

## **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Procedures Before, During, and After Mass**

### **Before Mass**

- EMs should arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the scheduled Mass to both check in, and prepare themselves for their ministry.
  - Check in with the sacristan if you are on the schedule.
  - Make your availability known to the sacristan if you are not on the schedule.
  - If possible, EMs should not perform another ministry during the same Mass.

### **During Mass**

- EMs are called, as is the entire assembly, to full, conscious, active participation in the Eucharistic celebration
- Because EMs are models for the ritual behavior of the assembly, they should do all the ritual gestures of the assembly with strength and reverence, and make all verbal and sung ritual responses with faith and enthusiasm

### **Procedures for Distribution**

- EMs may enter the sanctuary after the Lamb of God.
- Should not gather behind the priest, but to the sides of the altar.
- EMs receive Holy Communion after the priest (and deacon) have received, and before the reception of Holy Communion by the assembly; as indicated by the GIRM 2002 and the US Bishop's Conference; all should make a bow of the head while saying "Amen" when receiving both the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood
- If there is no deacon, an EM may assist the presider in distributing Holy Communion to the other EMs; EMs are not to self-communicate either the Sacred Body or the Precious Blood
- After EMs receive Holy Communion, they are given their appropriate Communion vessel by the priest or deacon
- Once all EMs have their vessels, they proceed reverently to their Communion stations
- In giving Holy Communion, the minister holds the host slightly above the vessel, looks at the communicant, and in a clear voice says, "*The Body of Christ*" to which the communicant responds "Amen". These are the only words to be used. Nothing is to be added or subtracted, not even a name.
- If a communicant begins to walk away carrying the host, the EM should say in a subdued voice, "Please consume the host now".
- In giving the Precious Blood, the EM holds the Sacred Cup up slightly and says in a clear voice while looking at the communicant, "*The Blood of Christ*" to which the communicant responds "Amen". These are the only words to be used.
- After the Blood of Christ has been received, the EM should wipe the rim of the Sacred Cup with a purificator and turn the Sacred Cup slightly before presenting it to the next communicant. The EM should be careful not to wipe in a manner where the purificator is dipped into the Precious Blood.
- Those EMs finishing distribution before others, should not move to assist those ministers who still have communicants to serve; this decision is reserved to priests and deacons.

### **Accidents During Distribution**

- If a host falls to the ground during distribution of Holy Communion, the EM should pick it up immediately and consume it then, or after distribution is over. It should never be put back in the vessel to be given to another communicant
- If the Precious Blood is spilled, the area should immediately be covered. It should then be blotted and washed after Mass with water and a purificator. The purificator should be rinsed and wrung out in the sacrarium. If there is no sacrarium, it should be rinsed in another vessel and the water poured into the ground in a secluded spot
- In either case, do not panic, and do not embarrass the communicant

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### **Procedures After Distribution**

- Once EMs are done with distribution, they are to hand their vessels to the priest or deacon. **DO NOT PLACE VESSELS ON THE ALTAR.**
- Any remaining Precious Blood is to be consumed at the side of the Altar.
- Chalices may be taken to the side sacristy and cleansed after Mass by a priest, deacon or acolyte
- EMs should return to their places, together, in a dignified and reverent manner, not rushing

### **Miscellaneous**

- All EMs are reminded to wash their hands in the sacristy or the rest room before Mass begins.
- All EMs are to use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the tabernacle.
- While performing their ministry, EMs do not bow or genuflect to the altar or tabernacle.

### **No Blessings**

- All EMs are reminded that they are not to bless any person as part of this ministry.
- It is appropriate to warmly smile at any person who cannot receive, but to place your hands on (or sign the cross) confuses the sign of Communion. A child in line is anticipating the day of receiving Christ.
- From a practical POV, the practice slows distribution significantly.
- The final blessing and sending, from the priest, is minutes after Communion.