EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

PROCEDURES GUIDEBOOK for MASS
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) at Mass

General Guidance from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops

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. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should show a reverence for the Eucharist. That reverence is reflected in their demeanor at Mass (full, active and conscious participation at liturgy – Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, no. 14), their attire, and the manner in which they handle the Eucharist (Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion, no. 29). A neat and reverential appearance is in keeping with the minister’s role and belief in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The minister’s attire should not detract from that role. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should see to it that their hands are clean. They should also refrain from using strong cologne, perfume or aftershave because some people have sensitivities to these scents and because these fragrances often remain on one’s hands and can be transferred to the Eucharist.

The number of EMHCs needed for a Mass will vary, according to which Mass you are serving, the species of Communion being served (the Body of Christ or the Blood of Christ) and whether there is an additional priest or deacon serving Communion. For each Mass a “Lead EMHC” will be scheduled to be included in the number of EMHCs for that Mass. The sign-in sheet, located in the Narthex, will list the scheduled ministers and their respective positions for serving.

- At the 4:30 pm and 9:00 am Liturgy there will be two ministers of the Host and four ministers of the Cup.
- At the 7:30 am Liturgy there will be two ministers of the Host and two ministers of the Cup.
- At the 11:00 am Liturgy there will be four ministers of the Host and four ministers of the Cup.

If a scheduled minister does not arrive at least ten minutes before Mass is to begin, the Lead may recruit a known minister or adjust to having fewer ministers participate.
**Lead Minister the Duties Before Mass**

1. Arrive at Church 30 minutes before the scheduled Liturgy.
2. Check that everything that is needed is in place:
   
   a. In preparation for the Offertory, a sacristan, or the Lead EMHC from the previous Mass, may have already placed the wine Decanter and the Paten with an unconsecrated large Host on the small table located inside the carved doors at the entrance to the Nave of the Church on the right side. If they have not already been prepared, please prepare them and place them there before Mass. Unconsecrated Hosts and wine are kept in the locked closet in the sacristy.
      - Unconsecrated hosts should total approximately 150, which may vary depending upon the Season and the Mass. If consecrated Hosts from a previous Mass will be brought to the altar  
      - Do not overfill the Decanter – please use measuring cups and your own visual check.
   
   b. Consecrated low-gluten Hosts, stored in a pyx in the Tabernacle, should be placed on the small table in the sacristy to be ready for a member of the Assembly who requests a low-gluten Host.
   
   c. Consecrated Hosts left over from an earlier Mass may be brought from the Tabernacle in the chapel to the sacristy and transferred to a Ciborium for use at the current Mass. The Ciborium may then be placed on the small table in the sacristy and be sure that a candle is placed and lit to remind all of the Presence of the Eucharist in the room.
   
   d. Designate a minister of the Cup to bring a Ciborium of consecrated Hosts and the pyx with consecrated low-gluten Hosts to the altar when the other ministers gather in the sanctuary for Communion. This minister of the Cup will also be the minister to bring the Cup to those who are not physically able to approach the altar (**See note on page 4 under Special Circumstances, #1).  

3. A Sacristan or the Lead EMHC from the previous Mass may have already set the credence table to include the Chalice covered by a Corporal, 2-4 Cups with Purificators, 1-3 Ciboria with unconsecrated Hosts the finger bowl with pitcher of water, a hand towel for washing the priest’s hands, and a small pitcher of water for the priest to add water to the wine Decanter. If not, please set up the credence table.
   
   a. The sacred vessels are stored in the closet in the sacristy.
   
   b. Purificators and hand towels are kept in plastic bins in the sink cabinet.
   
   c. You may bring Hosts consecrated at the earlier Liturgies to the sacristy for use at the 11:00 am Liturgy, adjusting the number of unconsecrated hosts used.

4. The Sacramentary (the book the Presider uses) should be on the Presider’s chair to the right. If Father Bill O’Connell is presiding, the sacramentary with large print will be on the credence table with the Corporal on top of it. (see photos on page 8)

5. The Book of the Gospel should be on or near the sign-in podium in the narthex.

6. Check the sign in sheet to confirm all liturgical ministers are present. If anyone is absent, you may recruit a known EMHC, but if none are available the station will not be filled. If a lector or prayer reader has not signed in, ask the single lector to read both Readings and recruit a known prayer reader.
7. Invite a family of 1-2 people to carry the gifts at the Offertory or check-in a family that may have been scheduled.

8. Participate in the Processional. The proper order of the procession ministers is single file:
   a. Cross bearer
   b. Ministers of the altar (Acolytes)
   c. Lead Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
   d. Lector (second Reader) (when there are two Readers)
   e. Lector (first Reader) carrying the Gospel Book, unless a deacon is present
   f. Deacon carrying the Gospel Book, when present
   g. The Presider

Upon a signal from the Presider, the cantor will welcome the congregation and ask them to rise as we gather and join in singing the opening hymn. The ministers and Presider process down the middle aisle toward the altar. From time to time in the liturgical year there may be a gathering around the Baptismal font in the back of the church and opening prayers and blessing of the congregation may precede the processional.

The lector holding the Gospel Book above his/her head does not stop at the foot of the altar but proceeds straight up the steps, goes around on the left side, and places the Book in the center of the altar, steps back and bows in reverence to the altar, and then s/he turns and walks between the altar and the ambo, descends the stairs and takes his/her seat in the Assembly. Simultaneously, the Presider and other ministers stop at the foot of the altar and bow together. As the Presider ascends the steps the ministers disperse to their seats in the Assembly.

**Special Circumstances**

Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation, according to their capacity.

1. **Individuals with Disabilities:** To accommodate those with limited mobility, we have asked that they take a seat close to the front of the Church. The Body of Christ will be brought to them by the Presider before other members of the Assembly receive. *The Precious Blood will be brought to them by the designated minister of the Cup when all others have received, usually the minister standing on the Ambo side of the altar.*

2. **Individuals with Gluten Intolerance or Sensitivity:** A pyx with consecrated low-gluten Hosts will be kept in the sacristy on a small table with a candle lit to ensure awareness of the Presence. The Lead EMHC will designate a minister of the Cup to place the pyx on the altar at the time ministers are gathering in the sanctuary.
   a Father Jerry will offer the low gluten Hosts to gluten-sensitive parishioners when he is presiding.
   b A designated EMHC should be identified to offer low gluten Hosts to gluten-sensitive parishioners if Father Jerry is not presiding.
   c When Communion has been completed the pyx may be placed with the empty Ciborium on the credence table, to be moved to the sacristy after Mass. The pyx of consecrated Hosts will be returned to the Tabernacle by the Lead EMHC
following the 4:30 pm and 11:00 am Liturgies but will remain in the sacristy following the 7:30 am and 9:00 am Liturgies.

3. Members of the Choir: All members of the choir will file in line following the Assembly down the right aisle and up the center aisle to receive Communion. If a member of the choir has mobility limitations, they are asked to sit in the first row of the choir and Communion will be brought to them.

4. Cantors: Cantors may join the EMHCs in the sanctuary to receive Communion and return to resume singing after having received Communion.

All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Duties Before/After Mass

1. All EMHCs should arrive and sign in on the sheet in the Narthex no later than 10 minutes before Mass. Remember the station at which you will be serving. One minister of the Cup will be designated by the Lead to bring the Ciborium with consecrated Hosts and pyx with low-gluten Hosts to the altar after the Sign of Peace. After the general Assembly has received Communion, this minister will also bring the Cup to those who are physically unable to approach the altar.

2. EMHCs may sit anywhere in the Church but consider a location not too far from the altar to enter the sanctuary in a timely manner during the Sign of Peace.

3. Please plan to remain after Mass to assist in the cleaning of the Sacred Vessels.

During Mass

1. At the Offertory the Acolytes will set the altar with the Corporal, sacramentary, the Ciboria of unconsecrated Hosts, the Chalice and Purificator.

2. At the Sign of Peace, the Acolytes will place the Cups (2 or 4) on the right side of the altar.

3. After the Sign of Peace all EMHCs and the cantor will approach the altar and take their place across the width of the sanctuary to receive Communion. If there is no Sign of Peace offered, EMHCs approach the altar at the reciting or singing of Lamb of God.

4. During the Lamb of God, the Lead Minister will pour the consecrated Wine from the large Decanter into each of the Cups and give the empty Decanter to an Acolyte to return it to the credence table.

5. When all EMHCs have received Communion, Father will step down from the sanctuary and offer the Eucharist to those who are unable to walk up to the altar. Each EMHC will either take their Cup and Purificator, or Ciborium, and proceed to their respective station.
   a. Note that a designated EMHC will stand on the far-left side of the altar to offer low-gluten Hosts to those who have requested it; and will also offer the Cup to those who are physically unable to approach the altar for Communion when the line of Communicants at his/her station has ended.
   b. At liturgies when Father Jerry is not presiding and an individual requests a low-gluten Host, the EMHC will turn and ascend the steps of the sanctuary, placing the Cup on the altar and retrieving the pyx. The minister will offer the Host and then return to the altar to replace the pyx and retrieve the Cup to continue serving.

6. While Communion is being served to the congregation an Acolyte will place an empty Ciborium on the altar with the lid placed near it.
7. Please maintain a prayerful silent presence as you anticipate the next individual who will approach you to receive; and refrain from singing the Communion hymn until you have returned to your seat.

8. When the procession of those receiving the Precious Blood at your station has concluded, return to the credence table and, with your back to the congregation, consume any remaining contents. If you are unable to drink it all, place the Cup on the table for consumption after Mass by another minister. Place the Purificator on the table and return to your seat by exiting on the organ side and walking down the side aisles.

9. Ministers of the Host will place any remaining consecrated Hosts in the Ciborium on the altar and then place their empty Ciborium on the credence table before exiting on the organ side, returning to their seat down the side aisles.

10. If the Lead Minister has finished distributing Holy Communion before all others have finished, s/he will remain at the credence table until all ministers have returned.

11. When the distribution of Holy Communion has concluded, the Lead Minister will place the lid on the Ciborium and will be led down the middle aisle by the Acolytes, who will be carrying lit candles, to the Chapel door.

12. Acolytes will return to the Church and the Lead Minister will unlock the Tabernacle and place the Ciborium in it. If a Ciborium is already in the Tabernacle, consolidate the Hosts and leave the empty Ciborium in the “small sacristy room” near the chapel to be returned to the sacristy in the Church after Mass. The Lead Minister will lock the Tabernacle, return the Tabernacle key to its proper location, and return to the Church.

13. If the Lead EMHC has returned to the Church before the Presider has concluded Mass, then it is appropriate to participate in the recessional in the same order as the procession. At the end of Mass, the Presider will descend from the sanctuary and stand at the foot of the stairs. When the Presider begins that process, the Lector(s) take their place at the foot of the stairs on the left side (facing the altar) and the Lead EMHC takes his/her place on the right side of the Presider. When the Presider bows, the liturgical ministers also bow, then turn to walk out of Church. The recessional is led by the Cross bearer, followed by the Acolytes, the Lead EMHC, the Lector(s) and the Presider.

**After Mass Clean Up**

All EMHCs are expected to support the Lead Minister with Assistance in cleaning the sacred vessels.

1. Bring all vessels from the credence table to the sacristy.
2. If a Ciborium was left in the “small sacristy” retrieve it for cleaning.
3. Consume any remaining Precious Blood left in one or more of the Cups.
4. If there are particles of consecrated Host apparent in a Ciborium, add a little water and drink it – do not pour it into the sink.
5. Wash the Vessels
   a. Use caution to not “clink” vessels together to avoid any denting of the metals.
   b. Do not immerse the vessels in water; wipe them with a wet cloth.
c. Extra care should be taken to clean around the rim of the Cups – a drop of soap may be used on a wet cloth to remove any lipstick but rinse the Cup well with a clean wet cloth.

d. Dry the vessels thoroughly and ensure no spots are visible on the vessels.

6. If another Mass is scheduled, you may reset the credence table with the clean vessels. You may also place the Decanter and prepare the Paten with a large unconsecrated Host and place the Decanter and the Paten on the small table located inside the carved doors at the entrance to the Nave of the Church on the right side.

7. If this was the last scheduled Mass, put the vessels away in the sacristy closet. There are cushioned padded containers in the sacristy closet for storing the sacred vessels.
Positions and Stations

Immediately following the Sign of Peace, EMHCs ascend the altar and spread out across the sanctuary behind the Celebrant, being careful to allow room for the Acolytes.

Communicants will be directed to approach the altar from the center aisle only. At the weekend liturgies at 4:30 pm, 7:30 am and 9:00 am the stations will include 2 ministers of the Cup and 2 ministers of the Host. After the Communicants have all received, the designated minister of the Cup will also serve those who were physically unable to approach the altar.

At the 11:00 am liturgy and at liturgies with higher attendance, there will be 4 ministers of the Cup and 4 ministers of the Host. The additional ministers of the Host will stand parallel to the third chair on either side. After the Communicants have all received, the designated minister of the Cup will also serve those who were physically unable to approach the altar.
The Credence Table – Set by the Sacristan or the Lead EMHC before Mass

- Place the large Corporal (altar linen) and the Chalice, covered with a small Corporal, on the right edge of the table.
- The Cups, 2 to 4 of them, are set across the back, with 2 to 4 Purificators.
- The Ciboria are in front of the Cups and may number from 1 to 3.
- On the left side are: the glass water pitcher for adding water to the Decanter of wine; and the metal finger bowl, small metal pitcher and hand towel for the washing of the priest's hands.

The Credence Table – Set by the Sacristan or Lead EMHC before Mass for Reverend Bill O'Connell

- The table is set as above, but Father Bill will bring his Chalice and prefers to use the larger Sacramentary.
- The Sacramentary is placed on the table with the Corporal on top of it.
The Altar Setting at the Offertory – Set by the Acolytes during Mass

- The Corporal (altar linen) is placed at the center front of the altar.
- On the left side of the altar the Ciborium, already filled with unconsecrated Hosts, is set.
- The Chalice is placed on the right side of the altar with enough room for the Sacramentary (book of prayers for Mass).
- The Sacramentary is set at the right side of the altar in front of the Chalice.

- At the Offertory the Decanter of Wine and the Paten, with unconsecrated Bread, will be presented to the Presider by members of the congregation.
- The “Gifts” are then placed on the altar – the Decanter on the far right and the Paten at the center.
The Altar Setting at the Offertory – Set by the Acolytes during Mass for Reverend Bill O’Connell

- The Corporal (altar linen) is placed at the center front of the altar.
- On the left side of the altar the Ciboria, already filled with unconsecrated Hosts, is set.
- The Sacramentary (book of prayers for Mass) is set in the center front of the altar.
- The Chalice is placed in the center front of the altar behind the Sacramentary.

- At the Offertory the Decanter of Wine and the Paten, with unconsecrated Bread, will be presented to the Presider by members of the congregation.
- The “Gifts” are then placed on the altar – the Decanter on the far right and the Paten above and to the left of the Sacramentary.
The Altar Setting – Set by the Acolytes during the Sign of Peace

- During the Sign of Peace, the Acolytes will bring 2-4 Cups with 2-4 Purificators to the right side of the Altar.
- The Cups will be filled with the Precious Blood by the Lead EMHC and the empty Decanter will be given to an Acolyte to place on the credence table.
- Each minister of the Cup will pick up their Chalice and Purificator as they move forward to stand at their respective station.
The Altar Setting – Set by the Acolytes During Communion

- Each EMHC will have taken a Ciborium or a Cup with a Purificator from the altar when they descend from the sanctuary to serve the congregation.
- If the Sacramentary is still on the altar, a minister may place it on the Presider’s chair.
- The Acolytes will remove the Chalice and Paten from the altar and place it on the bottom shelf of the credence table.
- While Communion is being served to the congregation an Acolyte will place an empty Ciborium on the altar with the lid placed near it.
- EMHCs serving the Body of Christ will empty their Ciborium into the Ciborium on the altar and return their Ciborium to the credence table before returning to their seat, exiting on the organ side.
- EMHCs serving the Blood of Christ will return their Cup to the credence table, consuming any remaining Precious Blood if they are able to drink it all. If not, it will be consumed by other ministers after Mass.
- When the distribution of Holy Communion has concluded, the Lead Minister will place the lid on the Ciborium and will be led down the middle aisle by the Acolytes, who will be carrying lit candles, to the Chapel door. The Lead will place the Ciborium in the Tabernacle and return to the Church.

“I will praise you, Lord, in the Assembly of Your People.”
Psalm 22