

Guidelines for Communion Ministers

(October 2019)



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 Ministers, and all others are considered "Extraordinary" 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 that 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.

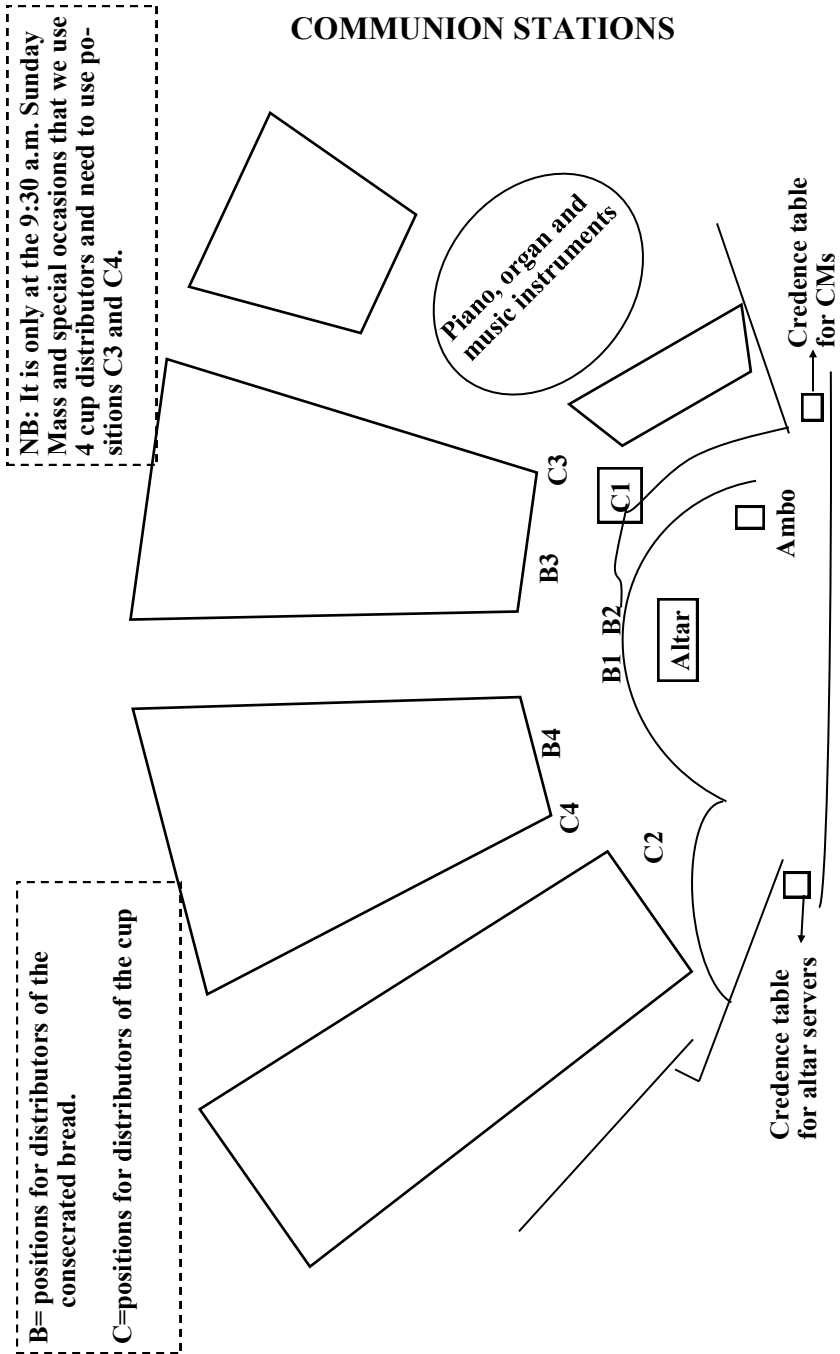
3. Any concerns about special schedules should be directed to Mary Ann Klakulak, who will forward them to the scheduler. If you lose your phone list of CMs or your schedule, please call the parish office (586-781-9010) and we will send you a new one. It is also available on line at our website.

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. Please do not 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 at the podium next to the reconciliation room. Arrive 10 minutes early and sign-in. 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 CM's at the 9:30 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 CM's have arrived and signed in. Five minutes before Mass, if there is a need for more CM's, 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.
 - The responsibility of the Captain is to make sure you give crosses to the CM's who will be handing out communion. That is how the priest knows who to give the plate with hosts to.
 - The Mass Captain is responsible for assigning someone to go with Father to serve parishioners who cannot walk up to communion. (Someone also needs to be assigned to take communion to the Choir during the 9:30 a.m. mass.)
 - 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.
 - The Mass Captain will be responsible for cleaning up the dishes/cups after Mass in 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 cups. 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 with towels, not purificators, clean up the counter area and put the soiled linen in the hamper that is located in the server's closet.

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 do not 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, 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.

pastor will address the issue in ongoing catechesis. Communion is not 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 priest at the altar. Do not combine hosts with the other CM's – each CM approaches Father on the altar. Father will combine them and take them to the tabernacle. Father will genuflect and then close the tabernacle door. The CM's will then take the empty plates back to the sacristy. (If Fr. Ron has mass, only one of the CM's will collect the hosts that are left and place the extra hosts in the ciborium and place them in the tabernacle. Please genuflect and then close the tabernacle door. The CM will then take the empty plates to the sacristy.)

Fr. Ron has Mass, one of the CM's will collect the hosts that are left and place the extra hosts in the ciborium and place them in the tabernacle. Please genuflect and then close the tabernacle door. The CM will then take the empty plates to 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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

1. The ministers of communion will come up around the altar area . 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 and dishes) are needed they can be found in the credence table located 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 the 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, and are wearing the cross, will receive the ciboria (plates) with the hosts. Remain standing on the altar while Father (and one CM with the cup of wine) will first serve the parishioners who cannot walk to 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 CM's on the altar waiting will go to their position (See Diagram) to distribute the hosts and wine. The rest of the community will be directed, by the ushers, to begin approaching to receive communion. If Fr. Ron Sayes has mass, it will be necessary for two of the CM's (one with hosts and one with the 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 back-up on the aisles. '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 low gluten hosts should be in a separate dish and given to the communicant along with the Communion Ministers. The dish must be placed in the tray and not in the ciborium. Low gluten hosts will be given out by Father, so those who have requested a low gluten host will know to approach Father 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. You are saying "The body/blood of Christ." This 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 corporal on the altar and cover with a purificator – Father will consume. If the host fell out of someone's mouth, wrap it in the purificator and place 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 all 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 of 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, go to the sacristy.

8. Cantor now comes to the altar with the communion ministers. He/she may 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 make-shift container. If they forgot their pyx, gently tell them to see a staff member or the priest after Mass and assure them that they will be given a proper pyx and the communion necessary. You do not 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 need to 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 have learned to get a blessing, go ahead and bless them. The