

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Who can be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion?

An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) is a confirmed Catholic about 17 years of age or older with a deep love for the Word of God and the Eucharist. This love is practically demonstrated by observing the precepts of the Church, especially attendance at Mass every Sunday. Likewise, because of the public nature of this ministry, the minister must live a moral life, following the teaching of the Church, and doing nothing to dissuade others from the happiness found by living according to the Gospel. As ministers of holy communion, they are to be especially observant of the Lord's commandment "that you should love one another as I have loved" (Book of Blessings, 1875).

What are the duties of an EMHC?

Ministers should arrive at the sacristy at least ten minutes before Mass is to begin.

They should wear clothing appropriate to the dignity of their office. For men, this means at least dress pants and shoes, a dress shirt with long sleeves, and a belt. For women, this means tops and shirts with sleeves, dresses or skirts that reach the knee, or slacks. Shorts, shirts that display prominent advertising or slogans, unclean or immodest clothing is always inappropriate. In general, one's appearance should be neat and clean and not be a distraction.

During the Lamb of God, the ministers proceed to the foot of the sanctuary. On the way there from their pew, they pause to utilize the hand sanitizer.

When the celebrant has received the Precious Blood from the chalice, the ministers enter the sanctuary and form a line behind the celebrant. Unless there is a deacon present, one of the ministers steps forward as "lead."

The lead minister stands at the corner of the altar to the celebrant's left. The lead receives the Precious Body and the Precious Blood. After receiving the latter, the lead retains the chalice and purificator. The lead then follows the celebrant, distributing the Precious Blood to each of the other ministers and anyone else who presents themselves behind the altar (e.g., servers, lectors, those taking Communion to the homebound).

After receiving a vessel of the Precious Body or Blood from the celebrant, the minister proceeds to his or her assigned station and distributes Holy Communion to the

congregation. As a courtesy, the handicapped or otherwise infirm receive first. When distributing, the minister states audibly and with conviction “The Body of Christ,” or “The Blood of Christ,” as appropriate.

When all who wish to receive have received, the minister returns to the altar, placing the vessel on one of the corporals. The purificator, folded neatly, likewise is placed on the corporal. All the ministers form a line behind the altar as they did initially after the priest received the Precious Blood. When the celebrant or deacon leaves the sanctuary to repose the Precious Body in the tabernacle, the ministers bow together and exit the sanctuary.

All is done with the utmost reverence that keeps all focused on the Eucharist.

LECTORS

Who can be a lector?

A lector must be a Catholic about 15 years of age or older with a deep love for the Word of God and the Eucharist. This love is practically demonstrated by observing the precepts of the Church, especially attendance at Mass every Sunday. Likewise, because of the public nature of this ministry, the minister must live a moral life, following the teaching of the Church and obedient to the Word of God so as to be “equipped for every good work” (Second Timothy 3:17).

What are the duties of a lector?

The lector arrives at least ten minutes before Mass is scheduled to start.

Lectors should wear clothing appropriate to the dignity of their office. For men, this means at least dress pants and shoes, a dress shirt with long sleeves, and a belt. For women, this means tops and shirts with sleeves, dresses or skirts that reach the knee, or slacks. Shorts, shirts that display prominent advertising or slogans, unclean or immodest clothing is always inappropriate. In general, one's appearance should be neat and clean and not be a distraction.

Before Mass begins, the lector places the lectionary, the petitions, and the announcements on the ambo.

If there is no deacon, the lector processes in behind the servers but ahead of the priest, carrying the Book of the Gospels, slightly elevated. Upon reaching the foot of the sanctuary, the lector makes a slight bow of the head while the priest and other ministers genuflect. The lector enters the sanctuary and places the Book of the Gospels on the altar, then goes to a seat in the congregation.

If a deacon is present, however, he will carry the Book of the Gospels. The lector need not process in. Rather, the lector may simply take a seat in the congregation.

When the priest has finished the Opening Prayer, the lector walks to the ambo. After adjusting the microphone to the appropriate height, the lector proclaims the first reading. The lector then takes a seat in the sanctuary. After the psalm has been sung, the lector walks to the ambo and proclaims the second reading. After proclaiming the second reading, the lector removes the Lectionary from the top of the ambo and puts it in an appropriate place. Then the lector returns to a seat in the congregation.

If there is no deacon present, immediately after the celebrant and congregation have recited the Creed, the lector walks to the ambo. After the celebrant introduces the petitions, the lector reads the petitions, then pauses, remaining at the ambo until the celebrant finishes a collect prayer. Then the lector returns to a seat in the congregation.

After the Prayer After Communion, unless instructed otherwise by the celebrant, if there are any announcements, the lector walks to the ambo and reads them.

At the end of Mass, as the priest and the other ministers approach the foot of the sanctuary, the lector may join them, genuflecting with them in the direction of the tabernacle. The lector then processes out behind the servers, but ahead of the priest and deacon.

USHERS

Who can be an usher?

An usher is about 15 years of age or older and possesses a deep love for the Word of God and the Eucharist. Likewise, because of the public nature of this ministry, the minister must live a moral life, following the teaching of the Church, and doing nothing to dissuade others from the happiness found by living according to the Gospel.

What are the duties of an usher?

The usher arrives about twenty minutes before Mass is scheduled to begin in order to greet all who arrive for Mass and to help prepare any details for Mass as requested.

Ushers should wear clothing appropriate to the dignity of their office. For men, this means at least dress pants and shoes, a dress shirt with long sleeves, and a belt. For women, this means tops and shirts with sleeves, dresses or skirts that reach the knee, or slacks. Shorts, shirts that display prominent advertising, unclean or immodest clothing is always inappropriate. In general, one's appearance should be neat and clean and avoid being a distraction.

Ushers are asked to select those who will bring forward the bread and wine at the time of the Preparation of the Gifts. When making this selection, ushers should be mindful of what is being observed in the celebration. For instance, if a particular family is celebrating an anniversary, members of that family should be invited to bring forward the gifts.

As the church is filling, ushers find suitable places for those who arrive just before, as, or even a little after Mass begins. In order to provide this service, ushers remain in the gathering space even a little after the Mass has begun. In all of their ministry, ushers are especially attentive to the handicapped. Also, ushers set an example of proper, attentive behavior, avoiding unnecessary conversation.

At the time of the offertory, the ushers take up the collection. They also assist those who are bringing forward the gifts. From time to time, they take up a second collection.

Ushers are to take care of any needs among the congregation such as medical emergencies, seriously disruptive behavior, or other situations which may call for attention. Ushers should know where a phone is located in order to call 911, procedures for emergencies and evacuations, and the locations of First Aid equipment.

At the end of Mass, ushers distribute the bulletins. The doors to the worship space may be opened as the celebrant begins the procession out of church, but not before, as a reminder to the congregation that they are to remain through the closing hymn.

Additional duties particular to a given parish are set out in other documents.

SACRISTANS

Who can be a sacristan?

A sacristan is a Catholic with a deep love for the Word of God and the Eucharist. This love is practically demonstrated by observing the precepts of the Church, especially attendance at Mass every Sunday. Partially on account of this participation, a sacristan has above-average familiarity with the Church's liturgy and the liturgical year. Likewise, the minister must live a moral life, following the teaching of the Church, and doing nothing to dissuade others from the happiness found by living according to the Gospel.

What are the duties of a sacristan?

The sacristan arrives at least twenty minutes before the Mass is to begin in order to ensure that everything is prepared.

Using well derived estimates, the sacristan prepares the gifts, setting out the proper amount of wine and the proper number of hosts.

The sacristan prepares the celebrant's chalice: ensuring that it is clean, the sacristan sets atop the chalice a purificator and a corporal. The latter is used to capture any fragments of the Precious Body or drops of the Precious Blood that should accidentally fall.

The sacristan prepares any additional chalices which will be required for the distribution of the Precious Blood: ensuring that they are clean, the sacristan puts these on the credence table and places near them an equal number of purificators.

The sacristan prepares any additional ciboria which will be required for the distribution of the Precious Body: ensuring that they are clean, the sacristan puts these on the credence table.

The sacristan reminds the celebrant to check that the Roman Missal is prepared for the proper liturgy. When the celebrant has determined that it is, the sacristan ensures that the Roman Missal is placed near the celebrant's chair for use during the liturgy.

The sacristan ensures that the lavabo, a vessel of water, and a towel are prepared on the credence table.

The sacristan assists the celebrant with ensuring that a sufficient number of each type of minister is present.

After Mass, the sacristan ensures that a priest or deacon has purified the vessels. Then, the sacristan cleans them as necessary and puts them away in their proper places.

Precise details of these duties and any other duties particular to a given parish are set out in other documents.