

# Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Ministry Guidelines

## RITUAL ACTION:

- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion take part in the entrance procession.
- After the priest celebrant's announcement of the Sign of Peace<sup>1</sup> proceed immediately to the sanctuary, splitting evenly and standing on both sides of the altar just behind the priest celebrant in a semi-circular manner.
- Each minister should cleanse their hands using the sanitizer available at the credence tables on each side of the Sanctuary.
- Be aware that, towards the end of the Lamb of God, an acolyte will go to the tabernacle to retrieve the ciborium if needed. Do not obstruct or block the path for the acolyte.
  - If the ciborium is to be retrieved from the tabernacle and an acolyte is not in the process of retrieving it, one extraordinary minister should complete this task.
  - To retrieve the ciborium the door is opened, the minister genuflects, the ciborium is retrieved. The top is removed and left by the tabernacle. Traditionally the door to the tabernacle is left only slightly ajar, not fully open. The ciborium is then transferred and placed on the corporal on the altar.
  - The pyxes kept in the tabernacle contains gluten-free hosts, which the priest celebrant may request.
- If the ciborium and/or pyx is to be returned to the tabernacle the priest celebrant may hand it to one of the extraordinary ministers, an acolyte, other minister, or may elect to transfer the ciborium himself. Once at the tabernacle, the top is replaced on the ciborium. The ciborium is then placed in the tabernacle and the minister genuflects. The door is closed and the minister(s) return.
- The IOM (131) states these transfers are completed "reverently but without ceremony".
- All extraordinary ministers leave the sanctuary once their ministry is completed.
- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion take part in the recession only if they are seated within the sanctuary.

## Distribution of Holy Communion:

- Any changes to the distribution locations or process will have been discussed at the meeting before Mass.
- The proper form for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "*The Body of Christ*" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "*The Blood of Christ.*" No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287).

## When someone presents themselves for a "blessing":

- There is no formal provision for this within Church documents: it is a local custom
- The Liturgical Director of the Archdiocese has suggested that when possible we refrain from using the word "bless" in our actions at that time
- It has been recommended something like, "*May the peace of Christ remain in your heart*" or "*May Christ pour his richness into your heart and mind*", among other options.
- Many elect to simply trace a cross on the forehead of the individual while saying nothing.

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<sup>1</sup> With the introduction of the new General Instructions (anticipated to happen Advent in 2011) this may change. The final draft currently asks the extraordinary ministers not to approach the altar before the priest has received Communion.

### **Purification of Sacred Vessels<sup>2</sup>:**

- **All communion vessels are to be returned the altar.** They should be placed on the corporal which is to the side. (If there is only one corporal, place them there.)
- Extraordinary ministers of the Cup consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution at the altar before placing it on the altar. If unable to do so, place the cup directly on the altar. Please do not ask others to consume the elements.
- Leave any purificators beside the corporal after use.
- You may purify your hands at either credence table.
- The priest, deacon or instituted acolyte will tend to the purification of the vessels.

### **Should a host drop to the floor:**

- Don't panic!
- Discretely and reverently pick up the fallen host, place it in your hand until communion is finished. When communion is completed, you may consume the host or give it to the priest to properly dispose.
- Be careful not to drop additional hosts as you bend down.

### **Should a spill of the Most Precious Blood happen:**

- Don't panic!
- Ask those near the spill to step back and gain the attention of one of the acolytes.
- Place your purificator over the spill. The acolyte will bring you another purificator.
- Step away from the area if possible and continue in your ministry.
- The acolyte will look after the spill, if not immediately, after Mass. Leave the purificator over the spill area until the area has been properly cleaned.
- If the cup is too full for you to manage gracefully, ask the next person in line to hold the cup while you initially tend to the spill.

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2 The General Instruction of the Roman Missal state that the purification may only be performed by an instituted acolyte, deacon or priest. All vessels return to the altar.