

**EXTRAORDINARY
MINISTER OF
HOLY COMMUNION
HANDBOOK**

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish

Comportment of the EMHC:

1. Reverence in attitude with regard to the Eucharistic species — the ***Precious Body*** and the ***Precious Blood*** — and the sacred vessels — the ***chalice*** and the ***ciborium/paten***.
2. Provide an example to the congregation at Mass and other liturgies through attentive posture and dignified dress which includes:
 - a. dress shoes (preferably with low or no heels and covered toes);
 - b. slacks or alternatively for women are a modest skirt or dress which does not come above 1”-2” at the knee;
 - c. a dress shirt or blouse;
 - d. no open shirts showing bare skin at the breastbone;
 - e. no sleeveless tops;
 - f. for men, a button down shirt with a tie is preferred.
3. Reverence the altar of sacrifice during Mass with a profound bow.
4. When at or near the altar, keep unoccupied hands in a reverent posture of prayer.



Spend time in prayer before serving at the altar.

Mass Duties and Instructions

Prior to Mass

- **Arrive 15-30 minutes before your scheduled Mass** to check in with the sacristan or priest. Ensure they are aware you are present by initialing next to your name on the EMHC and Lector schedule which is posted on the bulletin board. *Please try to arrive 15 minutes early if you are not scheduled just in case there are extenuating circumstances.*

Mass

- EMHCs come to the Mary side of the altar as the congregation begins the *Agnus Dei*.
- Line up behind the altar servers:
 - EMHCs for ***Precious Blood*** to the left, closest to the high altar; and
 - EMHC for ***Precious Body*** to the right, closest to the front altar.
- Follow the altar servers up to the altar, and wait at the corner of the altar in the same order.
- All receive the Precious Body from the priest.
- Precious Blood:
 - The priest will offer the Precious Blood with the purificator to the EMHCs to his right.
 - Take the purificator in one hand and then the chalice. At this time you may consume the liquid species if you choose.
 - The EMHC closest will offer the Precious Blood to the EMHC of the Precious Body.
- Do not offer the altar servers the Precious Blood.

Distribution Practice

- ***Precious Body***:
 - After the priest hands the ciborium/paten with the Precious Body to the appropriate EMHC, proceed to the front of the steps and *wait for an altar server with a communion paten to be in place before beginning to distribute the Precious Body*.
 - Until the priest returns to the center to distribute communion, stay in the middle and indicate to the lines of communicants to alternate coming forward. When the priest returns, move to either side, depending upon where he chooses to stand. Be flexible.
 - EMHC of the Precious Body will hold up the consecrated host as the communicant approaches.
 - If he or she takes Communion in hand, place it directly in the center of the hand.
 - If you run out of consecrated hosts, turn towards the priest. *If he is out or low, also, he will indicate to you what do do next.*
 - If he or she has their hands crossed or otherwise indicates they prefer to reverence rather than receive say, "Peace be with you".



An effective way to move your purificator after each wipe is to place it, still folded, over your forefinger with the tail (top and bottom) hanging down your hand so that it wraps your forefinger. Then, as you hand the chalice to the communicant, you can tug at the purificator moving it over your finger smoothly. You will receive instruction on this when you begin your training.

- **Precious Blood:**
 - EMHCs of the Precious Blood will each go to the front pillars.
 - The EMHC that served the Precious Blood to the EMHC of the Body will follow them and then proceed to Joseph side pillar.
 - The other EMHC of the Precious Blood will follow the priest to the disabled before taking their place at the Marian side pillar. *Exceptions are in place for EMHCs with mobility challenges.*
 - Wipe the chalice at the rim after each consumption, give it a 1/4 turn before offering it to the next communicant.
 - Move the purificator to another spot after each wipe.
 - If the Precious Blood is exhausted before Communion ends, turn towards the side altar and wait until the priest returns to the main altar before proceeding forward to the side steps. If it is not exhausted, consume it yourself or have someone consume it for you if you are unable to do so.
- **Make eye contact with the communicant as you say “The body/blood of Christ.”**
- Return the vessels: Wait at the bottom of the steps and hand them of the altar servers. The altar servers are trained to take these from you. Please do not come back to the altar; do not place on or take anything from the altar.
- The priest will bring the remaining hosts in the ciborium to the tabernacle. If you are still at the foot of the sanctuary during this time, face the tabernacle until the Eucharist is reposed, reverence (genuflect or profound bow as you are physically capable) with the altar servers and the priest.
- Return to your seats.

After Mass

- Take the purified vessels to the Sacristy and help to clean and dry the vessels.
- Be observant. If the visiting priest does not purify the vessels, the sacristan is trained to proceed with the purification after Mass. Ask the Sacristan first before removing the vessels to the sacristy.



Concelebration and/or Presence of a Deacon at Mass

You will note in the schedule that the EMCHs of the Precious Blood are designated 1 and 2. The reason for this is to avoid confusion when we are joined by other clergy such as priest or a deacon. When other priests or deacons are present the following changes occur:

Procedural changes for a Deacon:

- EMHC 2 (precious blood) will not be needed.
- EMHC1 will proceed to Joseph Side

Procedural changes for Concelebration:

- EMHCs check with the Sacristan

SPILLS, DROPS and DESECRATION

- If either of the species is dropped, immediately step towards the area to block anyone from stepping on it. Place your purificator over the spot. The altar servers are trained to come into action to begin purification as well as block the area from further desecration. As soon as they arrive, return to your duties as EMHC.
- Sometimes, when you are handed the chalice back, the liquid species can splash on your hand. If you spill any of the Precious Blood on your person, use your purificator to wipe it. After Mass, return to the Sacristy to purify your hand—or whatever was splashed—in the sacrarium (sink).
- If a communicant ***does NOT CONSUME the Precious Body***, stop serving, follow them, smile, and say in a non-confrontational tone, “Excuse me. Please consume that immediately.” If they still do not consume the host offer gently to consume it for them. By then, at least one of the Master level Altar Servers or the priest will have followed you. Make a minimum of fuss. The person may already be embarrassed and we are not seeking to embarrass them further, we are looking to protect the sacred species. Step back and return to serving Communion. It is helpful to remember that not everyone has evil intentions. People are sometimes disoriented.

The most important gift of my ministry is not the work that I do, but the example of reverence and worship that I offer to God and to the community.



What the Holy Church has to say about Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Via the GIRM (General Instruction of the Roman Missal) and through the CCDSS (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament)

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. [Cf. GIRM, no. 280]

This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist”, by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened. [156. CCDSS]

The proper and only permissible form for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "The Body of Christ" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "The Blood of Christ." No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. [Cf. GIRM, nos. 161; 284-287]

In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. (1) When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops, priests, or deacons. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, "the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may also depute suitable faithful for this single occasion." [Cf. GIRM 162]

You can read the full text of what the Congregation for Divine Worship teaches about this ministry here:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20040423_redemptionis-sacramentum_en.html#Chapter VII