



## **OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH**

### **Standard Operating Procedures for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

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In every celebration of the Eucharist, a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion should be present so that the Body and Blood of Christ could be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their ordination as “ordinary” ministers for the distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The purpose of the presence of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in particular celebration of the Eucharist stems from the need to assist the ordinary ministers, especially when the size of the congregation requires it. It is made clear that "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. In case of necessity, the priest may also depute suitable faithful for this single occasion “(GIRM 162).

In the liturgy, the word “ordinary” means primary. The Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are the ordained: bishop, priest, deacon. “Extraordinary” means “in addition to”. So when the EMHC are called to serve, they become an integral part of the Communion Rite. The baptized faithful possess a royal priesthood, and it is appropriate that some of their number, as lay ministers properly trained and commissioned, participate in the distribution of Holy Communion.

#### **REQUIREMENT AND SELECTION OF A MINISTER**

- I.** Must be fully initiated into the Catholic Church having received Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion, and a registered member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.
- II.** Must be at least 16 years old.
- III.** Must be able to live the Gospel in his/her communal and individual life; and must be able to participate in the life of the Church and with God’s grace, strive to live the faith in every aspect of his/her life.
- IV.** If married, must be married in the Catholic Church.
- V.** Must undergo proper training prior to serving at Mass. Training is conducted by the priest/s or EMHC Coordinator or someone delegated by either.
- VI.** Encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly in order to be properly disposed to receive as well as to distribute Holy Communion; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, like all other Catholics, should not be conscious of grave sin and should have fasted one hour before Holy communion, when he/she is scheduled to serve.
- VII.** Should be commissioned, preferably on a Sunday Mass, according to the Rite of Commissioning as found in the Book of Blessings, Chapter 63. All EMHC ministers must renew their commitment to the ministry every 2 years.
- VIII.** Required to attend regular trainings, workshops or retreats as called by the Ministry Coordinator, the Liturgy Coordinator or Pastor/Parish Administrator.

## PRE-MASS PREPARATION

1. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) schedule is available by the church hospitality room and on the parish website [www.olphewabeach.org](http://www.olphewabeach.org) (click on “News” and under the “Schedules” heading click on “Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion”)
2. To accomplish properly the monthly schedule, all EMHC are required to notify the Ministry Coordinator, at least about their unavailability for the new month, so the Ministry Coordinator could make the necessary adjustments to the regular schedule and accommodate personal schedules (i.e. vacation time, sick, serving another ministry, etc.).
3. All EMHC are responsible to be physically present at their scheduled time. If unable to attend, the said EMHC is responsible to obtain a replacement and in informing the Team Leader.
4. All EMHC should arrive 15 minutes before the Mass. Upon arrival the check Hospitality Room, confirm presence and the availability to serve as scheduled by informing the Team Leader.
5. All EMHC assigned to serve at a specific Mass are to sit at the seats right behind the altar servers.
6. According to GIRM #339, EMHC are asked to dress respectfully for this ministry by wearing “appropriate and dignified clothing.”

## MASS RESPONSIBILITIES

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should in every way demonstrate their reverence to the Holy Eucharist, that they truly believe that this is not just bread and wine, but the very Body and Blood of the risen Lord. EMHC express their deep faith and sense of God’s presence in their manner of dress, in their reverent silence, their grace-filled movement, and their care of the Sacred Species, all of which are observed by the people and by the Lord. All EMHC should participate actively in the prayers and responses of the Mass.

### Preparation of the Altar

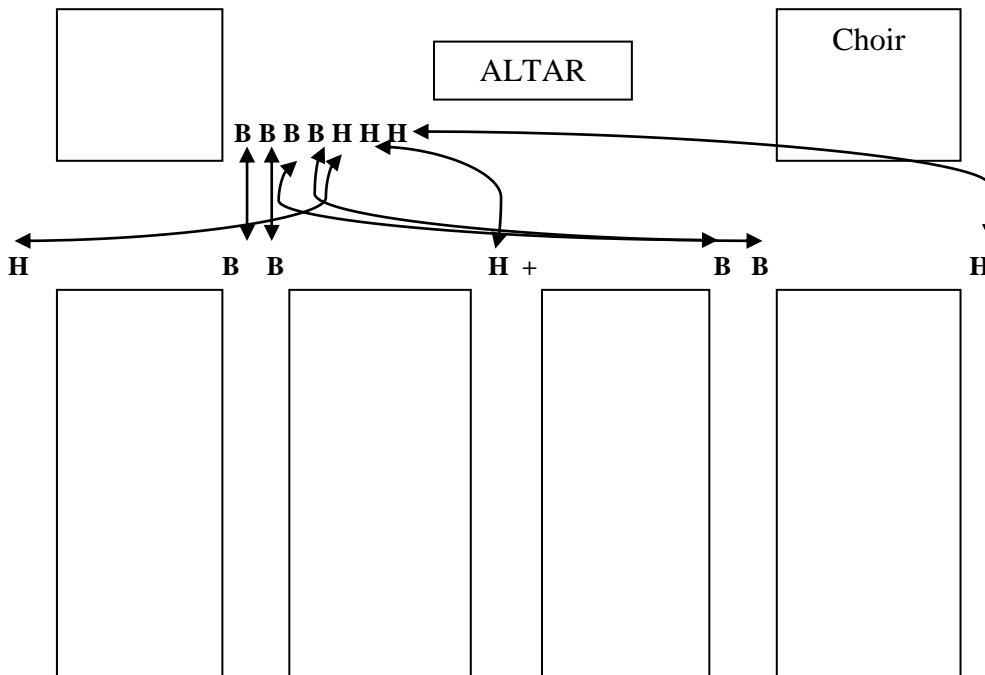
1. The altar is a symbol of Christ as the consecration of the bread into the Most Holy Body and wine into the Most Precious Blood occurs. All EMHC are to venerate the altar by bowing to it (not to the cross) before leaving the sanctuary, and when passing in front of the altar. Unless the tabernacle is situated at the sanctuary then all EMHC are to genuflect (with the right knee) before and after the Mass.
2. After the sign of peace, the EMHC serving at the Mass line up at foot of the sanctuary, in front of the seats of the Altar Servers.
3. After the celebrants and the deacon/s have drank the Most Precious Blood, the EMHC process to the front of the sanctuary and then take the first step of the sanctuary. At this time, EMHC are asked to maintain reverent silence to prepare themselves to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. (**B** = Ministers of the Blood; **H** = Ministers of the Hosts)

*See illustration:*

**B B B B H H H**

ALTAR
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4. If a deacon or additional concelebrants are present, the Team Leader must adjust the number of EMHC to serve at Mass before Mass begins. The ordinary ministers always take precedence in the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass. The priests always distribute the Most Holy Body while the deacons always distribute the Most Precious Blood.
5. All EMHC must be aware of number of the ordinary ministers present at the sanctuary and must be prepared to step in or step down to serve without causing disruption. Usually coordination is done before the start of Mass with the presiding priest or the Master of Ceremony, if present, and the Sacristan or Team Leader to establish how many EMHC are needed to assist the ordinary ministers.
6. EMHC do not self-communicate, that is, by taking Holy Communion by himself/herself or passing the ciborium or chalice from person to person (GIRM, 160). If the priest or deacon has forgotten to give the ciborium or chalice to the EMHC, care must be taken to call the attention of the ordinary minister so that the ciborium or chalice must be handed properly. The EMHC should not approach and take the ciborium or chalice from the altar if forgotten.
7. If the whole assembly is not being offered the Precious Blood of Christ, it is not appropriate to offer it to the ministers only. In this case, the EMHC should only receive communion under one species.
8. Be aware where the priest/s and deacon/s position themselves and then adjust accordingly. For example, if you are standing on the left side move towards left side without having to cross over. (see the following sample diagram: + stand for the priest celebrant)



9. All EMHC should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist in demeanor, attire, and the manner in which you handle and distribute the Body and the Blood of Jesus.
10. For the distribution of the Body of Christ, the Minister holds up the Host and says to the communicant, "The Body of Christ." Wait for the communicant to respond with "Amen." If the communicant fails to respond, say "Amen" for them. EMHC should create communication with the communicant via eye contact. Do not alter or add to the words. Place the Host reverently on the hands

or on the tongue of the communicant. If you observe someone particularly children not consuming the Host immediately please say "please put the Host in your mouth" or some similar statement.

11. If families especially parents with small children come up for communion, and the EMHC is in doubt if such child could receive Holy Communion, ask the parent if their child has received their First Holy Communion.
12. For the distribution of the Precious Blood, each minister should offer the Chalice saying, "The Blood of Christ." Wait for the communicant to respond with "Amen." If the communicant fails to respond, say "Amen" for them. Again, EMHC should create communication with the communicant via eye contact. Do not lift up the chalice too high for it might create spillage. Do not alter or add to the words. Pass the Chalice to the communicant, let the person receive the Blood then carefully take the Chalice back. Carefully wipe both sides of the rim of the Chalice with the *purificator* and give the Chalice a quarter turn to the next communicant. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene.
13. If a communicant approaches the EMHC to receive the Precious Blood with the consecrated host in his/her hand and tries to dip it into the chalice, the EMHC of the Precious Blood should cover the chalice with the *purificator* and asks the communicant to consume the Body of Christ first before receiving the Blood. Dipping the Body into the Blood is a self-communicate act or *intinction* and should not be done by a lay minister or one of the Faithful. *Intinction* is only done by the ordained ministers to particular situations.
14. Do not deny communion to anyone.
15. The faithful, who haven't received the Sacrament of the Eucharist, may approach the ordinary and extraordinary ministers with their arms folded across their chest. This is a sign to the ministers that he/she cannot receive communion. In this case, the EMHC minister may give the Blessing of Christ to any child or any adult who comes forward with this gesture. The EMHC may offer a simple Sign of the Cross on the communicant's forehead without any words.
16. If EMHC is already finished distributing Holy Communion at his/her assigned area, he/she may assist the other ministers. If the communicant is elderly or disabled than the EMHC moves toward the said communicant; if the communicant is short in stature, then the EMHC bend accordingly to properly distribute the Holy Communion.
17. After Holy Communion, all EMHC of the Holy Blood are to return the chalices to the credence table. If there are any remains of the Precious Blood, the EMHC is to consume it at the credence table. If he/she cannot consume the rest of the Precious Blood, EMHC may ask the deacon, priest, Master of Ceremony or another EMHC to consume the rest. The EMHC take their proper seats after doing their ministry.
18. Ministers of the Hosts place their plate on the *corporal* by the altar, bow to the altar and then return to their seats. The priest gives the *Ciborium* to the Sacristan, or deacon who returns the same to the tabernacle. EMHC are not to empty the remnants or the unused consecrated Hosts into the ciborium with the reserved Hosts. This is for the ordained ministers to do.
19. The deacon, priests or an instituted acolyte purify the sacred vessels after communion at the credence table. After purifying, the sacred vessels remain at the credence table until after the Mass.

20. If for any other reason, the deacon, priest or instituted acolyte failed to purify the sacred vessels after Holy Communion, the sacred vessels are to be covered with a *purificator* and the Sacristan or EMHC remind the deacon, priest or instituted acolyte to purify the sacred vessels after Mass. The EMHC do not purify the sacred vessels. However, they are to ensure that the sacred vessels are not to be kept unattended until the priest, deacon or instituted acolyte return to purify the sacred vessels.
21. Decanter of left over unconsecrated wine can be poured out and washed. Decanter does not need to be purified.
22. EMHC may assist the Sacristan by carrying the trays back into the sacristy. The Sacristan can solicit the assistance of the EMHC in placing the sacred vessels or other items used at the Mass back into the cabinets or other suitable area by the sacristy. The Sacristan is in charge of cleaning the sacred vessels.

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. Should a consecrated host fall to the ground, EMHC should retrieve it and places it in the hand that he/she is using to hold communion plate. When finished serving, he/she returns the communion plate to the altar and consumes the dropped consecrated host.
2. If the dropped consecrated host is not humanly consumable, that consecrated host is to be brought to the sacristy to be placed in a bowl and dissolved with water. When that consecrated host has been completely dissolved, the EMHC may dig a hole on the ground and pours the dissolved consecrated host into the ground. This is done when the sacristy does not have a sacrarium, a sink with drainage going straight to the ground instead of the sewage system.
3. If the Precious Blood is spilled, spread the *purificator* and place over the top of the spill, to be wiped up after Mass. Do not leave your position. Instead ask the Altar Server or Sacristan to hand the extra *purificator* at the credence table.

These are delicate situations; if it is handled in an efficient manner, it will likely go unnoticed by others.

### **CONCLUSION**

- I. The preceding pages may be overly detailed to those who are active in the ministry for many years, but it serves both new and established Ministers to help create a more standard process. By striving for procedural consistency among Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the assembly will feel more at ease, enabling them to be free from distractions and enter more deeply into the celebration.
- II. At times you will make mistakes in these procedures. What is most important is to maintain an attitude of reverence and worship towards the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and be warm and hospitable to members of the assembly.