Host to be taken to a sick person, you will not comply, but in a friendly manner, invite him or her to speak to the priest after Mass, (only trained pastoral ministers may take communion to the sick).
5. If a communicant is unable to come to the front to receive the Eucharist because of illness and/or mobility issues, arrangements are to be made before mass (with the assistance of the ushers) to position the communicant at the front or on an aisle so that communion can be delivered to them in their seat. After all the other communicants have received communion and before returning to the altar, a designated minister will take communion to those in the congregation requiring this service.

These are delicate situations; if it is handled in an efficient manner, it will likely go unnoticed by others.

CONCLUSION

The preceding pages of this handbook may be overly detailed to those who have been active in the ministry for many years, but it serves both new and established Ministers to help create a more standard process. By striving for procedural consistency among Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the assembly will feel more at ease, enabling them to be free from distractions and enter more deeply into the celebration.

At times you may make mistakes in these procedures. Do not worry! What is most important is to maintain an attitude of reverence and worship towards the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and be warm and hospitable to members of the congregation