

MARY, MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER PARISH

PROTOCOL GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNION MINISTERS (EMHCs)

I. Pastoral Notes about the Ministry and Holy Communion

- a. The Ministry's accurate title is *Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion*. However, *Communion Minister* is accepted by the Archdiocese and the Pastor as the preferred MMR designation. We are no longer to use *Eucharistic Minister* (note that the *priest* is the *Eucharistic Minister*).
- b. Ministers should not be in a state of mortal sin when serving Communion.
- c. Make every effort to have full participation (i.e., focus and engagement) in the Mass.
- d. The direction for pre-Communion fasting is a minimum of one hour, except for water and medications; in case of illness, it's a minimum of 15 minutes (Canon 919).
- e. If you are not feeling well, especially with a respiratory condition, do not administer Communion. Please make every effort to procure a substitute, and/or notify the No. 1 CM, or another member of the assigned CM team for your scheduled Mass. A list of CM contact information is available upon request.
- f. You must look the part of a minister, so wear proper attire when serving. Proper attire for Holy Day and weekend Masses generally means suit or jacket and tie for men, and correlated dress for women. In warm weather months, a tie is optional. Always come to Mass prepared to serve, even if you are not scheduled. In emergency fill-in situations you will not be expected to hold to the same dress code but use good judgment, as the faithful look to CMs as examples. Even for weekday Masses, while the attire does not have to be as formal, CMs should not wear shorts to serve.
- g. You can only administer Holy Communion in the parish where you are commissioned. For exceptions you must secure permission from that parish.
- h. It is the CM's responsibility to ensure hands are clean before handling the Host. If using hand sanitizer, apply it before leaving your pew for Communion distribution.
- i. CMs are not to purify sacred vessels.

II. "No. 1" Communion Minister Responsibility

In order to assure that we have enough CMs for the Mass and everyone understands their role, the person who is listed as the CM#1 in MSP (Ministry Scheduler Pro) for that Mass will have the following responsibilities:

- a. Check MSP the day before to see who is assigned and then again just before Mass for any last-minute cancellations/sub requests.
- b. Arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of time to check with the Sacristan and check in the CMs (meet in the Narthex). It may be helpful to bring a copy of the *Distribution Procedure in the Sanctuary* (which is presented further below and posted in the Ministry Room) as a reference. Remind CMs of their positioning and role.
- c. Ask the Sacristan how many vessels are in the Tabernacle and check if the Celebrant will be going to the Tabernacle. Also check for a Deacon, Acolyte, or visiting clergy, etc. to see if they plan to assist with the Tabernacle or with Communion.
- d. Assign enough CMs (usually 1 or 2 in addition to yourself) to assist at the Tabernacle. Carry no more than 2 vessels per person. Multiple trips to Tabernacle are permitted when necessary.
- e. If a Deacon is serving, you will need one less CMPB. If you need a last-minute sub, please enlist a CM from the congregation. CMs who are attending a particular Mass but not assigned should check with the #1 CM to see if help is needed.

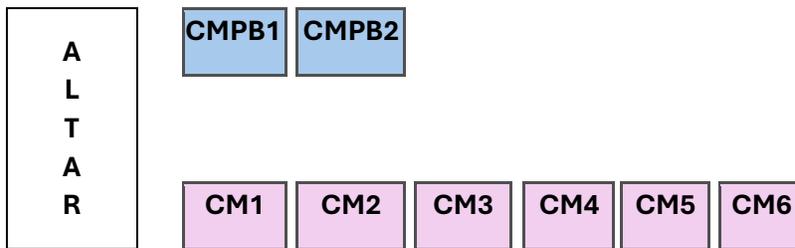
III. Distribution of Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

- a. The Sacristan is responsible for filling the chalices and providing purificators. The Altar Servers will bring the chalices to the priest or Deacon to place on the Altar for consecration and will assist in returning them to the credence table after the Consecrated Hosts are returned to the Tabernacle.
- b. The CMs who are assisting with the ciboria are to follow the priest or Deacon to the Tabernacle at the “Sign of Peace”. When the sacred vessels are on the altar, return to the section behind the Celebrant’s chair until the Celebrant receives Communion.
- c. At the “Lamb of God”, the remaining CMs for the Host should line up at the railing on the baptismal side, and the CMPBs should line up on the choir side.
- d. Immediately after the Celebrant receives Communion, CMs should approach the altar, with CM#1 in the lead. Do not wait for any other clergy to receive Communion. CMs should stand in a straight line perpendicular to the altar, starting with the first CM positioned at the corner of the altar (see accompanying diagram). CMPBs will stand on the opposite (choir) side corner of the altar.
- e. No one will be required to offer the chalice or consume the Precious Blood if they are not comfortable doing so. Between the clergy and other CMs, we do not expect any issues in consuming leftover PB. If you are a “non-consumer”, if possible, let your partner CMPB know before Communion as a courtesy.

- f. There are 2 chalice positions at each Mass (the number of stations is subject to change over time). These will be located between the center aisle and each of the side aisles (see accompanying diagram).
- g. There are **four common positioning scenarios** based on the presence of a Deacon and/or music group as follows:

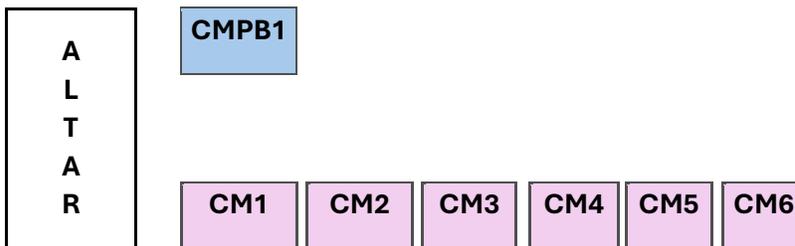
SCENARIO #1: NO MUSIC GROUP, NO DEACON

1. CMPB1 and CMPB2 will receive the Host and the Precious Blood from the Priest Celebrant. And then CMPB1 will follow the priest to administer the Precious Blood to CMs1-6 (note for all scenarios: to speed things up, CMPB2 can offer the chalice to the minister line and work their way towards CMPB1 – as long as the Host has been offered to all first.)
2. Then CMPB 1 will take their place to administer to the congregation.
3. CM1 will take their position in the center with the Priest.



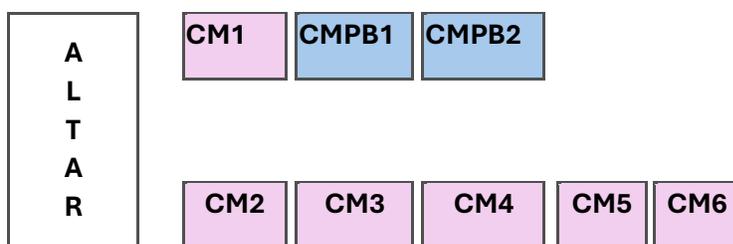
SCENARIO #2: NO MUSIC GROUP, DEACON

1. Only one CMPB is required.
2. The priest will administer the Host to CMPB1, then the Deacon will administer the Precious Blood to CMPB1.
3. The Deacon will follow the Priest to administer Precious Blood to CM1-6.
4. CM1 will administer the Hosts in the center with the Priest.
5. The CMPB will wait for the Deacon to approach his serving station of choice, then take the opposite station.



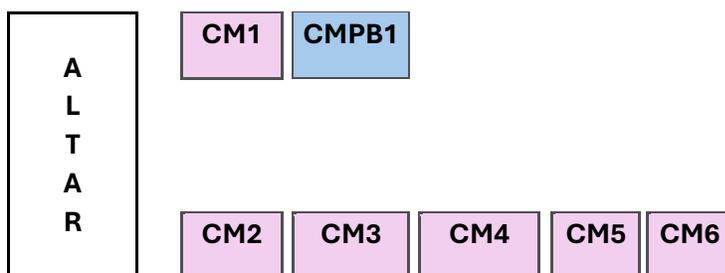
SCENARIO #3: MUSIC GROUP, NO DEACON

1. CM1 will line up on choir side of the Altar (approach from your position behind the celebrant's chair after assisting at the Tabernacle).
2. Priest will administer Hosts to CM1, CMPB1, and CMPB2, then hand the ciborium to CM1.
3. CM1 will immediately administer Hosts to the music group (**CM1 and music group will not receive PB**).
4. Priest will distribute the Precious Blood to CMPB1, and then immediately hand them their chalice. Then the priest takes the second chalice and administers the PB to CMPB 2, and then immediately hands them their chalice.
5. CMPB1 will follow Priest and administer Precious Blood to CM2-CM6.
6. CM1 will then take the serving station on the choir side.
7. CM2 will be at the center station with Priest.



SCENARIO #4: MUSIC GROUP and DEACON

1. CM1 will line up on choir side of the Altar as in Scenario #3
2. Only one CMPB is required.
3. After administering Communion to the Deacon, the Celebrant administers the Host to the CM1 and the CMPB. The Deacon will then hand a ciborium to CM1 (who will proceed immediately to the music group - **CM1 and choir will not receive PB**) and the chalice to CMPB1. Then the Deacon will follow the Priest to administer the PB to CMs1-6.
4. CM2 will be positioned in the center station with the Priest.
5. The CMPB will wait for the Deacon to approach his serving station of choice, then take the opposite station.



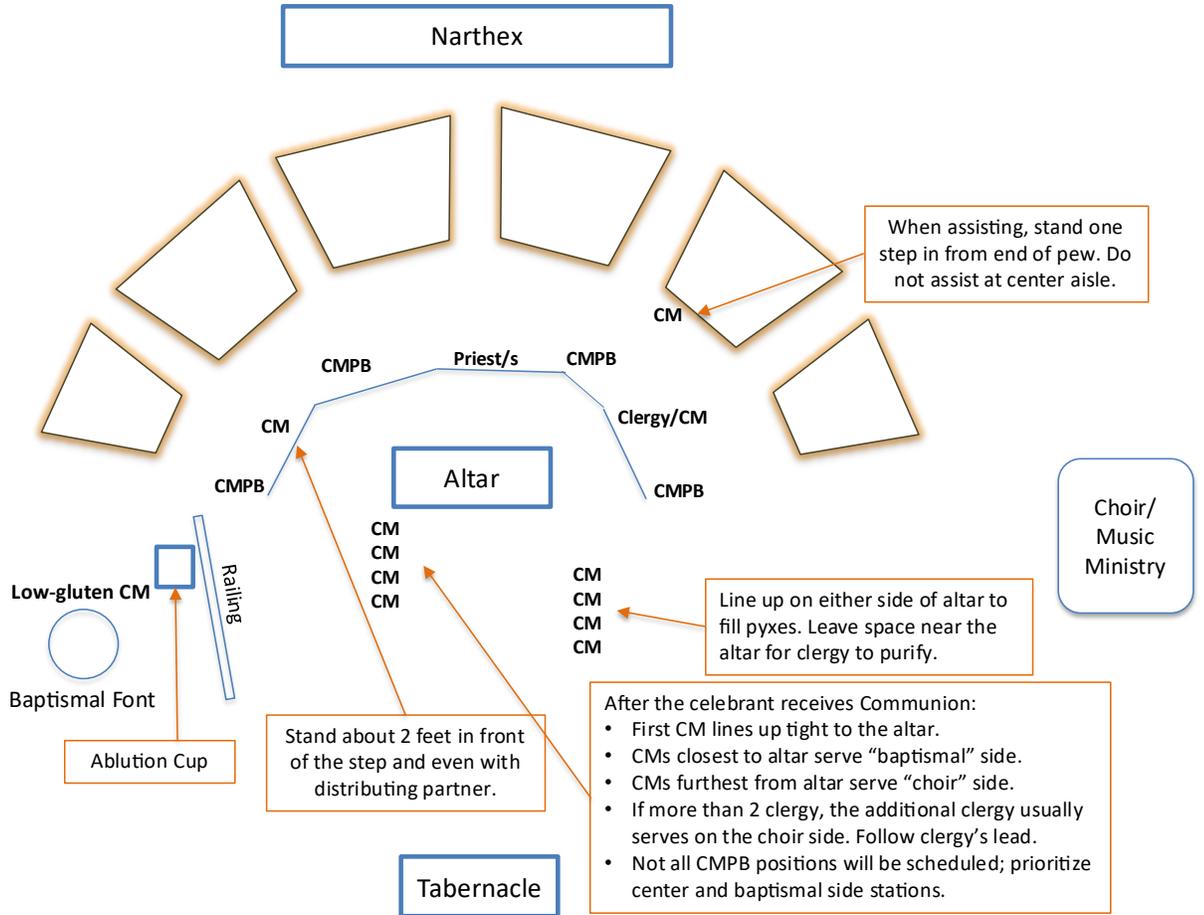
IV. Protocol for Distributing Holy Communion to the Faithful

- a. Ministers of the Host should wait until the CMPBs arrive at their serving stations before administering to the faithful. This will help to avoid traffic jams. Remember to serve the handicapped in the front pews first – with both species if requested. Do not take the chalice to the rear of the church.
- b. Ministers should stand a few feet in front of the sanctuary steps in order to allow communicants and ministers to pass between stations (when necessary) without having to climb up on the steps.
- c. Wait for communicant to bow and say “Amen” before distributing Communion. If he/she forgets to bow and/or say “Amen”, administer Communion anyway. Do not say “Amen” on the communicant’s behalf, nor ask him/her to say it before distributing Communion.
- d. To minimize the risk of spills, hand the chalice to the communicant slowly and reverently and be sure they have grasped it securely.
- e. You may ask small children who may present themselves for Communion if they have received their First Holy Communion. If not, then do not administer.
- f. Don’t administer Communion if you have a legitimate reason to question the communicant’s proper disposition to receive, e.g., non-Catholics.
- g. CMs can say “God bless you” if communicant approaches with arms folded for a blessing; but refrain from giving the sign of the cross.
- h. Drops and spills: The CM must pick up a dropped Host immediately and hold it to the side and then administer a new Host to the communicant. Consume the dropped Host in the sanctuary after Communion (or ask a priest or Deacon to consume it). For Precious Blood spills, cover the spill with purificator until all of the PB is soaked up, take the purificator back to the sacristy for cleaning. Do not use paper towels, hankies, or other cloths for cleanup...only liturgical linens are acceptable. You can bring a member of the congregation to the sacristy to clean/blot clothing if necessary.

V. Post-Communion Guidance

- a. After administering Holy Communion, the CM will place the sacred vessels on the altar directly, or hand to a clergy member to place on the altar.
- b. CMPBs should consume any PB that remains in the Chalice at the foot of the altar, then ascend the steps with the empty Chalice and place on the altar or hand to a member of the clergy (note: The empty Chalices should be placed on the credence table when Monsignor Citino is the Celebrant). If you require assistance in consuming remaining PB, you may ask another CM or a clergy member. Remember to say “The Blood of Christ” when handing the chalice to another person.
- c. Ordinarily, sacred vessels containing the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord should always be handed to the CM by the priest or Deacon. Only the priest or Deacon should remove the Ciboria from the Tabernacle and return the Ciboria to the Tabernacle. CMs may assist the priest and Deacon in transporting the Ciboria to the Tabernacle; however, they should not place them in the Tabernacle. They should instead hand the Ciboria to the priest or Deacon who then places them in the Tabernacle. An exception can be granted if there is only a priest, and no Deacon, and the priest has mobility problems.
- d. In the cases when retrieving vessels from the Tabernacle, open the door first, then genuflect (or bow if you are unable to genuflect), and leave the door open during Communion. When replacing vessels, place them in the open Tabernacle, genuflect or bow, then close the door. If you are carrying a filled pyx, remember NOT to bow or genuflect.
- e. When standing on the choir side of the altar to have your pyx filled, allow enough space around the altar for the clergy to conduct purification activities. You may also stand on the Baptismal side of the altar if there are more than a few CMs requiring pyxes to be filled (see accompanying diagram).
- f. Exit the Sanctuary immediately after you hand over your sacred vessel. The only exception is that the No. 1 CM (and in some cases, a second CM depending on the number of clergy present) should remain near the altar in case assistance is needed to transport sacred vessels back to the tabernacle.
- g. CMs who are taking Holy Communion to a Nursing Facility or a Homebound should leave the Church immediately after exiting the Sanctuary. In no event should a CM remain after Mass socializing while carrying the Precious Body of the Lord.
- h. Upon exiting the Sanctuary rinse your thumb and index finger in the ablution cup (near the baptismal font) and dry them with the finger towel. Use of the ablution cup is not required after distributing the Precious Blood.

Communion Minister (CM) Positioning for Distribution of Holy Communion



As of 9-25-25

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS

<p>Ablution Cup: A small bowl-like container, filled with water, and located in or near the sanctuary. After the distribution of Communion the ministers of the Host dip the thumb and index finger into the water to purify them and wipes the finger on the purifier.</p>
<p>Acolyte: One who is formally installed into the ministry with the intention of being ordained.</p>
<p>Alb: The white garment covering one's street dress for participation in the liturgy.</p>
<p>Altar: A table on which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered. It is the center of importance in the place where the Mass is celebrated. Also called: The Table of the Lord.</p>
<p>Ambo: The place where the Scriptures are proclaimed. Avoid: Pulpit</p>
<p>Aspergillum: A vessel or device used for sprinkling holy water. The ordinary type is a metallic rod with a bulbous tip, which absorbs the water and discharges it at the motion of the user's hand.</p>
<p>Book of Gospels: The book which contains the Gospel texts, from which the priests or deacon proclaims the Gospel of the day</p>
<p>Bread and Wine: The elements used in the celebration of Eucharist (unleavened bread and natural pure wine). NOTE: After the Eucharistic Prayer the bread and wine is referred to as: the consecrated bread and wine or the body and blood of Christ.</p>
<p>Cantor: One who sings during the liturgy (i.e., the responsorial psalm).</p>
<p>Cassock: A non-liturgical, full-length, close-fitting robe for use by priests and other clerics under liturgical vestments; usually black for priests, purple for bishops and other prelates, red for cardinals, white for the Pope.</p>
<p>Celebrant: The priest who presides over the assembly and consecrates the Eucharist. “celebrant” and “presider” are synonyms for the person who offers the Mass. Thus, only a priest or bishop can be a presider or celebrant. <i>Presider</i> is a newer term that is generally meant to indicate that the priest takes the lead in offering the Mass. <i>Celebrant</i> in of older vintage and indicates that the priest is the person who primarily celebrates the Mass. In recent times some as a means of indicating that the congregation should take an active role in the liturgy, proper to their status as laity; but either term is correct.</p>
<p>Celebrant's Chair: The place where the celebrant sits. It expresses his office of presiding over the assembly and of leading the prayer of those present.</p>
<p>Chalice: The cup used to hold the wine.</p>
<p>Chasuble: The vestment worn over the Alb by priests, bishops and Pope when celebrating the Mass.</p>

Ciborium: A vessel used to hold the consecrated bread for the distribution of communion.
Concelebrants: Those priests and bishops who join the celebrant in celebrating the Mass.
Cross bearer: The one who carries the cross in the procession (entrance and recessional).
Dalmatic: The vestment the deacon wears over the alb on solemn occasions.
Deacon: An ordained minister who assists the celebrant at the Liturgy of the Word and at the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs or Communion Ministers (CMs)) are duly instituted acolytes among the faithful who have been deputed to assist in the distribution of Communion. CMs may serve when the number of Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (bishops, priests and deacons) is inadequate.
Host, The Sacred: The bread under whose appearances Christ is and remains present in a unique manner after the consecration of the Mass.
Lamb of God: An invocation during the breaking of the bread in which the assembly petitions for mercy and peace.
Lectionary: The book that contains all the readings from the Scriptures for use in the celebration of the liturgy.
Liturgical Colors: Colors used in vestments and altar coverings to denote special times in the Church. Green is used in ordinary times, red denotes feasts of martyrs or the Holy Spirit, purple denotes penitential times and white is used for joyful occasions including Christmas, Easter and some saints' days.
Master of Ceremonies: One who assisted in the preparation of the celebration and is present during it to facilitate the movement of the entire rite.
Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are bishops, priests and deacons
Pall: A square of linen usually stiffened with cardboard that is used to cover the chalice
Patén: The plate used to hold the bread that will be consecrated during the Eucharistic prayer.
Presider (see celebrant)
Processional Cross: The cross carried in the processions.
Sacramentary: The book used by the celebrant, containing all the prayers for the liturgy of the Mass.
Sanctuary: That part of the church where the altar is located.
Stole: The vestment worn around the neck by all ordained ministers. For priests, bishops and Pope, it hangs down in front (under the chasuble); the deacons wear it over their left shoulder crossed and fastened at the right side.

Surplice: a loose, flowing vestment of white fabric with wide sleeves. For some functions it is interchangeable with an alb.
Tabernacle: Place in the church where the Eucharist or sacred species is reserved.
Vestment: The vesture the ministers wear.

Glossary sources:

<http://www.usccb.org/comm/glossary.shtml>

www.catholic.com

General Instruction of the Roman Missal

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact one of our CM Co-ordinators:

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This document is posted on our MMR CM web page [Communion Ministers | Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Church | North Wales, PA](#)).