

Procedures for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion St. Bartholomew's Parish, Newaygo, MI

Qualifications:

- Those selected to be ministers are to be fully initiated members of the community, of sufficient age and maturity (16 and confirmed), living a good Christian moral life.
- For those who will serve in public ministry of the Church, faith must be supported by visible signs.
- Ministers must have a positive sense of Church and reverence for the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
- Genuine ministry is about humble service. The model for all ministry is Christ the Lord who came to serve, not to be served

General:

- Place your name on the upcoming schedule located in the back of church for the masses which best work for you. Put them in your calendar as a reminder.
- Ministers are responsible to find a replacement if, for whatever reason, they are unable to be at the mass they signed up for.
- Dress in respectful attire and come with a devout spirit. Your clothing should never be a distraction to others from your ministry.

For all Masses:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass, sign in and seat yourself in the designated pews (right/front of church), and be in prayer.
- Near the end of the "Lamb of God" go stand to the right side in the hallway (near the entry leading to the office) and use the hand sanitizer.
- After the Fraction rite (when the priest breaks the larger communion host into smaller fragments) and the priest has given himself communion, move to the front and right of church facing the altar where he will bring communion (beginning with the host) to you.
- He will then bring the chalices and give to certain ministers who will first consume, and then turn to present to the remaining ministers.
- Once all ministers have their vessels, they should proceed reverently to their Communion stations

For 4pm Saturday Mass:

- With the overflow room closed off, there should be, beside the priest, three ministers for the 4pm Saturday mass (1 host, 2 chalices).
- Ministers with the chalice should stand in front at each end, far enough away from aisles to avoid backups and allow those not taking the cup to freely pass.
- Minister with the host should distribute communion first to the musicians, and then (beginning down the left aisle and proceeding around the outside of the main sanctuary) to those not able to come forward and who raise their hand. When finished, this minister should stand next to the priest to help finish distributing to those still coming forward.

For 9am Sunday Mass:

- If the overflow room is open, there should be seven ministers for the 9am Sunday mass (3 host, 4 chalices)
- One minister with host should proceed to the overflow room, first giving to musicians, and then stationing themselves in the middle aisle of the overflow room to distribute to those coming forward. One Minister with the Chalice should position themselves to give the precious blood to both Overflow and main sanctuary.
- When finished with the overflow room, the minister with the host should (beginning down the left aisle and proceeding around the outside of the main sanctuary) distribute communion to those not able to come forward and who raise their hand. When finished, this minister should then stand in front and to the right (and facing) the middle aisle (see diagram) to help distribute to those still coming forward.
- The remaining ministers should position themselves per the diagram.

For all Masses:

- Giving the Bread: In giving Communion, the minister holds a host above the vessel, looks at the communicant and says in a clear voice “The Body of Christ.” The communicant responds: “Amen.” The communicant can receive either in the palm of the hand or on the tongue.
- Giving the Cup: The minister holds the cup up slightly and says in a clear voice while looking at the communicant: “The Blood of Christ.” The minister gives the cup to the communicant who takes it entirely into his/her hands, drinks from it and returns it to the minister. The minister then wipes the rim of the cup with the purificator, gives the cup a quarter turn and offers it to the next communicant.

After Distributing:

- Ministers with hosts return your patens to the altar. Ministers with chalices with a remainder of Precious Blood should either ask another minister to discreetly consume the remainder of the Precious Blood, or return to the altar for the priest to consume. Do not place the purificator in the cup.
- Proceed with reverence back to your seat in the pew.

Following Mass:

- Ministers should assist in carrying the sacred vessels to the Sacristy, and there properly cleansed, dried and put in their place in the cupboard, locking it afterward.
- Used purificators should be placed in the laundry bag.

Dos and Don'ts:

- Intinction (dipping of the host into the cup of the Precious Blood and then consuming): The practice of receiving Communion by “Intinction” is discouraged in the United States as it seems to stand in contrast with Jesus’ command : ”Take and drink.” If someone approaches with host in hand to dip in the cup, cover the cup with the purificator and respectfully ask them to first please consume the host.
- Accidents with the Eucharistic Bread: The minister has several options. Hold the host in the same hand as the vessel. Never replace it in the vessel, give to the next communicant, or consume at that time. After communion, you may bring the dropped host to the altar, consume it yourself or notify the Priest/Deacon. If not consumable, it may be dissolved in a bowl of water, which is then poured into the sacrarium (special sink).
- Accident with the Precious Blood: The minister should cover the spillage with a purificator. Obtain, or ask someone to obtain the purificator from the credence table. After Mass, the area should be washed with a damp clean purificator. Clean (damp) towels should be used if the area is large. The cloths should then be rinsed and wrung into the sacrarium.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not perform another ministry during the same Mass, unless an emergency situation arises during Mass.
- 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. Nothing is to be added or subtracted, not even a name. 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 minister 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 minister 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. Nothing is to be added or subtracted, not even a name. 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 minister should be ready to assist in holding the Sacred Cup.
- After the Blood of Christ has been received, the minister 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 minister should be careful not to wipe in a manner where the purificator is dipped into the Precious Blood.
- The Sacred Cup is always ministered to the communicant; it may never be left for self-communion, except in the case of concelebrating priests.
- It is recommended that ministers of the Sacred Cup are positioned at a sufficient distance from the minister of the Body of Christ to ensure a smooth flow of the Communion procession.

Blessing by an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

Question:

Can an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) give a blessing to a person who comes to them in the communion line with arms crossed?

Answer:

The answer is yes.

While the CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH indicates that “the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained” (cf. no. 1669), it is important to note that the BOOK OF BLESSINGS (BB) states there are blessings where anyone who has been baptized can pray by “virtue of the universal priesthood, a dignity they possess because of their baptism and confirmation” (cf. no. 18). The bishops of the United States have even published a book entitled, CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS & PRAYERS (rev. ed.) in order to expand the opportunities for blessings by the lay faithful

. Blessings are considered to be “sacramentals” because they prepare people to receive the grace of God and to grow to be more like Christ. There are many occasions where non-ordained people offer blessings: when parents bless their children, when we gather around a family table or when we visit someone who is sick or suffering.

Liturgically, parents are invited to trace the cross on the forehead of their child during the baptism ritual and sponsors are invited to trace the cross on the senses of the candidate for full communion during the Rite of Welcome. Also, catechists are encouraged to bless catechumens and candidates throughout the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process.

Lastly, a properly designated lay minister is allowed to assist with the distribution of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday (cf. BB, no. 1659) and with the blessing of throats on the feast of St. Blase (cf. BB, no. 1628).

Since in the last two examples lay ministers may assist the ordained with those blessings it certainly is acceptable that an EMHC may offer a blessing to a person who comes to them in the communion line with arms crossed.

Within the context of our diocesan training for EMHCs we give these simple guidelines:

- The EMHC does not bless people with the consecrated host. This specific blessing is left to the ordained and only at the conclusion of the celebration of Eucharistic exposition with benediction.
- The EMHC may place a hand on the individual’s shoulder and say “May God bless you.” They do not make the sign of the cross over the individual in the manner of a priest or a deacon as this gesture is reserved to the ordained.
- They then move on to giving communion to the next person in their line.