

Diocese San Bernardino
OUR LADY of HOPE PARISH



**GUIDELINES for
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS
of HOLY COMMUNION**

*in accordance with the Guidelines
of the Diocese of San Bernardino
effective since the First Sunday of Advent, 2012*

For Internal Use Only.

1. WHO ARE THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION?

- 1.1. **Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** are bishops, priests, and deacons. These persons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their ordination.
- 1.2. **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)** are members of the faithful willing and being properly prepared to assist the Ordinary Ministers to distribute Holy Communion, including the Body and Blood of Christ.
- 1.3. The role of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion **does not replace** that of the Ordinary Minister, but supplements it on a provisional basis. That is, when a sufficient number of Ordinary Ministers is present for the distribution of Holy Communion, EMHC should not serve.
- 1.4. The Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino grants the faculty to pastors, parochial administrators, pastoral coordinators, and priest-chaplains to appoint EMHC in their parishes or institutions, as needed. **An official document of appointment**, signed by Bishop Rojas, and a card that can be carried by the EMHC will be provided for each person on the list submitted by the parishes or institutions.
- 1.5. The faculty is granted to all priests to designate suitable persons to distribute communion in a case of necessity.
- 1.6. All new EMHC should be **commissioined**, preferably during a Sunday Mass or a Liturgy of the Word where at least some members of the faith community are present.

2. REQUISITE CONDITIONS

- 2.1. The persons invited to serve as EMHC are to be mature (usually at least 15 years of age), fully initiated Catholics, who participate fully and regularly in the Sunday celebration of Eucharist.
- 2.2. EMHC strive to live Gospel values and to be Christ's presence in all areas of their lives.
- 2.3. Those invited to this ministry agree to be trained before being commissioned to parish service, are committed to faithful and reliable presence at those liturgies to which they have been assigned, and are willing to continue their formation and education.
- 2.4. EMHC normally limit the exercise of their ministry to **their own parish or institution**.
- 2.5. Normally, EMHC do not serve in another ministry at the same Mass, such as that of being Lector or Cantor.
- 2.6. It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Leadership in a given context (parish, hospital, etc.), to encourage ministers **every three years**, to discern the continuing call to this ministry.
- 2.7. Wearing "Sunday best" clothing is most appropriate for EMHC. The use of white or colored "stoles", "robes" or "scapular like collars" are strongly discouraged, as they have no liturgical meaning or tradition for this ministry. Generally, albs are not recommended although they may be appropriate in some pastoral situations.
- 2.8. Parishes will provide schedules for EMHC. EMHC are expected to arrange for their own substitutes.

3. MINISTRIES DURING MASS

3.1. Preparations

- 3.1.1. There should be a sufficient number of ministers for Holy Communion so that it can be distributed in an orderly and reverent manner. **Bishops, priests, and deacons are the Ordinary Ministers of Communion.** EMHC assist them as needed.
- 3.1.2. It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from the hosts **consecrated at the same Mass** and that they partake of the chalice, so that even by means of the signs, Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.
- 3.1.3. Pastors will need to assure that an excessive number of hosts are not brought up during the preparation of the altar and gifts for consecration. **Bread consecrated from the same liturgy is used first.** Only when it becomes clear that more is needed will what is in the Tabernacle be used. They will also need to assure that there is a sufficient amount of Precious Blood available for all that wish to drink from the cup.
- 3.1.4. EMHC arrive early to find out where their station will be during Communion and whether or not anything special will be required of them.
- 3.1.5. The EMHC ordinarily take their places within the assembly before the liturgy begins. **EMHC are not part of the Entrance Procession.**
- 3.1.6. Since all ministers are first and foremost members of the assembly, the **EMHC is expected to fully participate in the entire liturgy.**

3.2. Distribution of Holy Communion during Mass

- 3.2.1. The **distribution of Communion under both kinds** is the norm for Sundays in the Diocese of San Bernardino and is **strongly recommended** in all celebrations of the Eucharist; it is the communicant's option to receive from the cup.
- 3.2.2. EMHC may approach the altar as the priest receives communion. In the Diocese of San Bernardino, these ministers may gather in the sanctuary area during the **Sign of Peace**. Going to the altar at this time enables ministers to move without drawing attention to themselves and assures that they will be in place for the Lamb of God. Ministers remain in the main assembly for the Our Father.
- 3.2.3. Following the invitation to share in the Sign of Peace, **only the Ordained Minister should fraction the hosts into the ciboria**. During this time the Lamb of God is said or sung.
- 3.2.4. Only Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may retrieve the Blessed Sacrament from the Tabernacle during Liturgy. The unconsecrated wine for the presider's chalice will still be poured during the offertory, from an appropriate container or small vessel.
- 3.2.5. The Communion Song begins when the presiding priest receives Communion. Once the priest has received Communion, Communion is then distributed to the deacon and extraordinary ministers. EMHC in the Diocese should receive Communion standing.

- 3.2.6. Once all the Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers have received Communion, the Presider, who may be assisted by the Deacon(s), hands vessels with the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the Deacon(s) and Extraordinary Ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.
- 3.2.7. All ordinary and extraordinary ministers then move to their assigned places for the distribution of Holy Communion. Provision will be made to assure that musicians and choir members who wish may receive communion under both species. If possible, they come forward to receive—in procession and in unity with the rest of the assembly.

3.3. Posture and Gesture

- 3.3.1. *Posture*: The norm for posture for reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing. In the Diocese of San Bernardino, kneeling to receive communion is not to be encouraged. EMHC are to model the norm when they receive Holy Communion. However, communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel.
- 3.3.2. *Gesture of Reverence*: The communicant bows his or her head while the person in front of them is receiving the Body of Christ and again before receiving the Blood of Christ. Where it is the custom of the people to make the Sign of the Cross, this custom is not abrogated and may be used instead of the bow. Genuflecting is not to be encouraged as it may disrupt the prayerful movement of the communion procession.

3.4. For the Body of Christ

- 3.4.1. As the communicant approaches the Minister to receive the Body of Christ, the Minister picks up the host, holds it up in front of the communicant and says clearly the words "**The Body of Christ**". After the communicant has responded "**Amen**", the consecrated bread is placed in the hand or on the tongue according to the manner indicated by the communicant.
- 3.4.2. **Communicants are not permitted to take their own consecrated bread and communicate themselves.**
- 3.4.3. **If a consecrated host falls to the ground** during the distribution of Holy Communion, the Minister quickly and discreetly picks it up and places it to the side of other hosts in the ciboria to be consumed later or appropriately taken care of in some other manner, determined by the priest, after distribution is over.
- 3.4.4. If any ministers become aware that there may not be enough consecrated hosts for remaining communicants, they may begin to **gently break the hosts** remaining in their ciboria for distribution. If a large number of communicants remain, consecrated bread reserved in the Tabernacle for such a need can be removed only by an Ordinary Ministers from the tabernacle and distributed to the remaining communicants.
- 3.4.5. Communion Plates/Ciboria used at Mass are not to be made of any glass or materials other than precious metal (alloy) or precious wood with a metal liner to prevent rust.

3.5. For the Blood of Christ

- 3.5.1. **The distribution of Communion under both kinds is the norm for Sundays** in the Diocese of San Bernardino and is strongly recommended in all celebrations of the Eucharist; it is the communicant's option to receive from the cup.
- 3.5.2. **Children are encouraged to receive Communion under both kinds** provided that they are properly instructed and that they are old enough to receive from the chalice.
- 3.5.3. Normally, there are two cup ministers for every minister of the bread. The Minister presents the cup to the communicant saying clearly the words "**The Blood of Christ**". Generally, the communicant holds the cup firmly with both hands and drinks from it. However, in the case of physical disability or weakness, the minister will be ready to assist in holding the cup.
- 3.5.4. After the Blood of Christ has been received, the minister **wipes the rim of the cup inside and out with a purificator and turns the cup slightly** before presenting to the next communicant.
- 3.5.5. **The cup is always ministered to the communicant**; it may **never be left for self-communication** except in the case of concelebrating priests.
- 3.5.6. Intinction is "dipping" the consecrated host into the consecrated wine. **Intinction** is not customary in the U.S. and **is discouraged**.
- 3.5.7. **The practice of self-intinction is not permitted.**

- 3.5.8. **If the consecrated wine is spilled**, the area should be covered immediately with a purificator. After Mass the consecrated wine is wiped up with the purificator and the area washed with a damp cloth. The purificator and cloth are then rinsed in water poured down the sacrarium.
- 3.5.9. A **sacrarium** is a basin, usually covered, and usually found in or near the sacristy of the Church, with a drain pipe having no joints or elbows, that leads directly into the earth. This sink allows for the reverent disposal of many liturgical elements and for the rinsing of the cups used for the consecrated bread and wine at Mass.
- 3.5.10. **If a sacrarium is not available**, the Pastor should designate an appropriate place outside, in the ground near the sacristy, where the liquid may be poured or even buried as needed. This ground may contain plants and should not be located in a place where people are likely to step on it.

3.6. Blessing during Communion

- 3.6.1. In parishes where it is the custom of some parishioners to come forward, not to receive communion, but to receive a blessing, those coming forward are asked to cross their arms over their chest. During the Communion Rite, **only Ordinary Ministers should impart blessings** to those who join in the Eucharistic procession but do not receive Holy Communion.

3.6.2. **EMHC can extend their hand with the palm up**, not in a gesture of blessing but of welcoming, and without touching the person simply say, “God loves you” or “Dios te ama.” In the diocese of San Bernardino, you are not to encourage or discourage people from coming up to receive this greeting. We allow and respect those who do present themselves.

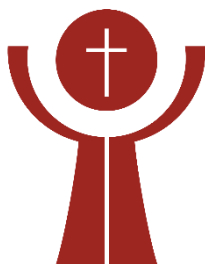
3.7. After Communion

3.7.1. The Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino has granted permission for the EMHC to consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution. This is not done at the place of distribution or while walking back to the sanctuary; instead, what remains in the cup is consumed immediately at the side table where the cups are placed once they are empty.

3.7.2. **The consecrated wine is never poured into the ground or a sacrarium.** What remains of the Blood of Christ may be consumed at the altar by the Priests, or the Deacons who ministered the chalice. The same then purifies, and wipes, and arranges the sacred vessels in the usual way.

3.7.3. The number of consecrated hosts to be reserved in the tabernacle is reflective of how much is needed for Communion to the Sick, Viaticum and for use at a Mass where an unexpected large number of communicants might necessitate going to the tabernacle for additional hosts.

- 3.7.4. **Purification** is accomplished by rinsing the vessels with water and pouring water into the sacrarium or container to be emptied into the garden soil. Cleansing is accomplished by washing the vessels with soap and water.
- 3.7.5. Provided the remaining consecrated bread has been consumed or reserved and the remaining Precious Blood consumed, the chalice, cups, ciboria and other vessels that held the Precious Blood, and used purificators, are usually taken to a side table from where they are transferred at the end of the Communion Rite to the sacristy where they are purified by the priest or deacon and washed by the EMHC immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people. **Cleansing the vessels at the altar is inappropriate.**
- 3.7.6. The purificators used are then taken care of by the Sacristan or Extraordinary Minister by soaking them in water. The water is then poured into the sacrarium, or in the absence of one, in another container reserved for this use only which is prayerfully emptied into a designated area in the garden soil at an appropriate time. After soaking the purificators, they may be washed by hand or in a washing machine, provided they are washed by themselves.



4. MINISTRIES OUTSIDE OF MASS

- 4.1.1. The persons invited to serve as EMHC to the Sick are to be mature (usually at least **18 years of age**), fully initiated Catholics, who participate fully and regularly in the Sunday celebration of Eucharist.
- 4.1.2. Ordinarily, commissioned EMHC take Communion to the sick, with the permission of the Pastor. There may also be certain persons who serve in ministry to the sick on a regular basis.
- 4.1.3. Up-to-date certification of recent completion of the **Safe Environment and Mandated Reporter training** from the Diocese of San Bernardino is required by the Office of Child and Youth Protection.
- 4.1.4. Normally, the parish or institution provides each minister with appropriate containers. **A pyx with lid** is used for carrying the consecrated host. When, in unique and rare circumstances, the precious blood is to be distributed, a suitable container for transporting it is necessary, such as **a small bottle with a dropper** specifically designated for this use.
- 4.1.5. **The Host should not be carried in a handkerchief, envelope, or other unsuitable container.**
- 4.1.6. The EMHC who brings communion to the sick in hospitals must be trained and fully aware of the basic procedures the institution has for hospital visitors. **This ministry in the hospital context will normally be simplified** to respect the more serious nature of a hospital stay. **Counseling, for example, is not envisioned as a duty of this ministry.** Other suggestions and cautions in this regard will be made throughout these guidelines.

4.1.7. It is the responsibility of the Parish Leadership to encourage EMHC/Visitors to the Sick to discern the continuing call to this ministry, about **once every three years**. Together, they can prayerfully determine whether or not a recommitment to another term of service is appropriate.

4.2. Preparation for the Distribution of Communion

4.2.1. It is recommended that **hosts for the sick and homebound be consecrated in the Mass from which they will be taken and in which the EMHC have fully participated**. Ideally, ministers are sent forth by the parish or other community from a Sunday or daily celebration of Eucharist.

4.2.2. At Sunday Eucharistic Celebrations a predetermined procedure is required which assures that the EMHC to the Sick and homebound has brought a Pyx to the church, with their **name and number of hosts** indicated on the outside bottom of the Pyx. The EMHC will also need to communicate with a person designated by the Pastor who will see to it that the Pyx is filled with the requested number of hosts. This procedure will also indicate where the Pyx is placed prior to Mass and who will place it there, to be sure that it is filled with the designated numbers of consecrated hosts.

4.2.3. **No longer will it be permitted for the EMHC who is communicating to bring his/her empty pix and ask for sacred hosts**. Once all present have received Holy Communion, the ministers are called forward, and are ritually blessed and sent forth from the community to serve the sick and homebound.

- 4.2.4. **If the EMHC cannot be present at the Mass** in which the hosts have been consecrated, the consecrated hosts may be put into Pyx by a Minister, which is then placed in the Tabernacle until after Mass or a day later in the week.
- 4.2.5. **The pyx is taken from the church only on the day in which Communion is to be distributed.** It is important to assure that any sacred container used must be closed firmly.
- 4.2.6. When it becomes known that someone can only receive the **Precious Blood, it has to be taken to the person on the day it was consecrated.**

4.3. Celebration of the Communion Service

- 4.3.1. **If the service is to take place in a hospital, the shorter rite is the norm.** Enhancements such as singing or even candles are often not suitable for the hospital context where the communicant may be quite ill. A cloth on which to place the Blessed Sacrament, a purificator (if offering the Precious Blood) and perhaps a cross and simple Bible are desirable although not always required.
- 4.3.2. It is recommended, whenever possible, that these rites be celebrated communally, that is with a small gathering of the faithful. Those present may be invited to read the scriptures, state the intercessions or assist in other ways, even leading a simple song when appropriate. These possibilities will be determined in light of the needs and condition of the communicant. Careful planning will assure that the minister has sufficient consecrated hosts for all present who wish to receive.

- 4.3.3. Whether Communion is to be distributed in the home, a hospital or other facility, family members, doctors, nurses, or other appropriate persons may be contacted prior to the visit to assure that the ritual options are safe and appropriate (i.e.) use of candles in the home, what readings (if used) would be most appropriate, time considerations, etc.)
- 4.3.4. The minister to the sick may celebrate the Communion Service in one of two ways—within a Liturgy of the Word or in a brief form for use in more restrictive circumstances (i.e. a hospital).
- 4.3.5. Normally, those who are with the sick (family and/or others) or homebound are asked to prepare a table with a linen cloth upon which the pyx is placed. Lighted candles, holy water, and a cross may also be used. Along with the Eucharist, one might bring other items or gestures that keep the sick person "connected" to their parish family - a bulletin, a tape of the homily, holy water, cards made by the parish school children, etc. The minister must also be sensitive to the needs of the family members and caregivers during this visit, assuring them of the love and support of the parish community.
- 4.3.6. A Communion fast is not necessary for the ill or their caregivers. If their health or medical regimen allows them to consume the consecrated bread, they may receive Communion at any time. If the sick wish to receive the sacrament of penance, it is preferable that the priest make himself available during a visit prior to the day when Communion is to be received.

4.4. Posture and Gesture

- 4.4.1. The posture for reception of Holy Communion to the Sick depends on the special circumstances of the communicant. In the Diocese of San Bernardino, communicants are encouraged to offer a Gesture of Reverence. Other appropriate options are a slight head bow, Sign of the Cross, offering of a simple prayer or, other appropriate gesture.

4.5. The Body of Christ

- 4.5.1. When the communicant is ready, the minister picks up the host, holds it up in front of the communicant and says the words "**The Body of the Christ**". After the communicant (if able) has responded "**Amen**", the consecrated bread is placed in the hand or on the tongue according to the manner indicated by the communicant.

4.5.2. Communicants are not permitted to take their own consecrated bread and communicate themselves.

- 4.5.3. **If a consecrated host falls to the ground** during the distribution of Holy Communion, the communion minister quickly and discreetly picks it up and places it in the purificator. It may be consumed later or appropriately taken care of in some other manner, after distribution is over.

- 4.5.4. When **the person receiving the host spits it out unexpectedly** and is not able to consume the consecrated host, place the host in the container in which you brought it when it is empty and return to the sacristy at the church as soon as is possible.

4.5.5. Dissolve the fallen or spitted host as much as is possible in a large container of water and pour all in the container into the sacrarium. In the appropriate manner, purify both the container for the host and the container that held the water and dissolved host.

4.6. The Blood of Christ

4.6.1. The norm for the distribution of Communion to the Sick in the Diocese of San Bernardino is to receive a consecrated host. In the case of physical disability or weakness, the minister needs to be ready to assist. Breaking the host into smaller pieces is often helpful.

4.6.2. **Only in extremely rare and unique circumstances** (i.e., inability to swallow even a small particle of the host) is a communicant permitted to receive some drops of the Precious Blood, and only with the permission of the Pastor.

4.7. Before and After Communion

4.7.1. Any remaining consecrated bread and wine is to be consumed by the EMHC. The small vial for the precious blood is properly purified.

4.7.2. **Under no circumstance may the extraordinary minister or deacon take extra Consecrated Hosts to their home or any place other than the Parish Tabernacle.** If they cannot be consumed immediately because of the amount remaining, the EMHC must carry them immediately after the Communion Service back to the Parish or Hospital Tabernacle where the hospital has a functioning Catholic Chapel.

- 4.7.3. **A consecrated host may not be kept on one's person or carried on a long journey** unless there is urgent pastoral need, and the minister has the permission of the bishop. **Nor may the Blessed Sacrament be stored overnight or for a longer period of time in a place that is not a Tabernacle.**
- 4.7.4. Finally, **keeping several hosts to avoid visits to the parish church is strictly prohibited.** If Communion is desired daily, parish ministers are assigned to visit the sick person, obtaining the consecrated sacrament from the parish or hospital tabernacle in the usual way.
- 4.7.5. Since the Tabernacle is the designated place of reservation for the Blessed Sacrament to be available to the sick and dying, **care must be taken** to assure that it is always locked after removing, placing or replacing the consecrated bread.

4.8. Sending forth the EMHC to the Sick and Homebound

- 4.8.1. After the Communion procession, but before the Prayer after Communion, the pyxes are held by the Presider and the EMHC are called forward. After they have assembled in the sanctuary, the Presider may say the following or similar words:

My brothers and sisters, the Lord has nourished us with his Body and his Blood. Now we send you to take this Eucharistic banquet to our absent brothers and sisters who are homebound or too ill to join us today. Tell them of our constant love and concern and our continuing prayers for healing and strength.

The EMHC then depart from the sanctuary and resume their place within the assembly.

- 4.8.2. This ritual sending forth will help the assembly to be **more aware of the community's absent members**. It serves to **avoid individual special requests in the Communion procession**.
- 4.8.3. Additionally, the ritual sending forth reflects our understanding of **sacraments – as instruments of the Church**, celebrated in a public manner, in the midst of the community or their representatives. Finally, this allows due care over who receives the pyx. **It is prohibited to request additional hosts during the Eucharistic Procession**.
- 4.8.4. It is important for visitors to the sick to understand they are normally expected to **exercise their duties immediately after Mass**. The visit to the sick by a Eucharistic minister has **priority over any other activities after Mass** as possible. One should avoid doing errands, dining out, or engaging in long conversations until after the visit (s) to the sick are completed. **Always be aware that the Blessed Sacrament is being carried**.

4.9. Blessing during a Visit to the Sick and Homebound

- 4.9.1. **The new rules regarding EMHC not being allowed to offer blessings only applies to the reception of Communion during Mass**.
- 4.9.2. A Visitor to the Sick and Homebound may simply **hold the right hand slightly elevated over the person** and say the following or similar words: **“May God bless you now and always.”** A priest or Deacon, though not a lay person, may make the Sign of the Cross over the person or on their forehead.

