

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Guidelines

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Thank you for your willingness to serve our community as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (EMHC). This important ministry is not only a great assistance to the priest during Mass but also a witness to the people we serve of Christ's love for us in our love for each other. The following guidelines have been created to help you grow and develop in your ministry as an EMHC. Thank you again for your generosity of time and talent.

Procedures during Communion at all Masses

1. EMHC's will approach the Altar during the Sign of Peace. The deacon will retrieve the reserved Sacrament from the tabernacle.
2. The priest will consume Body and Blood at the altar. He will then give Holy Communion under both species to the deacon.
3. The priest will give each EMHC and altar server the Body of Christ, to be consumed *immediately*. The deacon will follow the priest and give the Precious Blood to each EMHC and to the servers.
4. The priest and the deacon will distribute Holy Communion from the center aisle. The EMHC's will distribute the Precious Blood at the far left and far right of the sanctuary. When distribution to the main body of the congregation is completed, the priest and one EMHC will move to the side seating area to distribute Holy Communion there.
5. As the priest and EMHC are distributing in the side area, the deacon and remaining EMHC's will return to the altar and place the ciborium and empty chalices on the altar for purification. If there is Precious Blood remaining in your chalice, please consume it; do not put it back on the altar. If you cannot consume all of it, ask for help from the deacon. Please make a neat stack of the purificators at the edge of the altar. Do not cover the chalice with the purificator.
6. Once the chalices are returned to the altar, the EMHC's may return to their seats.
7. The deacon will return the Blessed Sacrament to the Tabernacle and purify the sacred vessels.

At Masses without a Deacon

When the deacon is not present at the Mass the following changes are made:

1. The first EMHC (as scheduled) will retrieve the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle and place it on the altar.
2. The first EMHC will fill the role of the deacon in everything except the purification of the sacred vessels. The purification will be done by the priest.

Important Points to Remember as an EMHC

1. It is important to use the proper language in describing the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Once the bread and wine have been brought forth at the Offertory and blessed they are the Blessed Sacrament and the Precious Blood. Referring to them as bread and wine after that point diminishes the special nature they have taken on even though the appearance remains the same. Being mindful of this distinction also helps people to understand that the elements of the Sacrament are indeed sacred and precious and not mere symbols but the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ.
2. When distributing communion under either species, please refrain from saying the name of individuals, for example, "Bob, the Body of Christ" or "Nancy, the Blood of Christ". Doing so might alienate people whose names we don't know because they are new to the parish or visiting. Simply look each communicant in the eye and say "the Body of Christ" or "the Blood of Christ".
3. In the past, the practice of intinction was allowed, and even though it has been discontinued, there are apparently some parishioners who still practice it. Intinction is meant to be a rare practice and then to be done only by a priest for the entire congregation. If a communicant attempts to dip the host into your chalice, gently cover it with the purificator and ask them to consume the host first in order to receive the Precious Blood.
4. Remember that you are an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. You hold and distribute the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is one of the most powerful and humbling roles available to members of the laity. We are not hurried during Mass to distribute Communion as quickly as possible but move with grace and dignity while our Savior is amongst us in the flesh.
5. If there is a spill of the Precious Blood, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CLEAN IT UP!** Simply unfold your purificator over the affected area, return your chalice to the altar, and let the priest know what has happened and where so he can attend to it.

Schedules

The monthly schedule is provided by e-mail or US Mail to every minister household. Please inform the church office ***no later than the 20th of each month*** as to your availability for the following month.

If you are scheduled for a time when you cannot participate, please let the church office know so a sub can be found. The schedule is printed and placed in the Reconciliation/gathering room, as well as in the glass bulletin board at the church entrance.