

Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity

Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Prayer

Gracious God,
you nourish me with the Body and Blood of your Son,
that I might have eternal life.
Grant me your blessing, whom you have chosen
to give the bread of heaven
and the cup of salvation
to your faithful people.
May the saving mysteries I help distribute
lead your people to the joys of eternal life. Amen.

Guidelines

- As Catholics, we believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, that is, the consecrated host and wine. This means that Jesus Christ is present – body and blood, soul and divinity – in the Eucharistic species. We receive Jesus Christ, whole and entire, even under only one of the Eucharistic species, that is, Sacred Bread or Precious Blood (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 282). For this reason, utmost reverence is given to the Blessed Sacrament. This utmost reverence is reflected in our demeanor at Mass (*fully active and conscious participation in liturgical celebrations*, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 14), in our attire and in the manner we handle the Eucharistic species.
- *“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 very large number of communicants, the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose”* (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 162, 191).
- Extraordinary ministers may distribute holy communion (Instruction on the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained..., Article 8) –
 - to those who are sick – at home, in the hospital or nursing home
 - in the absence of ordained ministers, e.g. communion service
 - when ordained ministers present at the Eucharist are unable to distribute, e.g. impaired mobility
 - when particularly large number of communicants and limited number of ordained ministers, where this situation may cause excessive prolongation of the distribution of communion, e.g. the Sunday mass, depending on the attendance, may qualify
- Communion ministers should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the function they are carrying out. Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Blessed Sacrament, thus, the more formal attire.

Clothing should not be distracting. The focus of the communicant should be on the Blessed Sacrament, not on the person distributing communion or his/her dress.

- Appropriate attire for men: dress slacks and shirt.
- Appropriate attire for women: dress slacks or skirt, and blouse or sweater.
- Avoid sweatshirts, sweat suits, blue jeans, sneakers, tops with any kind of slogan printing or pictures on them, no very tight clothing, short pants, short skirts and low cut tops, Capri's, spaghetti strap tops, off the shoulder tops to name some, and for footwear, no flip-flops.
- Try to dress appropriately whenever you come to Mass as you may be needed to fill in for others.

Before the Mass

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the mass.
- Pray.
- Let the sacristan know that you have arrived.

Participation at Mass

- During the Mass, communion ministers sit with the rest of the faithful, and should participate fully and actively in the Mass, listening to the readings, and joining the faithful in prayer.

During the Rite of Communion

- Reverently approach the Sanctuary to receive communion and to assist in distributing the Eucharistic species.
- Receive communion from the presider, and from a deacon, who when present, administers the chalice (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 182).
 - Communion ministers, in receiving the Precious Blood, particularly from the chalice that they themselves will use for distribution to the faithful, must receive communion in place, reverently. Refrain from walking while drinking the Precious Blood from the chalice.
 - Communion ministers are not to self-communicate either the Sacred Body or the Precious Blood (Instruction on the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained..., Article 8.2).
- Communion ministers are always to receive from the presider the vessel containing either of the Eucharistic species for distribution to the faithful (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 162).

Distributing Communion

- Ministers of the Sacred Body
 - Raise a host slightly, and show it to the communicant, and say, “The Body of Christ.”
 - If a host falls on the floor while distributing communion, either
 - put it in your hand, under the paten and you may consume it later.
 - or, take it to the sacristy, after the distribution, place it in a glass of water. Once the host is dissolved, dispose it in the Sacramentarium.
- Ministers of the Precious Blood
 - Raise the chalice slightly, and show it to the communicant, and say, “The Body of Christ.”
 - After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the minister turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood. (Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion, 45)
 - Regarding intinction, that is, the practice of partly dipping the consecrated host into the consecrated wine before consumption by a communicant – since we do not have the appropriate communion plates, which serve to safeguard the Eucharistic species (crumb from the host or a drop of the consecrated wine) from falling on the floor, we refrain from receiving from the chalice in this manner.
 - If attempts are made to intinct the host into the wine, just place your hand over the chalice, without touching the rim. You may say to the communicant, “Please see the priest about receiving from the chalice.”
 - Also, we are mindful of gluten-intolerant communicants who only receive from the chalice.
 - If consecrated wine is spilled, just cover the area with a purificator and allow it to absorb the Precious Blood. Use additional purificators as needed. Leave a clean purificator over the area to keep people from walking on the spilled wine. Let the purificator/s soak in a basin of water, and then, dispose the water in the Sacramentarium.
 - After the Mass, pat the area with purificator/s wet with water to dilute and to absorb the wine. Let the purificator/s soak in a basin of water, and then, dispose the water in the Sacramentarium.

Handling of Remaining Consecrated Hosts and Wine

- Consecrated Hosts.
 - If there are consecrated hosts left in your paten, bring them to the altar.
 - Allow the altar to be the place where remaining consecrated hosts are gathered and collected into one paten or ciborium.
 - The priest or the deacon receives your paten, collects and gathers the remaining consecrated hosts in one ciborium.
 - Return to your seat and offer a prayer of thanksgiving during the moment of silence after communion.

- Consecrated Wine.
 - If there is consecrated wine left in your chalice, you may consume it, at your station. Otherwise, ask another communion minister, the priest or the deacon to assist.
 - Take the empty chalice to the altar, with the purificator folded *on top*, covering the chalice. Do not place the purificator *in* the chalice.
 - Return to your seat and offer a prayer of thanksgiving during the moment of silence after communion.