
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC's)
RESOURCE GUIDE

PRAYER OF A MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST

Here I am, Lord, ready to do Your will. Bless me as I prepare to give Holy Communion to all those You have gathered for this Eucharistic celebration. Bless all of us that we may worthily receive Your Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In sharing the Eucharist, may we become one with You. Amen.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion are fully initiated members of the community in good standing with the Church who feel called to serve in this special role of distributing Holy Communion. They may assist the priest in distribution of Communion at Mass and at other times when Communion is distributed outside of Mass (e.g., to the sick or the homebound).

PREPARATION

On your assigned day:

- **Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins** on the day you are scheduled so that you can enter into a spirit of prayer before the liturgy begins.
- Check in with the Mass Coordinator to let them know you are there and prepared to serve in your ministry. Ask if there is anything special you should know about the upcoming liturgical celebration.
- Before Mass, check with the other EMHC's and choose the following:
 - 2 EMHC's to distribute the Precious Blood
- Please bring a song book from your pew so you can sing as you process into church.

DRESS AND MOVEMENT

While there is no "dress code" for serving as an Extraordinary Minister, we ask that you dress neatly, in a way consonant with the dignity of your role. Good taste and common sense are the best guides in this area. What you wear sends signals to the assembly about how seriously you take your ministry. Dress how you minister – with dignity and respect. Never wear anything that would distract from the Eucharist. The focus must always be on the Eucharist, not the assisting ministers.

BODY LANGUAGE

Your movements should reflect reverence and respect for the Eucharist. Avoid unnecessary movements that will distract or call too much attention to yourself. When in the sanctuary, limit your movement as much as possible.

Approaching the Sanctuary

- As the celebrant drinks from the chalice, stand and come forward. You should bow towards the Altar at the position where you encounter the steps of the sanctuary. (e.g., in the center aisle in front of the altar, or near the ambo depending on where you sit.) **Use the steps to the left of the ambo to come into the sanctuary** (hand sanitizer will be available in that area). All the EMHC's should proceed to the area right behind the celebrant, standing in a straight line facing the congregation.
- If no other Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (priests or deacons) are present, there will be 5 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion – three to distribute the Body of Christ and two to distribute the Precious Blood.
- The priest will distribute the Body of Christ to each of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, **which should be consumed immediately**. After doing so, he will offer the cup with Precious Blood to the first EMHC to consume. This EMHC should begin to distribute the Precious Blood to the EMHC next to him/her and so on. The priest will offer the EMHC at the other end of the line the 2nd cup of Precious Blood and then proceed to give the bowls of consecrated Bread to the three EMHC's in the middle of the line. **(the two EMHC's distributing the Precious Blood should stand at either end of the line)**
- Move forward to your positions to distribute communion, moving forward together with the presider and other EMHC's.
 - The lead EMHC distributing the Body of Christ will stand in the middle aisle with the priest. **The lead EMHC will be whomever Fr. Pat hands the Ciborium to.**
 - The other two EMHC's distributing the Body of Christ will wait until the first two small pews have received Communion and then proceed to stand beside the 2nd small pew, facing the center aisle.
 - The two EMHC's distributing the Precious Blood should stand in the entrances to the passageways on either side of the sanctuary.

Distribution of Holy Communion

- Fr. Pat will distribute Communion to the servers as the EMHC's are walking up to the Sanctuary. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Check with the musicians to see if they would like to receive Communion before or after distribution to the congregation.** If you hear music start to play, you will distribute Communion after distributing to the congregation.
- Be aware of any persons sitting in the front with special needs (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.) and bring Communion (both the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood should be offered) to them in the pew.
- If you are distributing the Body of Christ, elevate the Host slightly above the ciborium as you show it to each of the communicants saying, "The Body of Christ". These are the only words to be used – nothing added or subtracted.

- If the communicant is receiving in the hand, place the Host in their hand. If receiving on the tongue, be careful not to touch the person's mouth or tongue with your fingers.
- If a person approaches who is not receiving communion (who may approach with arms folded or who is a small child), then, without physically touching the individual, **hold your hand to the side of their shoulder and offer this prayer: "May God Bless You"**. Do not try to mimic the blessing conferred by the priest or deacon (e.g., that is do not make the Sign of the Cross).
- If you are distributing the Precious Blood, elevate the cup slightly (always being careful not to spill any of the contents) as you show it to each communicant saying, "The Blood of Christ". These are the only words to be used – nothing added or subtracted.
- Hand the cup to the person ensuring that they receive it with both hands. Do NOT continue to hold onto the cup.
- When the cup is returned to you, wipe the rim with the purificator and rotate the cup slightly before offering it to the next person.
- If there is Precious Blood left in the cup, turn towards the altar and consume the remaining Precious Blood; wipe the rim of the cup with the purificator and return to the sanctuary. Place the cup and the purificator on the corporal on the altar then return to your seat. The EMHC's of the Body of Christ should also return their vessels onto the corporal on the altar and then return to their seats as well.
- If no deacon is present, the lead EMHC of the Body of Christ stands back slightly and waits for the Celebrant to hand over the ciborium to be returned to the Tabernacle. After receiving the Ciborium from the Celebrant, return it to the Tabernacle and genuflect before closing the Tabernacle door. You may then return to your seat using the stairs beside the Ambo, reverencing the altar with a bow at the waist.
- If a Host is dropped on the floor, pick it up immediately. You may either consume the host or bring to the Celebrant to consume.
- If Precious Blood is spilled on the floor, please wipe it up using the purificator. After Mass, please use water and a towel or purificator from the Sacristy to purify the area where the Sacred Blood was spilled. Return the wet towel to the Sacristy and leave on the sink to dry out.

Additional Notes:

- If a Deacon or concelebrating priest are present for Mass, they will normally serve as a Minister of Holy Communion. We will do our best to inform you on weekends when you are otherwise scheduled if this will be the case. In the event of a last-minute change, please check with the Celebrant to be sure that you are needed to serve as an Extraordinary Minister when a Deacon and/or another Priest are present.
- Communicants are expected to consume the Host immediately after receiving it. Please be aware of anyone who does not do this and discreetly ask them to consume the host or ask someone nearby in the congregation to follow up with the person. If you are in doubt about whether someone is able to receive Holy Communion (they may present

themselves unsure of what to do, as a non-Catholic visitor unaware of our practices or as someone who has not yet made their First Communion), then offer to give them the prayer of blessing, by saying “May I ask God to bless you?” If they still are insistent, then politely indicate that they should talk to the priest after Mass.

- **The dipping of the consecrated bread into the cup by the communicant (or the EMHC) is prohibited.**
- You **are allowed** to put a host in a pyx for someone who wants to take Communion to the sick.
- Always carry the Sacred Vessels with both hands.

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no 1396:

The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church. Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body – the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body. (Cf. 1 Cor 12:13) The Eucharist fulfills this call: *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread”* (1 Cor 10:16-17):

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond “Amen” (“yes, it is true!”) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, “the Body of Christ” and respond “Amen.” Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true. (St. Augustine, Sermon 272: PL 38, 1247)