

GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are traditionally commissioned at the evening Mass of Maundy Thursday, and this practice will be followed each year. As well as commissioning new Extraordinary Ministers, existing ones will be re-commissioned as a reminder that it is a temporary ministry, and also to give you the opportunity to renew your commitment. We also intend to provide a short retreat for ministers during the year.

Updated March 2013

Thank you for serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. You will be aware that it is a great privilege to give the Body and Blood of the Lord to your fellow parishioners, and it is therefore natural that you will want to exercise this ministry with the greatest possible care. These notes are intended to help you do that, and also to relieve any anxiety you may feel about what you should be doing and when. What follows refers particularly to Sunday Mass, but there are some additional notes relating to weekday Mass and visiting the sick.

Before Mass

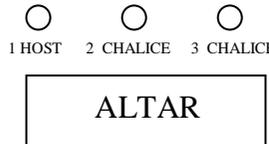
Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass and inform the celebrant in the sacristy that you will be serving as a minister. Know who the other ministers are for that Mass. Be aware that sometimes more or fewer ministers than usual may be needed, for example if a deacon or concelebrating priest is present, (so please don't be offended if told you're not needed). Remember; one person - one ministry, so you should not carry out any other role (such as reader, server, steward etc) at the same Mass.

During Mass

At Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel without a deacon, the celebrant and three Extraordinary Ministers will distribute Holy Communion. One of these will distribute the Host and the other two will distribute the Precious Blood from the chalices. (If a deacon is present he and the celebrant will distribute the Host and the ministers will administer the chalices.)

Immediately after the sign of peace please approach the sanctuary step. When all the ministers have arrived, bow together and take up position behind the priest and facing towards the congregation. No need to offer the sign of peace to anyone on the sanctuary. Extraordinary Ministers do not need to go to the Tabernacle.

The priest will distribute Communion to the Extraordinary ministers as follows: He will first give the Host to all three Extraordinary Ministers in turn (1,2,3). He will then bring the chalice to Extraordinary ministers 1 and 2. Extraordinary Minister 2 will retain the chalice and purificator. The priest then brings the second chalice to Extraordinary minister 3 who will retain it, and the purificator, after receiving the Precious Blood. The priest then hands the ciborium to minister 1 to distribute.



The priest and ministers all move to the edge of the sanctuary to distribute to the congregation. The priest and deacon/minister distributing the host stand in the centre - in front of the altar. Those ministering from the chalice stand at the front corners of the sanctuary. Some points about the distribution of Communion:

Administering the Body of Christ

- Full attention to each person – eye contact
- Hold up the Host. Wait for “Amen”
- Be attentive to how each person receives (tongue or hands). Make sure Host is consumed before the person moves away.
- Be prepared to give a blessing when requested. (“*May God bless you*” or similar) – do not make the sign of the Cross over the person
- If a Host is dropped, pick it up immediately but inconspicuously
- If you run out of Hosts, ask the priest for some more.

Administering the Blood of Christ

- Always carry the chalice with great care
- Present the chalice and allow each person to take it into their own hands (if able to)
- Wipe the lip of the chalice and rotate slightly after each person
- Carefully Wipe up spillages immediately using a purificator – notify the priest
- If you run out of the Precious Blood, place purificator over the chalice and remain in your place.

After Communion

The priest, deacon and Extraordinary Ministers remain in position until the last person has received Holy Communion. The priest and Extraordinary Minister 1 move to the back of the Altar and place their vessels on the Corporal in the centre of the Altar. Extraordinary Ministers 2 and 3 consume any surplus Precious Blood and take their chalices directly to the credence table. Extraordinary Minister 1 returns to his/her seat. Extraordinary Ministers 2 and 3 only remain on the sanctuary and purify the vessel if there is no concelebrating priest or deacon present, otherwise they too return to their seats. The vessels are purified as follows: Using the edge of a purificator wipe any fragments of host from the paten into one of the chalices. Pour water into the chalice and carefully rinse around. Consume the water and wipe dry the inside and the lip of the chalice with the purificator. Place the used purificator over the chalice and leave on the credence table. After purifying, Extraordinary ministers 2 and 3 leave the sanctuary together, bow to the altar and return to their places.

After Mass

Extraordinary Minister 2 and 3 take the vessels from the credence table to the sacristy where they are washed in warm soapy water, dried and returned to the safe. Used linen (except the Corporal) is placed in the linen basket.

Other Mass Centres

The same guidelines apply to Sunday Mass at the other centres, although normally only one Extraordinary Minister will be required (to distribute the Precious Blood).

Weekday Mass

Up to two Extraordinary ministers may be needed to administer the chalices, depending on the presence of a concelebrating priest and deacon.

Taking Communion to the Sick

Holy Communion for the sick should normally be taken directly from Sunday or weekday Mass. Extraordinary Ministers receive the Blessed Sacrament in the presence of the congregation and the priest says the prayer of dismissal which reminds us all that those not present because of age or infirmity are fully part of the Eucharistic community. Please note the following about taking out Communion from Mass:

- Please notify the priest in the sacristy before Mass how many hosts you will need. At centres place the required number of hosts in the paten.
- Come up to the sanctuary immediately after Communion and stand to the right of the altar. Present your open pyx to the priest.
- After the prayer of dismissal, return immediately to your place. It is not necessary to remain on the sanctuary while the ciborium is replaced in the tabernacle. When you are carrying the Blessed Sacrament you do not genuflect as you leave the sanctuary.
- Ideally you should leave the church immediately and go straight to your visits.
- Please avoid any unnecessary secular activity (e.g. shopping) whilst you have the Blessed Sacrament in your possession.
- If you are unable to take Holy communion directly from Mass, and need to do so at another time of day, please do not “help yourself” from the tabernacle, but ask a priest or deacon to give you the necessary Hosts.

Please ensure that you keep the priests or parish office notified of those whom you visit regularly, and also let us know about any changes as a result of people recovering, moving etc. The priests will try to visit all those on the list, but please let us know if anybody particularly wishes to see a priest (e.g. for confession or anointing). Copies of the booklet giving the revised rite of Holy Communion to the sick are in the parish office, so please ensure that you have one of these. Extraordinary Ministers will know to exercise their discretion in deciding whether in certain cases it is appropriate to continue using the previous translation.

General

Ministers of Holy Communion are expected to be good examples of Christian faith and life at all times, not just when they are “on duty” in church or visiting the sick. Please also be attentive to using correct language in connection with your ministry, ensuring that you speak of “the Blessed Sacrament”, “the host”, “the Precious Blood” etc. rather than “the bread” or “the wine”.