

GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS of HOLY COMMUNION

St. Brigid Catholic Church, updated June 2023

1. What is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion?

- Lay person designated by the Archbishop for a particular period of time to assist the priest in the distribution of Holy Communion when there is a shortage of ordained clergy.
- *Outside* of the Ordinary Minister of Communion (the priest).
- An honor and a privilege, not a right:

“To touch the sacred species and to distribute them with their own hands is a privilege of the ordained, one which indicates an active participation in the Ministry of the Eucharist. It is obvious that the church can grant this faculty to those who are neither priests or deacons...to meet a just need, but always after an adequate preparation.”

*Saint Pope John Paul II, *Domenicae Cena*, 11*

2. Qualifications:

- Fully initiated into the Church; must have received all Sacraments of Initiation
- At least 16 years of age
- Registered in the parish and living in communion with the Church
- Faithful who possess good qualities of Christian life & morals
- Those who foster personal devotion to the Eucharist and set an example by their reverence and devotion
- Certified by the Archbishop at the request of the Pastor for a period of three years
- Carefully prepared (pre-prayed)
- *Pastor or presiding priest may commission for a single occasion.*

3. Way of Life

- Seek holiness through frequent confession
- Expand knowledge and appreciation for the beliefs of the Church
- **Commit to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament**
- Always be presentable at Mass. See additional notes.

4. Before Communion:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to Mass. Sign in and take a cross (white for the Body of Christ, red/black for the Blood of Christ).
- Sit wherever you like, accessible to the aisle. Prepare yourself mentally and spiritually for your sacred office (prayer card).
- During the *Lamb of God*, approach the altar, make a profound bow and move to the appropriate side to clean your hands before getting in line. Ciboria ministers are first, followed by the ministers of the Cup.
- Once the celebrant has received under both species, ascend the Sanctuary steps and form two lines to receive Communion.
- After receiving your sacred vessel, move to your station.
- The minister going to the choir loft will take communion to those members that are unable to come to the altar, then ascend the stairway to the loft. See additional notes for more details.

5. During Communion:

- The norm is to receive under one species, and on the tongue.
- In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, communion is allowed under both species if the presiding priest chooses. Receiving in the hand is sanctioned by the USCCB.
- For health reasons, some individuals may receive the Precious Blood, but not the Body of Christ.
- Intinction is NOT allowed.
- When distributing the Sacred Body, use the index finger and thumb, hold the host high enough to make eye contact while saying “*the Body of Christ*,” and place it in the communicant’s hand or on the tongue.
- When distributing the Precious Blood, hold the chalice with both hands; say “*the Blood of Christ*” then hand it off fully to the communicant. When you receive it from the communicant, wipe the lip of the chalice with the purificatory and turn the chalice slightly. Do not unfold the purificatory, rather turn it for a fresh spot each time.
- Extraordinary Ministers are not authorized to bless individuals who are not receiving Holy Communion. We are not ordained. Look them in the eye, and say, “*Receive the Lord Jesus in your heart.*” Do not touch them or hold your hand over them.
- Be aware of other ministers and be prepared to serve at their station if they run out of hosts or if you finish first. Transferring the Body from one ciborium to another is discouraged.

6. After Communion:

- When you are done at your station, and there is no other station that needs assistance, form a line at the side of the altar (in the same location as before Communion) and wait for the priest and deacon to finish. Then, the Body ministers carry their ciboria directly to the deacon at the altar, while the Blood ministers place their chalices on the credence table, with the purificatory draped over it (**not stuffed in it**).
- Chalice ministers should consume any Precious Blood that remains in their chalice prior to ascending the altar.
- EOMHCs serving the *Body of Christ* should cleanse their fingers in the ablution cup after returning their vessel.
- After coming off the altar, show reverence by making a profound bow before returning to your seat.

7. Accidents:

- If the Body of Christ falls on the floor, pick it up and consume it.
- If it is not able to be consumed, take it to the credence table after Communion to be dissolved and poured down the sacrarium.
- If the Precious Blood spills on the carpet, cover it with the purificator, stand over the spot and gently say that you are done serving. Attempt to consume any remaining Blood and wait for an usher or the sacristan to assist you.
- If the Precious Blood spills on the clothes of a communicant, ask them to see you after mass to discuss proper cleaning of the garment. See additional notes.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Proper Attire / Being presentable – Appropriate attire is only a small way to show reverence for Our Lord, but it has a huge impact on the faithful. Extraordinary Ministers should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the function they are carrying out. Clothes that expose the thighs, shoulders or any inappropriate part of the body should not be worn, nor should any clothing with prominent logos or slogans.
- Minister going to the Choir Loft - This minister takes the Body of Christ to those unable to go to the altar as directed by the ushers. Then go directly to the stairwell to the loft near the elevator. Do not stop to serve the members of the congregation that are in the cry rooms or in the narthex. They form lines and receive from the ministers along the sides of the church. After ministering to the choir, wait until the ushers are visibly in line for communion before descending the stairs. Walk directly to the altar and hand the ciborium to the deacon.
- Precious Blood spilled on clothing – If the garment is machine washable, it should be soaked in a large bowl or basin until all the Precious Blood has dissolved. The water should be poured directly onto the ground or on a live plant indoors. Garment may then be washed as normal. If the garment must be dry cleaned, ask the communicant to take Holy Water and dilute the Precious Blood stain until it has dissolved on the garment.