

General Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Sacred Heart Parish- Groton

December-2007, *revised*

Dress appropriately, you are truly *Theotokos* (God-bearers) and a witness to the community.

Arrive 15 minutes prior to Mass.

Arrange who will cover each station among yourselves prior to Mass, including who will bring the reserved Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle at the appropriate time.

The first arriving EM will check that everything is in place (sacristan will have done this):

- 2 purificators & 2 communion cups are on the credence table
- key is in the tabernacle
- gifts have been prepared (water/wine/ciboria at back of church)
- Bring any questions to the celebrant or deacon, if present.

Process in, following the altar servers. Bow, take seat on the left side of the church

Following the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God), one host minister will go directly to the tabernacle, genuflect, open the tabernacle, remove the reserved Blessed Sacrament, close the tabernacle (leave the key!), and process reverently to the altar steps. Hand the ciborium(ia) to the deacon, if present, or proceed to the altar and hand to the celebrant.

Other EMs will take their place aside the altar servers, kneeling on the first step after the *Agnus Dei*.

After the celebrant self-communicates, and while the deacon is receiving, all EMs will take their positions at the top of the steps, between the ambo and the credence table. The cup ministers should pick up a purificator from the credence table before lining up. It is preferred that they arrange themselves with the cup ministers in the center (Ambo-H-C-C-H-table).

After all receive the host from the celebrant, the priest/deacon will administer the cup to the EMs of the Cup. They, in turn, will offer the cup to the Host ministers next to them.

Then the celebrant or deacon will hand the Host Ministers a ciborium.

The ministers will take their pre-determined positions for the distribution of Holy Communion.

The words used are, "The Body of Christ" (or "The Blood of Christ"). These are the ONLY words used (not, "Dave, receive the Body of Christ" or any adaptations). The response is "Amen."

Blessings- if someone approaches you with arms folded across their chest (or young children/babies accompany a communicant), you may simply say "May God Bless you," making no gestures.

Host Ministers: If you run out of hosts, approach the priest/deacon who will supply you with more from their ciborium. Do not begin breaking hosts.

Cup Ministers: If you run out of Precious Blood, do NOT pour from one cup to another, simply return your empty cup to the altar and return to your seat.

Ushers may direct you to communicants in the pews that are unable to come forward. Please follow their direction.

Following communion, all EMs return to the sanctuary.

Cup ministers should consume any remaining Precious Blood (assisted by other ministers, as necessary), and place their empty cups on the altar. If a deacon is present, one purificator should be left on the altar, the other returned to the credence table.

Host ministers place their ciborium on the altar.

One host minister will reverently receive any remaining hosts from the deacon or celebrant in one (or more) ciboria and process to the tabernacle to reserve the Eucharist. He/she shall place the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, genuflect, close and lock the tabernacle and remove the key. The key should be placed on the credence table.

With the exception of the EM bearing the reserved Eucharist, all ministers shall bow to the altar each time they enter or exit the sanctuary.

At the beginning of the recessional song, the EMs, together with the lector(s), shall follow the altar servers in procession out of the church.

General Comments

At all times, maintain the spirit of reverence and “noble simplicity” while handling the Eucharist.

Avoid touching communicants (no pats on the head, etc.)

Avoid giving a little one their First Holy Communion- when in doubt, ASK!

Gloves, dirty hands- offer communion on the tongue.

Ensure that the recipient consumes the Host. Be watchful.

Do not break Hosts, nor pour from cup to cup.

The purificator is for the cup, not anyone’s lips.

If a Host falls to the floor- reverently consume it.

If you spill the Precious Blood, place your purificator over the spill, direct traffic around the spill, obtain a fresh purificator from the sacristy, and continue distribution. Advise the celebrant/deacon, who will assist in clean-up after Mass.

If a person known to you as an EM presents themselves with a pyx, you may provide them with the Body of Christ. Others should be quietly directed to see the celebrant or deacon following Mass.

Sacred vessels are purified by ordinary ministers only at the altar or credence table.

One (or more) EM should offer to assist the sacristan after Mass, to prepare for the next Mass or store the vessels for the day.

The basin in the sacristy is a sacrium, not a sink. Know the difference.

When in doubt, *always* ask questions before or after Mass.

EMs may also be asked to assist with the Blessing of Throats on St. Blaise’s feast, or with the Distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday. The text of these blessings will be provided to you.

Please take time to pray before the Blessed Sacrament before or after Mass.

Thank you for your ministry!