

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (EMHC)

In 2004, St. Pope John Paul II issued an Instruction through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament - *Redemptionis Sacramentum* - Chapter VII (cf: no. 155-156). Under this instruction, the “ordinary” ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, Priest and Deacon in virtue of their ordination. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are laypersons who have been instituted as acolytes or dually commissioned as ministers of Holy Communion. They assist the “ordinary” ministers by giving the Body and Blood of Christ to the family of God. They act in the name of Jesus and follow the example of service that He gave at the last supper. (cf: *GIRM* no. 98)

1. The EMHC must be a person of good standing, baptized, a practicing catholic, and living a faithful & prayerful life.
2. The EMHC participates in the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ at the Eucharistic Celebration or provides Holy Communion to the sick.
3. The EMHC needs to be properly instructed in reverently handling the Sacred Species.

DO'S: (Practices may vary in each parish dependent on custom, tradition, etc.)

- The EMHC should receive Liturgical and Pastoral training, and be commissioned by the Pastor.
- The EMHC should participate in the Mass if distributing Holy Communion.
- Prayerful preparation is recommended prior to Mass.
- Appropriate and modest dress is required.
- The EMHC(s) walks in the entrance procession and has a designated place in the front pew, close to the sanctuary.
- After the celebrant receives both species, the EMHC(s) will receive.
- EMHC(s) sanitizes / washes their hands at a table placed to the side of the sanctuary before and after distributing Holy Communion. (The ablution water is to be poured into the sacrarium).
- The EMHC may receive under both species according to established parish custom and then is given the chalice and purificator / ciborium by the celebrant and proceeds to the Communion station(s).
- The EMHC raises the Sacred Host and says “**The Body of Christ**”, waits for the response “**Amen**” and places the Host in the hand or on the tongue of the communicant.
 - Please remember that EMHC should not add any other words to the formula of distributing Holy Communion. i.e., “*Name, The Body of Christ*”.
- The EMHC should be mindful of any particles of the Blessed Sacrament and ensure that no particles of the Host drop onto the ground or fall into the hands of the communicant.
- If a consecrated Host falls on the ground, it's not to be given to the communicant, but either reverently consumed by the EMHC or placed on the paten/corporal and disposed of in the *sacrarium* in the sacristy.
- The EMHC should be prepared to administer the chalice when Holy Communion is given under both species.

- The EMHC presents the chalice and says "**The Blood of Christ**" waits for the response "**Amen**" then gives the chalice to the communicant.
 - Please remember that the EMHC should not add any other words to the formula of distributing Holy Communion. ie, "*Name*, The Blood of Christ" or "The Precious Blood of Christ".
- After receiving the chalice back, the EMHC wipes the chalice with the purificator, and uses a different part of the purificator to wipe the chalice for each subsequent communion.
- The EMHC or communicant isn't to dip the Host into the chalice (intinction).
 - (*Institutio Generalis Romani*, 2002, 287)
- After distribution the EMHC(s) returns the chalice / ciborium to the celebrant at the altar, and with pastoral discretion, the EMHC(s) may be asked to consume the remaining Precious Blood.
- The EMHC(s) may be included in the recessional procession.
- At the conclusion of Mass, the EMHC may be asked to:
 - Collect the vessels to be washed, dried and placed in the appropriate cupboard.
 - Prepare wine cruets/vessels and hosts in preparation for the next Mass.
 - Unless it was the last Mass of the day.
- The EMHC(s) may be asked to assist by the pastor with distribution of Holy Communion to members of the community who are sick (in hospital / care facilities) or confined to their homes, as per safe environment protocols.
- The EMHC(s) should be supplied with the proper Pyx in which to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick or homebound.
- The EMHC should carry the Blessed Sacrament in the pyx and burse (pouch) with great care and reverence, and should distribute Holy Communion to the sick immediately following Mass, and not carry the Blessed Sacrament elsewhere along the way.

DON'TS:

- The EMHC(s) doesn't assist in breaking the Host at the altar.
- Where the custom has arisen of the priest offering a blessing to those who do not receive Holy Communion, the EMHC may simply say "**May God bless you,**" without any additional gestures, especially the priestly gesture of blessing the people.
 - (*CCC 1669*, canon 1169)
- If there is a spillage of the Precious Blood, the EMHC should wipe the floor space with the purificator and leave it on top of the spill. After Mass the EMHC should rinse and dry the area with water, and may ask the celebrant for assistance with cleaning the spill.

Extract taken from:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson



Nelson Diocese Liturgy Committee