

# ***EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION GUIDE***

The privileged service of being an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is important to the Eucharistic life of the Church. The following guidelines will help extraordinary ministers carry out their service with the dignity and reverence the Eucharist calls forth from us.

**What is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion?** The term “extraordinary minister of Holy Communion” is the appropriate term for members of the lay faithful who are called upon to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion either within the Eucharistic celebration or on another occasion such as a Communion Service or a visit to the homebound. “Ordinary ministers” of Holy Communion are bishops, priests, or deacons. We use the term “extraordinary” because the ministers assist the ordinary minister in facilitating a smoother or more graceful distribution of Holy Communion than would otherwise be possible due to the number of communicants. On some occasions, the extraordinary minister may not be necessary due to enough ordinary ministers present or the small size of the congregation. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should never see their role as a right or position of power. Rather, their ministry is a true service to the community, and should be exercised in a spirit of docility and generosity. If an ordinary minister is not available, an extraordinary minister has the obligation to bring Viaticum (Holy Communion) to a dying person.

## **Requirements:**

1. The service of an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is essentially connected to the Holy Mass. It is therefore necessary that the extraordinary minister be a practicing Catholic, fully initiated (baptized and confirmed). They should be at least 18 years of age and have a High School diploma. If married, the extraordinary minister should be in a marriage that is recognized by the Church. Ideally the candidate should also have a deep and obvious love for the Blessed Sacrament and should be known in the community as someone who is committed to the Church’s understanding of the Real Presence.
2. Jesus is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharistic Species. Because of this, the highest level of respect and reverence is due to the Blessed Sacrament. Such respect needs to be shown to the Consecrated Species by ensuring that one’s appearance and dress conveys dignity and an awareness of the sanctity of the Eucharist, as well as by manifesting signs of devotion outside of one’s service at Holy Mass, especially by genuflection or a profound bow when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Time before the Blessed Sacrament in silent prayer should also be part of the extraordinary minister’s regular spiritual life.
3. Since extraordinary ministers are designated to serve in a particular parish, they are not to exercise this ministry elsewhere without the permission of the appropriate pastor or chaplain.
4. Extraordinary ministers are required to sign a “Code of Conduct” form which is kept on file by the Church and Archdiocese. The form needs to be resubmitted every three years.
5. An extraordinary minister may be terminated from service by a priest or bishop at any time and may resign at any time.
6. Extraordinary ministers should discern their desire to continue in the ministry every three years.

## Preparation:

1. **Be conscious of how you dress!** Appropriate dress should reflect three things: our respect for Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist, our respect for God's house, and our respect for our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. Extraordinary ministers should not wear shorts, jeans, short skirts, low cut tops, t-shirts, tight attire, etc. It is always best to choose in the favor of modesty. Shirts and ties are recommended for men.
2. Be sure to have clean hands and clean fingernails. People notice these things. If you are sick or have a cold or a cough, please refrain from serving.

## Procedures:

1. The words for distribution are, "**The Body of Christ**" and "**The Blood of Christ.**" If distributing via intinction, the words are, "**The Body and Blood of Christ.**" No deviations from these are allowed. Speak clearly and just loud enough to be heard. Do not acknowledge the recipient by name if you know him or her.
2. If the Host is given in the hand, special care should be taken to ensure that the Host is consumed by the communicant. Do not let anyone walk away carrying a Consecrated Host in their hand.
3. If given orally, place the Host gently and carefully on the front of the tongue.
4. A communicant may not dip the Consecrated Host in the Precious Blood under any circumstances.
5. If anyone comes forward with their hands crossed over their chest, simply offer them a blessing by saying "May God bless you" or a similar blessing, speaking just loud enough so the one receiving the blessing can hear you. **Do not** bless them with a sign of the Cross, and **do not** physically touch them.
6. If during distribution a parishioner asks you to place Hosts in a pyx so they can distribute outside the Church, refrain from doing so and tell them that Sacred Hosts should be retrieved following Mass.
7. When you finish distributing at your position, look around to see where help may be needed. To prevent congestion in front of the Sanctuary, only one extraordinary minister should help distribute on either side of the main aisle at positions 3 and 4 if these positions are open.
8. When the distribution of Communion is completed, turn to the Cross, consume any remaining Precious Blood, then take your intinction set to the altar, hand it to a priest, and proceed to the Sacristy. If the priests are still distributing, you may place your intinction set on the altar. You do not have to bow to the Blessed Sacrament when returning your ciborium or intinction set to the altar since you are carrying the Body of Christ. Do remember to bow to the Blessed Sacrament as you depart the Sanctuary, however.
9. While in the Sacristy, please remain quietly reverent.
10. **All extraordinary ministers must return their crosses to the cross board so they're available for the next Mass.**
11. If the sacristan no longer needs your assistance you may return to your pew.

### **Areas of Concern:**

1. If you drop a Host that has not been dipped in the Precious Blood, you or the communicant should ideally pick it up and consume it immediately as a sign of respect for the Blessed Sacrament. If this is not possible or prudent, you can palm the Host and place it in the glass cup with the gold cover located next to the Tabernacle in the Adoration Chapel after finishing distribution.
2. In the case of a Host dropped after dipping it in the Precious Blood, you should stop distribution and tend to it immediately. Have the Altar server, an usher, or a congregant watch the Host to make sure no one steps on it. You should then place your intinction set on the Altar, proceed to the Sacristy, and get a moistened and a dry purificator, return to the dropped Host, pick it up, wipe up any Precious Blood spots with the moistened purificator, dry the spots with the dry purificator, return the purificators to the Sacristy, and place the Host in the glass cup with the gold cover located next to the Tabernacle in the Adoration Chapel. If there are any congregants waiting to receive at your position, you can retrieve the intinction set and continue distributing.

**Holy Days of Obligation and Holidays:** The cross board will be displayed at each of these special Masses. Remember that we have committed ourselves to serving our Lord as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. With that commitment come certain personal responsibilities. One of the most important is serving as an extraordinary minister whenever there's a need. With this in mind, please take a cross if one is available so we can fill all positions at these special Masses.

**Adoration Chapel:** The Adoration Chapel is a wonderful function at Epiphany and all extraordinary ministers are expected to volunteer to spend an hour in the Chapel with the Lord weekly.

### **Distributing to the Sick and Homebound or the Hospitalized:**

1. It is not always possible for the pastor or his clerical delegate to visit the sick and homebound or hospitalized of the parish on a regular basis. In these cases, the use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to assist in the distribution of the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and homebound or those who are hospitalized can be of tremendous benefit.
2. You must complete the "essential three" before visiting the sick and homebound or the hospitalized. The "essential three" include certifiable VIRTUS training, signing the Code of Conduct, and the satisfactory completion of a background check.
3. If you feel called to become a part of this crucial and rewarding ministry or if you have any questions regarding the "essential three" qualifications, contact Barry Wills, Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound Coordinator, at 763-755-1020 or [bwills@epiphanymn.org](mailto:bwills@epiphanymn.org).

***Thank you for giving so freely of your time and talent and for your dedicated service to our Lord, the Church of the Epiphany, and your fellow parishioners!***

# Procedures at Weekend Masses

Check in with the Sacristan to get a cross (no one is scheduled, but all are asked to serve every time you attend a Mass). We will need up to 7 EMs at the Sunday Masses.

- 1 EM will cover sections 1 and 2.
- 1 EM will cover the old icon Chapel and crying room **(if there are 5 or more choir members, distribute to them first before moving to the icon Chapel).**
- 1 EM will cover section 5.
- 2 EMs will cover section 6.
- 1 EM will cover the foyer and then move to the back pews to distribute to the handicapped. **(When finished with the foyer and back pews, return your ciborium to the Altar unless the Sacred Vessels are being purified. In that case, take your ciborium to the Sacristy. If the sacristan is not present, wait till they come back).**
- 1 EM will be needed up front if only 1 priest celebrates.

**ALL EM's gather by the choir area at the beginning of the "Lamb of God."** Hand sanitizer is located on the corner of the choir area. Sanitize your hands before you process down. EMs will process to the Sanctuary behind the Sacristan and the musicians.

## **THIS IS THE ORDER WE NEED TO FOLLOW:**

- Sanitize your hands by the choir area.
- Process down to the Sanctuary and receive Communion.
- Line up in front of the Sanctuary where the priest will distribute the intinction sets and ciborium.
- After receiving an intinction set or ciborium from the priest, proceed to your distribution station.

## **NOTES:**

- When giving a blessing, please do not touch the congregant, doing so could contaminate the fingers you use to distribute the Body of Christ.
- If you drop a Host, you or the communicant should ideally pick it up and consume it immediately as a sign of respect for the Blessed Sacrament. If this is not possible or prudent, you can palm the Host and place it in the glass cup with the gold cover located next to the Tabernacle in the Adoration Chapel after finishing distribution.
- In the case of a Host dropped after dipping it in the Precious Blood, you should stop distribution and tend to it immediately. Have the Altar server, an usher, or a congregant watch the Host to make sure no one steps on it. You should then place your intinction set on the Altar, proceed to the Sacristy and get a moistened and a dry purificator, return to the dropped Host, pick it up, wipe up any Precious Blood spots with the moistened purificator, dry the spots with the dry purificator, return the purificators to the Sacristy, and place the Host in the glass cup with the gold cover located next to the Tabernacle in the Adoration Chapel. If there are any congregants waiting to receive at your position, you can retrieve the intinction set and continue distributing.
- When you have finished distributing and if help is not needed at position 3 or 4, turn to face the crucified Christ and consume any remaining Precious Blood before returning to the Sanctuary to place the intinction set on the Altar.

Please dress appropriately for the weekend Masses.

Please contact Liz Grefsheim with any questions at [lgrefsheim@epiphanymn.org](mailto:lgrefsheim@epiphanymn.org).