

Mary, Mother of God Church

157 South Triangle Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844
(908) 874-8220

<http://www.marymotherofgod.org>



Parish & Diocesan Policy For Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

UPDATED Aug 7, 2023

Please Note:

1. EMs at the 9AM Mass are once again bringing Holy Communion to Brookdale, Foothills and some homes.
2. EMs may bring Holy Communion from any Mass to Home Bound if they are comfortable with that. Speak to Msgr or the Celebrant for the Mass.

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1. Introduction

This document has been prepared for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion serving at Mary, Mother of God Parish in Hillsborough, New Jersey. It is our hope that this document will provide each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion with the information they need to serve in this capacity with confidence. Updates to this document and other information is available online at the Mary, Mother of God Ministry Website at: <http://www.rotundasoftware.com/ministry/mmog?user=mmog>

This is an awesome ministry in that we come in contact with the Most Blessed Sacrament as we serve others. It is an honor to serve in this ministry and we must respond that way. Like Mary, may we respond to His call of service as we recall her fiat...

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word.” Lk 1:38

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, you are an example to others. Parishioners look at you to see how you present yourself. This is both in and out of church. It is especially important to set a good example of honor and respect whenever you are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament you refrain from unnecessary talking or joking. Genuflect as you pass the tabernacle, and before you enter your pew. Your reverence, love and respect should be obvious, and it will be a light to others.

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, you should have a deep respect and understanding of the substantial, true presence of God in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. You are encouraged to spend time in Adoration. Our church has Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic Adoration in the chapel from Friday morning after the 8:30AM Mass until 10:00AM Sunday morning.

Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are those who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders, i.e. our Priests and Deacons. The term Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion means that we are **extra** ministers to the Ordinary Ministers, serving only if there is a need. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should **never** take the place of an Ordinary Minister, unless there is a reason (i.e. an Ordinary Minister is ill).

There may be times when an unexpected Deacon or Priest is present at a Mass we are serving at, and since they are Ordinary Ministers, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may need to step down.

During Christmas and Easter, we may be called to serve in the gymnasium. Remember, Jesus’ humble entrance into the world as He was laid in a manger. The surroundings are not what is important. Jesus in the Eucharist is what is important. Be humble as Jesus was humble, serve as Jesus served.

There is a story told about an elderly woman who lived at the bottom of a steep hill. The Church she attended was at the top of the hill. Every morning she would walk up the steep hill to attend Mass. Across the street from her lived an atheist who thought her daily journey was ridiculous. One cold, icy day as he returned home from an all-night party in the early morning he joked that at least that day she would not be climbing up that hill. Much to his amazement, as he approached his home, he saw her negotiating the steep hill on her hands and knees. He was extremely affected by this. The next day he went up that hill to speak to the Pastor. He wanted to know what it was that he had in that Church that would make an elderly lady climb an icy hill on her hands and knees. He then learned about God in the Eucharist and eventually converted.

We pray that as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, we develop a deep level of devotion and desire for Jesus in the Eucharist and the Word. That is what we should all be striving for. We pray that others will see that devotion in us and it will bring about great conversions in our parish. May God bless each of us abundantly in our ministry.

Amen

Excerpts from
The Joy of Being a Eucharistic Minister
By Mitch Finley

You are Extraordinary!

As a volunteer ready to distribute Holy Communion during parish Masses, you present yourself in service to the faith community. Your personal spirituality is bound to be shaped by this special ministry

The Eucharist is a Joyful Mystery

“The Christian belief in the resurrection is just such a mystery: it ... can never be understood fully nor named clearly.” - *The Resurrection of Jesus, Father Kenan B. Osborne*

As Ministers of Holy Communion, it is especially important for us to seek as complete and accurate an understanding of the Eucharist as we can. The Christ we receive in the consecrated bread and wine is the risen Christ who is with us now, alive and active in the Church and in the world. It is the “body and blood, soul and divinity, the whole person of the risen Christ that we receive in Holy Communion.

The Faith of the Minister of Holy Communion

Faith depends on being Eucharistic in everything we do – on being a thankful person. The faith of a Minister of Holy Communion is a faith that finds endless reasons to give thanks.

The Hope of the Minister of Holy Communion

“Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end.” - *St. Teresa of Avila*

Hope in the life of a Minister of Holy Communion comes from the Eucharist because it nourishes hope in a particular way – by giving us the grace of our own further resurrection – and what better cause for hope than this? Give hope by the way you offer each person the risen Lord Jesus, “body and blood, soul and divinity.”

The Love of Minister of Holy Communion

“Lord, I come to you with all the sincerity of my heart, and with good firm faith; I come with hope and reverence, because you have commanded it, and I really believe that you are present here in the Sacrament, both God and man.

It is your wish that I should receive you and become one with you in love. I therefore pray you for your mercy, and beg you to grant me special grace, so that I may melt away in love and be absorbed in you, no more concerned for any outside comfort. For this Sacrament is most high and most worthy. It is the health of soul and body, the remedy for every sickness of the spirit. By it my faults are cured, my passions curbed, temptations overcome or weakened. Grace is outpoured in richer measure, virtue that has taken root is strengthened; faith is increased, hope made strong, love kindled to envelop all my being.” - *The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas a Kempis*

The heart of a Minister of Holy Communion’s love is his or her love for Christ in the Eucharist. It is Christ Himself that we give thanks for, and in particular we give thanks his gift of himself to us “under the appearances of bread and wine.”

The Presence of the Minister of Holy Communion

“My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.” - *Exodus 33:14*

God's presence extends to ministry. When we act on behalf of Christ, for others, we do so in union with the personal presence of God. Each Minister of Holy Communion is a unique individual, so each one will bring the Divine Presence in a unique manner – by way of the sense of joy at sharing the great mystery of the Eucharist. You bring joy to others when you bring the Eucharist to others ... with your presence you bring the presence of the risen Christ, and you become a source of support for the faith of the person to whom you give Communion. Your commitment, faithfulness, willingness to be there when you are needed, your desire to share yourself and your time with others – all this nourishes and supports the faith of those who you serve as a Minister of Holy Communion. Make a gift of your smile.

2. Terminology

➤ The Eucharist

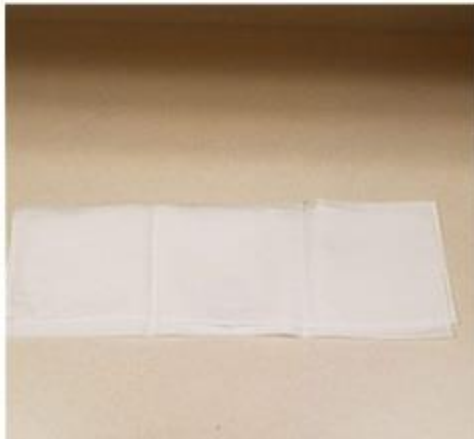
- ✓ The word **Eucharist** means thanksgiving. It is the name given to the **Blessed Sacrament**. It also describes the liturgical rite which brings us to the Table of the Lord, the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. We experience the Eucharist during Mass as both Sacrifice and Sacrament. During the **Sacrifice of the Mass**, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Then we receive the Eucharistic Jesus in the **Sacrament of Holy Communion**.
- ✓ **The Eucharist** refers to both the **Body of Christ** (consecrated bread) and the **Blood of Christ** (consecrated wine), both of which are fully the actual Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ is **truly substantially present** under the appearance of bread and wine.
- ✓ During the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**, we witness the **words of institution** and the **consecration**, which is when the Priest speaks the words of Jesus and by the Power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. This change is called **transubstantiation**, the substance of bread and wine transform into the Body and Blood of Our Lord. The bread and wine are now **consecrated**.
- ✓ Any vessels that held the Body or Blood of Christ must be **purified** after being used. This is a special way of cleaning the vessels so as not to treat any particles of the Lord left in the vessels with disrespect. Vessels with particles of Host or any Precious Blood should be purified before they are put away.
- ✓ The bread and wine that we have in the sacristy is **unconsecrated**. Unconsecrated hosts are **never** to be placed in a tabernacle. The tabernacle is used to hold consecrated Hosts in reserve, and consecrated and unconsecrated hosts should **never** be mixed.
- ✓ **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** - The Eucharist is exposed so that it may be adored. During Exposition there is often a rite called **Benediction** that takes place, which consists of the singing of certain hymns, prayers and a Eucharistic blessing. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in our church starts after morning Mass on Friday and concludes at 10:00AM on Sunday. When Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is taking place, there is someone present with the Lord at all times.
- ✓ The **monstrance** is the vessel used to display the exposed Eucharist. It comes from the word: **monstrar** which means to show.
- ✓ The **lunette** is a glass holder that holds the actual Host, the **Body of Christ**. The lunette is slid into the monstrance by a Deacon or Priest at the start of exposition.

➤ The linens used during Mass. They are found in the top drawer of the chest of drawers in the working/lower sacristy. There are also some (for emergency purposes) located in the credence table behind the altar:

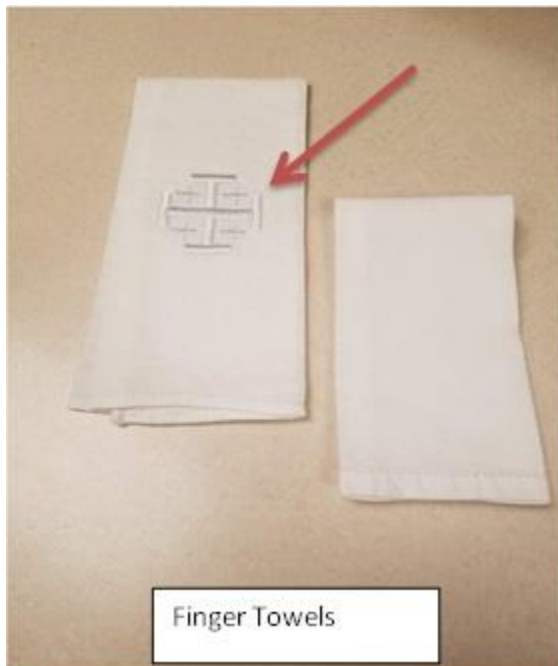
- ✓ The **pall** is a stiffened square card covered with linen, usually embroidered with a cross, or some other appropriate symbol. It is used to cover the chalice and protect the Precious Blood.
- ✓ The **corporal** is a square cloth, with a cross towards the bottom. It is folded in thirds, and thirds again, so that when unfolded you will see 9 sections. Vessels that contain unconsecrated hosts and wine to be consecrated during Mass should be touching a portion of the corporal during the consecration. If a vessel is not touching a corporal, it does not mean that the bread or wine are not consecrated – all vessels that contain bread or wine that the Priest intends to consecrate for that Mass are consecrated. Also good to note, items that the Priest does not intend to consecrate, are not consecrated – i.e. if the wine cruet is inadvertently left on the altar, the wine in it is still wine.

When folding a corporal, place it in front of you seam side down, cross towards you. Fold the bottom a third way up. Fold top a third way down. Fold right a third way over. Fold left a third way over. When placing this on the chalice, place it just as you folded it, on top of the pall, with the cross of the chalice facing you (if there is a cross on the chalice).

Folding
Corporal → a



- ✓ The **purificator** is a rectangle. It has a cross in the center of it. It is folded in thirds lengthwise, then in half. It is used when distributing the Precious Blood and when purifying vessels. Once folded the cross is located at the fold.
- ✓ The **finger towel** is usually smaller than a purificator and typically has no cross on it or the cross is towards the bottom of the towel. It is folded in thirds lengthwise, then in half. After folding, if it has a cross, it is in the center of the folded towel. It is used to dry hands.



- **The vessels used during Mass.** All the vessels are in the safe in the working/lower sacristy unless otherwise noted.
 - ✓ The **chalice**, the first among Sacred Vessels, is the communion cup used by the Priest to consecrate the wine during Mass. The chalices are located in the safe.
 - ✓ The **paten** is a small round plate used to hold the large Host to be consecrated during Mass. Each chalice in the safe has a paten on top of it.
 - ✓ The **cruets** are small glass pitchers used to hold water and wine. There are usually wine and water cruets in the refrigerator. Extra cruets are located in the cupboard above the small refrigerator.
 - ✓ A **ciborium** is the vessel used to distribute consecrated Hosts during Communion. They are located in the safe. Most ciboria are rather large bowls with a lid. Some, however, look like a chalice with a lid (chalices do not have lids).
 - ✓ A **pyx** is a small metal vessel with an attached lid used to transport Holy Communion to the sick and homebound. The pyxes are located in the drawer to the right of the sink. It is also the name of the vessel used to hold the lunette containing the Host used during Eucharistic Adoration.
 - ✓ A **burse** is a small fabric or leather pouch used to hold a pyx for protection.
 - ✓ The **flagon** is used to hold large quantities of wine which will be consecrated during Mass. There are both metal and glass flagons located in the safe. The glass flagons are only used on special occasions.
 - ✓ The **communion cups** used to distribute the Precious Blood to the congregation are located in the safe.
 - ✓ The **ablution cup**, a small dish with a lid containing water, it is used to rinse fingers after distribution of Holy Communion. We have two, one is on the sanitizer table, and the other is kept next to the tabernacle. A finger towel is placed next to each ablution cup.
 - ✓ A **lavabo bowl** (finger bowl) is a dish or bowl that is used to collect water when the Priest's hands are washed during Mass. We use a glass dish. They are located in the cabinet above the small refrigerator.
- **Roles**
 - ✓ **Ordinary Minister** of the Eucharist is a Bishop, Priest or Deacon.
 - ✓ **Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist** is an extra lay person that will serve in addition to the Ordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, if there is a need. (*May be abbreviated as EM in this document*)
 - ✓ The **Sacristan** is the person whose responsibility it is to setup for the Mass and to clean up after it is over.
 - ✓ The **Sign-In Coordinator** is responsible for making sure we have enough Extraordinary Ministers, Readers and Altar Servers for the Mass or Service.
- **The Church**
 - ✓ The **narthex** - The gathering space as you enter the church building.
 - ✓ The **nave** - the main part of the church where the congregation sits.
 - ✓ The **sanctuary** is the area in the front of the nave up the steps. It is where the altar is located, as well as the tabernacle, the presider's and other chairs, the ambo, lectern and credence table.
 - ✓ The **tabernacle** is a metal case used to hold consecrated Hosts that were not consumed during Mass. It is directly behind the altar. The keys to the tabernacles are located in the safe. An ablution cup with clean water and a finger towel should be next to the tabernacle.
 - ✓ The **sanctuary candle** – this candle is lit whenever Jesus is present in the tabernacle. It is mounted on the wall near the tabernacle.
 - ✓ The **ambo** is where the Liturgy of the Word is proclaimed.
 - ✓ The **altar** is where the Mass is celebrated.
 - ✓ The **lectern** by the choir is used for announcements and by the music ministry.
 - ✓ The **credence table** is the small table located in an alcove behind the tabernacle. It is used to hold any items used during Mass. There is a drawer in the credence table that should contain a lighter and extra linens. Additional items are put on the credence table for use during Mass.
 - ✓ The **offertory table** or gift table is the small table at the back of the nave which is where we place the gifts to be brought down during Mass.

The Sacristy

- ✓ The **sacristy** is a room where the vestments, church furnishings, sacred vessels, linens, and other treasures are kept. It is where the clergy meet and vest, where the sacristan prepares for Mass and where vessels are purified, if not purified during Mass. We have two sacristies – the vesting or upper sacristy which is located in the Narthex area – it is where the Priests and Deacons vest, and the working or lower sacristy which is located behind the sanctuary – it is where items used during Mass are located. It is where the sacristan would go to setup for Mass.
- ✓ The **sacrarium** is a sink that drains into the ground. The sacrarium is used to take care of any Hosts or any Precious Blood that is not consumable for some reason (i.e. it was spit up, or if the Precious Blood spilled on the floor). Each sacristy contains a sacrarium which is marked. It is the right sink in both sacristies.

➤ The Chapel

The **chapel** is smaller than the main church; it has an altar, tabernacle, sanctuary candle, and ambo. It is used to celebrate daily Mass, for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and for other smaller gatherings. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament starts after the Friday 8:30AM Mass and continues until 10:00AM on Sunday. On Sundays, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who brought Holy Communion to the sick return any extra Hosts to the chapel tabernacle if Mass is in progress in the main church and then purify their pyx in the working/lower sacristy. The key to the chapel tabernacle is kept in the safe. The outside entrance to the chapel is located to the right of the rectory. The working/lower sacristy is down the half flight of stairs in the hall, just inside the doors to the nave.

3. Scheduling

- Each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is responsible for viewing the schedule online. Links to the schedule, roster information and sign-ups are available at the ministry website:
<https://secure.ministryschedulerpro.com/webterminal/login.php?user=mmog>.
- This site is password protected since it contains phone number and email information. A non-password protected schedule is also accessible from the Mary, Mother of God Website.
- Each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is responsible for finding their own replacement if unable to attend an assigned Mass.
- By logging into the website and following the instructions in the tabs of the website, you can submit changes to the information that is on file for you, sign up for Holy Days, or enter information about travel plans or other events that would cause you to be unavailable to serve. You are strongly encouraged to sign up for Holy Day Masses. If you do not sign up, especially for Christmas and Easter, it **does not** mean you will not be assigned, instead it indicates that you have no preference about that Holy Day, unless you have set those dates as unavailable days to serve.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion serving at the 9:00AM Mass may be assigned to bring Holy Communion to the homebound, assisted living facilities or nursing homes. This is a serious assignment that takes extra time and is not easy to fill “on the spot”. It is extremely important to make sure you find a replacement if you cannot make one of these assignments.

4. Dress

- Always dress in appropriate Sunday attire, even if not scheduled to serve. You never know if you may be needed.
- No shorts, short skirts or dresses, jeans, gym sneakers, beach type sandals, low cut or sleeveless tops, spandex, tight or form fitting coverings, T-shirts, etc.
- When fellow parishioners look at you, your attire and attitude should not cause them to be distracted from Jesus.
- If you are serving during daily Mass, your attire may be more casual.

5. Arrival

- If you are the Sacristan, be there 25-30 minutes prior to Mass.
- All other Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion that are serving should be there 10-15 minutes prior to Mass.
- Gather in the narthex outside the vesting/upper sacristy, this way it is easy to determine if everyone scheduled to serve is present.
- If you are not scheduled for the Mass you are attending, stop and check to see if help is needed.
- A replacement should be found from the congregation for any minister not present 5 minutes prior to Mass. Do not expect to serve if you arrive late.
- If you are the sacristan, instructions can be found in the cabinet above the refrigerator in the working/lower sacristy. The instructions are also available for review on the Mary, Mother of God Website.
- If you are not sacristan, but the assigned sacristan has not yet arrived, you should start setting up regardless. The assigned sacristan can take over for you when they arrive. If the assigned sacristan prefers help, it is fine to assist.

6. Mass

➤ Things to do, consider and decide prior to Mass:

- ✓ You should gather in the narthex outside the vesting/upper sacristy, this way it is easy to determine if everyone scheduled to serve is present.
- ✓ Decide with the other Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, which stations you will all be distributing Holy Communion from. Do this well before Mass begins.
- ✓ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion going to any homebound, Nursing Homes, or Assisted Living Centers should gather bulletins and any other handouts.
- ✓ You should wear one of the chains with a large crucifix hanging to the left, just inside the vesting sacristy door. If you have your own, you may wear that.
- ✓ Based on how many Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are gathered, **start looking for substitutes if anyone is not there at least 5 minutes prior to Mass.**
- ✓ In addition to making sure there are enough Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, make sure there is at least one Reader, and at least one Altar Server. If no Readers or Altar Servers have shown up at least 5 minutes prior to Mass, start looking for backups for them as well.
- ✓ You should not serve at Mass in more than one capacity (i.e. music, reader ...) unless there is a desperate need. Seminarians may serve as both Altar Server, as well as EM or Reader since they are in the sanctuary during Mass.
- ✓ If there are Deacons or concelebrating Priests that were not on the schedule, some Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may need to step down. This should be decided prior to the procession. If it is preferred that no one steps down due to heavy attendance, then extra ciboria may be needed.
- ✓ If a Priest is not feeling well, he may prefer to sit down during the distribution of Holy Communion. You should ask if they plan to distribute during Mass, and if not you should pull in another Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from the congregation. In this case, if a Deacon is not present, it may also be necessary for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to be responsible for handing out the vessels.
- ✓ The moments before Mass should be a prayerful time so try to settle everything as early as possible.
- ✓ **There should be no discussion, especially in procession or when in the sanctuary.**
- ✓ The Celebrant will lead a prayer prior to processing.

➤ Entrance Procession order at the start of Mass:

- Altar Server with the Processional Crucifix
 - Additional Altar Servers (may process with candles)
 - Readers
 - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - Deacon(s)
 - Priest Concelebrants (if present)
 - Priest Celebrant
- ✓ When the procession arrives at the altar, the Altar Servers reach the steps and move to the sides, and the Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion pass the pew closest to the sanctuary, then move off to the sides standing in front of the first center pews. This opens the center aisle for the Celebrant/Deacon(s) to approach the steps. They will bow or genuflect, and you should bow at the same time. The Deacon(s) and Priest(s) will then enter the sanctuary and kiss the altar. Once they have kissed the Altar, you may go to your pew.

➤ **Towards the end of the sign of peace:**

All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should approach the steps before the sanctuary to form a line, about 2-3 feet (which is the third tile) from the bottom step. All bow together, and then move to the left side of the sanctuary, sanitize your hands at the small sanitizing table, then go up the steps into the sanctuary. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who will be distributing the Precious Blood should stand closer to the ambo. Once in the sanctuary, stand in a line facing the Altar. You should try to be in place prior to the start of the Lamb of God.

➤ **After receiving Holy Communion:**

The Priest and/or Deacon will hand the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion the vessel they will use, either a ciborium or communion cup and purificator.

➤ **As the Priest is leaving the sanctuary:**

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may proceed to their station.

✠ **Do Not Cross Through the sanctuary**

✠ **Do not enter or leave by the front steps, only the side steps (left or right).**

✠ **You may cross to the other side by going behind the credence table.**

➤ **When distributing the Host, raise the Host and in an audible tone say the words “the Body of Christ”, do not add extra words.** Look to see if the communicant’s hands are out, if so, give them Holy Communion in the hand, otherwise give them Holy Communion in their mouth. If they have their hands crossed in front of their chest and their head is down, this is a sign for a blessing only. You may trace a sign of the cross on their forehead or place your hand on their shoulder and say “May God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. Do not make a sign of the cross as the Priest or Deacon would, whatever action you make it should be discreet.

✓ If you do not have enough Hosts, you may get Hosts from another Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Hosts may also be broken if there are not enough.

✓ If a Host drops:

- The person that dropped it may pick it up and consume it
- Or the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should pick it up and hold it, then when done, give it to the Priest or Deacon and let him know what happened
- If it is not consumable, the Host should be placed in the ablution cup by the tabernacle and poured down the sacrarium after Mass.

➤ **When distributing the Precious Blood, raise the communion cup and in an audible tone say the words “the Blood of Christ”, do not add extra words.** Hand the communicant the communion cup; when you take the communion cup back, hold it firmly by the stem and wipe inside and outside of the rim where the communicant received, then turn the communion cup a quarter turn.

✓ If you do not have enough Precious Blood, you **may not** get more from another communion cup, simply cover the communion cup with your purificator and return to the sanctuary. **Do not** push the purificator into the communion cup, just lay it over the top.

➤ **When your station is done**

✓ First look to see if you may be able to assist elsewhere. There may be a need to bring Holy Communion to parishioners in the back of the Church who cannot approach the altar. The ushers should direct the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion if this is the case.

✓ After distribution of the Precious Blood, cover the communion cup with the purificator, return to the sanctuary by the side steps and hand the communion cup to the Priest or Deacon. If they are occupied, wait. Only if directed to, may you place the communion cup on the altar along with the purificator. The Priest or Deacon may request that you consume any remaining Precious Blood. **You should only consume what remains if directed to do so.**

✓ After distribution of the Host, return to the sanctuary and hand your ciborium to the Deacon or Priest if he is able to receive it. Only if directed to, may you place it on the altar.

- **Leave the sanctuary, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not assist at the altar after the distribution of Holy Communion. Do not combine Hosts from one ciborium to another, do not touch anything on the altar!**
 - ✓ It is recommended that Ministers of Holy Communion that distributed the Host, dip the fingers they used to distribute the Host in the ablution cup located on the small table near the back steps, to rinse off any particles of Host that may remain on their fingers.
 - ✓ Go down the steps at the back of the sanctuary and wait for all other Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to finish. When all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are done, you should all go to the center aisle, face the altar (3rd tile back from bottom step), bow to the altar together, then return to your seat.
- **Dismissal of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** bringing Communion to those who are unable to attend Mass
 - ✓ Before the final blessing, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion that will be bringing Communion to one or more parishioners who were not able to attend Mass, will be asked to approach the altar. Gather all your belongings before you approach. If there is more than one minister, they should approach altar together, bow and stand in the center. The Priest or Deacon will give a blessing and will distribute the pyx(es). Make sure the pyx is securely closed and latched. You do not bow to the altar when leaving since you now have Jesus in your hands. You should not engage in idle talk, you should not return to your seat. You should leave as quickly as possible to avoid being tempted to get into conversation. You are now on a mission to bring Holy Communion to the sick, and this mission should be handled reverently.
 - ✓ No idle talk. You may talk to the people you are bringing Holy Communion to, as this is part of the ministry. Jesus visited the sick too. Just no idle talk to others.
 - ✓ No inappropriate music
 - ✓ No radio or TV
 - ✓ You should be Christ centered
 - ✓ You should bring any handouts, especially the bulletin and any new Catholic Spirit, to the homebound. If going to the nursing homes or Assisted Living Centers, be sure to take a large number of the items being handed out.
- **When Mass is over and the Priest comes down from the sanctuary, the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should stand in front of the first pews, bow when the Priest bows and follow out of the Church in procession:**
 - Altar Server with the Processional Crucifix
 - Altar Servers with candles
 - Readers
 - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Note: If you are serving as sacristan, you may choose not to process out, you may remain behind to begin clean up after the Mass.

 - Deacon(s)
 - Priest Concelebrants (if present)
 - Priest Celebrant
- ✓ If you used one of the crucifixes from the vesting sacristy, do not forget to return it.

7. Purification of Vessels

- **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not be purifying vessels, it is the responsibility of an Instituted Acolyte, Deacon, or Priest.**
- **Ordinary Ministers should purify all vessels if possible.**
- **Only if there is no Ordinary Minister available to purify a vessel, the procedure is as follows:**
 - ✠ When purifying the communion cup first make sure all the Precious Blood is consumed. **It should NOT be poured down the Sacramentum.** When empty, pour in some water and swirl gently to rinse any Precious Blood from the sides, and drink the water mixed with the Precious Blood. Repeat as necessary to consume all traces of Precious Blood, and then dry the communion cup with a purificator.
 - ✠ When purifying pyxes and ciboria, pour water into the vessel, swirl, and then consume in the same manner as the communion cup. When done the vessel should be dried with a purificator. If you have a number of vessels to purify, you may pour water in one, swirl the water and pour that water into the next, swirl and so on. You should repeat at least once. You should try to end with the water in a vessel that is easy to drink from. When done, dry all vessels with a purificator.
 - ✠ Under **no circumstances** during purification, should anything consumable be poured down the Sacramentum. Only if the Eucharist is spit up or is unconsumable for some other reason, should it be poured down a sacramentum.
 - ✠ Prior to putting away vessels, wash them with clear water, then dry with a purificator.
 - ✠ Put all vessels away when done (see section 2 for locations). When putting a pyx away, leave it open so it can dry thoroughly. Some pyxes have rusted due to them being closed with some residual water in them.

8. Bringing Holy Communion to the Sick

- **The two drawers to the right of the sink in the working/lower sacristy contain:**
 - ✓ The pyxes
 - Use the largest pyx for Foothill Acres Nursing Home unless the assignment will be shared. If shared use the two good sized flatter pyxes.
 - Use the next largest pyx for Brookdale/All American Assisted Living Centers
 - Any of the small pyxes may be used for bringing Holy Communion to the homes, or you may choose to use your own pyx for this.
 - ✓ There are burses for the pyxes in the drawers (small pouches, if you would like to use one).
- **The counter to the right of the sink should have the tray that the pyxes are placed on to be brought down with the gifts.** It **must** have a corporal on it, with the filled pyxes placed on the corporal. The lids should be closed, but do not have to be latched shut. The Celebrant or Deacon will need to open each pyx prior to the consecration.
- **It is helpful to gather bulletins, and any other handouts ahead of time.**
- **Before the final blessing, the Priest or Deacon should call you up, and give you a blessing.** Gather your belongings before you approach the altar. He will hold out the pyx(es) and you should take your pyx. You should make sure it is closed and latched. You should leave the Nave and exit the Church immediately. **Do not** bow to the altar since you now have Jesus in your hands. **Do not** return to your pew.
- **Prior to leaving the Church building, make sure you have:**
 - your pyx
 - enough bulletins and any other handouts
 - a burse for your pyx if you would like one
 - a “Communion to the Sick” guide, if needed. There are copies in the top drawer in the sign-in area and the guide is on the MMOG website in the Extraordinary Minister section:
<https://marymotherofgod.org/documents/2022/10/CommunionToTheHomebound.pdf>
- **Remember to be reverent since you are holding Jesus** - no idle conversation, no inappropriate music, no radio or tv, no side errands, ...
- **Follow the Communion to the Sick procedure in the next section.**
 - ✓ Feel free to spend time during your visits. You may be one of very few people they have the opportunity to speak with.
 - ✓ Some things to consider when bringing Holy Communion to the Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Centers
 - if there are many rooms to visit, you might consider omitting the optional elements otherwise the visit will run too long and may become disruptive of the home’s schedule.
 - Both Brookdale and All American watch the 10:30AM Streamed Mass
 - You may also want to omit the optional elements in the memory impaired units
 - If a person is sleeping, you may call to them gently, but do not force them to wake. It may be that they had a difficult night and are just now able to sleep. You may say a prayer for them.
 - If a person is on a feeding tube, or cannot receive for any other reason, you may say a prayer with them.

➤ **Taking care of your pyx when done**

- ✓ You should return remaining Hosts to the tabernacle
 - Enter the church building by the chapel door.
 - Go down the steps, through the doors to the working/lower sacristy.
 - Get the chapel tabernacle key from the safe.
 - Go to the chapel, place your pyx on the altar then open the tabernacle, genuflect.
 - Empty your Hosts in the ciborium in the tabernacle.
 - Genuflect, close then lock the tabernacle.
 - Return to the working/lower sacristy with your empty pyx and the tabernacle key.
 - Return the tabernacle key to the safe.
 - Purify the pyx (see section 7), **only if** no Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion is present.
 - Put the pyx into the pyx drawer, **leaving the lid open.**
- ✓ If there are remaining Hosts, but the church is locked:
 - Try to see if you can get into the church by knocking on the door of the rectory.
 - You may call the Pastor: 908-874-8220 or 908-874-8088, for help getting access to the church.
 - If you cannot gain access, you should **immediately** consume any remaining Hosts and purify the pyx as described in section 7 as soon as you can get access to water. Try to return the pyx to the church or rectory before the next weekend Masses, however we do have extra pyxes if it is a problem.
- ✓ If the pyx belongs to you and is empty, purify the pyx as described in section 7.

Communion to the Sick Procedure

The basic elements of what to say and do when bringing Holy Communion to the sick (required elements are **bold, underlined, marked (Required) and highlighted in purple**). In those sections an asterisk is next to the minimum required elements containing suggested verbiage:

† **(Required) Opening Prayers**

- ✓ You should open the pyx as you start so that the Blessed Sacrament is exposed during this service.

***All:** *(Making a Sign of the Cross)* In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Minister: The peace of the Lord be with you always

All: And also with you.

† **(Optional) You may have a penitential rite:**

Minister: My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

- ✓ *You may choose either:*

Minister: Lord Jesus, You healed the sick, Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Minister: Lord Jesus, You forgave sinners, Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

Minister: Lord Jesus, You give us Yourself, to heal us and to bring us strength, Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

- ✓ **OR** *you may lead in the following prayer:*

I confess to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned

In my thoughts and in my words. In what I have done and in what I have failed to do.

Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.

Therefore, I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen

- ✓ *Conclude the penitential rite with:*

Minister: May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

† **(Optional) Liturgy of the Word**

- ✓ *You may use the missalette to read the Gospel reading for the day, a reading of your choice,*

Or from USCCB: <https://bible.usccb.org/daily-bible-reading>

Or the following from Jn 6:51:

Minister: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

All: *(Making sign of cross on forehead, lips and heart)* Glory to You, O Lord.

Minister: Jesus says: "I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

† **(Optional) General Intercessions**

- ✓ *You may invite the people present to lift up anyone or any intentions in prayer that they would like to*
- ✓ *Or you may say something simple like:*

Minister: We lift up to You, Lord God, all of our intentions for healing in mind, body, soul and spirit of all present here and for all those that we hold dear in our hearts.

(You can engage those present to see if they have any intentions, lifting up prayers as needed, conclude with...)

We lift up all of these intentions to you Lord God, in the mighty name of Jesus.

All: Amen

† **(Required) the Lord's Prayer**

***Minister: Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:**

***All:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

† **(Required) Holy Communion**

- ✓ *Distribute Holy Communion to all who would like to receive. Some communicants may not be able to receive a whole Host. You may break off a piece for them. Some may not be able to receive at all (those on liquid diets for example), you may say a quiet prayer over them.*

Minister: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

*** Minister: The body of Christ**

***Communicant: Amen**

† **(Optional) Prayer after Holy Communion**

Minister: Let us pray

All-Powerful God, we thank you for the nourishment you give us through your holy gift.

Pour out your Spirit upon us and in the strength of this food from heaven, keep us single minded in your service.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

All: Amen.

† **(Required) Concluding Rite**

- ✓ Conclude with either:

Minister: May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us;

(Making a sign of the Cross) **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

All: Amen.

- ✓ *Or:*

***All:** *(Making a Sign of the Cross)* In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

9. Frequently Asked Questions

1) What do you do if the Host falls on the floor during Mass?

- The communicant may pick up the Host and consume it
- Or you must pick up the Host, hold on to it until after distribution of Holy Communion is complete, and
 - ❖ If it is consumable give it to the Priest or Deacon, letting them know what happened.
 - ❖ If it is not consumable, place the Host in the ablution cup by the tabernacle for it to dissolve. Make sure the sacristan knows to take care of this after Mass is over.

2) What do you do if the Precious Blood spills on the floor?

You cover it with a purificator, and when you are done distributing Holy Communion, you soak up the Precious Blood and wash the area with water using purificators. You may continue to distribute the Precious Blood if there is more in your communion cup by using one of the extra purificators from in the credence table, however position yourself so no one would step where the spill is. If there are no purificators in the credence table, you may use the one from the altar. If you use one from the credence table, make sure to replace it after Mass, if you use the Celebrant's purificator, make sure to return it as soon as possible.

3) When is it appropriate to bow to the altar?

During Mass the focus is on the altar. You should bow when you approach and leave the altar provided you are not holding Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. For example, when you leave the altar with a ciborium to bring Holy Communion to someone in the back of the church and then return, you would not bow, or when you leave or return with a pyx that contains the Blessed Sacrament.

4) When is it appropriate to genuflect?

Outside of Mass, the focus is on Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament within the tabernacle, rather than the altar. If the Blessed Sacrament is present in the tabernacle, then you would genuflect towards the tabernacle as you enter or leave the nave or chapel, before entering your pew, after opening the tabernacle, before closing the tabernacle and when passing in front of the tabernacle. If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for Adoration, you should go down on both knees before Him. You would not genuflect if you were holding Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

5) What do you do if you are visiting the sick and you do not feel that someone understands that they are going to receive Jesus?

- If their loved ones are present, you should try to honor their wishes. Sometimes a loved one or caregiver may spark the memory of the communicant. You may ask for their assistance.
- You should try to show them the Host, sometimes visually seeing Jesus brings back their memory.
- You should **not** try to force the Blessed Sacrament into someone's mouth. You should simply say a prayer with that person.

6) In the nursing homes, who do I give Holy Communion to?

Go to the front desk and ask for a list of Catholic residents, or have an employee walk around with you, you may give Holy Communion to residents that have assembled for the Communion service and those in their rooms who are on the list or who you are directed to by the nursing home employee. If employees, visitors or residents request Holy Communion, they may receive.

7) What do you do if someone spits out the Host when I bring Holy Communion to the homebound or Nursing Homes, or it becomes unconsumable by some other means?

You collect it in something, preferably a small cup; something that does not dissolve in water. Take it back to Church with you, then dissolve it in water and pour it down the sacrarium.

8) How do I know where to go when bringing Holy Communion to the homebound?

The directions to each home are on the sheets in the Sign-In Area. The sheets are on the counter. There is a copy for each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to take with them when going to the homebound.

There is a phone number for each home as well, so if the directions are not clear, you may call. We follow the full Communion to the Homebound procedure in the homes.

9) How do I get to Brookdale Assisted Living? **Address: 600 Auten Rd - Phone: (908) 431-1300**

1. Turn right out of the Church parking lot
2. Right onto New Amwell
3. Left onto Auten (first light)
4. Brookdale is on the left, just before the light at Amwell
5. Communicants gather in the foyer area and someone from Brookdale will point out who should receive. We follow the full Communion to the Homebound procedure here.
6. The person who helped you will then take you to the Memory Care unit. Someone working in that unit will tell you who in there should receive Holy Communion. We do the short form of the Communion to the Homebound procedure here. They will also help you exit the unit once you are done.
7. There may be some residents who are not able to leave their rooms. The front desk will have that list.

10) How do I get to All American Assisted Living? **Address: 351 Route 206 - Phone: (908) 829-0523**

1. Turn right out of the Church parking lot
2. Left onto New Amwell
3. Left onto Rte 206
4. All American is on the right, just after the light at Hamilton
5. Someone will show you to the TV room where most communicants are present. We follow the full Communion to the Homebound procedure here unless they are in the middle of watching the Mass. Then do the short procedure.
6. The person who helped you to the TV room will then take you to the Memory Care/Respite unit and will tell you who in there should receive Holy Communion. We do the short form of the Communion to the Homebound procedure here. We usually have some rooms to visit in here as well. They will also help you exit the unit once you are done.
7. There may be some residents in the main building who are not able to leave their rooms. The front desk will have that list.

11) How do I get to Foothill Acres Nursing Home? **Address: 39 E. Mountain Road - Phone: (908) 829-0523**

1. Turn right out of the Church parking lot
2. Right onto New Amwell
3. Left onto Beekman
4. Right onto South Branch Road (at the municipal building)
5. Left onto East Mountain Road (at the corner mall)
6. Foothills is on the right
7. There are 4 wings to distribute in. First, pick up the binder with the list of Catholic residents from the front desk. It is helpful to grab a couple of disinfectant wipes from the counter. It is also helpful to grab a small plastic cup from the first nurses cart you pass to have on hand in the event someone spits out a Host. Take the elevator to the second floor, to the right is the 300s wing. Visit the rooms in that wing, then the activities room there, they will have a number of residents gathered. Next go to wing on the left side of the elevators, the 400s wing. First visit the activities room on that side, then the rooms. Next go to first floor and visit the re-hab room and see if anyone in there needs Holy Communion, then the Magnolia unit, the 200s wing, where the Memory Care patients are (the codes to enter and leave are in the book), most residents will be in the lunch rooms, an aide will point out who should receive, and finally, the sub-acute unit, the 100s wing. In the sub-acute unit, go to the rooms then finish with the lunch room. We do the short form of the Communion to the Homebound procedure in all locations.

12) What do I do if I get back from bringing Holy Communion to the sick and the Church is locked?

- You may see if there is someone in the Rectory that may help you, you will need a main door and sacristy key

- You may try to call the pastor – 908-874-8220 or 908-874-8088, for help getting access to the church
- If no one is available, you should consume any Hosts, then purify the pyx at home, and return it as soon as possible.

13) What if I am going to the homes and no one comes to the door and the house does not look empty?

- First, you should try to call their number to see if they just could not hear you at the door
- Second, you should try to call the emergency number listed for them, if one exists
- Third, try to let someone in the rectory know – you can call 908-874-8220, and follow prompts.
- Last, you should call the police and let them know the situation

14) What if there are plenty of consecrated Hosts for the Mass, but not enough ciboria for the number of ministers/Deacons/Priests?

You may place empty ciboria on the credence table, if they are available. You should inform the Priest that you are doing this. Just before distributing Holy Communion, consecrated Hosts will be moved to the empty ciboria. If there are no empty ciboria, and there are more Ministers of Holy Communion than expected, the lid of a ciborium may be used.

15) What is intincture and is it allowed?

Intincture is the practice of dipping the Host into the Precious Blood. Only Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Deacons and Priests, may intinct for distribution. It is not permitted by EMs or Communicants. If someone attempts to intinct, you should cover the communion cup and quietly tell them that it is not allowed.

16) Do I give the Precious Blood to children, or to someone that looks like they may drop the communion cup?

- If it looks like a communicant is having difficulty, you may continue holding the communion cup and assist a communicant in receiving from the communion cup
- Children may receive the Precious Blood.

17) What should I do if someone comes up during the distribution of Holy Communion with a pyx and asks for a Host to bring home?

You ask them to speak to the Priest after Mass. No one should ever take Jesus back to their pew. There is a time and procedure for obtaining a Host to bring to the sick. If a person is mandated to bring Holy Communion to the sick, they should speak to the Priest ahead of time. The proper procedure is to have their pyx containing unconsecrated hosts brought to the altar along with the gifts, and prior to the final blessing, the Priest should call them up, give them their pyx and a blessing and send them to distribute Holy Communion. They should leave the Church at that time. Although not preferred, a mandated person may receive a consecrated Host after Mass is over to bring to the sick.

18) May someone who is not an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion bring Holy Communion to someone at home, or serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at Mass?

The Priest has the authority to mandate a person to serve for a special occasion. This is not a long-term mandate such as the 2-year mandate that comes from the Bishop, it is only for the time of the special occasion.

19) If I know the name of a person that I am going to distribute Holy Communion to, may I address them by name?

It is not acceptable. You are not allowed to add extra words. You should not call extra attention to one communicant over another. It also avoids embarrassment if you know someone and cannot recall their name at that moment. Smiling as you distribute is welcoming and allowed. This is a joyful moment.

20) What should I do if someone comes up during the distribution of Holy Communion and has their hands crossed over their chest? May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion give blessings?

This is the sign to be given a blessing instead of Holy Communion. It is not preferred for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to do this during Mass, however it is permitted in our diocese. Extraordinary

Ministers of Holy Communion may be asked to give a blessing either in during the distribution of Holy Communion or when visiting the sick. You may simply trace a sign of the cross on their forehead or place your hand on their shoulder and say something appropriate such as “May God bless you; Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. Your action should be discreet, it should not look like the blessing given by the Priest or Deacon.

21) What should I do if someone does something wrong when receiving Holy Communion?

It is **never** appropriate during the distribution of Holy Communion to make a scene. If you know the person involved you may speak to them afterwards if you are comfortable doing so, or you should speak to the Priest or Deacon after Mass.

22) What should I do if I know someone is not in a state of grace? Do I give them Holy Communion?

You may not deny Holy Communion to anyone coming to receive. You may, however, if your relationship deems it acceptable, talk to them outside of Church about your concerns.

23) What should I do if I see someone return to their pew after receiving Holy Communion, but they did not consume the Host?

If they are in ear shot, you can quietly let them know they need to consume the Host. If out of ear shot, you should not chase after them, but you should note who it is and keep an eye on them. You may either speak with them after the distribution of Holy Communion, after Mass or ask the Priest or Deacon to speak to them.