

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION PROCEDURES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER MASS

Before Mass

- EMHCs should arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the scheduled Mass to both check in, and prepare themselves interiorly for their ministry
- EMHCs should sit within the assembly of believers; they should not be part of the opening or closing procession, nor sit in the sanctuary
- EMHCs should not perform another ministry during the same Mass, unless an emergency situation arises

During Mass

- Because EMHCs are models for the ritual behavior of the assembly, they should do all the ritual gestures of the assembly with strength and reverence, and make all verbal and sung ritual responses with faith and enthusiasm

Procedures for Distribution

- EMHCs may enter the sanctuary during the Fraction Rite, but should not approach the altar until after the presider has received Holy Communion; follow specific parish procedure
- Ordinarily no ministers should go to the tabernacle to bring previously consecrated hosts to the altar; all hosts for distribution should be consecrated at that Mass
- EMHCs receive Holy Communion after the priest (and deacon) have received, and before the reception of Holy Communion by the assembly; all should make a bow of the head while saying “Amen” when receiving both the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood
- If there is no deacon, an EMHC may assist the presider in distributing Holy Communion to the other EMHCs; EMHCs are not to self-communicate either the Sacred Body or the Precious Blood
- After EMHCs receive Holy Communion, they are given their appropriate Communion vessel by the priest or deacon (In the Arch.SFe, when necessary, an EMHC may assist the presider in distributing the vessels for Holy Communion to the EMHCs, especially when there is no deacon present and there would be an undue delay in distributing Holy Communion to the faithful)
- Once all EMHCs have their vessels, they proceed reverently to their Communion stations
- In giving Holy Communion, the minister holds the host slightly above the vessel, looks at the communicant, and in a clear voice says, “The Body of Christ” to which the communicant responds “Amen”. These are the only words to be used. Then the Sacred Body is placed in the hand or on the tongue according to the manner indicated by the communicant
- If a communicant begins to walk away carrying the host, the EMHC should say in a subdued voice, “Please consume the host now”
- Distribution of Communion under Both Kinds is recommended in all celebrations of the Eucharist; but it is the communicant’s option to receive from the Sacred Cup
- In giving the Precious Blood, the EMHC holds the Sacred Cup up slightly and says in a clear voice while looking at the communicant, “The Blood of Christ” to which the communicant responds “Amen”. These are the only words to be used. Generally, the communicant should hold the Sacred Cup firmly in both hands and drink from it. However, in the case of a physical disability or weakness, the EMHC should be ready to assist in holding the Sacred Cup

- After the Blood of Christ has been received, the EMHC should wipe the rim of the Sacred Cup, inside and out, with a purificator and turn the Sacred Cup slightly before presenting it to the next communicant. The EMHC should be careful not to wipe in a manner where the purificator is dipped into the Precious Blood.
- Those EMHCs finishing distribution before others, can move to assist those ministers who still have communicants to serve; follow specific parish procedure in this regard
- It is recommended that there be two ministers of the Sacred Cup for every one minister of the Body of Christ. This allows for a smooth flow of the Communion procession
- It is recommended that ministers of the Sacred Cup are positioned a sufficient distance from the minister of the Body of Christ to ensure a smooth flow of the Communion procession

Accidents During Distribution

- If a host falls to the ground during distribution of Holy Communion, the EMHC should pick it up immediately and consume it then, or after distribution is over. It should never be put back in the vessel to be given to another communicant
- If the Precious Blood is spilled, the area should immediately be covered. It should then be blotted and washed after Mass with water and a purificator. The purificator should be rinsed and wrung out in the sacarium. If there is no sacarium, it should be rinsed in another vessel and the water poured into the ground in a secluded spot
- In either case, do not panic, and do not embarrass the communicant

Procedures After Distribution

- Once EMHCs are done with distribution, they return their vessels to the altar where any remaining hosts may be either consumed or prepared to be taken to the tabernacle; any remaining Precious Blood should be consumed at the altar by the priest, deacon or EMHCs
- Communion vessels may be taken to the side (credence) table and cleansed after Mass, so that all may maintain a prayerful silence of word and movement after Communion; the vessels should be suitably covered
- EMHCs should return to their places in a dignified and reverent manner, not rushing
- Communion vessels should be purified by a priest or deacon; however, when a sufficient number of priests or deacons are not available, EMHCs may purify the vessels (special US Indult from the Holy See)

Miscellaneous

- EMHCs do not wash their hands in the ablution bowl in the sanctuary either before or after distribution of Holy Communion. All EMHCs are reminded to wash their hands in the sacristy or the rest room before Mass begins
- While performing their ministry, EMHCs do not bow or genuflect to the altar or tabernacle

Source: Office of Worship and Christian Initiation Archdiocese of Santa Fe