

Guidelines for Communion Ministers

(August 2016)



Thank you for agreeing to serve the parish in this way. You will note the name change (from Eucharistic Ministers to Communion Ministers). The Church's guidelines want parishes to make it clear that priests and bishops are technically the "Eucharistic Ministers". Deacons, and officially installed adult acolytes, are "Ordinary" Communion Minister; all others are considered "Extraordinary" Communion Ministers. We will be using the title "Communion Ministers" or "CM" as shorthand for all that.

It is important to review each year the expectations and procedures for those who help distribute communion. The Eucharist is the heart of our worship and you are public witnesses to its meaning. It is important that this service not become merely routine but continually challenge us to deepen our faith, our trust in God, and our appreciation for the Eucharist. One of the chief concerns of the new General Instruction on the Roman Missal (G.I.R.M.) is that we keep the sacredness of the action we are participating in, foremost in our minds.



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DRESS AND DECORUM

1. As a public witness to the Eucharist, our behavior and dress should reflect a real respect for the role we perform. That is why the Church asks that those who are not living the Catholic faith not come forward for this ministry. This does not mean we have to be perfect, only that in general our lives conform to Catholic principles. It is expected as well that you will be a registered member of the parish. At times, for various personal reasons, one goes through a period of uncertainty as to one's relationship with the Church. If that occurs, it is best to take some time off from exercising this role of Communion Minister.
2. Dress should be appropriate for Sundays: no tennis shoes, flip-flops, jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, and so on. For men we ask that dress slacks and shirt be worn, preferably with a sport coat (except in summer); tie optional. For women we ask that modest dresses or skirts and blouses be worn, or full-length dress pants (no Capri-style) and blouse. Dress as an example for the rest of the community.
3. If you are signing up to be a substitute, please be dressed properly. We realize that sometimes you may be asked to be a substitute and you feel you would have dressed differently if you would have known you would be in this public role. You should feel free to decline, if you are not properly dressed to serve. In exceptional circumstances, when we need emergency CMs, a different standard of dress might be applicable.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. The length of term for a CM is one year. There will be annual opportunities to review your commitment and to sign-up for another year. We deeply appreciate those who serve faithfully year after year. On the other hand, if your service has been irregular, please be confident of improvement before signing up for another year.
2. Do you have to receive under both forms, if you are a CM? You are encouraged to, in order to witness to the full sign/symbol of eating and drinking. But there can be good reasons not to (e.g. having a cold). You have freedom to use your discretion.
3. What if someone wants to dip the host into the cup? The Church discourages this, since it tends to signal a person taking communion for himself/herself, rather than being offered communion as a gift. But please don't stop a person or make them feel bad about it. If it becomes common, then let the pastor know.
4. Distributors of the cups: You need to let go of the cup after you offer it. If you hang onto the cup at the same time as the person attempts to receive it, then spills are more likely.
5. Thank you for your reverent and attentive care in performing this ministry. It helps all of us receive communion more reverently.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

1. We check-in by the sacristy of the Church in the room that doubles as the Reconciliation Room. Arrive 10 minutes early and sign-in at the podium. If you are subbing for someone specific, sign-in your name and then list the initials of the person you are subbing for in the column on the right titled "Subbing For". If you are not scheduled but can be a substitute, please approach the Mass captain near the sign-in room before Mass and let them know. The Mass captain will make sure there are 5 CMs (7 at the 9:30 a.m. Mass and on special occasions). **Please note:** If you arrive late, a substitute may have already been found. Please arrive at least 10 minutes early.
2. Mass Captain Responsibilities: There is a captain assigned for each Mass. Ordinarily all ministers of communion will be assigned the role of 'captain' at one time or another, on a rotating basis.

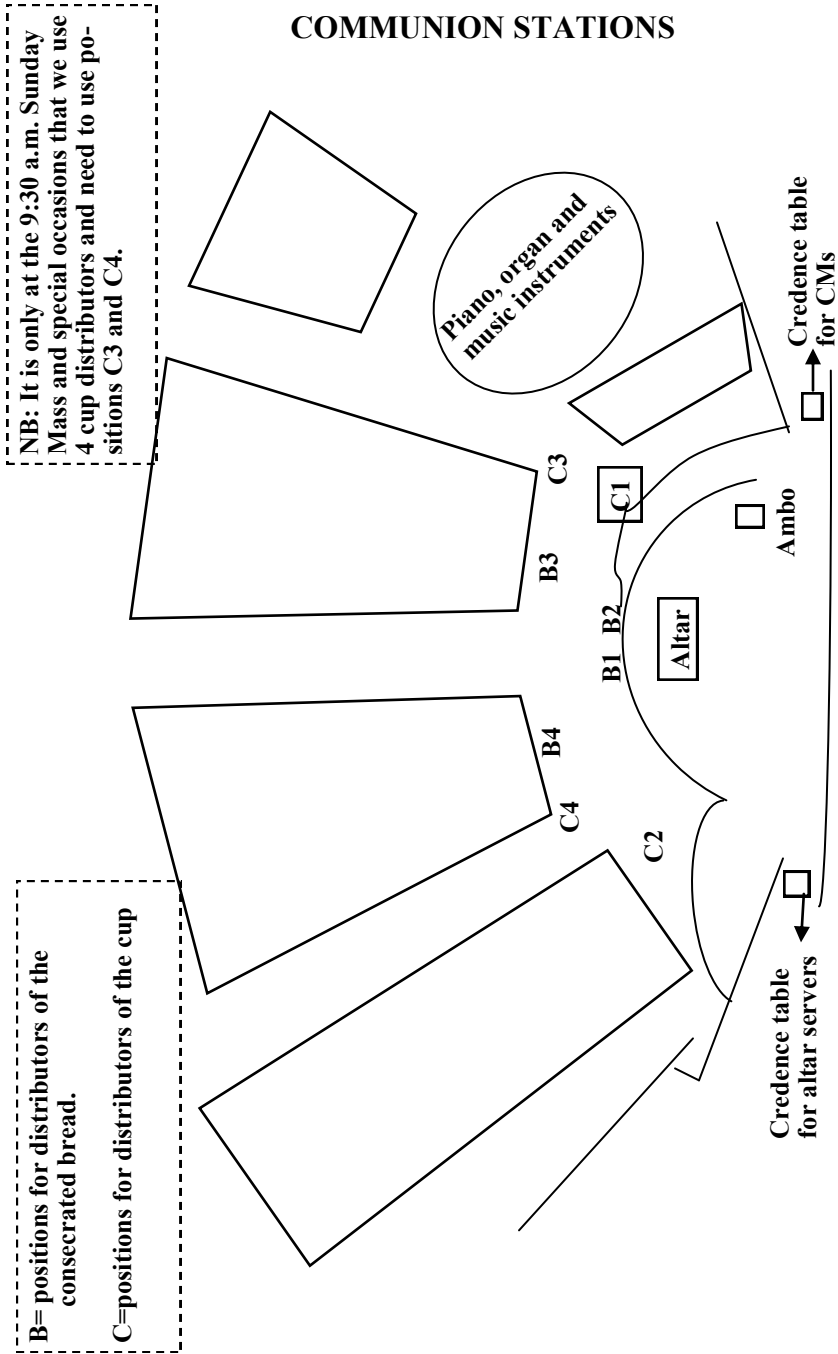
The captain should arrive at least 15 minutes early. He or she will stand in the back and wait to make sure that all assigned Extraordinary Ministers of Communion have arrived and signed in. Five minutes before Mass, if there is a need for more CMs, the captain will ask others to fill in. It is helpful when you let the Mass captain know before Mass, if you are available as an emergency substitute.

If a captain cannot be present at their assigned Mass, they are asked to call another CM for that Mass not just as a substitute but also to assume the role of the Mass captain.

If vessels have not been cleaned by the priest or deacon after communion on the altar, the Mass captain will be responsible for cleaning up the dishes/cups after Mass in the sacristy.

3. Sit with your family anywhere in the church. It might be most convenient to be toward the front half of the church, or at the edge of a row.

COMMUNION STATIONS



SUBSTITUTES

Our greatest challenge with the whole area of ministers of communion is faithful fulfillment of assignments. It is not fair to assume that someone will fill in if you don't show up. **If you cannot make it, get a substitute.**

1. You must first try to find a substitute or switch with someone. If you cannot find a substitute or switch with someone, then call the captain of your assigned Mass. The captain is the name with an asterisk on the schedule. This will allow the captain to know beforehand how many people are needed and will be able to ask for help as people arrive.
2. If you are substituting for someone, let the Mass captain know the name of the person you are a substitute for.
3. Questions or concerns can be directed to Mary Ann Klakulak (586-781-9338). Schedules will be available either by email (at your request) or near the sacristy prior to the start of the new schedule. The schedule is also available online at www.ssjohnandpaul.org. Please listen for the announcement.
4. Substituting for the holidays such Christmas and Easter are a big concern. We have sign-ups in the hallway of the church. Please consider signing up early.
5. Any concerns about special schedules should be directed to Mary Ann Klakulak, who will forward them to the scheduler. If you lose your phone list of CMs or your schedule, please call the parish office (586-781-9010) and we will send you a new one.

the time to try to teach them differently. Occasionally you will also get an adult who does that, because that is how some priest taught them. Again, bless them if they come up with arms crossed, even though that is not really the best practice for communion, but you do not bless a child just because he/she is coming forward with their older siblings or with an adult.

11. CM's should bring their remaining consecrated hosts to the area at the base of the tabernacle where only one of the CM's will collect the hosts that are left and give them to Father who will be putting all the extra hosts back in the ciborium. The priest will take them to the tabernacle. Father will genuflect and then close the tabernacle door. The CM's will then take the empty plates to the sacristy.

CLEAN-UP

1. If vessels are not going to be cleaned by the priest or deacon, take the cups to the sacristy and consume (or have another CM or usher consume) the remaining contents. Put the cup on the counter, covered by the purificator. **Do not ever pour the consecrated wine down the sacrarium (sink).** Please do not clean the vessels at this time. The Mass captain is responsible for cleaning the vessels after Mass.
2. If there are small fragments from the hosts on the plates, scrape them into one of the cups. Add a little water and consume the drop or two of wine in the cup. The plates can be dry wiped and placed in the cupboard over the sacristy sink. The cups are washed with hot water and soap (found under the sink). Dry the dishes, clean up the counter area and put the soiled linen in the hamper that is located in the servers closet.

4. If a deacon is scheduled, he is automatically one of the communion ministers and the schedule has been adjusted for that.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

1. The ministers of communion will come up around the altar area during the Greeting of Peace, after you have greeted those nearest you. It is best to finish your exchanges of peace, before approaching the altar. As the CMs approach, they make a bow toward the altar and then go up the steps/ramp and line up on either side behind the altar.
2. The altar servers will be bringing up the cups with purificators and the distribution plates (ciboria). The Communion Minister is not responsible.
3. In case extra purificators (or cups or dishes) are needed they can be found in the credence table locate on the choir side.
 - **Father will bring the Ciborium from the Tabernacle with extra hosts that may be needed.**
 - Depending on the presider, you will consume your communion after the presider has consumed his communion. When presented with communion (both the consecrated bread and wine) you are asked to 'make a slight bow of the head' and then say 'Amen' as a sign of reverence and as an example to the rest of the community. The presider will then give the cup to two ministers - one on each side (at 9:30 Mass and for special occasions four CM's and four cups are needed). The CM's on the altar will continue to offer the wine to the altar servers and other CM's who will be passing out the hosts. These CM's then become the ministers of the wine for all of communion.
 - The other CM's, who do not have the cups, will receive the ciboria (plates) with the hosts. Everyone will then go to their open station (see diagram). Remain standing in those positions because Father (and one CM with the cup of wine) will first be approaching the very elderly or people with walkers/canes in the front and back rows to receive communion. Ushers will be directing Father on their behalf. They will tell you and hold the other members of the congregation back until they receive.

When Father returns to the front of the altar, the rest of the community will be directed, by the ushers, to begin approaching to receive communion. If Fr Ron has Mass, it will be necessary for two of the CM's (one with hosts and one with wine) to approach those unable to come forward.

- Please allow sufficient space between the distributor of the hosts and the cup so as not to cause a back-up on the aisle. **C1 person:** Move back when you notice that it is getting crowded with those wanting to receive the cup. There is not a lot of room because of the organ and the choir area.
- 4. To avoid cross-contamination all gluten free hosts should be in separate pyxes and given to the communicant along with the Communion Ministers. The pyxes must be placed in the tray and not in the ciborium. Gluten free hosts will be given out by Father, so those who have requested a gluten-free host will know which minister to approach to receive that particular host.
- 5. When you offer the host or cup, say "The body (blood) of Christ," holding the host or cup out in front of the person. Remember: the focus is on an exchange of faith. Your saying "The body/blood of Christ" is your statement of faith on behalf of the whole community. You are asking for a response of faith ("Amen. Yes, I believe and will live it.") The focus is on the faith that must be present. If someone does not say "Amen," please say the "Amen" for them. Some say "receive the body of Christ", or some may want to mention the person's name when offering the host or cup. This is not appropriate because that puts the emphasis on the passive reception of communion. It is not so much that we are receiving the body of Christ, as it is that we believe this to be the body of Christ and are willing to become the body of Christ. The church encourages people to make a slight bow of the head before stepping forward to receive so as not to minimize this important exchange of faith.
When wiping the cup, open the purificator — rotate the cup and purificator each time someone receives.
- 6. If the consecrated host drops, pick it up and place the purificator on the area of the floor where it fell. Place the host on the cor-

poral on the altar and cover with a purificator - Father will consume it. If the host fell out of someone's mouth, wrap it in the purificator and place it on the tray on the altar. (After Mass, Father or the CM will break it into pieces and flush it through the sacrarium.) Then get a clean purificator from the credence table on the choir side of the altar and return to your station. After the distribution of communion, Father will perform an ablution prayer over the spot where the host fell. If the consecrated wine spills on the steps, simply wipe it and cover with the purificator. If it is a spill on the carpet, leave the purificator over the spill and go to the choir side credence table and get another purificator.

- 7. If you are running low on the consecrated bread, go straight to the altar and take as much as might be needed from the ciborium. Ordinarily you do not have to break any hosts in half. If doing so for a few allows you to finish communion, then that is acceptable. If it looks like breaking a few hosts will not suffice, then use the consecrated hosts in the ciborium on the altar. We will always try to have the proper number of hosts available at each Mass. If you run out of the consecrated wine, simply go to the sacristy.
- 8. Ordinarily, the cantor and music ministers will all receive by coming to one of the communion stations. One of them might have a pyx so that an extra host can be reserved to distribute to the organist at the end of communion.
- 9. If someone comes forward requesting communion to take with them, it should only be placed in a pyx, never a tissue or makeshift container. If they forgot their pyx, gently tell them to see the priest or pastoral minister after Mass and assure them that they will be given a proper pyx and the communion necessary. You don't repeat "the body of Christ" as you place the hosts in the pyx.
- 10. If a child comes forward who does not receive communion, you do not automatically bless them. The Mass has a blessing and it comes at the end, as we are dismissed. Rather, smile at the children or nod at them to acknowledge them. However, if someone comes up with their arms crossed, because that is how they've learned to get a blessing, go ahead and bless them. The pastor will address the issue in ongoing catechesis. Communion is not