

St. John XXIII

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Guidelines

A Note to Our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

Thank you for participating in this important ministry at St. John XXIII. You have a special privilege of distributing the Holy Eucharist to the people of God. Remember not WHAT it is you are handling, but WHO it is: our Lord Jesus Christ, present under the appearance of bread and wine. This ministry requires great care to properly and respectfully handle the Body and Blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

About Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC):

EMHCs have a unique role in the Catholic Church. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of Communion. The priest may call upon lay people to be extraordinary ministers to assist him based on the needs of the community.

Requirements of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion:

EMHCs must be baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics who regularly share in the Eucharist. They must be in full communion with the Catholic Church, have a sacramental marriage if married, attend Mass each weekend, and be in a state of grace (and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as needed). They should be of exemplary Christian character, committed to the faith, devoted to the Eucharist, respected by the community, and demonstrate interest and involvement in the community's life. They must be in good standing according to the law of the Church, spiritually sound and capable of adhering to all of the community's procedures for communion ministers. Physically, EMHCs must be able to stand with, walk with, and hold the Body and Blood of Christ in a safe and reverent manner.

Scheduling:

Six to Seven EMHCs are scheduled for each Mass depending on if a permanent deacon is present or not. EMHCs are scheduled through Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) which is where EMHCs can set preferred Mass times, designate days they cannot serve, make and accept sub requests, and receive reminders for when they are scheduled.

“All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine.” -USCCB

Dress/Appearance:

EMHCs should dress intentionally with dignified, modest, and suitable attire for the function of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Overall, their clothes and appearance should not be a distraction to them or to others based on appearance or function.

Recommendations include:

- Khaki pants, dress pants, knee length or longer skirts or dresses
- Collared shirts, button up shirts, dressy shirts
- Dress shoes and dress socks; prefer no flip flops, slides, crocks, snow boots, super high heels
- Neatly groomed hair
- Simple makeup or jewelry if it is worn

Before Mass:

EMHCs should check in at the Liturgical Ministry bulletin board in the gathering space near the sacristy. They should place a check mark by their name or add their name if it is not listed. If they are willing to serve and are not scheduled, they can check the board when they come to Mass and add their name if there are not enough EMHCs. EMHCs should wash their hands with soap and water before Mass.

Procedures During Mass:

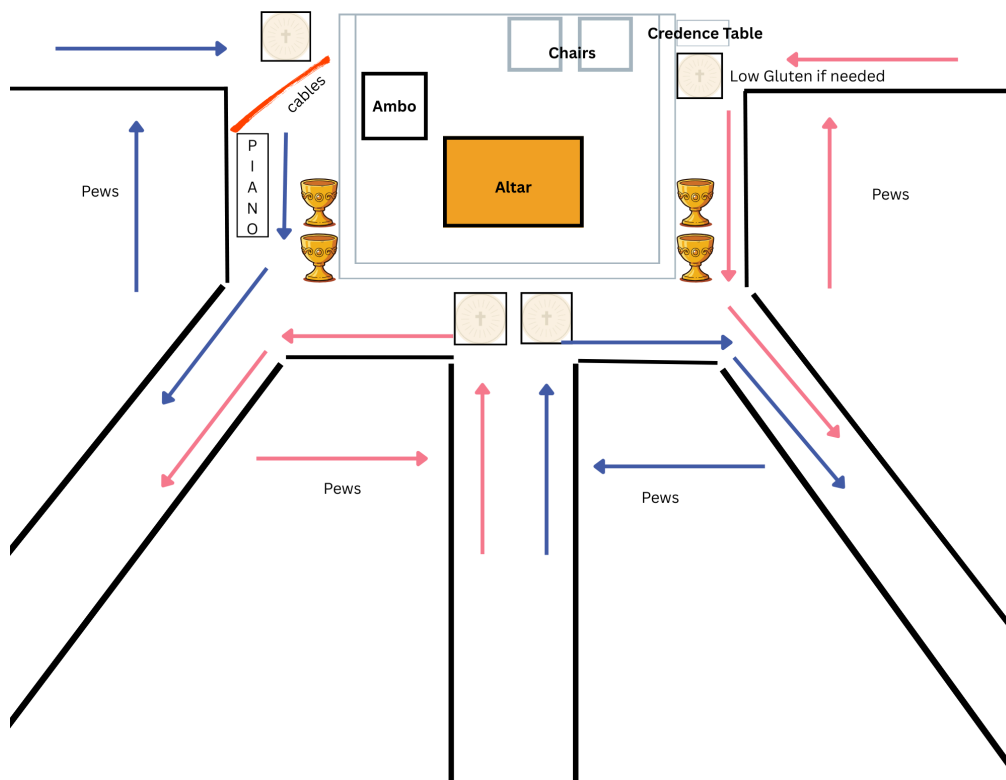
Lining Up:

After the Sign of Peace/during the Lamb of God all ministers approach the sanctuary and line up by the steps in front of the altar. The ministers of the Precious Blood line up on the ends of the line and ministers of the Precious Body line up in the middle of the line.

“After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.” -USCCB

Distribution Placement:

There are 8 total people distributing communion: 4 of each species. The priest always distributes the Precious Body. If a deacon is present, he always distributes the Precious Blood. See the Map for the placement of each distributor:



Distribution Procedures:

The faithful come forward to receive. As they approach they should make a bow of the head as an act of reverence. The normal posture is standing to receive; they may kneel to receive.

Precious Body Distribution: The minister of the Precious Body elevates the host slightly and says, “The Body of Christ”. Nothing should be added nor subtracted from these words. (For example, do not say the person’s name or “This is the Body of Christ”.) The faithful are to respond with an audible “Amen”. Then the EMHC distributes the consecrated host either on the hand or on the tongue, making sure the person consumes the whole host.

Precious Blood Distribution: The minister of the Precious Blood holds the chalice and says, “The Blood of Christ”. Nothing should be added nor subtracted from these words. The faithful are to respond with an audible “Amen”. Then the EMHC carefully gives the chalice to the person receiving it. After they have received, the chalice is returned to the EMHC. The EMHC then wipes the chalice with the purificator to ensure no drops of the Precious Blood drip down the side of the chalice.

Low Gluten Hosts: If any parishioner is in need of low gluten hosts they place one in a pyx and Father consecrates them in the pyx. Father or the deacon will then hand the pyx(es) to one of the EMHCs who will stand near the credence table. The EMHC will hold onto the pyx(es) until a person approaches saying they are low gluten. The EMHC should distribute communion to them by handing them the whole pyx or flipping the pyx over into their hand. They generally keep the pyx, but if they hand it back to the EMHC, the EMHC should place it on the altar with the ciboria and chalices at the end of communion. The EMHC should never place the pyx on the credence table. If they cannot hold all of the pyxes in their hand, they can place them in the ciborium, ask an altar server to hold them, or place them on the altar.

Communion to those Who Cannot Come Forward: The first one or two EMHCs done with their areas should report to any people who could not present themselves to give them the Body of Christ. The ministers of hospitality will help point out people who need to receive in the pews and chairs. The norm is to only bring back the Precious Body, but if someone requests the Precious Blood, then a EMHC of the Precious Blood can go back to distribute the Precious Blood, as well.

Those Not Receiving: Some people have been taught that if they are not able to receive Communion they should come forward and cross their arms to receive a blessing. Since this is Communion, it is not the proper time for a blessing. Everyone will receive a blessing at the end of Mass. If anyone (child or adult) comes forward with their arms crossed over their body or the child is carried by the adult the EMHC should simply say, “May God bless you and protect you” or “May God bless you and keep you.” The EMHC is not to touch anyone or give any kind of motion, gesture, or sign of a blessing.

Running Low: If an EMCH notices they are running low on hosts, they should check with another EMHC to see if they have extra. If they do, the EMHCs should carefully transfer some of the hosts from one ciborium to the other. If none of the EMHCs have extra, the EMHC will break the hosts they have remaining. One crumb of the host is the fullness of Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Each person who receives even a crumb of the Eucharist, receives it in full. EMHCs should break the hosts with great care and reverence over the ciborium to prevent the loss of even a single crumb. If the Blood of Christ runs out in a chalice, the EMHC will return the empty chalice to the altar. If another EMHC is present on the same side, they will distribute to both communion lines on that side.

Dropped Host or Spill:

“If the Eucharistic bread or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up reverently by the minister. The consecrated bread may be consumed or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium. Should there be any mishap, for example, if the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice, the area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.” -USCCB

In case of a dropped consecrated host the EMHC can consume or give it to the deacon or the priest to consume or to put in the ablution bowl. If there is a spill the EMHC should put the purificator over it immediately and notify the priest or deacon.

Distribution Completed: Once the EMHC has distributed to all in their area(s), they should bring their chalice and purificator or ciborium up to the altar and reverently place it on the altar. Proceeding down the stairs, they should bow and immediately return to their seats to take time to pray to God and acknowledge His Presence within them.

*“In those instances when there remains more consecrated wine than was necessary, if needs dictate, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution with the permission of the diocesan bishop.”
-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Extra Blood: As an EMCH, if you are able, you can consume the rest of the Precious Blood in your chalice. This is never a requirement. If you do not want to or cannot, simply place the chalice on the altar. Father and/or the deacon will finish consuming it. If there is a lot for Father/the deacon to consume, he may ask the EMHCs to help, but you can say “no”.

After Mass:

After Mass, the Ministers of the Precious Body should bring the tabernacle key, tray, and drinking glasses back to the sacristy to be put away and washed. The vessels have already been purified by Father, so they do not need to be purified a second time. The EMHC should not submerge the vessels in water and after washing with soap and water they should make sure they are completely dry before stacking them and putting them away. The water bowl and towel can remain on the credence table if there is another Mass that day. The cruet of water can go in the refrigerator. Please soak the purificators in the bowl in the sacrarium (sink that leads to the earth instead of the sewer system).

Commissioning: All EMHCs should be commissioned every 3 years at minimum either at the designated times during Mass or privately with Father.