



## **Our Lady of Perpetual Help Standard Operating Procedures for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) assist the priests and deacons of the parish in distributing communion at Mass and to the sick or homebound. They are called not only to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ, but also to take on Christ's likeness. They accomplish this by strengthening their faith from within and sharing it with the faithful at communion time.

In liturgical terms, the word "ordinary" means primary or first. The Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are the ordained clergy. "Extraordinary" means in addition to Ordinary. EMHC are not "extra hands helping out", they are an integral part of the Communion Rite. The faithful are a royal priesthood, and it is appropriate that some of their number, as lay ministers properly trained, participate in the distribution of Holy Communion.

### **TO BECOME AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION**

- Any fully initiated Catholic (16 years and older) of good standing with the Church called to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may approach the Director of Ministries or inform the parish office to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. This includes a commitment to the ministry and a deep devotion to the Eucharist.
- Training is required prior to serving at Mass the first time. Initial training will be conducted by the Team Leader for the Mass that the new person is assigned to. It will include the actions to be taken during the Mass by whom as well as where sacred vessels and linens are stored, where the tabernacle is located in the sacristy, etc.
- Annual training is scheduled regularly. Please check parish bulletin. All EMHC are required to attend these training sessions to acquaint them with their roles as ministers of Holy Communion. EMHC "should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence" (*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, #28)
- To be properly disposed to receive communion, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, like all other Catholics should not be conscious of grave sin and should have fasted for one hour. It is encouraged that all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

### **PRE-MASS PREPARATION**

- The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion schedule will be available in 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”)
- On the schedule, there will be three names that have an asterisk (\*). If there is an asterisk next to your name, you are the assigned Ministers of the Hosts at that Mass. You are also responsible for bringing up the tray of *communion cups*, the tray of *communion plates*, distribution of *purificators* to Ministers of the Cup and cleaning of the sacred vessels after Mass. Team Leader to determine EMHC responsibilities before Mass begin. Team Leader must be informed of switching responsibilities before Mass begins.
- All Ministers are responsible for being present at their scheduled time. If you are unable to attend, you are responsible to obtain a replacement and informing your Team Leader.
- All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should arrive 15 minutes before Mass. Upon arrival assigned EMHC will find the ministry schedule in the Hospitality Room and check off their names indicating that they are present or inform the Team Leader.
- According to GIRM #339, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are asked to dress respectfully for this ministry by wearing “appropriate and dignified clothing.”

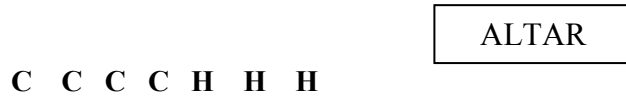
## **MASS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should in every way demonstrate by their reverence for the 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 respectful silence, their grace-filled movement, and their care with the Sacred Species which are observed by all the people and by the Lord. All EMHC should participate actively in the prayers and responses of the Mass.

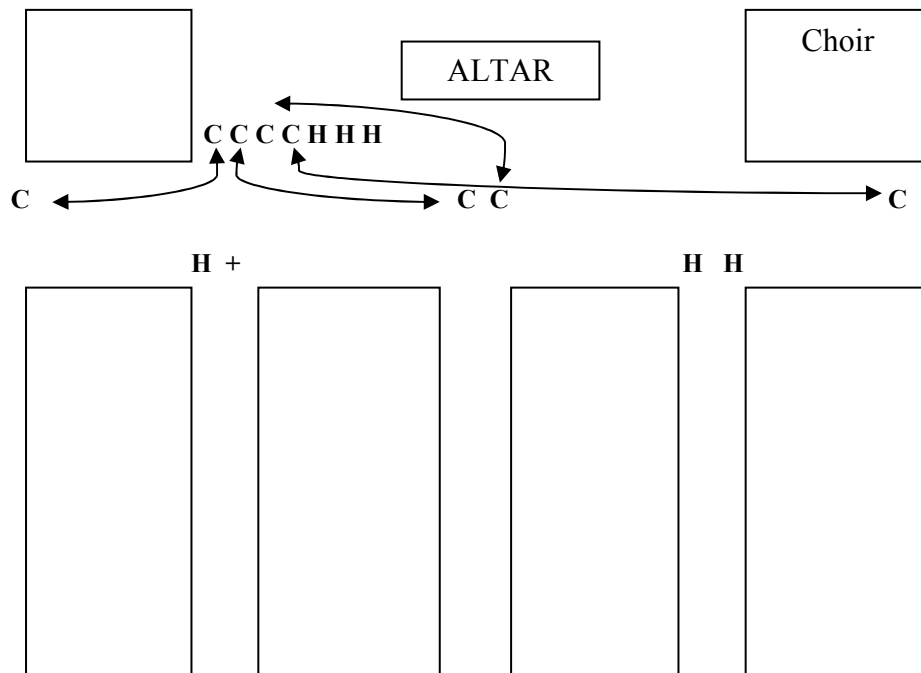
## **Preparation of the Altar**

- At the conclusion of the *Prayers of the Faithful* the first Minister of the Hosts will proceed to the *credence table* and bring up the tray with the *communion cups* to the altar after Deacon or Altar Server prepare the various sacred vessels and other items to be used in the Eucharistic celebration. Return the tray to the *credence table* and stand beside the Altar Servers. No sign of reverence, for example, a bow or genuflection, is necessary unless you pass in front of the altar.
- At the “*sign of peace*”, the second Minister of the Hosts will proceed to the *credence table* and bring up the tray with *communion plates* and *pyxes*, if any, to the altar for the *Breaking of the Bread*. (A pyx is a small vessel, which usually looks like a gold pocket watch, in which the Holy Eucharist is carried to the sick and the homebound.) The Minister will place the *communion plates* and *pyxes*, if any, on the altar and return the tray to the *credence table*. Then stand beside the Altar Servers. (Note: Homebound Ministers are to have placed their *pyxes* on the tray on the *credence table* before Mass)

- After the “*Lamb of God*”, the third Minister of the Hosts will proceed to the *credence table* and get the *purificators* for the Ministers of the Cup and stand beside the Altar Servers. This Minister will pass out the *purificators* when the rest of the EMHC line up.
- After Father and Deacon consume the Body and Blood of Jesus, all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion line up on the first step left of the altar, as such: (C = Ministers of the Cup; H = Ministers of the Hosts)



- If Deacon or additional concelebrants are present, the Team Leader must adjust the number of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion needed to serve at Mass before Mass begins. For example, if Deacon is serving, then there will be one less Minister of the Cup.
- ALL Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be aware of the number of ministers at the Altar and be prepared to step in or step down without causing disruption. For example, if there are too many Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, step down after consuming the Body and Blood of Jesus and return to your seat.
- Watch Father and/or Deacon as to where they position themselves and THEN move from where you are standing into position. For example, if you are standing on the left side move towards left side without having to cross over. (see the following sample diagram + = Father)



- All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist in demeanor, attire, and the manner in which you handle the Body and the Blood of Jesus.

- 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. Do not alter or add to the words. Place the Host reverently into the communicant's hands or on their tongue. If you observe someone—particularly children—not consuming the Host immediately, say "please put the Host in your mouth" or some similar statement.
- For the distribution of the Precious Blood, each Minister should offer the Cup saying, "The Blood of Christ." Wait for the communicant to respond with "Amen." If the communicant fails to respond, say "Amen" for them. Do not alter or add to the words. Pass the Cup to the communicant. When the person has received from the Cup, carefully take the Cup back. Carefully wipe both sides of the rim of the Cup with the *purificator* and give the Cup a quarter turn for the next communicant. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene.
- DO NOT DENY communion to anyone.
- For children, if the child has not yet received First Holy Communion, they should approach you with their arms folded across their chest. If you are unsure about whether a child has received First Holy Communion ask if they have or have not received it.
- You may give the Blessing of Christ to any child or any adult who comes forward with arms crossed and are not of the Catholic faith by placing your palm on their forehead and saying "May God's blessing be upon you" or similar statement.
- Please be aware of your line. For example, if your line is long, back up. If the communicant is elderly than move toward the communicant or if the communicant is short then bend down toward communicant.
- When your side is finished distributing Holy Communion, if the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion on the other side of the Church are not finished, please move to their side and distribute Holy Communion.
- After the distribution of Holy Communion, the *ciborium* will be returned to the Altar and placed on the *corporal*.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to return all vessels to the Altar.
- The Ministers of the Hosts will place their plate on the *corporal*, turn and face the Altar, bow and stand on the floor fronting the altar and wait until Father consolidates the remaining hosts into the *ciborium*. Father will give the *ciborium* to the Sacristan to return to the tabernacle. The Sacristan will place the *ciborium* in the tabernacle, genuflect before closing the door, lock the tabernacle, and return the key to its proper place.
- Ministers of the Cup will place their cup on the trays with the *purificators* covered over the cups, turn and face the altar, bow and return to their seats. Ministers of the Cup are to consume the remaining Blood of Christ in front of the altar before placing their cup on the trays.
- The first Minister of the Hosts is to pick up tray of *communion cups* and return it to the Sacristy. The second Minister of the Hosts is to pick up tray of *communion plates* and return

it to the Sacristy. The third Minister of the Hosts is to clear the Altar by folding in the *corporal* and placing it on the tray in the Sacristy.

- After Mass, Ministers of the Hosts are to patiently keep company with Jesus and the sacred vessels until Father or Deacon return to purify the vessel.
- After Father or Deacon has purified the vessels, the evening Mass Ministers of the Hosts are to wash vessels with soap and water and dry with a microfiber cloth and return them to the cabinets. After Father or Deacon has purified the vessels, the morning Mass Ministers of the Hosts are to clean vessels with a microfiber cloth and place them back on the trays on the credence table for the next Mass.
- Replace the purificators with clean ones. A laundry bag for soiled linens can be found in the Sacristy. DO NOT USE soiled purificators to wipe counters, floors, sink, etc.
- Empty the small finger bowl and wash and dry with the used hand towel. Refill the water pitcher if necessary and replace both items onto the credence table for the morning Mass. Place water pitcher in refrigerator after the evening Mass.
- Decanter of left over unblest wine can be poured out and washed. Decanter does not need to be purified.

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- Should a Host fall to the floor, you should retrieve it and place it in the hand that you are using to hold communion plate. When finished serving return the plate to the Altar and consume the dropped Host.
- 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. Ask the Altar Server or Sacristan to hand you the extra *purificator* off the Altar.

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

### **CONCLUSION**

- You may serve in more than one liturgical ministry but you may serve in only ONE liturgical ministry at a Mass. Liturgical ministries include: Altar Servers, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs), Lectors, Music Ministers, Sacristans, and Ushers. Be certain your ministry coordinator knows on which ministries you serve and at which Masses. That coordinator will provide this information to the persons creating the liturgical ministry schedules so there be no scheduling conflict.
- The preceding pages may seem be overly detailed to those who have been 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.

- 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.

7/16/2008