

St. Agnes Parish

West Chester, PA



Extraordinary Minister Manual

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Greeting from Pastor

Dear Friends,

I am most grateful for your dedicated service to St. Agnes Parish in your role as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. There is no doubt that each and every one of you already lead busy familial and professional lives. This makes your sacrifice of time and talent all the more beautiful and beneficial. Please accept my deepest gratitude for your continual excellence in dedicated service to our parishioners.

St. Maximilian Kolbe said that if angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: the Blessed Eucharist. What a mystery it truly is that just like Jesus came into the world not in power and dominion but exposed in a manger, so too, Jesus continues to come into the world exposed in the simple elements of bread and wine. Still even further, in some way we are all called to minister to Him in the Sacramental presence, like Mary and Joseph did in the stable. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion does no less as he or she faithfully guards and distributes the Eucharist to the community.

Just as the Church is a pilgrim Church on a journey, each one of us is on a personal spiritual journey. As you begin or continue this great service, know that I keep each of you in my prayers and am tremendously grateful for your work.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Fr. Bill Donovan

General Principles

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops, priests, or deacons. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, “the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may also depute suitable faithful for this single occasion (GIRM 162).”

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. In all matters they should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop (*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America*, NDRHC, no. 28). When recourse is had to Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, especially in the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, their number should not be increased

beyond what is required for the orderly and reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord. In all matters such Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop.

All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine. Should there be any mishap—as when, for example, the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice—then the affected “area . . . should be washed and the water poured into the *sacrarium* [*GIRM*, 280].” (NDRHC, 29).

Dignity of the Eucharist

*Catechism of the Catholic Church
#1323 - #1347*

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'

The Eucharist – Source and Summit of Ecclesial Life

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."

"The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both

of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit."

Finally, by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.

In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."

The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist

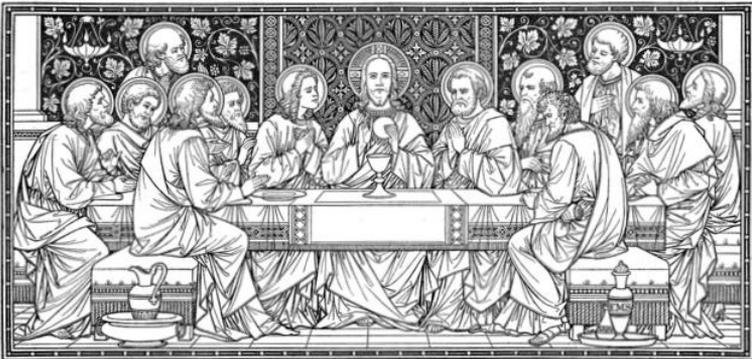
The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity:

- The gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions;*
- The liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.*

The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship"; The Eucharistic table set for us is the

table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.

Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table “he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.”



Parish Procedures for Sunday Mass

Before Mass:

1. *Arrive to Mass 10 minutes early*
2. *Sit in the first pew in the middle section of the St. Joseph side of Church*
3. *Prepare yourself spiritually to enter into the mystery of the Eucharist*

During Mass:

1. *Model "full, conscious, and active participation" during the Mass*
2. *During the Sign of Peace Extraordinary Ministers should move into the sanctuary, make a simple bow to the altar, and proceed to the St. Joseph side of the altar*
 - a. *It is not necessary to form a line in the front of the sanctuary and bow together. Each person should enter the sanctuary, bow individually, and move to the side of the altar*
3. *The priest or deacon will distribute Holy Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers. Afterwards, they will hand the ciboria to the ministers*
 - a. *The Precious Blood will be distributed to the Extraordinary Ministers only during Masses when all congregants are offered the Precious Blood*
4. *The Extraordinary ministers, upon reception of the ciborium, immediately move to their stations*

- a. *Care should be taken to hold your right hand over top the ciborium in order to ensure that no hosts fall out. Likewise, the purificator should be held over top of communion cups when in motion*
 - b. *Holy Communion should not be distributed by the Extraordinary Ministers until the priest has begun distributing himself*
5. *To distribute Holy Communion, make eye contact with the communicant, elevate the host slightly between your thumb and first finger, and in a clear voice say, "The Body of Christ"*
 - a. *The communicant has the right to receive the Body of Christ in their hands or on their tongue*
6. *To distribute the Precious Blood, elevate the communion cup slightly when the communicant arrives saying "The Blood of Christ." When the cup is given back to you, carefully wipe the rim and rotate it slightly for the next communicant*
7. *When finished distributing Holy Communion, return to the Blessed Mother side of the altar and give the sacred vessel to the priest or deacon who will place them on the altar*
8. *After the priest consolidates vessels he will hand the unpurified vessel to the Extraordinary Minister to be placed on the credence table*

- a. *Altar servers and any non-instituted individuals are not permitted to handle unpurified vessels*
 - b. *Altar servers may transport purified altar plates from the priest or deacon to the sacristy*
9. *Once the priest leaves the altar the Extraordinary Ministers may also exit the front of the sanctuary individually bowing in front of the altar before returning to their seats*

After Mass:

1. *Make a prayer of thanksgiving*

Visitation of the Sick

Extraordinary Ministers are commissioned not just to serve during the Mass, but to extend Christ's presence beyond the walls of the Church by bringing the Eucharist to the sick and elderly of the Parish. "Our brothers and sisters...are to be entrusted with administering the Eucharist, with taking communion to the sick, and with giving viaticum to the dying." (BB, 1875)

Procedures:

1. *The Eucharist should always be transported in a pyx and burse*
 - a. *Care should be taken that there are not unnecessary activities being done while one is in possession of the Eucharist*
 - b. *The Extraordinary Minister should proceed from the Church directly to the sick or homebound individual*
2. *Only Rites approved by the USCCB may be used in care for the sick*
 - a. *"Communion in Ordinary Circumstances"*
 - i. *Ideal for Communion Services*
 - b. *"Communion in a Hospital or Institution"*
 - i. *Ideal for individual use*

3. *At the end of the Rite do not slip back into idle "chit-chat". The Extraordinary Minister should leave the communicant in relative silence as to be able reflect on the mystery of the Eucharist. This may require previous instruction*
4. *After communion has been distributed to the sick, the Extraordinary Minister should see to the purification of the pyx as soon as possible*
 - a. *A slight amount of water should be poured into the pyx, careful not to spill, then the contents of the pyx (water and sacred particles) are to be consumed by the Extraordinary Minister. The pyx, ideally, would only be dried with a purificator*
 - b. *If, after a communion service, there are additionally consecrated hosts remaining, the consecrated hosts should be returned to the tabernacle in the Church immediately*

Additional Procedures

Regarding the words of distribution:

The proper and only permissible form for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "The Body of Christ" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "The Blood of Christ." No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287).

Regarding a consecrated hosts which falls or Precious Blood which spills:

If the Eucharistic bread or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up reverently by the minister. The consecrated bread may be consumed or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium.

Should there be any mishap, for example, if the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice, the area should be washed with a purificator and the water poured into the sacrarium.

Regarding the consumption of extra Precious Blood:

In those instances when there remains more consecrated wine than was necessary, if needs dictate, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should return to the foot of the altar and consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution.

Regarding doubts about the eligibility to receive communion:

The task of the Extraordinary Minister is simply to distribute communion and never to withhold it unless specifically directed by the bishop or priest. If you have questions or concerns about someone who has come forward to receive, speak to the priest after Mass.

Regarding a communicant who doesn't know how to receive communion:

There may be instances when individuals come to receive communion who clearly do not know how. If a person comes forward with a confused demeanor or without expressing any desire to receive, it is permissible to ask, "Are you Catholic and wish to receive?" Likewise, if it is unclear whether a child has received their First Holy Communion it is permissible to ask the parents, "Does he or she receive communion?"

Regarding a communicant who doesn't consume the Body of Christ immediately:

It is the grave responsibility of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion alike to ensure that the Body of Christ is consumed by the communicant in their presence. If the communicant walks away without consuming the host the Extraordinary Minister must leave their station and ensure that the communicant consumes the host.

*"What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh "given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit," preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as viaticum."
Catechism of the Catholic Church #1392*

