

Training Notes for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Last updated - 2019

Introduction:

- Welcome new Eucharistic Ministers! The Parish is very grateful for the ministry of EMs - It is a needed and appreciated service to our parishioners
- Ordinary vs. Extraordinary Ministers – Ordinary Ministers have been ordained (priests, deacons), Extraordinary Ministers are laypeople.

General Beliefs/Principles:

- Belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist under both species, so either one has the fullness of the presence of Christ: Body - Blood - Humanity - Divinity
- The EM should exhibit a deep reverence for and belief in the Eucharist by his/her demeanor and general attention to the sacredness of the ritual taking place in the distribution of the Eucharist.

Procedural Guidelines:

- Proper attire of the EM: “Sunday best.” Blue jeans and tennis shoes should be avoided; ladies should make sure their shoulders are covered.
- Fulfillment of obligation: the EM is expected to be available for serving when scheduled. Everyone is asked to check in at the back of the Church no less than 10 minutes before Mass is scheduled to begin.
- Attendance Sheet: If the EM is present at the scheduled time, he/she should sign in at the attendance sheet next to the name. If changes in personal schedules prevent one from serving when scheduled, it is the EM’s obligation to arrange for a substitute. When the substitute is found, the substitute should report at the scheduled time, cross off the original name on the attendance sheet and add his/her name in the space provided.
- Cross Necklace: The EM should take a cross necklace from the peg that hangs above the attendance sheet and wear it for the duration of Mass. Return the necklace after Mass.
- Proper time to approach the Altar: When the “Lamb of God” begins, the EMs will approach the Altar, timing it so that they are not in the way of the Priest/Deacon bringing the Ciboria from the Tabernacle to the Altar. EMs en route to the altar should stop at the steps and wait reverently for the Priest/Deacon to bring the Ciboria to the Altar.
- In case of sudden emergencies when a replacement for EMs absent cannot be found, an EM not scheduled to serve may approach the altar. In extreme cases, the spot(s) will be left open and everyone will operate with one or two less EMs. In that case the Celebrant will assign the EMs at Communion time accordingly. The minimum number of EMs needed for the Eucharistic distribution is five.
- The monthly schedule usually has 6 EMs scheduled. If there is no deacon present to serve at the Mass, a 7th EM (not assigned on the schedule) should present themselves to serve.
- EMs are invited to sanitize their hands before approaching the altar. This can be done on their own from their pews or at the shelf on the far side of the front pillar. NOTE: this is not a requirement, but may be viewed as a considerate gesture by the congregation.
- EMs form a semi-circle around the Altar ready to receive Communion and then receive the Consecrated Species from the Celebrant. EMs should not crowd the altar; they can count about 5-6 blocks on the parquet floor and stand back that far from the altar.
- Distribution: The Priest will distribute Holy Communion to the Deacon, then to those circling the altar (servers, EMs). The Priest/Deacon will distribute the Precious Blood, and then will hand

the EMs either the Ciboria or the Cup (within the semi-circle surrounding the altar, the Ciboria distributors will be in the back while the Cup distributors will be on the sides.)

- Placement of EMs: EMs distributing from the Ciboria will stand on the side aisle in line with the pillar. If there is no deacon, the Priest will designate which EM will distribute next to him at the Ciboria in the center aisle. EMs distributing from the Cup should stand almost shoulder to shoulder (without touching) about halfway between the center and side aisles, so as to allow as much space as possible for the faithful receiving from the Cup without holding up the line. In the case of one Cup distributor, the EM will stand in the middle and alternate which aisle he/she distributes to.
- Giving the Host: When a communicant comes forward to receive the Body of Christ, he or she will make a sign of reverence (typically a bow). The EM will elevate the Host slightly above the Ciboria for the communicant to see while clearly saying, "The Body of Christ." If the communicant wishes to receive in the hand, the EM will place the Host in the palm of the hand. If the communicant wishes to receive on the tongue, the EM will turn the host horizontally to place it in the mouth.
- Giving the Cup: When a communicant comes forward to receive the Precious Blood, he or she will make a sign of reverence (bow). The EM will elevate the Cup for the communicant to see while clearly saying, "The Blood of Christ." The EM will give the cup to the communicant, who receives it entirely, drinks from it, and returns it to the EM. Then the EM wipes the rim of the Cup with the purificator and turns the cup before offering it to the next individual. The EM should use a different spot on the purificator to wipe the cup after each communicant receives it.
- Distributing to the Choir Loft: After the faithful have come forward to receive Communion in one of the lines, the Priest/Deacon will distribute the Paten to one EM. The Paten should contain enough hosts for receiving Communion from their pews and in the choir loft. Ushers will signal to the Priest how many are expected to receive in their pews. The EM who receives the paten will distribute to those in the rear of the church first (with the guidance of the ushers), and then the choir loft. The EM may divide the host if they know they will run short. Conversely, the EM is to consume any extra hosts not distributed to the faithful; *always return an empty Paten to the Credence table.*
 - NOTE: the EM should never take the Paten directly from the altar; he/she should always wait for the Priest/Deacon to hand it to him/her.
- When done distributing from the Ciborium or the Cup, the EM is to return the Ciborium to the Altar or the Cup to the Credence table. If there is any amount of Precious Blood remaining, the EM should consume it reverently (with the help of other EMs, if needed). After consuming what remains in the Cup, the EM should purify the Cup by adding some water and drinking it from the Cup; after that the Purificator should be used to dry the Cup. The Purificator is then left inside the Cup unfolded.
- Cleaning the Sacred Vessels: After Mass, the first two names of EMs on the schedule are to report to the Sacristy to wash the Sacred Vessels and prepare them for the next Mass.
 - Father's Ciborium and Cup are not to be submerged in water. They both have many crevices where water hides and then drips out during the next Mass. The only time these are to be cleaned are after the 4:30 p.m. Saturday and last Mass on Sunday. After all other Masses, these vessels need not be washed.

Accidents and Other What-To-Do-If...:

- If the host is dropped, the EM should pick it up. They may either consume it, or hold it aside for the Priest/Deacon to consume. The EM should NOT place it back in the Ciboria.

- If the Precious Blood is spilled, the EM should dab it with a purificator and leave it. The EM should signal to an altar server to retrieve a clean purificator from the sacristy. The EM should stand protective over or in front of the spill so that it cannot be stepped on.
- If someone comes forward to receive Communion and you are uncertain if they should receive, distribute to them anyway. EMs are not to police who receives and who does not. Speak with the Priest/Deacon afterwards to point out the issue and voice concerns.
- If someone attempts to receive via intinction (dipping the host into the Precious Blood), place your hand over the Cup and do not allow them to dip the host. Only the Priest can distribute via intinction. This is a *very rare* circumstance.
- If someone comes forward seeking a blessing rather than Communion, direct them to the priest's or deacon's line. EMs cannot offer blessings.

Distributing to the Sick and Homebound

- EMs who distribute to those who are unable to attend Mass should have their own pyx. They will place it on the designated tray in the back of the church before Mass with an indication of how many hosts they are requesting. The tray will be brought forward with the bread and wine during the presentation of the gifts.
- The Priest will invite EMs who distribute to the sick and homebound to come forward after Holy Communion and retrieve their pyx. Out of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, the EM should carry the pyx in a pouch around their neck, rather than in a pocket or purse. The EM should proceed to the place they will be visiting immediately following Mass.

Reminders

- Smile!
- Make eye contact with communicants.
- Don't rush, but don't dawdle.
- Do not create distractions or disrupt the rhythm and flow of the liturgy.
- Make a heroic effort to stifle a sneeze.
- Remember that you are sharing the True Presence of Jesus.

Monthly Ministry Schedule

- The monthly ministry schedule is generated about three weeks prior to the month being scheduled.
- EMs and other ministers should communicate schedule conflicts no later than the 5th of the month prior in order to avoid being scheduled. Communicate schedule conflicts via email to Wendy Piper at wpiper@delawarestmary.org.
- After the 5th of the month, Wendy generates the schedule and it gets posted to the St. Mary website (<http://www.delawarestmary.org/schedules/>); limited printed copies will be available in the vestibule of the church. EMs are responsible for checking the schedule and knowing when they are scheduled to serve.
- EMs are responsible for finding a substitute if they are unable to serve as scheduled.