

Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist HANDBOOK



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Excerpts from:
Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963
The Communion Rite at Sunday Mass, Gabe Huck,, LTP, 1989
Guide for Ministers of Communion, Victoria M. Tufano, LTP, 1999
Handbook Revised 9-11

“You are the body and members of Christ.
If, then, you are Christ’s Body and his members,
it is your own mystery which you receive.
It is to what you are that you reply ‘Amen,’
and by replying subscribe.
For you are told, ‘The Body of Christ,’
and you reply, ‘Amen.’
Be a member of the Body of Christ and
let your ‘Amen’ be true.”

-St. Augustine



Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Still, the liturgy is the summit
toward which the activity of the Church is directed,
at the same time it is the fount
from which all the Church's power flows.
For the aim and object of apostolic works
is that all who are made children of God by faith
and baptism should come together
to praise God in the midst of his Church,
to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

St. Michael Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist Mission Statement

Based on Catholic teachings and our own understanding,
we are committed to the celebration of the Eucharist
as central to our identity as a community of faith.
As Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist at St. Michael,
we prayerfully and reverently distribute
the Body and Blood of Christ
to our brothers and sisters in faith.
Our commitment to the assembly is a pledge
to be at the assigned liturgy or to find a substitute
so that all may fully experience the Eucharistic Banquet.
As ministers of hospitality,
we welcome to the table
those who are the Body and Blood of Christ with us.



Prayers for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

God in heaven,
Your Son, Jesus Christ
showed his love for you
by serving his brothers and sisters.
I ask you now to be with me
as I extend your love in service.

Open my mouth to praise you in word and song.
Open my ears to hear and listen to your Word.
Open my hands to do your work,
and take from my heart
any evil and distracting thoughts.

Inspire me to know what to do and to do it well.
Help me to serve reverently at your holy altar,
and to Live in Christ each day of my life.
May all that I say and do
as your humble servant
give you praise and glory,
both now and forever.
Amen

Jesus, bless these hands you have chosen as your tools.
Jesus, always keep me aware
and in awe of my sacred mission.
Jesus, make me worthy of this great ministry
I have humbly accepted.
And Jesus, send me out into the world
to distribute your love.
Amen

Appropriate Attire for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

Be attentive to your attire. How you dress sends a message to those that you serve. Your ministry should be transparent, not drawing attention to yourself, nor distracting those to whom you minister. Avoid jeans, shorts, short skirts, bare midriffs, low cut blouses, spaghetti straps, flip flops, and gym shoes. Many times it is necessary to fill in, so always come to church dressed appropriately to serve the Body and Blood of Christ.

Opportunities to Serve When Not Scheduled

1. If you are willing to serve when not scheduled, ask the sacristan when you arrive if EM's are needed. The sacristan can be found at the EM sign-in table or in the sacristy.
2. Holy days (Jan 1, Aug 15, Nov 1, and Dec 8) are not automatically scheduled as part of the quarterly schedule. Sign-up sheets are provided on the weekend preceding the holy day at the sign-in table.
3. Christmas and Easter are not automatically scheduled. Sign-up sheets are provided approximately two weeks prior at the sign-in table. Many EMs are needed for these liturgies, especially for those times when Mass will be celebrated in both the church and the gym at the same time. Your willingness to serve in either space is greatly appreciated.

Because ministry is a shared responsibility, liturgical ministers should not serve in more than one ministry at any given liturgy.

An Introduction

As an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist we are first and foremost a member of the Body of Christ, one of the holy people of God. In Baptism we were claimed by Christ as one of Christ's own and marked with the sign of the cross. Through the waters of Baptism we died with Christ to all that was not of God and were cleansed of all that could separate us from God. In Confirmation we were anointed with Chrism as one who shares in the priestly, prophetic and royal ministry of Jesus, the Anointed One, the Christ.

In our life as Christians, we participate deeply in that ministry in many ways. Through our actions and relationships in our homes, in our places of work and in our parish and local community, we carry on the work of Jesus by trying to live as Christ lived and taught. However, the fullest and most central expression of our ministry as baptized Christians is our participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, first and foremost as a member of the worshipping assembly.

As Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, we are called to further service of the Body of Christ, the Church, as we share the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ with God's people. Like all ministry, this is a great honor and a great responsibility. We undertake it with the intention to grow in our devotion to the liturgy, to the Church that celebrates it, and, most importantly, to the Lord, through whom, with whom and in whom we live and move and have our being.

We have been called to a most beautiful ministry. Time taken to reflect on its meaning and practice will deeply enrich our own awareness of the mystery of Christ and that of the people we serve.

Qualities of Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist bring their own unique qualities with them to the ministry of communion. Some of these good qualities are pure gift, a matter of personality and temperament. Others have been developed through discipline, experience and struggle. When these good qualities are brought to the ministry, both the qualities and the ministry are enhanced. Four specific qualities are offered as examples.

Humility: As an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist we are willing to do whatever is asked of us. We serve at liturgy whenever we are needed to administer the Eucharist to our brothers and sisters. Are we equally ready to accept the Lord from them? As baptized members of the Body of Christ, those to whom we minister the Eucharist also have Christ present within them. Can we see, revere and accept Christ through them? Can we accept with joy and humility the many ways that Christ ministers to us, even while Christ ministers through us?

Hospitality: When we celebrate the Eucharist, we eat and drink at the table of the Lord in anticipation of the day when all will do the same. In a sense, the Eucharist is a rehearsal for the heavenly banquet where we get to “try out” our heavenly table manners. At this table all are equal — no head table, no children’s table, no servant’s table. All who gather are honored guests.

As Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, we too are honored guests. But we are also appointed servants. Our task is to welcome those who approach the Lord’s table, to extend to them the same hospitality that has been extended to us. How do we do this in such a brief encounter? We convey hospitality through posture that is both attentive and relaxed, a warm smile, eye contact, an unhurried but efficient pace, a tone of voice that is reverent and cordial.

4. . . . your station is finished, but another station still has many people in line. Once you finish distribution at your station and there is an unusually large number at another station who have not received, BOTH Body and Blood ministers may assist, reverently positioning themselves so that all may receive. Remain mindful of traffic flow.
5. . . . another minister takes the station you chose. Discreetly look around and move to the station in need of a minister.
6. . . . there are too many ministers in the sanctuary and there is no vessel available for you. Discreetly return to your pew.

Schedule conflicts:

- 1) If you are unable to fulfill a scheduled assignment, refer to the Eucharistic Minister Phone List (distributed annually with the first quarter schedule) and call or email someone to substitute. Contact at least 3 other EMs. If you are unable to find a sub, call the Coordinator of Extraordinary Ministers.
- 2) The parish bulletin lists the minister assignments for the following week. The entire quarterly schedule can also be found online at www.saintmike.com. Click on “Schedules for Liturgical Ministers” at the bottom right of the Home Page.
- 3) Hard copies of schedules and lists of ministers are also available in the Sacristy or can be downloaded from the parish website.
- 4) To preclude scheduling conflicts with vacations or other activities, please contact the Coordinator of Extraordinary Ministers or the Worship Office by the first of the month preceding the start of a new quarter with dates you will be unavailable in the next scheduling period.

December 1	for 1st Quarter-January, February, March
March 1	for 2nd Quarter-April, May, June
June 1	for 3rd Quarter-July, August, September
September 1	for 4th Quarter-October, November, December

3. C1 carries the tray of chalices to the sacristy, places it on the counter, takes a clean cloth found on the counter, unfolds it, covers the chalices, and returns to church.
4. Any items remaining besides the corporal (small white cloth) and altar cloth, are taken by one of the remaining EM's to the sacristy. All other Eucharistic ministers wait until the vessels have been taken away from the altar before returning to their pew.
5. Ministers who leave the church with Eucharistic vessels return to church as quickly as possible for the remainder of the liturgy.

After Liturgy

Ideally all remaining Precious Blood is consumed at the altar. If some remains, it is consumed in the sacristy. Please offer assistance to the sacristan after the liturgy has concluded.

What to do if . . .

1. . . . a host is dropped. Pick it up and consume it immediately or hold it in the palm of your hand under the bowl. You may consume it when you return your vessel to the altar or you may hand it to the Deacon/Presider, telling him it fell on the floor.
2. . . . a small amount of wine is spilled. Protect the area from being walked on so it can be cleaned up when liturgy ends. If a significant amount of wine is spilled (e.g. a cup is dropped), use your purificator to cover the Precious Blood and then tell the sacristan who is sitting behind the lectors to get you another purificator. S/he will appropriately clean the spill after liturgy.
3. . . . you are running low on hosts. This rarely happens. If you notice that the number of consecrated hosts remaining in your bowl may be less than the number in your line yet to receive, check with your host station partner to see if there are sufficient hosts in her/his bowl to cover the need. Prior to breaking hosts, you may check to see if other host ministers have already returned to the altar. You may use hosts they have returned to the altar.

Gratitude: The giving of thanks and praise in the Eucharist is the central and essential action of the Church. The gratitude that we express in the Eucharist is a basic element of each individual's life, too. Each of us has a "salvation history," a story of how God has always walked with us, acting through us and for us. Our response to that personal story is also one of gratitude and hope. Grateful persons share their gifts and blessings with others and receive the gifts and blessings that others have to share. We must receive the great gift of the Lord's presence with grateful hearts and share that gift generously and joyfully with others, both in our Eucharistic ministry and in our daily lives.

Reverence: As Catholics, we have been taught since our earliest days to treat the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist with the utmost reverence. How we dress or walk or hold our bodies all convey a message about our sense of reverence. As Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, we are teachers of reverence as well. The assembly watches as we approach the altar and handle the sacred, consecrated bread and wine. They learn much by our attitude of reverence.

Just as we would never harm the body of anyone we love, we must care for the Body of Christ that is the Church. This would seem to go without saying. Who among us would purposely injure the Church? But our most real and ordinary contacts with the Church are those with fellow parishioners, the people who sit around us each weekend. A character in the Peanuts comic strip once said, "I love mankind; it's people I can't stand." We cannot say, "I love the Church; it's parishioners I can't stand." Saint John says it more strongly: "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars."

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist are called to honor the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ, and the anointed Body of Christ that is the Church. We owe our fellow worshippers and our fellow ministers at the liturgy that same reverence that is due Christ. How they serve is never as important as who they serve and who they are as they worship and serve. They are—we are—the Body of Christ, and we must treat one another with utmost respect at all times.

Sample Sign In Sheet

Eucharistic Minister Sign-in Sheet

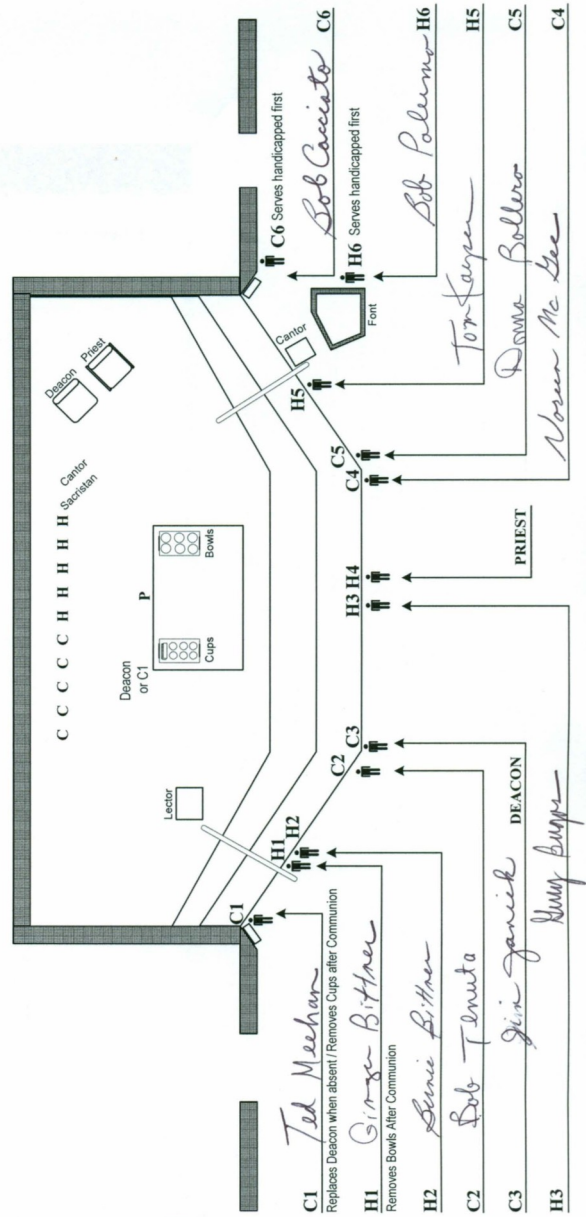
07-Aug-11

9:00 AM

19th Sun Ord Time

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-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

- Deacon
- Bittner, Bernie
- Bittner, Ginger
- Bollero, Donna
- Bugos, Gerry
- Cacciato, Bob
- Kaysen, Tom
- McGee, Noreen
- Meehan, Ted
- Palermo, Bob
- Tenuta, Bob



Special Reminder about Naming Those Who Come to Receive the Eucharist

Our primary bond at the celebration of the Eucharist is our bond in the Lord Jesus. Everything else, even our name, is secondary. For this reason, Eucharistic ministers are not to say the name of the individuals to whom they are ministering.

The act of giving and receiving communion is an act of faith in the presence of Christ. The minister who says, "The Body (Blood) of Christ," is making a statement of faith to which the communicant gives assent by saying, "Amen." Nothing should dilute or diffuse that action.

The practice of saying a person's name when ministering to him or to her comes from a desire to be hospitable and to recognize that we personally know the person. However, everyone who comes to the Lord's table is equal and equally welcome. Each should be treated with the same respect and hospitality. While naming a friend, family member or someone known may seem more hospitable to them, it may unintentionally make a person whose name is not said feel less welcome.

Removing the Vessels and Returning to Your Seat in the Assembly

When the Presider returns to his chair, the following events take place:

1. H1 and C1 approach the altar and remove their respective trays/vessels. An additional minister may be needed to step forward to remove any other remaining vessels. The order of exiting from the sanctuary is: H1, C1, and then other ministers.
2. H1 leads ministers out of the sanctuary, carrying the tray with the reserve to the chapel. The minister genuflects and returns to church. Sacristan returns all remaining consecrated hosts to the reserve bowl, covers it and places it in the tabernacle. The tabernacle door is closed and locked (leave the key in the tabernacle door). Sacristan takes the tray/bowls to the sacristy.

When distributing the Body of Christ, an H minister takes a consecrated host from the bowl, looks each person in the eye and offers it reverently, using ONLY THESE WORDS, “The Body of Christ.” The minister waits for the recipient’s gesture of reverence (bow of the head) and spoken “Amen.” Then the minister places the Body of Christ either in the hand or on the tongue depending on what the recipient indicates.

When distributing the Blood of Christ, a C minister holds the chalice so that it can be safely passed to the recipient, looks each person in the eye, and offers the consecrated wine reverently, using ONLY THESE WORDS, “The Blood of Christ.” The minister waits for the recipient’s gesture of reverence (bow of the head) and spoken “Amen.” Ministers allow each person to take the chalice to drink, assisting the frail or very young communicants, if necessary. Before handing the cup to the next recipient, the minister wipes the rim of the chalice with the purificator and rotates it so that the next person drinks from a different spot. The purificator should be opened before beginning to serve, since the entire surface of the cloth is meant to be used. While the chalice is in the hands of the communicant, the minister uses this time to position a clean section of the purificator to use to wipe the rim.

Intinction: Although the practice is not appropriate, if it is obvious someone wants to receive in this fashion, tilt the cup slightly and allow them to dip. Follow with the purificator underneath the dipped host to avoid spillage.

Once the last person in a minister’s line has received, the minister returns her/his vessel to the appropriate tray on the altar. At the altar, chalice ministers are encouraged to consume all, or as much as possible, of any remaining Precious Blood in their chalice before setting it down. *Cup ministers do not consume the remaining Precious Blood while at their ministry station nor while walking back to the altar.* Ministers of the Body of Christ place their bowl with remaining consecrated hosts on the tray.

After placing their vessel on its tray, each Eucharistic minister stands in line behind and away from the altar and joins in singing the Communion song. During this time, the Presider will distribute consecrated hosts to visitors of the homebound and prepare the vessels for removal.

PROCEDURES

Before Liturgy Begins

Arrive in sufficient time, *no less than ten minutes* before the time of the Mass, to sign-in so the sacristans know you are present. Latecomers should expect to be replaced by the sacristan.

If you have been assigned this liturgy, check the box next to your name or next to the name of the person who called you to serve as a substitute. Make sure to write your name next to the station where you will be serving.

Check for any notices regarding changes/additions for the liturgy at the sign-in table. These are infrequent but do happen on occasion.

The sacristan prepares the vessels and the gifts to be brought up at the Presentation of the Gifts.

For all liturgies, one tray containing six wine chalices will be placed on the credence table near the ambo and another containing six bread bowls will be placed under the tabernacle in the Chapel.

How Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist Receive Communion

During the Sign of Peace, the sacristan goes to the tabernacle to get the reserve which has already been divided into bowls.

When the Lamb of God begins, and after the Presider has returned to the altar, the sacristan carries the tray and the reserve to the altar. The tray and reserve is placed on the Presider’s LEFT. The sacristan then joins the other Extraordinary Ministers who have assembled in the sanctuary, behind and away from the altar.

Note: If the Presider does not leave the sanctuary during the Sign of Peace, the sacristan should immediately go to the tabernacle to get the reserve in the bowls. These are brought directly to the altar for the Presider to begin the fraction rite. Other ministers also approach at this time.

While assembled in the sanctuary, ministers are asked to model participation in the liturgy by joining in the sung prayer of the assembly.

Ministers use appropriate gestures of reverence when receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. Make sure to bow your head after hearing the words, “The Body/Blood of Christ” and then respond with, “Amen.” To receive the Body of Christ, hands are positioned one on top of the other, with palms facing upwards. If you are unable to receive the Precious Blood of Christ, cross your hands over your chest and bow your head to indicate you are not receiving.

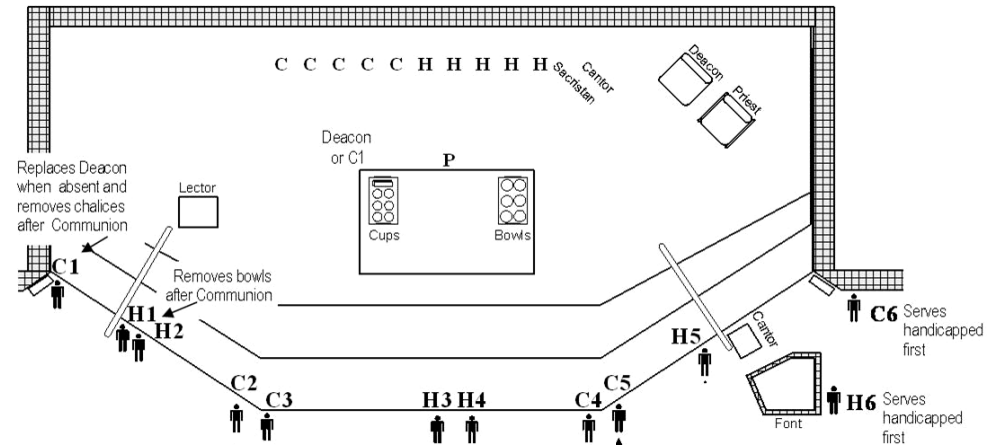
Liturgies with a Deacon:

The Deacon, after receiving, turns around and ministers both species to the C (chalice) ministers, moving from left to right. The Presider distributes both species to the H (bowl) ministers working from right to left.

The Deacon returns to the altar to distribute chalices and purificators to each C minister who approaches the altar. Similarly the Presider distributes bowls to each H minister who approaches. Ministers do not take the bowls from the altar themselves.

Liturgies without a Deacon:

When a Deacon is not present, it is the pastoral decision at this time to have the C1 minister assist the priest with distributing communion and vessels to the other ministers. The C1 minister stands away from the altar, directly *in front* of the line formed by the cup ministers. (See Diagram) This assures the Presider that a minister is available to assist.



After the Presider has received, the C1 minister who is assisting walks forward to stand alongside the altar. The Presider ministers both species to the C1 minister.

He then hands the C1 minister a bowl. (S)he turns around and ministers the Body of Christ to the C ministers moving from left to right. The Presider distributes to the H ministers moving from right to left.

When C1 finishes distributing the Body of Christ, (s)he returns to the altar, sets the bread bowl down, picks up a chalice and purificator, and returns to minister the Blood of Christ, again from left to right. (C1 need not wait for the Presider to hand her/him a chalice.) C1 may leave the chalice and purificator in the hands of the last C minister to receive before returning to the altar to hand a chalice and purificator to each of the remaining C ministers who approach the altar.

Distributing to the Assembly

After all ministers have received both species, the H ministers approach the altar to receive a bowl from the Presider. The C ministers approach the altar to receive a chalice and purificator from the Deacon/C1 minister. With vessel in hand, all ministers immediately move to their stations, facing the altar until the Presider arrives at H4. Once the Presider is in place, all ministers turn to the assembly and begin distribution of the Eucharist.