

SAINT MICHAEL **CATHOLIC CHURCH**



EUCCHARISTIC GUIDELINES 2015

Prayer for the Extraordinary Minister

Blessed are You, God of all creation!

I thank You for calling me to serve Your holy people.

May I see You in them.

May they see You in me.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen

STANDARD PROCEDURES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

Introduction

The Eucharistic Ministers are called in a special way from God to administer the Holy Eucharist on behalf of the Priest. Your willingness to serve as a Eucharistic Minister reflects not only a response to your baptismal call to serve the people of God, but a commitment to Christ as you share in the preaching, teaching and leading aspects of the church. Your willingness to commit to a monthly schedule, to prepare properly for your ministry and to arrive on time and dressed appropriately for your assigned Mass, further reflects that commitment.

The Holy See of the Vatican has requested that your ministry be referred to as “Extraordinary Minister of Communion,” so this ministry will now be known as EMC.

Vocabulary List

Ciborium: Cup like vessel used to hold the consecrated hosts during Mass.

Chalice: Cups that hold the wine during Mass.

Corporal: Square linen cloth used on the altar under the chalice and the ciborium during Mass.

Credence table: Table that holds the vessels during Mass.

Cruet: Small pitcher to hold the water during Mass. They may also hold wine if the congregation is small.

EMC: Extraordinary Minister of Communion.

Pall: A stiffened square card covered with white linen and spread over the Chalice.

Paten: Flat dish to hold the large host at Mass. We also use this term for the “bowls” that hold the hosts during Mass.

Monstrance: An ornate golden vessel used for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Purificator: A small linen cloth used during Mass to dry and clean the chalice.

Sacrarium: A basin provided with a drain directly to the earth for the disposal of water that has been used for some sacred purpose and is no longer needed. A sacrarium, synonymous with piscina, receives the water from the washing of the sacred vessels and linens. It is generally located in the sacristy of a church.

Sacristy: A room for the storage of sacred vessels, vestments, and altar linens.

Sanctuary: The portion of the church building that contains the altar.

Tabernacle: A cupboard or boxlike receptacle for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Schedule

Please refer to the schedule that is published for your assignment. If you are unable to attend on your scheduled day, please contact a replacement from the ECM list provided. If you are unable to find a substitute, please notify the church office. It is preferred that you sit in a pew which is close to the front of the church.

Before Mass

Please come at least 15 minutes before Holy Mass starts. Remember you are handling the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Christ. Do not think of this as an entitlement, but as a blessing of humble service for the Glory of God.

Your way of dressing should be appropriate and in conjunction with the sacredness of the place of the Liturgical Service. Shorts and halter tops are inappropriate.

The 15 minutes before Holy Mass begins should be for setting up the Mass, and depending upon the Mass time for which you are scheduled to serve, you may also be asked to set the Cups.

Set Up For Mass

In the Sacristy you will find a small Tabernacle, which has the Chalice, the Paten and the key for the Tabernacle in the Altar. You will find the key for this Tabernacle on the lower shelf of the top cabinet to your right. In the middle drawer of the cabinet you will find clean Purificators as well as clean Corporals. The clean hand towels are in the left door bottom cabinet. Please make sure to use hand sanitizer to clean your hands before handling the Sacred Vessels.

1. It is very important that when you are preparing the Chalice, the items are in the right order. Immediately on top of the Chalice please place the Purificator; after this place the Paten with the large Host, which is located in the gold Pyx in the door of the refrigerator. The Priest will use this for the Consecration. Over the Host place the Pall, and on the very top place the Corporal.
2. The Ciborium is located also in the lower shelf on the top cabinet on your right, use the gold cup with a cross on the lid. In order to know how many Hosts we will need for that specific Mass, please go to the Tabernacle on the Altar. With the proper reverence, genuflect or bow in front of it, open the Tabernacle and check how many consecrated Hosts remain in the Ciborium. Once you determine how many are in the Ciborium, close the Tabernacle, place the key on the Altar, genuflect again and go back to the Sacristy. The small Hosts are in a plastic jar inside the refrigerator.
3. How many Hosts do we need for each Mass? The Ciborium in the Tabernacle holds 250 Hosts, the Ciborium, with the cross on the lid, in the Sacristy holds 300 Hosts. For each Holy Mass the EMC will check the number of remaining

consecrated Hosts in the Tabernacle and then will determine how many small Hosts will need to be put in the Ciborium and put on the Gift Table. These are the average number of people receiving Holy Communion at St. Michael's based upon our prior statistics: At 5:30 p.m. we have an average of 75-90 people receiving communion. At 8:00 a.m. we have an average of 70-90 people receiving Holy Communion, at 9:30 a.m. we average 90-120 people receiving Holy Communion, and for 12:00 p.m. the average is about 80-100 people receiving Holy Communion.

4. Setting up the Wine and Water Usually we only use the Cups for the Precious Blood of Christ at 9:30a.m. Mass. We are planning to make use of the Cups for all the Masses during the summer. Inside the refrigerator, in the Sacristy, are the Cruets and the Wine to be used at Mass. For the 5:30 p.m., 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Masses ensure that the cruets are filled half way, and for the 9:30a.m. Mass the Wine Cruet needs to be filled all the way. Please also ensure that the stoppers are tightly inserted on the Cruets.
5. Set up the Altar
 - a. The Chalice, which has already been set up, should be taken to the Altar. Please make sure to hold the base of the Chalice with one hand and place your other hand on top of the Corporal. Place the Chalice on the Credence Table closest to the Tabernacle, leaving sufficient space for other sacred vessels. With the proper reverence bow and return to the Sacristy.
 - b. Take the Cruet with water, to be used by the Priest during the offertory and for the cleansing after Communion; place it on the same Credence table next to the Chalice. Again with the proper reverence, bow and go back to the Sacristy.
 - c. If Cups are used for your scheduled Mass, take the two cups in the lower shelf in the cabinet to your right and two Purificators. Place the Cups on the Credence Table farthest from the Tabernacle, and place the Purificators close to the Communion Cups.
 - d. Get the Cruet with the wine and the Ciborium with the small Hosts and place them at the back of the church on the Gifts Table on your left, facing the Altar.
6. Selecting Individuals to Present Gifts. Your next responsibility would be to find people to bring the gifts to the Priest during the Offertory. Selecting a family of 4 is preferable. Children and adults are encouraged to bring the gifts to the Celebrating Priest. If there are guests or new members of the parish, it is recommended to ask them to bring the gifts, so they will feel welcome in our Church Community. This is part of being welcoming and caring for visitors and new parishioners. You need to tell them to get ready during the first collection, that they need to walk slowly, and after they give the gifts to the Celebrating Priest, to bow in front of the Altar and return together to their pews. If Ushers are not available to help with the carrying of the gifts, you are encouraged to help the people that you selected.
7. Coming To The Altar: It is preferred that the EMC approaches the Altar when the

Celebrating Priest has finished consuming the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Christ. The EMC/EMCs, together, bowing and reverently climb the Altar steps and stand on the Right side of the Altar. The Celebrating Priest will administer the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist to the Altar Servers on the left side of the Altar and then he will administer to the EMCs. Again it is strongly recommended and suggested that your dress should be appropriate for the Sacredness of the Altar and the Liturgical Setting. Your attire should not be a distraction to the people in the pews. **Note:** Sometimes we need to ask people to substitute for an absent EMC and they may not be dressed properly. But we do ask you to dress respectfully in case you are needed as a substitute unexpectedly. We thank you for being open-minded.

8. Where do you stand to administer Holy Eucharist? The EMCs will stand on the left side of the Altar facing the people. Remember that you are handling the Holy Body and the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ the Glorious Risen Son of God. Angels tremble before His Glory! How much are we blessed when we are administering the Holy Eucharist! Please make sure to raise the Body of Christ and with faith look at the eyes of the recipient and proclaim: "The Body of Christ". "Amen" should be elicited by your proclamation of faith.
 - a. If the Faithful comes with his/hers arms crossed on the chest or a finger on the lips, this signifies that they wish not to receive Communion. You can give a blessing by raising your hand and saying: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." **Please do not touch anyone during the blessing.** If someone is not sure about receiving or not acting in the right way when coming to receive, you are entitled to ask: "Do you receive the Holy Eucharist?" or "Do you want to receive the Holy Eucharist?" If you are satisfied by the person's response, you may administer. You can also humbly remind the people who come to receive to put their palms out to receive the Holy Eucharist. If someone is not consuming the Holy Eucharist before leaving the Altar, you may ask the person to consume it before leaving the sacred space of the Altar.
 - b. If a host is accidentally dropped, pick it up right away and consume it. Offer the person in front of you another Consecrated Host.
 - c. If you are administering the Precious Blood, you need to raise the Cup and say: "The Blood of Christ." After the recipient takes a sip, clean the Cup with the Purificator and give the Cup a quarter of a turn for the next recipient.
 - d. If Precious Blood is accidentally spilled, place your Purificator on top of the spill and continue serving after obtaining a clean Purificator. After Mass, return to the sacristy for a clean wet towel and dab at the stain until it is gone and the towel no longer picks up any sign of Precious Blood. Return to the Sacristy and rinse the towel in the Sacramentarium until all the Precious Blood is gone. Place the towel on the drying rack in the sacristy.

9. After the last person receives Holy Eucharist, the EMC should go back to the Altar and may give the Ciborium to the Priest, **“DO NOT PLACE THE CIBORIUM ON THE ALTAR”**.
10. The cleansing of the Cups. The EMCs need to consume the remaining Precious Blood in their Cups. The Altar Server will give the water to the Priest first, the EMCs should patiently wait for the Altar Server to serve them water with which to clean the Cups. Try to get all the wine, which is consecrated Precious Blood, and also drink it. Dry the Cups with the Purificator, put the Cups on the Credence Table where they were, and place the Purificator folded on top of the Cup.
11. **Change initiated in February, 2015** The Priest will check the remaining Holy Eucharist in the Patens of the Altar Servers and then will combine the remaining particles of the Holy Eucharist into the Ciborium that will be placed in the Tabernacle by the EMC. The Priest will give the Ciborium to the EMC who reverently will carry it to the Tabernacle and, after carefully placing it inside the Tabernacle, will close the inside door of the Tabernacle; then will close the outside doors, lock the Tabernacle, take the key out, take a step back and all the EMCs, the Altar Servers and the Priest will genuflect. **REMEMBER IF YOU DO NOT GENUFLECT, NO ONE WILL GENUFLECT**. Place the key on the Credence Table. After this is done, the EMC will step down from the Altar and after bowing in front of the Altar, will go back to his/her pew.
12. After Mass: The EMC should ensure that after Mass they clean up, bringing back the Sacred Vessels to the Sacristy. Also, the soiled towels and Purificators should be placed on the laundry bag inside the Vestment Closet. The EMCs are reminded that they are in charge of the particular Mass that they are assigned to, and they need to come and set up and clean up.

Clarifications on Blessing given during communion?

What is an EMHC?

In order to properly understand the issue, we must first examine the role of the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (hereafter abbreviated EMHC). An EMHC is a lay person who has been commissioned — typically by the bishop or vicar general — to distribute Holy Communion to those present at Mass when needed. The 2002 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), the official instruction manual of the Mass, describes the function of EMHC's in articles 162-163.

The Pastor represents the Bishop in a Parish and he is authorized to commission an EMC.

To summarize, the EMHC's first approach the altar only after the priest has received communion. After receiving communion themselves, they then receive from the priest the proper vessels containing the Most Holy Eucharist and in turn distribute Holy Communion to the faithful gathered for Mass. When the distribution of communion is finished, they return the sacred vessels to the altar where the priest is to purify them and the EMHC's return to their spots in the congregation.

When can EMHCs be used?

Lay persons who are called upon to distribute Holy Communion during Mass are not actually called "lay ministers" as the title of the article may lead you to believe. On the contrary, they are properly referred to as "extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion," which happens to be a very descriptive term.

As we have already seen above, EMHCs are indeed ministers of Holy Communion, but there is more to it than that. They are extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. The presence of this necessary adjective is not intended to communicate that they are wonderful people, even though most of them are. Rather, this word "extraordinary" is meant to distinguish them from the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, who are priests and deacons.

As those who have been ordained in order to serve the Christian faithful, priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers, that is, servants of Holy Communion. Priests and deacons have been set apart by the Sacrament of Holy Orders to serve the rest of the Body of Christ, especially at the altar.

In 2004, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments promulgated an instruction entitled *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, which clarified certain matters regarding the Eucharist. In paragraph 88, it states that it is "the priest celebrant's responsibility" to distribute Holy Communion, perhaps assisted by other priests or deacons who are present. Paragraph 157 of that same document notes that if there is a sufficient number of ordinary ministers present, then EMHCs should not be used.

However, article 162 of the *GIRM* indicates that if there are no other ordinary ministers present and there is “an exceedingly large [*valde magnus*] number of communicants,” the priest celebrant may then call upon EMHCs to assist him. Paragraph 151 of *Redemptionis Sacramentum* explains further that these EMHCs are to be used “only out of true necessity” and that when they are used, “special urgent prayers of intercession should be multiplied that the Lord may soon send a priest for the service of the community.”

Thus, paragraph 158 summarizes that EMHCs may only be used when the priest is impeded (e.g. old age or sickness) or when “the number of faithful coming to communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged.”

Can EMHCs give blessings?

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With this proper understanding of the role and usage of EMHCs, we can now begin examining the question at hand. As noted in the introductory paragraph, this is one of those practices that seems to vary by community. In some places children and non-Catholics are instructed to come up with their arms crossed in order to receive a blessing from the EMHC, whereas in other parishes, they are asked to remain seated. Even the blessing given varies greatly from place to place. Whatever the practice may be, let us now ask whether EMHCs are permitted to give blessings during communion.

In 2008, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments received a letter asking precisely this question. The congregation responded in a private reply with five observations on why this practice is not permitted.

But first, let me note that even though private replies do not have the force of universal law, they typically (and this one especially) contain an excellent analysis and resolution of the issue, giving us a unique look at the practice of the Roman Curia. In other words, this private reply is persuasive not by reason of authority but by the authority of right reason, to which every well-intentioned Catholic should submit. Here are their five observations:

Blessing given at end of Mass

The Congregation for Divine Worship points out in their first observation that the liturgical blessing of the Mass is given to everyone gathered in the church just a few moments after the distribution of Holy Communion. This occurs when the priest, making the sign of the cross, says, “May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

In other words, there is no need to bless only some members of the congregation (e.g. children and non-Catholics) during communion, when the entire congregation is blessed by the priest just moments later.

Laity unable to bless at Mass

In the second observation, we are reminded that within the context of Mass, blessings are the competency of the priest, not lay persons. Article 18 of the *Book of Blessings* notes that even though lay persons may give some blessings, “whenever a

priest or deacon is present, the office of presiding [over a blessing] should be left to him."

A 1997 instruction, *Ecclesia de Mystero*, on the collaboration of the lay faithful further indicates that the laity should never say prayers or perform actions during the Mass which are proper to the priest, as this may lead to a confusion of roles. Since the blessing of the congregation during Mass is reserved to the priest, lay persons must avoid doing so.

Laying on of hands discouraged

The third observation addresses the practice in some places where the EMHC lays hands on a member of the congregation as a sign of blessing. The private reply states that this practice "is to be explicitly discouraged" because the laying on of hands has its own "sacramental significance" which is inappropriate here. The *Catechism* notes that since this specific sign commonly accompanies the administration of sacraments (e.g. Confirmation) and the succession of the apostles, the laying on of hands must not be used here.

Some prohibited from receiving blessings

Finally, in the fourth and fifth observations, the private reply notes there are some who should neither approach Holy Communion nor receive a blessing. This would include non-Catholics and those mentioned in canon 915 of the *Code of Canon Law*, such as those under the penalty of excommunication and those persisting in manifest grave sin. Giving a blessing to these persons might give the impression that they are in full communion with the Church or have returned to good standing. In order to avoid the possibility of scandal, EMHCs should not give blessings.

Additions to the rite prohibited

Finally, even though the private reply does not specifically mention this, we ought to recall that "no one may on a personal initiative add to or omit or alter anything in [liturgical] books" as canon 846 of the *Code of Canon Law* clearly states. Nowhere in the *Roman Missal* or the *GIRM* are the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion instructed to bless those unable to receive communion; therefore, this practice of blessing is one of these additions to the rite which is strictly prohibited.

Making use of the sacramentals

Sometimes we may be tempted to think that since something is not part of the Mass it has no spiritual importance. But this would be to neglect the power of the sacramentals, such as blessings, which are liturgical actions signifying spiritual effects obtained through the intercession of the Church. Done properly and in the right context, these blessings better dispose us to receive grace and sanctify various occasions in life.

One such sacramental that lay persons may administer is the blessing of sons/daughters, which can be as simple as praying over your children: "May the Lord keep you and make you grow in his love, so that you may live worthy of the calling he has given you, now and for ever. Amen."

Therefore, even if EMHCs are not permitted to give blessings during Mass, the desire to bless is good nonetheless and can become a fruitful aspect of our faith when done in accordance with the Church's rites. As a parent, you can always enjoy the practice of

blessing my young children before bed and teaching them to reverence the Eucharist with a simple bow of the head as they walk past the minister of Holy Communion at Mass.