

# OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



## EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION MANUAL

July, 2013



## The History of the EMOHC Ministry

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (henceforth, designated EMs) are often necessary to the reverent sharing of Holy Communion, especially when it is distributed under both forms to the faithful. This ministry was born, though, because of several practical necessities.

In the early days of the Church, there were fewer restrictions about who distributed Holy Communion. For example, a sick person could have asked a friend to bring the sacrament. One of the early martyrs of the Church, Saint Tarcisus, was killed while taking Holy Communion to the sick as an acolyte. But by the Middle Ages, the ministry was restricted to bishops and priests. Deacons were considered the EMs, and on some occasions, they administered the blood of Christ from the chalice. Throughout Catholic history, there are rare circumstances when lay people served as exceptional ministers of Holy Communion, for example, in danger of someone's death or in times of persecution. But the practice was very rare until recently.

The Second Vatican Council opened up the ministry of distributing Communion. They also changed the use of the word "extraordinary." Because deacons are ordained clergy, the Council included them among the "ordinary" ministers of Holy Communion. But the Council permitted bishops to appoint lay people to distribute Communion. Although many of them are "extraordinary" according to the common definition of someone wonderful and exceptional, the word here means "outside the ordinary," that is, they are not among those in Holy Orders who, by reason of ordination, have the responsibility of providing Communion to the faithful.

In 1969, the Vatican announced several reasons for expanding the Communion ministry to the laity:

- Outside the Mass, people needed access to Holy Communion when an ordinary minister was not available.
- The usual minister was sometimes impeded by poor health, advanced age, or the demands of the pastoral ministry.
- Sometimes the number of faithful wishing to receive Holy Communion at Mass was so great that the celebration was taking too long.

The reasons all pertained to the great demand for Holy Communion. The shortage of priests was not yet a significant problem. Prior to the twentieth century, very few people received Communion at a typical Sunday Mass. Pope Pius X started promoting regular Holy Communion in 1905, and the practice caught on. It was this wonderful circumstance that caused the need for EMs: the great desire to receive this sacrament, a desire expressed by more numbers of the faithful than at any other time in history.

Bishops could now appoint ministers to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion from among the laity, provided they were "outstanding in Christian life, in faith, and in morals, and...trained to carry out so exalted a function." At first, it was thought that persons of a mature age would be ideal, and initially that men would act in this capacity more so than women, but even these qualifications were soon lifted.

From the beginning, the vision of this ministry was not limited to the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass. Lay people were needed to distribute Holy Communion outside the Mass as well. When the rites for the sacrament of the *Anointing the Sick* were revised in 1972, they specified that those who were dying could receive Holy Communion from a lay minister.

In 1973, the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments issued a more comprehensive instruction, *Immensae Caritatis* (*Infinite Love*), "On Facilitating Reception of Holy Communion in Certain Circumstances." From this document, we read:

There are several situations in which a shortage of ministers of Communion has been pointed out:

- Within Mass, because of a great crowd of people or some disability of the celebrant;
- Outside the Mass, when the distance makes it difficult to take Holy Communion, especially as viaticum to the sick in danger of death; or when the sheer number of sick people in hospitals or similar institutions require several ministers.

In order then that the faithful who are in the state of grace and rightly and devoutly wish to share in the sacred meal may not be deprived of this sacramental aid and solace, Pope Paul VI has decided it opportune to authorize special ministers who will be empowered to give Communion to themselves and others of the faithful, under the exact and specified conditions here listed.

## When Extraordinary Ministers May Be Called Upon

Having spoken to the extraordinary nature of the EM, it is important to discuss what constitutes a sufficient need to call for their use. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) provides the following basic description of the occasion when EMs should be called upon:

The priest may be assisted in the distribution of Communion by other priests who happen to be present. If such priests are not present and there are a very large number of communicants, the priest may call upon EMs to assist him, e.g., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion.

While the Church has avoided giving a precise definition of the term “very large number” of communicants, in order to allow flexibility for diverse local situations, the *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest*, Art. 8, Sec. 2, does give a more precise expression of this requirement:

Extraordinary ministers may distribute Holy Communion at Eucharistic celebrations only when there are no ordained ministers present or when those ordained ministers present at a liturgical celebration are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion. They may also exercise this function at Eucharistic celebrations where there are particularly large numbers of the faithful and which would be excessively prolonged because of an insufficient number of ordained ministers to distribute Holy Communion...To avoid creating confusion, certain practices are to be avoided and eliminated where such have emerged in particular Churches: ...the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass thus arbitrarily extending the concept of “a great number of the faithful.”

*Immensae Caritatis* adds a fourth reason - to take Communion to the sick when no priest or deacon is available, or when they are impeded by other ministries. Thus, we see four basic occasions when the Church calls upon the service of EMs:

- At Mass, when the priest is physically unable to distribute Holy Communion;
- At Communion services when no ordained minister is available;
- At Masses where the great number of faithful prevents the priests and deacons from distributing Holy Communion to all of them;
- To the sick, when they are unable to be visited by a priest or deacon.

## Terms and Definitions

<b>Altar</b>	Place of Sacrifice; site where the Eucharist and Communion Rite occur in the Mass
<b>Ambo</b>	Location of the Lectionary; place from which the Liturgy of the Word occurs
<b>Aspergillum</b>	Holy water sprinkler
<b>Aspersorium</b>	Bucket for holy water
<b>Baptismal Font</b>	Basin used for the Sacrament of Baptism
<b>Boat</b>	Vessel holding the incense
<b>Burse</b>	Square envelope in which corporal is placed when not in use; also, small zippered pouch for pyx, usually having cord to place over neck
<b>Censer</b>	Chained vessel for burning coals of incense; also called thurible
<b>Chalice</b>	Sacred vessel which holds the unconsecrated wine which, after consecration, becomes the Blood of Christ
<b>Chalice Veil</b>	Goes over (in order) the Chalice, Purificator, Paten, Large Host and Pall, and beneath the Burse (which holds the Corporal); matches Priest's Chasuble
<b>Chrism</b>	Holy oil for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation
<b>Ciborium (plural – ciboria)</b>	Chalice-like sacred vessel with a lid in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle or contained during Communion
<b>Communion Cup</b>	Used when Communion under both kinds occurs; a two-to-one ratio of cups to ciboria is proper; the cup holds the Precious Blood for reception by the faithful
<b>Corporal</b>	Square linen on the Altar on which is placed the Paten with the Sacred Body, and the Chalice with the Precious Blood; after Communion, folded four times so that any Sacred Body fragments, which may have fallen from the consecrated Hosts, are captured; rinsed over the Sacramentarium before being placed in the laundry
<b>Credence Table</b>	Table behind and to the side of the Altar on which are various sacred vessels (finger bowl and towel, water and wine cruets, etc.), used during the Liturgy of the Eucharist
<b>Cruet</b>	Small vessel that holds water or wine
<b>Evangelary</b>	Ornate book that contains only the Gospel readings
<b>Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion</b>	Lay person who meets criteria of canon 230 of the <i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> (the C.I.C. or CIC, i.e., the <i>Code of Canon Law</i> )
<b>Lavabo Bowl and Ewer</b>	Bowl and pitcher used to wash the priest's hands during Mass
<b>Lectionary</b>	Book on the Ambo that contains the Scripture readings that the Reader, Priest and/or Deacon read during the Liturgy of the Word
<b>Luna</b>	Round glass case within which is placed a large Sacred Body for insertion into the center of the monstrance; used for Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Missal (Sacramentary)</b>	Rite book containing prayers recited at Mass by the priest at the chair or altar
<b>Monstrance</b>	Sacred vessel which holds the Luna within which is the Sacred Body; used for Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Narthex</b>	Entrance hallway of the church

<b>Nave</b>	Central main part of the church where people sit	
<b>Oil of the Catechumens</b>	First oil used at the Sacrament of Baptism	
<b>Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion</b>	Bishop, Priest, or Deacon	
<b>Ostensorium</b>	Same as Monstrance	
<b>Pall</b>	Square cardboard covered by linen; used to cover paten and chalice	
<b>Paten</b>	Small round plate on which rests the large Host to be consecrated	
<b>Priest Vestments</b>	<b>Alb</b>	Ankle-length white vestment
	<b>Amice</b>	Neck covering worn under the alb
	<b>Cassock</b>	Black vestment that buttons down the front
	<b>Chasuble</b>	Colored outer vestment
	<b>Cincture</b>	Rope belt
	<b>Cope</b>	Cape
	<b>Dalmatic</b>	Colored outer vestment for the deacon to wear
	<b>Stole</b>	Long band of cloth worn around the priest's neck, or over the deacon's shoulder
	<b>Surplice</b>	Short white vestment worn over the cassock
<b>Presider's Chair</b>	Where the priest sits	
<b>Processional Candles</b>	Candlesticks carried in processions	
<b>Processional Cross</b>	Cross carried in processions	
<b>Purificator</b>	Small linen folded three ways; used by priest and other ministers to clean rim of cup after use by each communicant	
<b>Pyx</b>	Small round container within which are held Sacred Bodies to be taken to the sick or homebound; carried in burse with cord around neck	
<b>Rite Booklet</b>	Printed pamphlet which contains prayers said by leader of a liturgical service; used by EMs to the sick and homebound for Communion	
<b>Sacrarium</b>	Receptacle, usually next to sink in sacristy, in which all Sacred Vessels after purification are rinsed before cleaning; drains directly into the ground rather than into a sewage system, out of respect for fragments/drops of the Body and Blood of Christ	
<b>Sacristy</b>	Preparation area where sacred vessels are kept; also, where priest and deacon vest, if no separate vestry area exists	
<b>Sanctuary</b>	Raised platform on which ambo and altar are located	
<b>Sanctuary Lamp</b>	Light, usually suspended by chain or affixed to wall, adjacent to location of Tabernacle; when lit, indicates presence of reserved Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle	
<b>Tabernacle</b>	Locked and secured place of reservation for the Blessed Sacrament, kept for taking to sick and used for Communion services	
<b>Taper</b>	Stick or wick used to light candles	
<b>Vigil Lights</b>	Small candles burned as memorials	

# Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Our Lady of the Mountains Roman Catholic Church

## Explanatory Notes

What follows is an instruction that considers the proper order of the Roman Catholic Church, yet addresses the challenges and special considerations of our facilities at Our Lady of the Mountains. Please be advised that these procedures are effective as of the writing of this manual. Any additions or corrections to the actual procedures that are not reflected in this manual are not necessarily in error. Please check with the Pastor, Father Byrd, for clarification.

### Definition of “Ordinary” and “Extraordinary” Ministers of Holy Communion

Bishops, priests, and deacons are the “ordinary” ministers of Holy Communion. Instituted acolytes and lay people may be used as “extraordinary” ministers of Holy Communion “when the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it” and provided they have received “sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence...In case of necessity, the priest may commission suitable members of the faithful for the occasion” (*Norms 28; GIRM 162*). (From *Archdiocese Training Guidelines*, page 2, revised October, 2003.)

### Serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

You have felt God’s call to this ministry, and members of the Church have affirmed it. The role of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is an extremely important one during the celebration of the Eucharist. In an effort to highlight this liturgical role, the bishops of the United States have stated that EMs “should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence.” By now you may have received this preparation and training from either your diocese or your parish or both. If not, be sure to inquire about it. Here, you will find an explanation of the practical requirements of your ministry.

### Basic Skills to Learn and Practice

As one called to serve at the altar, your ministry will require you to grow – in confidence, dexterity, agility, and reverence in the way you handle chalices, purificators, ciboria, and pyxes. You will learn to handle the sacred species appropriately and respectfully. Whether you are a beginner or a long-serving EM, you should have great reverence for the Eucharistic species.

Some of the practical training from the pastoral leadership of your parish will include how to receive Holy Communion under both forms of consecrated bread and wine; how you will distribute the Host and administer the cup to each communicant; how to cleanse the vessels once they have been purified by a priest or deacon; how to lock the tabernacle; how to carry a pyx reverently; how to examine your own reverent personal style; and, of course, what to do when an accident happens with the Eucharistic species. These matters are explained in the sections that follow to help you review your duties and reflect on the privilege you exercise in your ministry.

### Terminology for the Blessed Sacrament

The way we speak both reflects and shapes the way we believe, and so it is important that our language regarding the Blessed Sacrament reflect our understanding of its nature, and our faith in the real presence of Christ. Although all of Christ is present under each species, it is customary to refer to the Host after consecration as either simply the “Host” or the “Sacred Body.” Likewise, the contents of the cup may be referred to simply as the “chalice” or as the “Precious Blood.” The terms “bread” and “wine” should be used to refer to the bread and wine brought forward as gifts, but *never* to the consecrated species, which are no longer bread or wine, but the Body and Blood of the Lord.



# Guidelines

## Qualification Procedure

### *Qualifications to Serve as an Extraordinary Minister*

It is important that those individuals selected to serve as EMs are chosen carefully. The instruction *Immensae Caritatis* describes them in the following manner: “The faithful who are special ministers of Communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting.”

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has given some concrete expressions of these norms, namely that an EM,

- Is at least 16 years of age,
- Has received the sacrament of Confirmation, and
- If married, is married within the Church.

In addition, it is necessary that the individual receive the approval of their pastor that they are properly qualified and trained. Additional expectations may be added by the individual parish.

### *Selection of Extraordinary Ministers*

Parishes in the Archdiocese are strongly encouraged to actively select individuals who are particularly well qualified to serve as EMs, and not to simply ask for volunteers. Pastors are encouraged to develop their own additional criteria for selecting EMs, which might consist of participation in Eucharistic Adoration or in being active in stewardship programs. The goal is to choose individuals whose exemplary Catholic life and morals will reflect well upon the Church and show the dignity and importance of Holy Communion. The instruction *Immensae Caritatis* gives some additional guidance on the selection of individuals: “The fit person...will be designated according to the order of this listing (which may be changed at the prudent discretion of the local Ordinary): [instituted] reader, major seminarian, man religious, woman religious, catechist, one of the faithful – man or a woman.” Thus, a parish blessed with a seminarian, or candidates for the Diaconate, should use them as EMs before seeking help from the laity.

### *Certification of Extraordinary Ministers*

Because EMs serve the Church in a public capacity, it is necessary that an individual be certified before beginning service as an EM. While instituted acolytes (usually seminarians and men preparing for the diaconate) become an EM by virtue of their institution, other individuals require a specific commissioning.

### *Commissioning for an Extended Period*

In most cases, EMs are certified for an extended period of up to three years (one year if under 18 years old). The pastor is responsible for selecting the individuals designated to serve, for verifying that they are in good standing with the Church (not in an invalid marriage or a situation of cohabitation, not an ex-priest, etc.), and that their selection would not scandalize the faithful (See *Qualifications to Serve as an Extraordinary Minister* above). Candidates will complete an Application Form to aid in this process. After the individuals have been approved by the pastor and trained, the information is submitted to the Parish Office, which will issue the certificates. When they receive their certification, they are able to begin functioning as EMs until their certification expires. It is advisable that, once the commission is granted, that they receive it through the *Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* (*Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63).



### *Way of Life of an Extraordinary Minister*

Obviously, it is not sufficient for an individual to demonstrate an exemplary Catholic life before becoming an EM; it is also important that they cultivate those virtues after they have been chosen for that position of service to the Church. Again, a bare minimum below which individuals should recuse themselves would consist in anything that would prevent them from receiving Holy Communion – grave sin, failure to attend Sunday Mass, or a choice not to maintain Communion with the teachings and life of the Church. Positively put, however, EMs should seek, like all Christians, to cultivate holiness, especially through frequent confession, personal prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament, and attendance to daily Mass, if possible. They should also seek to have a good knowledge and appreciation for the thought and beliefs of the Church, especially through study of scripture and Church teaching. If EMs find it difficult to live lives appropriate to their function, they might recuse themselves for a time from the distribution of Holy Communion, or, if necessary, a pastor might find it necessary to ask them not to continue their service.

Please note:

1. A candidate for the position of an EM will be required to fill out an Application Form.
2. If qualified, he/she will be certified for a period of three years. After three years, the EM must take a refresher class and be re-certified.
3. An EM who has served at another parish, but has moved to a new parish, must be certified in the new parish.

The authority of this Ministry is established by the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The pastor and the Pastoral Council will facilitate the function of this service to the parishioners. The pastor will provide direction for the service. The EMs who are assigned to serve at the liturgies shall be dedicated and committed in their responsibility to serve our Lord in a reverent and professional manner.

### **Specific Guidelines**

#### *Dress Code*

You should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the function you are carrying out. Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Blessed Sacrament, generally by being more formal. Any clothing that exposes the upper arms or other inappropriate parts of the anatomy should not be worn, nor should any clothing bearing prominent logos or slogans. Clothing should not be distracting; the focus of the communicant should be on the Blessed Sacrament, not on the EM. Please consider the appropriate dress code as professional dress or dressy-casual. The following are not acceptable: jeans, shirts without collars, shorts, or similar dress. We need to remember that we are serving the “Body and/or Blood of Christ, our Savior.”

#### *Responsibilities*

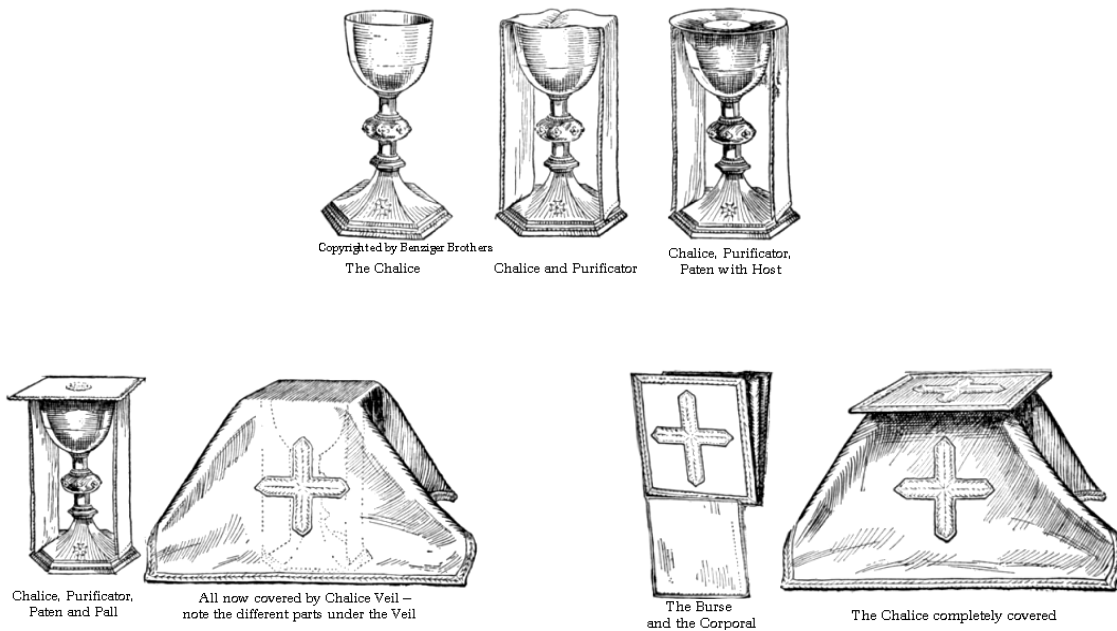
1. If you find it impossible to attend the service in which you are scheduled, it is *your sole responsibility* to find a replacement from the list of EMs (which includes their telephone numbers), found at the end of the Ministry Schedule. ***This responsibility is extremely important.***
2. If an EM does not show up as scheduled, those EMs who are present should find another EM from the congregation. If you cannot find one, please let the ushers know there is an unfilled need and they can help in signaling for and locating a replacement.
3. Those EMs assigned to each Mass will determine who will serve as lead (and Sacristan, if needed). Please note, the Ministry Schedule lists the EMs for each Mass in alphabetical order; it has no bearing on who should serve as lead.
4. The lead EM or Sacristan needs to be at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the Mass for setup. The rest of the EMs should be present at least fifteen minutes prior to the Mass. You should always be early, not late.
5. The lead EM will check with the presiding priest to determine the number of Communion cups, purification cloths, etc. that will be needed for the liturgy. The usual is two communion cups at the 4 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass and four communion cups at the Sunday Masses.

6. The lead EM will place the chalice, Communion cups, finger bowl, hand towel, and purification cloths on the credence table prior to the liturgy. If a deacon will purify the sacred vessels, the lead EM will also open two corporals and put them on the credence table, since the deacon will purify the sacred vessels there.
7. Any substitute EMs should notify the lead EM that they are serving for another EM.

***Prior to Mass – Preparation Discussion***

1. When a deacon or concelebrating priest is in attendance, we will need one less extraordinary minister.
2. The lead EM will check to ensure the key is in the Tabernacle. If not, obtain and place the key in the lock on the door of the Tabernacle. The key is located in the vestment closet behind the altar. Return the key to the same place immediately after Mass.

***Preparation of the Sacred Vessels by the Lead Extraordinary Minister (or Sacristan)***



***The Credence Table (behind and to the left of the altar)***

- If a deacon will be purifying the sacred vessels on the credence table, open two corporals and put them on the table.
- Place the Chalice with a purificator, paten, large Host, pall, chalice veil, burse, and two corporals on the table.
- Fill the Communion cups with wine (2 or 4 depending on which Mass) and place on the table. Please gage, based on those present, how much wine to put in each Communion cup. Extraordinary ministers should be able to consume whatever Precious Blood is not consumed at Communion time.
- Place the water on the table.



**CREDESCENCE TABLE**

***The Small Table (at the rear of the church)***

- Check the number of consecrated Hosts in the tabernacle. Using that information, estimate the number of unconsecrated Hosts that will be needed for the Mass and fill a second ciborium with that estimated number. The unconsecrated Hosts are in the refrigerator in the Sacristy. Additional unconsecrated Hosts are in the Parish Office refrigerator. Place the ciborium with unconsecrated Hosts on the table.
- Place on the table the cruets with wine and water that will be brought forward as gifts during the Mass.
- Place the Elijah cup on the small table if someone is going to receive it at the end of Mass.



**SMALL TABLE**

Please check the parochial Sacristy manual if you need more details on setting up for the Mass.

***Procession and Position***

1. At the beginning of the “Lamb of God/Agnus Dei,” come forward and stand to the left of the Sanctuary, opposite the choir, and next to the rock pillar where the altar servers sit. If an EM will be distributing the Sacred Body, he/she should wash his/her hands in the lavabo dish prior to assuming his/her position.
2. **After** the priest (and deacon) has (have) received Holy Communion under both species (GIRM 162), come forward to the bottom of the two steps to the Sanctuary. If an EM will be distributing the Sacred Body, he/she should take the first position on the left side of all EMs near the credence table.
3. The Priest distributes the Body and Blood of Christ to the EMs.
4. After receiving Holy Communion, *the priest or the deacon* gives you the vessel from which you will distribute the Sacred Body or Precious Blood (GIRM 162).
5. The EM distributing the Sacred Body takes the position next to the priest. Those distributing the Precious Blood stand to the left and right of the altar, leaving a clear path. It is important that you know where your station is, and, if you need to pass to the rear of the church, that the ushers do not permit the aisles to become

crowded until you are at your stations. The choir-side EMs should proceed behind the wall of the sanctuary to their positions, for both safety and decorum. As a general rule, you should refrain from unnecessarily going up and down the sanctuary steps.

### ***Handling the Sacred Vessels during Distribution***

Each sacred vessel, blessed for service only in divine worship, deserves the special respect of every EM and communicant. The chalice and ciborium, for example, should be held upright to reduce the possibility of spilling and to show the dignity of the sacrament they contain. Some ciboria are made with handles. In these cases, you use the handle while distributing the Host.

How to hold the vessels reverently will depend on how they are manufactured and how dexterous you are. Practice holding the vessels – when you are first commissioned, before you actually begin to serve, and also, for instance, if ever the community changes sacred vessels for a different liturgical season. The first time you encounter a particular vessel should not be during a Mass. This is not a time to be anxious, insecure, or unprepared. Practice beforehand so that you can feel at ease and be filled with reverential awe as you exercise your ministry during the sacred liturgy. In general, the ciborium or the chalice should be held comfortably at chest height, not too high or too low, for ease of distribution. Adjust the height to accommodate the physical capability or dexterity of the communicant. For example, some children and elderly persons may be unsteady when receiving. Be attentive to those concerns as you distribute Holy Communion. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you, and commit yourself to practicing the distribution of the sacred species with the reverence and respect they always deserve.

### ***Manner of Distributing and Receiving Holy Communion***

While the norm for the distribution of Communion in the Roman Rite remains under one species and on the tongue, specific permissions have allowed Communion under both species and Communion in the hand to take place. Pope Paul VI, in *Sacramentali Communionem* (1970), granted permission to distribute Communion under both species in certain cases, and with the publication of the revised GIRM in 2001, the responsibility for determining when it is appropriate to permit Communion under both species rests with the diocesan bishop.

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Communion under both species is permitted at all Masses, meaning that the individual priest celebrant may decide whether to offer Communion under one or two species. If Communion is offered under both species, the ordinary minister of the chalice is the deacon; however, especially large celebrations may require the use of EMs here, also. When Communion is offered under both species, the individual communicant decides whether to receive from the chalice or not.

The communicant will generally make a sign of reverence (a bow is the norm in the United States), and then approach the minister standing. While standing is the norm in the United States, Communion is not to be denied to those who prefer to approach and kneel. Keep in mind that the manner in which you distribute Holy Communion can encourage the communicant to receive correctly and reverently. It might also encourage the communicant to reply with a stronger more deliberate “Amen.”

### **DISTRIBUTING THE SACRED BODY**

Holding a ciborium, take the Host and hold it before the eyes of the communicant, saying “The Body of Christ.” No one may modify these words; no other words are to be used. The communicant replies, “Amen,” after which you give him/her the Sacred Body.

The decision to receive the Sacred Body on the tongue or in the hand is on the part of the communicant, and no one can compel him/her to receive one way or the other. Regardless, each of these methods of receiving the Sacred Body place particular burdens on the EM.

#### ***Communion on the Tongue***

Take the Host between your thumb and forefinger in such a way that you may place the Host on the tongue by pressing down with the forefinger from above. This makes it easier to avoid contact with the tongue of the communicant.

### *Communion in the Hand*

The practice of receiving Communion in the hand, which is permitted in the United States by a special indult from the Holy See, places additional requirements on the EMs, because it is now necessary that you make sure that the Sacred Body is treated with reverence by the communicant and that it is properly consumed. Pope John Paul II, in *Dominicae Cena* 11, describes this difficulty: “In some countries the practice of receiving Communion in the hand has been introduced. This practice has been requested by individual Episcopal conferences and has received approval from the Apostolic See. However, cases of a deplorable lack of respect towards the Eucharistic species have been reported...This is in no way meant to refer to those who, receiving the Lord Jesus in the hand, do so with profound reverence and devotion, in those countries where this practice has been authorized.”

Thus, you should take the Host between your thumb and forefinger and gently place the Host into the “throne” formed by the hands of the communicant. Each communicant is to receive, *not take*, the Host from you. The communicant should take a single step to the side and consume the Body of Christ. This procedure ensures that the communicant does not go away carrying the Host in his/her hands, *which is not allowed*. Because of the concern that the Body of Christ may be profaned, you must verify that the communicant consumes the Host. If the person walks off without consuming the Host, you must follow that individual and either ask him/her to consume the Host, or to retrieve it so that nothing untoward happens. This is a responsibility for an extraordinary minister just as it is for an ordinary minister of Holy Communion.

### *Patens*

You should always pay attention that no small fragments of the Host fall to the ground. For this reason, the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 93, states that, “The Communion plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, in order to avoid the danger of the Sacred Body or some fragment of it falling.” Hence, at OLM, the altar servers do use Communion plates (patens) which they hold in such a way that it is under the Host at all times. If we have no altar servers, it may help to keep the Host over the ciborium.

### **DISTRIBUTING THE PRECIOUS BLOOD**

Hold the chalice before the eyes of the communicant, saying “The Blood of Christ.” No one may modify these words; no other words are to be used. The communicant replies, “Amen,” after which you give the chalice to the communicant, who raises it to his/her mouth. Do not continue to hold the chalice and raise it to the lips of the communicant; instead ensure that the communicant has taken the chalice firmly before releasing it. After the communicant has taken a sip of the Precious Blood, you should take the chalice, wipe the lip of it with the purificator, and rotate it slightly.

Many EMs find it helpful to have the non-dominant hand holding the chalice by the “stem” (while the dominant hand holds the purificator), so that the communicant can choose either to grasp the bowl of the chalice with a hand on each side or to receive it by placing one hand on the chalice’s bowl and the other underneath the base. Because each communicant’s way of receiving will be different, it does take some practice to manage these movements in a simple and reverent manner.

The purificator, whose purpose is for both reverence and hygiene, is best unfolded so that more areas of the chalice’s rim might be cleaned after each communicant’s reception of the Precious Blood. When you have handed the chalice to the communicant, you have an opportunity to change the current spot of the purificator held in your fingers. This allows a new section of the cloth to be available for use on the chalice.

After wiping both the inner and outer rim of the chalice, “the minister turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood.” This turning can be achieved by receiving the returned chalice from the communicant in the following way. Hold your hand in an open “C” formation by moving the thumb a comfortable one to three inches opposite the other fingers. Clasp the stem by closing the “C” around it. Wipe the rim’s sides with the purificator. Then turn your wrist slightly inward toward your body as you present the chalice to the next communicant. This action rotates the chalice a thirty-second, sixteenth, or eighth turn away from the last communicant’s point of contact with the chalice.



Learning how to hold the chalice, how to present it reverently to the communicant, how to retrieve it, and how to turn it slightly takes some practice, but soon becomes routine.

### **COMMUNION FROM THE CHALICE ALONE**

Some individuals, for medical reasons, are unable to receive even a small particle of the Sacred Body. For this reason, it is permitted for individuals to receive Holy Communion only under the species (appearance) of wine. This is stated in *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 41, “In case of necessity, depending on the judgment of the bishop, it is permitted to give the Eucharist under the species of wine alone to those who are unable to receive it under the species of bread.” In such cases, Communion from the chalice is distributed just as when the communicant receives under both species.

### **BLESSINGS**

Although they are not a part of the approved rite of the Mass, it has become customary in many parts of the United States for individuals who are not receiving Holy Communion to come forward and ask for a blessing. Often this desire is indicated by hands crossed on the chest although in some cultures, particularly Latino ones, people desiring to receive the Sacred Body on the tongue may also come forward with crossed arms. If you determine that a person is seeking a blessing, respond with a prayer that is clearly distinct from the blessing given by a priest. It is recommended that you say, “May God bless you.” It is important that you not use the Host in giving a blessing, and that you not touch the person with the fingers you have used for distributing the Sacred Body, lest some of the particles be rubbed onto the individual.

### **DENYING HOLY COMMUNION**

There are practically no situations where an EM should deny Holy Communion. Church norms (*Redemptionis Sacramentum* 91) state that, “Any baptized Catholic who is not prevented by law must be admitted to Holy Communion.”

You should not make a judgment on the worthiness of any individual to receive Holy Communion. In the case of individuals clearly living a life in discrepancy with Church teachings, the decision is to be made by the pastor, in consultation with the Archbishop, and he will then inform the EMs involved. If you are unsure whether an individual is Catholic or has received First Communion, you should ask the communicant (or if the communicant is a child, the parent). If the reply is no, you should let the communicant return to the pew without receiving Communion.

### ***Returning the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar***

After distributing Communion, you should return to the altar (those on the choir side should go behind the wall of the sanctuary in order not to walk in front of the priest) and hand the vessel to the priest or place it on the corporal on the altar. If a deacon is purifying the sacred vessels at the credence table, hand the vessel to the deacon or place it on the corporal on the credence table.

- If you were distributing the Precious Blood, stand at the foot of the Sanctuary and empty the chalice by consuming whatever remains of the Precious Blood. Then return the empty chalice to the altar (or credence table), placing the vessel on the corporal. DO NOT place the purificator in the cup, since the latter has not been purified yet; lay the purificator *next* to the cup.
- If you were distributing the Sacred Body, purify your fingers of any particles that may have clung to them, using the small bowl of water on the credence table.

### ***Accidents Involving the Blessed Sacrament***

While every care should be taken to avoid accidents involving the Blessed Sacrament, you should be prepared to respond if this occurs. The most common sort of accident involves a particle of the Host or a portion of the Precious Blood falling on the ground or on another object.

If a particle of the Host falls on the ground, you should pick it up and consume it. If for some reason you cannot consume it (for example, it has already been in an individual's mouth and that individual is unable to consume it), you may dissolve the Host in water and later pour the water down the sacrarium. However, it is best to contact a priest or deacon should this be necessary.

A greater difficulty is presented if some of the Precious Blood should fall to the ground. You should ensure that no one steps on the spot, perhaps by delegating an individual to guard it. You could use a clean purificator to mark the spot. Then, perhaps with the deacon's assistance, water should be brought and poured over the spot. It is important to note that when it is diluted with water to the point where it loses the appearance of wine, the Precious Blood ceases to be the Eucharist. However, you should still treat the resulting water with respect by collecting it, through the use of purificators, into a non-consecrated vessel (for example, a lavabo bowl). You should then pour it down the sacrarium. If some of the Precious Blood should drop on an individual's clothing or possessions, you should treat it in the same way, with due respect for the individual involved.

### *Purification of Vessels*

Purification of the vessels is carried out by a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte (usually a seminarian or deacon candidate) either after Communion or immediately following Mass. The purification can take place on the altar by the priest alone, or at the credence table by the deacon or acolyte, but not in the sacristy. This requirement helps to emphasize that the purification of vessels is not simply "doing the dishes," but a part of the ritual of the Mass, by which we show respect to our Guest: Christ as present in the Blessed Sacrament. Lay ministers may assist in any cleaning or washing of the vessels that take place after the ritual purification is complete.

The most important principle at stake in the purification of vessels is respect for the Blessed Sacrament. It must be emphasized that all of the Blessed Sacrament must be consumed, and that none of it may be disposed of in any way. The Church emphasizes this fact by excommunicating anyone who disposes of the Blessed Sacrament (for example, by pouring the Precious Blood down the sacrarium). This excommunication can only be lifted by the Holy See.

### *Cleansing of Linens*

The individuals who clean altar linens (in particular purificators) need to act with respect for the Blessed Sacrament. It is customary to soak all the linens in water, so that any particles of the Host or Precious Blood might be dissolved, and then pour this water down the sacrarium (it is not necessary to consume this water). After this process, the linens may be washed normally, but apart from other linens.

### *Duties after Mass*

The EMs for each Mass are responsible for seeing that all vessels are cleaned and returned to the shelves and drawer in the cabinet behind the altar in the sacristy.

- Rinse the Communion cups and chalice in the sacrarium first, and then wash them with a drop of soap and water in the regular sink. Dry them thoroughly with a cloth towel.
- Open all purificators and put them in the pot that has the lid on it and let them soak. After you wipe the sink and sacrarium, put the towels below the sink.
- Rinse the ciborium, Communion plates, and paten in the sacrarium. Then, dry them thoroughly.
- Put corporals in the pot for soaking if any Precious Blood spilled on them. For those that have no Precious Blood on them, shake them out over the sacrarium and then re-fold them and put them in the drawer.
- Put the burse and veil back in the drawer.
- If the wine cruet needs to be refilled from the gallon jug under the sink, please use the funnel and rinse the funnel after using it before you place it back on top of the gallon jug.
- Turn out the lights in the sacristy area via the light switch outside the door. (The switch inside the door controls the lights on the crucifix over the altar; they should always be left on.)





**STORAGE OF THE SACRED VESSELS**

*Please double-check that all final duties are completed before leaving the church. If you are the last one out, turn out the lights and make sure all doors are closed and locked.*



### ***Service to the Sick and Homebound***

While this document primarily deals with the service of EMs at Mass, some EMs also take Communion to those who are sick or homebound when it is impossible for a priest or deacon to take them Communion on a regular basis. After these EMs have completed the regular training session, they will attend a separate training session so that the specific issues involved in this service may be presented in greater depth. EMs to the homebound must become acquainted with the approved rites for Communion in such circumstances, and have a copy of that ritual to use when distributing Holy Communion.

### **RECEIVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

You will receive the Blessed Sacrament from the priest or deacon, sometimes within the context of Mass. You should have a metal pyx in which to place the Host(s), and a burse (a small pouch) on a cord in which to place the pyx. The cord should be placed around the neck, and then the burse (with the pyx inside) may be placed in a shirt pocket, or left hanging around the neck. The burse and pyx should not be placed in a purse, pants pocket, or other location.

### **TRAVELING TO THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND**

Once you have received the Blessed Sacrament, it is important that you go directly to the place where you are to distribute Holy Communion. It is never appropriate to take the Blessed Sacrament home for later distribution. **These are considered grave matters by the Church.** While on the way to distribute Holy Communion, it is important that you avoid anything that might diminish your focus on the Blessed Sacrament, for example, engaging in unnecessary conversations or listening to the radio in the car.

### **DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION TO THE HOMEBOUND**

When you have reached the location where you are to distribute Holy Communion, it is good that you move directly into the rite, as you are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Socializing is best postponed until afterwards. If you are met at the door with a candle for the Blessed Sacrament, you should be accompanied to the place where you will distribute Communion. If a table has been prepared with a white cloth and a crucifix, you should place the pyx on the table and genuflect in adoration. You may want to take a small white cloth and crucifix in the event that such preparations have not been made. You should follow the rite given for the distribution of Holy Communion in all cases. After you have finished, you should be sure to purify the pyx in the usual way.

## Appendix 1 – A Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist, *Rejoice in the Lord, Always!*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the third Sunday of Advent, the Church proclaims our joyful expectation of the fulfillment of God's promise in the prophetic antiphon, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near."

Truly, at this time of year, we celebrate through the liturgy, the nearness of the Lord in a twofold way. The approaching feast of Christmas reminds us of all the wonder and glory associated with the coming of the Son of God, through the gentle love of the Virgin Mary. And peering into the wider lens of the Advent season, we also look into the future, to the day when Jesus Christ will return, Judge and Savior, when "all who want it may have the water of life, and have it free." (Revelation 22:17)

In the midst of this season of sacred memory and hopeful awaiting, I write to you in praise of that singular miracle which Jesus Christ has given the Church as the wellspring of our salvation and the ultimate meaning of our individual lives, the Holy Eucharist. This belief has been reasserted for our times in the words of the Second Vatican Council, "The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life." (*Lumen Gentium* 11)

For we believe that at every offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is placed on the altar before us. Not just a sign, or a symbol, not just indication or illustration - but the very Body and Blood. Christ's words were these, "This is my body...this is my blood." Why should we doubt this, or try to explain it, or attempt to qualify it in any way at all? Do we question the miracle by which life is created, or suppose that life is less miraculous because science has the expertise to describe it? Do we question the feelings that well up inside us when we see a mother nursing her baby, or a father placing his life on the line for the sake of his child? It is the same kind of profound reaction with which we must greet the miraculous words of our Savior, those words which daily bring to life a sacrifice and a triumph enacted in the past but "re-presented" daily in the Holy Mass.

Under the signs of bread and wine, signs that recall the goodness of creation, we are able to enter into the deep and wide mystery of God's presence in humankind. Many events come to mind - the unleavened bread of the Passover, the Manna in the desert, the multiplication of the loaves, the transformation of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana - these events and others reawaken in us some grasp of the pervasive influence of our God. For by partaking in the banquet of this mystery, we are also enabled by the mercy of the Everlasting Father to escape the Angel of Death - to be fed the bread of heaven in the arid desert of our hungering human natures - to be granted the refreshing wine of Love's inspirited libation, our "cup of blessing."

In this way, the Eucharist reawakens in us a sense of the fundamental agreement made between God and mankind - that a woman would bear a child who would erase the sin of Adam and Eve, and restore the flow of grace between the Creator and the created. In the wisdom which is fed to us by the living Word of God, we come to understand that the Eucharist is first a sign of redemption - a sign of God's forgiveness extended to the entire human race.

The Eucharist is also sign of remembrance by which is fulfilled the direct commandment of our Lord to His Apostles, "Do this in memory of me." Thus, sustained by uninterrupted generations of the ordained priesthood, the sacrifice of the Last Supper and the Cross is made alive and present to the faithful in their celebration of the Mass. In turn, the faithful are able to unite themselves to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so that the Church may be drawn together in all places and at all times, through the abiding source of her unity, the Eucharist.

In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayers and works, are united with those of Christ and with His total offering, and so acquire a new worth. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1368, trans. from original)

It is this "new worth" which transforms the Church from simply a human gathering into a living temple inhabited by the actual, real and true presence of Jesus Christ. And where the Son of God dwells, there dwells also His Father whose love offers the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is Christ present in word and power. It is not irreverent to declare that in the Eucharist, we "have" God, for His presence is true and real. We call this presence real "because

it is a presence par excellence, since it is substantial, in the sense that Christ, whole and entire, God and man, becomes present.” (Council of Trent, A.D. 1551)

In a time such as ours, with the deposit of our Faith questioned by many and rejected by some, it is sad to think that the immense wonder of the principal source of God’s love should be questioned and rejected as well. It is to arouse the faithful of the Archdiocese of Atlanta against this tendency exhibited both within and without the Church that I now write. At such times, when the central mystery of God’s redemptive act is assailed, then the faithful must meet the doubters with renewed conviction and visible witness. God has given us everything by giving us the life and death and Resurrection of His Son - now we must respond by giving ourselves devotedly to His real Presence. For who does not desire to sit in the company of a best friend, and to know in advance the joy of heaven, where friends will gather forever around the throne of God - singing, feasting, rejoicing, and remembering in such a way as will suffice for eternity?

As a faithful reflection of this vision, and in order to offer a strong and visible witness to the world, particularly to the people of North Georgia, I will establish at the Cathedral Parish of this Archdiocese Perpetual Adoration of Jesus Christ in His most holy Eucharistic Presence, and I encourage all parishes to promote Eucharistic devotions. This initiative is taken in union with and inspired by the example of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, who has written, “The Church and the world have a great need of Eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet Him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease.” (*Dominicae Cena* 3)

In the tradition of our Holy Church, we call upon the Mother of God to aid us in this undertaking, inspiring us by her maternal example. For after the Annunciation, Mary waited upon the coming of the Lord, protected by the fostering love of her husband Joseph. When He was born, she cared for His childly wants, remaining with her Son as He grew to maturity and wisdom. When His destiny was revealed, there stood the Mother at the foot of the Cross, broken by sorrow, but steadfast in faith. And when finally the Holy Spirit was given to bring life to the Church, Mary, the first model of all Christians was there, always ready to take her place in the meaning of what her Son came to reveal.

Brothers and sisters, through participation in Perpetual Adoration of the Eucharist, may we hope to fashion in ourselves the example of Mary, who by accepting the will of God, attained for herself and for all people the “new worth” of the Son of God, and “the merciful and redeeming transformation of the world in the human heart.” (*Dominicae Cena* 7) By receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord at Mass, and by adoring His presence in the tabernacle, may we also entreat the Father, “Be it done unto me according to thy word,” thus uniting our lives forever to the birth, death, and rising of Jesus Christ.

Given, with my blessing, on Gaudete Sunday, December 12, 1993.

+ John F. Donoghue  
Archbishop of Atlanta

Our Lady of the Mountains Roman Catholic Church  
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION  
APPLICATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

16 or more years old

Confirmed

MARITAL INFORMATION

Single

Engaged

Married

If married or engaged,

Is this, or will this be, your first marriage?  YES  NO

Is this, or will this be, your spouse/fiancée’s first marriage?  YES  NO

Were you, or will you be, married by a Catholic priest or deacon?  YES  NO

Widowed

Separated

Divorced

If divorced, remarried?  YES  NO

If divorced and remarried, previous marriage(s) annulled?  YES  NO

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has given some concrete expressions of these norms, namely that an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, if married, be married within the Church, have received the sacrament of Confirmation, and be at least 16 years of age. In addition, it is necessary that the individual receive the certification of their pastor that they are properly qualified and trained.

Archdiocesan Manual for Parish Trainers of  
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Based on your responses, the pastor will approve your application or contact you for further information.

OFFICE USE ONLY  
Date Trained \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal Date \_\_\_\_\_  Certificate Issued