

General Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Selection Process

- Those to be deputed should be mature in faith and be known to other parishioners as exemplary Catholics. They must also be fully initiated Catholics (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist).
- The pastor (or, with the pastor's permission, the parochial vicar) sends the names of candidates to the Office of the Bishop who give approval and grants permission by letter. The signature of the priest is required as a recommendation of the individual.
- All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be properly prepared for their role of distributing Holy Communion by the pastor or his delegate, and made aware of the nature of this liturgical ministry, the mystery of the Eucharist and the theology of the Mass.
- Once proper training has been received, the permission becomes effective at the time of the celebration of the liturgical rite from the Book of Blessings, Chapter 63. Unless previously withdrawn, permission is given for a three year period which must be renewed to remain in effect.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should not assume the roles of others such as cantor, reader, or server at the same liturgy at which they are assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion.
- They do not enter in the entrance procession with the other ministers and are seated with the assembly.
- They may not assist the priest at the altar in the manner of a deacon.
- Reception of Holy Communion by the Extraordinary Ministers
- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not approach the center of the altar before the priest has received Communion. 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.

Distribution of Holy Communion

- 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, 161; 284-287).
- 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.

Completion of Communion Rite

Extraordinary Ministers offering the consecrated bread should return to the altar or to the credence table and hand either the paten or chalice to the priest or deacon, then, once empty, take it to the working sacristy. Extraordinary Ministers offering the consecrated wine take the cup to the working sacristy and consume what remains of the Precious Blood, then place it on the counter in the working sacristy.