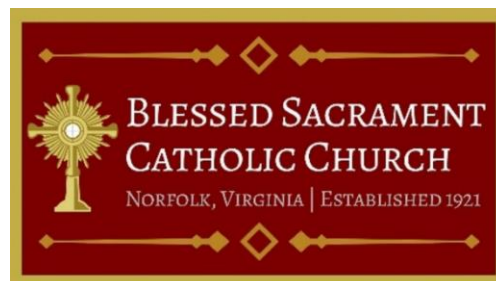


Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Manual



Revised September 2023

EMHC or Eucharistic Minister?

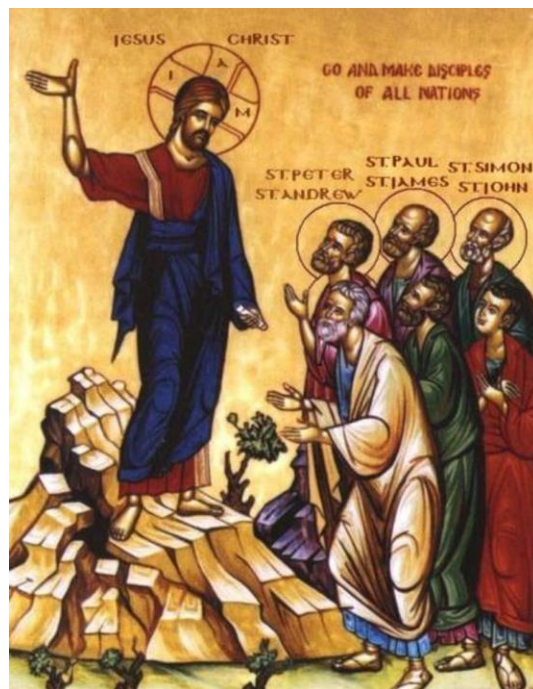
Only a validly ordained priest can validly consecrate the Eucharist. As stated in Canon Law, "The ordinary minister of holy communion is a bishop, presbyter, or deacon." However, Canon Law continues, "The extraordinary minister of holy communion is an acolyte or another member of the Christian faithful designated according to the norm of can. 230, §3."

The name "minister of the Eucharist" belongs properly to the Priest alone." That is also specified in the Vatican instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. Section 154 of *RS* states: "the only minister who can confect the Sacrament of the Eucharist *in persona Christi* is a validly ordained Priest. Hence the name "minister of the Eucharist" belongs properly to the Priest alone."

The distribution of Holy Communion is done by the priest, often with one or more ministers, depending on the number of people receiving Holy Communion. There are two types of assistants: ordained (ordinary) ministers and extraordinary ministers. An "Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion" is an ordained bishop, priest, or deacon. See also section 154 of *RS*. The term "Ordinary" refers to the fact that ordained ministers are the ones who would ordinarily assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. The shortage of ordained ministers, and large numbers of communicants, has led to the practice of deputing lay persons for this function.

An "Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion" is a Catholic lay person who assists in the distribution of Holy Communion, either during the Mass, or afterwards, such as to housebound persons. Section 156 of *Redemptionis Sacramentum* prohibits the use of other titles for these lay persons.

Section 158 of *RS* provides instructions on the use of EMHCs: "the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged.



Why are EMHC's Called Upon by the Priest?

Having spoken of the extraordinary nature of extraordinary ministers, it is important to speak about what constitutes a sufficient need to call for their use. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* provides a basic description of the occasion when extraordinary ministers 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 is a truly large number of communicants, the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, that is, duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been duly 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 “truly 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* 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 at mass thus arbitrarily extending the concept of "a great number of the faithful".

The Instruction, *Immensae Caritatis* adds a fourth reason – to bring communion to the sick when no priest or deacon is available, or when they are impeded by other ministries. There are four occasions when the Church calls upon the service of extraordinary minister: At Mass, when the presider 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; and to the sick when they are unable to be visited by a priest or deacon

Qualifications of an EMHC

It is important that those individuals selected to serve as extraordinary ministers are chosen carefully from those who have been confirmed in the Catholic faith. 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.”

EMHC Procedures

During the Mass

- ⦿ EMHC's (and their families) should sit on the presider's chair side of the nave near the altar servers.
- ⦿ Currently, there are a total of four EMHC's assigned to each Mass:
 - ✘ 2 EMHC – Host
 - ✘ 2 EMHC – Precious Blood
- ⦿ After the “Sign of Peace”:
 - ✘ Use hand sanitizer located in the EMHC pews or near the processional cross.
 - ✘ Line up at the bottom of the sanctuary steps in front of the choir in order.
 - ⦿ Cantor (farthest to the left)
 - ⦿ Accompanist
 - ⦿ EMHC – Precious Blood 2
 - ⦿ EMHC – Host 2
 - ⦿ EMHC – Precious Blood 1
 - ⦿ EMHC – Host 1 (farthest to the right)
 - ✘ By lining up in this order, EMHC – Precious Blood 1 can offer the chalice to the EMHC – Host 1 and EMHC – Precious Blood 2 can offer the chalice to the EMHC – Host 2, the accompanist, and the Cantor.
 - ✘ All EMHC's should remain standing once they are in place before receiving Holy Communion.
- ⦿ After the priest consumes the Precious Blood from his chalice, the bells will be rung by an altar server. At this time, go to the top sanctuary step in unison to receive the Host and Precious Blood.
- ⦿ After you receive the Host and Precious Blood you will be handed either a ciborium containing consecrated Hosts (EMHC – Hosts) or a Chalice and Purificator (EMHC – Precious Blood).
 - ✘ When waiting to distribute either species, always keep the purificator over top of the chalice or your hand over the ciboria.
- ⦿ After the celebrant leaves the sanctuary to distribute communion, move to your assigned location. NOTE: EMHC – Host 2 and EMHC – Precious Blood 2 should walk between the tabernacle and the ambo.
 - ✘ **EMHC – Host 1.** Offer the Host to the congregation seated in the St. Cecilia semitranssept (previously the New Section).
 - ✘ **EMHC – Precious Blood 1.** Position yourself near where the altar servers' pews, facing toward the center aisle so those who have received the Host from the presider may come to you to receive the Precious Blood if they choose. (Look for the floor indicator)
 - ✘ **EMHC – Host 2.** Offer the Host to the parishioners seated in the Ambo side semitranssept. Be sure to distribute first to the individuals in the handicapped seating, then go to the indicated spot.
 - ✘ **EMHC – Precious Blood 2.** Position yourself near the reserved seating area for the Lectors facing toward the center aisle so those who have received the Host from the Deacon may come to you to receive the Precious Blood if they choose. (Look for the floor indicator)

Extraordinary Minister – Host

- ◊ Look the recipient in the eyes and use only the words “The Body of Christ” while elevating the Host. The recipient should respond, “Amen.”
 - ✘ If an individual is unable to receive the Host, they may come forward with their arms crossed and bow before the Eucharist.
 - ✘ You can then say to them “May God Bless You.”
 - ✘ Do not use any gesture, such as laying a hand on the person or making the sign of the cross.
 - ◊ Lay People, within the context of Holy Mass, are unable to confer blessings. These blessings, rather, are the competence of the priest.
 - ◊ Furthermore, the laying on of a hand or hands (which has its own sacramental significance) by those distributing Holy Communion, in substitution for its reception, is to be explicitly discouraged.
- ◊ If the Consecrated Host or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up immediately and reverently by the Extraordinary Minister. The Consecrated Host may be consumed immediately or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium.
- ◊ After offering the Host to the last recipient:
 - ✘ Bow to the altar prior to approaching the sanctuary.
 - ✘ Hand the ciboria to the altar server or place the Ciborium containing any remaining consecrated Hosts on the altar.
 - ✘ Bow to the Altar when leaving the sanctuary.
- ◊ Cleanse your hands in the ablution bowls containing soapy water, rinse in clear water, and dry your hands.
 - ✘ The ablution bowls are located along the wall behind the organist.
 - ✘ This water is poured down the sacrarium after the completion of 11:00 am Mass.
- ◊ Return to your pew.

Extraordinary Minister – Precious Blood

- ◊ Look the recipient in the eyes and use only the words “the Blood of Christ” when elevating the chalice. The recipient should respond “Amen”.
- ◊ After offering the Precious Blood, wipe the chalice with the Purificator around the entire lip of the chalice and turn for the next recipient.
 - ✘ If the Precious Blood is spilled from the chalice, you should blot the area with the purificator and leave the purificator over the spot.
 - ✘ Extra purificators will be under the credence table.
 - ✘ After the Mass has ended, the spot should be washed, and the water poured into the sacrarium.
- ◊ After offering the Precious Blood to the last recipient:
 - ✘ Bow to the altar prior to approaching the sanctuary.
 - ✘ Consume any Precious Blood remaining in the chalice at the Credence Table facing away from the congregation. If you are unable to consume the remaining Precious Blood when you return the chalice to the Credence table, ask the other EMHC or the Deacon to consume the remaining Precious Blood in the chalice.
 - ✘ Cover the Chalice with the Purificator and place it on the corporal or hand to the Deacon.
 - ✘ Bow to the altar when leaving the sanctuary.

- ⦿ Cleanse your hands in the ablution bowls containing soapy water, rinse in clear water, and dry your hands.
 - ✘ The ablution bowls are located along the wall behind the organist.
 - ✘ This water is poured down the sacrarium after the completion of 11:00 am Mass.
- ⦿ Return to your pew.

After Mass

- ⦿ Please assist with removing vessels and linens from the Credence Table by taking them to the working sacristy.
- ⦿ The vessels will be cleaned and prepared for the next Mass or stored.
 - ✘ Instructions for cleaning/preparing items is taped to the wall by the sink.
- ⦿ All vessels that held the Consecrated Host or Precious Blood are cleaned in the sacrarium.
- ⦿ All soiled linens are rinsed and placed hanging over the cover to the sacrarium.

EMHC to the Sick and Homebound

- ⦿ Arrive to Mass at least 15 minutes early.
- ⦿ Be sure to see the Sacristan before Mass to give them your pyx and tell them how many hosts you need. The sacristan will make sure the pyx is taken up to the credence table for consecration.
- ⦿ After distribution of Holy Communion and during the purifying of vessels, the priest will call all EMHC' to the Sick and Homebound to approach the sanctuary steps.
- ⦿ Collect your pyx from the plate and remain at the sanctuary steps for a blessing and dismissal.
- ⦿ Place the pyx inside a burse or a corporal. REMEMBER that you are carrying our Eucharistic Lord; therefore, the pyx should be carried with much care.
- ⦿ When leaving, be sure to visit the communicant as soon as possible.
- ⦿ Follow the prayer service in your EMHC to the Sick and Homebound booklet.
 - ✘ If you have not received this booklet yet, please see the director of EMHC to the Sick and Homebound.

Notes
