

SOME GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist with the smooth and reverent giving of communion during Mass when a sufficient number of ordinary ministers (priests, deacons) are not available.

A. QUALIFICATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is a person who:

1. is a Catholic in good sacramental standing in the Church: i.e., is a person who is a baptized and confirmed Catholic and, if married, is validly married according to the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church;
2. is a Catholic mature in faith and of excellent character, who shows reverence and love for the Eucharist;
3. is growing spiritually through daily prayer and liturgical prayer, especially the Sunday Eucharist, and who accepts the responsibility of ministry in serving the needs of others;
4. understands that the Mass is a communal prayer and that the distribution of communion is a liturgical function requiring a sense of dignity and an attitude of prayer;
5. is sensitive to the ways that Christ is present in the Mass: within the assembly, through the proclaiming of the Word, in the Eucharist;
6. has a basic understanding of the theology of Eucharist in line with the present rites.
7. expresses a sense of dignity by appropriate Sunday dress, by handling all liturgical vessels with respect, by alert posture, by graceful and correctly timed movement;
8. is person-oriented and has an ability to be attentive to the person being ministered to;
9. is comfortable handling any accidents that might occur so that the communicant involved in such an incident is at ease with the situation and not overly embarrassed;
10. is able to identify the specific objects used at Mass with the names that are given in the parish (e.g. chalice, corporal, purificator ...);

11. has physically demonstrated the actual movements a communion minister is expected to make during the Mass;
12. is faithful in keeping scheduled appointments and obtaining dependable replacements when necessary; (if because of circumstances of health, age, or work schedule a person is unable to be present on a regularly scheduled basis, that person should not be considered a candidate for Eucharistic ministry);
13. is acquainted with taking Holy Communion to the sick and with giving it as Viaticum to the dying;
14. is chosen by the pastor or one delegated by the pastor based on #'s 1-12.

B. SCOPE OF MANDATE

1. Three years. The pastor submits new candidates to the Office of Worship (contact point for the Archbishop on this matter) on an annual basis, or as needed. All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be commissioned (cf. chapter 63, Book of Blessings). An annual renewal of commitment accompanying the commissioning of new ministers is encouraged. The commissioning and/or renewal might best occur on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ or some other Ordinary Time Sunday whose readings are particularly Eucharistic. Commissioning at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday is discouraged.
2. Extraordinary Ministers offer communion during Mass, lead the Rite of Communion outside of Mass, and celebrate the ministration of Communion to the Sick (ordinary rite, special rite, or Viaticum).
3. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to be well trained and educated prior to functioning (cf. A. 1-12).
4. An annual gathering for prayer and reflection by and with the Extraordinary Ministers is highly recommended.

C. DRESS

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be dressed with regard to the ministry they are performing (cf. A. 6). A clear, concise dress code is highly recommended, published by the pastor through the Liturgy Committee/Commission.
2. They do not wear the garb of an ordained deacon or priest.

D. MINISTRATION OF COMMUNION

1. Extraordinary Ministers should approach the sanctuary after the priest has received Holy Communion;
2. may always receive Holy Communion under both species;
3. are always to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord from the priest. Self-communication is prohibited;
4. receive their vessels for distribution from the priest or deacon.
5. When the cup is offered, generally there are two Blood of the Lord ministers with each minister of the Body of the Lord.
6. Vessels should be carried with both hands.
7. Mishap: if precious blood is spilled, area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.
8. Remaining Eucharistic bread (Body of the Lord) should be returned immediately to the tabernacle.
9. Remaining Precious Blood is to be consumed immediately at the communion station, a side table or in the sacristy; it may not be diluted for consumption; it may not be reserved - except for the sick (for immediate use by someone who is unable to shallow the consecrated host); and may not be poured into ground or sacrarium.
10. Communion by intinction (the minister dipping the consecrated bread into the cup) is to be reserved for extraordinary circumstances since it removes the option of receiving communion in the hand. The dipping of the consecrated bread into the cup by the communicant is prohibited. (cf. Sacramental/Liturgical Policies, Archdiocese of Indianapolis.)

Prepared by the Office of Worship, based on:

- Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)
- Code of Canon Law (1983)
- General Instruction on the Roman Missal (2011)
- Instruction on Eucharistic Worship (1967)
- Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass (1973)
- Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America (2002)