



Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) Training

Parishes of Watertown, Kranzburg, Florence, Clark, Henry, and Bryant, SD

Unity as one in Christ Jesus in Holy Communion



Dear Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion,

The people of our pastorate are deeply grateful for your decision to serve as an Extraordinary Minister. Your service and dedication are important parts of the life of our parishes. It is a privilege to be in the sanctuary as our Savior, Jesus Christ, becomes truly present, body, blood, soul and divinity, just as He was at the Last Supper and Calvary, and therefore Extraordinary Ministers are chosen from those who display a desire for a more intimate union with Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ.

Saint Thomas Aquinas said, "The celebration of the Holy Mass is as valuable as the death of Jesus on the Cross." The primary duty of an Extraordinary Minister is to assist the priest, as a representative of the people of the pastorate, in a visible manner, as the mystery of Calvary unfolds on the Altar and to extend His presence in distribution of holy communion to those at mass and those who are unable to attend in person. What an honor to serve our Lord at this most praiseworthy gift of love.

The place of the Extraordinary Minister in liturgical celebrations, and with those who are unable to join us in person, remains one of prominence and distinction. All actions of the Extraordinary Minister are woven from signs and symbols whose meaning is rooted in the works of creation and in human culture, specified by events in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Accordingly, Extraordinary Ministers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence.

The purpose for this manual is to give you direction for distributing Communion during our pastorate masses, and to be a guide to help you in taking Communion to those who are unable to be with us in person. Along the way, you will learn most matters concerning the Rite of Communion and many matters concerning liturgical worship. We pray that you will strive to grasp their spiritual meaning.

We remain yours in Christ,

Fr. Shaun Haggerty

Pastor of Ave Maria

Fr. Christopher Hughes

Parochial Vicar of Ave Maria

Fr. John Fischer

Parochial Vicar of Ave Maria

Fr. Richard Baumberger

Auxiliary Priest of Ave Maria

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The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) performs a great service to the Church, by distributing Holy Communion to God's people on those occasions where there are an insufficient number of priests and deacons to distribute Holy Communion to the people present at the mass, and to the homebound. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the Church in this capacity, and requires careful preparation on the part of the EMHC.

Introduction

The Diocese of Sioux Falls is blessed with many parishes where the great number of communicants at Sunday mass, coupled with a limited number of priests and deacons, presents a real need for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. For that reason, when the permission to employ extraordinary ministers was first given in 1971, the Diocese of Sioux Falls made use of it almost immediately. Thus, when the permission to use EMHC was made universal with the instruction *Immensae Caritatis* of 1973, the practice was already established in the Sioux Falls Diocese. In that year, Pope Paul VI noted that in some places there was a shortage of ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, (priests and deacons) and provided for the institution of extraordinary ministers in certain circumstances. Indeed, since that time, extraordinary ministers have been of great service in many parishes of the diocese. The presence of extraordinary ministers in the Church is a very new one in terms of the history of the Catholic Church, and is accommodated to particular circumstances of the modern world, and can be expected to develop as the Church has an opportunity to reflect upon this particular service offered to the Church. This document presents the guidelines of the Catholic Church for the use of EMHC, together with those norms specific to the Diocese of Sioux Falls.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Defined

In short, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is a lay person or religious who has been deputed by the bishop for a period of time, or by a priest or deacon for a single occasion, to assist the priest and deacon in distributing Holy Communion to the faithful on those occasions where a shortage of ordained clergy makes it impossible for them to distribute Holy Communion to all the faithful in a reasonable way. It is thus a privilege to which the Church invites certain individuals under given circumstances, and not a right. The distribution of Holy Communion should not be seen as a more complete exercise of the priesthood that belongs to all believers in virtue of their baptism, as that priesthood is ordered to the sanctification of the world through the public life of the individual, together with their private prayer and sacrifice, and not to conducting public worship in the name of the Church. Rather, it is to be looked at as the exercise of a function that is proper to the ordained priesthood, but which, of necessity, must be carried out by others. This highlights the extraordinary nature of this service, which, rather than being part of the structure of the Church, is instead tied to particular needs arising from the limited number of clergy.

Pope John Paul II points this out in his instruction *Domenicae Cenaë*: To touch the sacred species and to distribute them with their own hands is a privilege of the ordained, one which indicates an active participation in the ministry of the Eucharist. It is obvious that the Church can grant this faculty to those who are neither priests nor deacons, as is the case with acolytes in the exercise. It is thus useful for the diocesan bishop to issue particular norms concerning extraordinary ministers which, in complete harmony with the universal law of the Church, should regulate the exercise of this function in his diocese. Such norms should provide, amongst other things, for matters such as the instruction in Eucharistic doctrine of those chosen to be extraordinary ministers, the meaning of the service they provide, the rubrics to be observed, the reverence to be shown for such an august Sacrament and instruction concerning the discipline on admission to Holy Communion.

The proper term for laypeople delegated to distribute Holy Communion at mass is “**Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion**” here often abbreviated to extraordinary minister. The preference for this term is noted in *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 156, which states “This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy

Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist”, nor “special minister of the Eucharist,” by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.” The term “Extraordinary Minister” which had been commonly used, is likewise inappropriate, and should be avoided. Thus the use of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion must be considered a sign of the shortage of priests and deacons, and should be an encouragement to pray for an increase in holy vocations to the priesthood and diaconate.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion perform a very valuable service to the Church in supplying for this temporary need, but it is important to recognize that this service corresponds to an extraordinary situation in the life of the Church.

Why the Church Regulates the Liturgy

In any document that addresses the norms provided by the Church for the regulation of the liturgy, the question may naturally arise of why the Church places certain requirements and guidelines on liturgical actions. It has to be recognized that this regulation may sometimes provoke an impression of legalism or excessive control, especially in a culture that values individual expression and autonomy. To begin to understand this phenomenon, it is important to remember that the Church is not primarily an institution or an association of individuals, but is more fundamentally a communion with Christ, and established by Him, which exists through the sacred bonds of the sacraments, and which is expressed in certain concrete forms. Thus the activity of the Church, and especially her sacred liturgy, is an expression of that communion and of the inheritance that she has received from the Lord. While recent times have amply demonstrated the human dimension of the liturgy, and the many ways in that it can be adapted to different concrete circumstances, it remains, in essence, a sign of that communion, something shared by believers throughout the world. As such, it is not the property of any individual, priest, or local community, but belongs to the whole Church. To change those elements of the liturgy that express its universal character would be to isolate the local community from the broader communion of the Catholic Church, and, ultimately, to make its worship inward focused and arbitrary. The Church provides certain guidelines and regulations to express the universal character of Catholic worship, showing that the essential character of her public prayer is shared throughout the world, and is received as part of a dynamic tradition reaching back to Christ’s own action, while at the same time providing sufficient flexibility to be at home in local situations all over the world. The regulations discussed in this document should be understood with that spirit – not simply as rules to be followed, but as expressions of the unity of the Church throughout the world in her common worship of Christ.

When Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are Called

Having spoken of the extraordinary nature of extraordinary ministers, it is important to speak about what constitutes a sufficient need to call for their use. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* provides a basic description of the occasion when extraordinary ministers should be called upon: The priest may be assisted in the distribution of Communion by other Priests who happen to be present. If such Priests are not present and there is a truly large number of communicants, the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, that is, duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been duly deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the Priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion. While the Church has avoided giving a precise definition of the term “truly large number” of communicants, in order to allow flexibility for diverse local situations, the Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest does give a more precise expression of this requirement: “Extraordinary ministers may distribute Holy Communion at Eucharistic celebrations only when there are no ordained ministers present or when those ordained ministers present at a liturgical celebration are truly unable to distribute

Holy Communion. They may also exercise this function at Eucharistic celebrations where there are particularly large numbers of the faithful and which would be excessively prolonged because of an insufficient number of ordained ministers to distribute Holy Communion. To avoid creating confusion, certain practices are to be avoided and eliminated where such have emerged in particular Churches: the habitual use of extraordinary ministers at mass thus arbitrarily extending the concept of "a great number of the faithful".

The Instruction, *Immensae Caritatis* adds a fourth reason—to bring communion to the sick when no priest or deacon is available, or when they are impeded by other ministries. There are four occasions when the Church calls upon the service of extraordinary minister: At mass, when the presider is physically unable to distribute Holy Communion; at communion services when no ordained minister is available; at masses where the great number of faithful prevents the priests and deacons from distributing Holy Communion to all of them; and to the sick when they are unable to be visited by a priest or deacon. We will examine the procedures for distributing Holy Communion on each of these occasions later in this document.

Qualifications to Serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

It is important that those individuals selected to serve as extraordinary ministers are chosen carefully. The instruction *Immensae Caritatis* describes them in the following manner: The faithful who are special ministers of communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting. To foster devotion to the Eucharist it is highly recommended that all EMHC make a weekly hour of Eucharistic Adoration either before Jesus in the Monstrance or in the Tabernacle. We have a 3 p.m. Holy Hour every Sunday and 24 hour adoration every Wed Noon to Thurs noon in our Pastorate. You should be in attendance if you are able. However, it is absolutely essential that you always attend Sunday Mass in the Pastorate or wherever you are traveling. To purposefully miss Sunday Mass is grounds to not be active EMHC until the sacrament of Confession is sought out.

The Diocese of Sioux Falls has given some concrete expressions of these norms, namely that an extraordinary minister, if married, be married within the Church, have received the sacrament of Confirmation, be at least 16 years of age, and have received the certification of their pastor that they are properly qualified and trained, and-for those who distribute communion to the homebound-have completed the current safe environment training.

Selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Parishes in the diocese are strongly encouraged to actively select individuals who are particularly well qualified to serve as extraordinary ministers, and not to simply ask for volunteers. Pastors are encouraged to develop their own additional criteria for selecting extraordinary ministers, which might consist of participation in Eucharistic Adoration or in being active in stewardship programs. The goal is to choose individuals whose exemplary Catholic life and morals will reflect well upon the Church and show the dignity and importance of Holy Communion. The instruction *Immensae Caritatis* gives some additional guidance on the selection of individuals: The fit person referred to in nos. I and II will be designated according to the order of this listing (which may be changed at the prudent discretion of the local Ordinary): reader, major seminarian, man religious, woman religious, catechist, one of the

faithful—a man or a woman. Thus, it seems advisable that a parish that is blessed with the presence of a seminarian or religious make use of them if EMHC are called for. It would also be very fitting for candidates for the Diaconate to serve as an extraordinary minister.

Way of Life of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

It is not sufficient for an individual to demonstrate an exemplary Catholic life before becoming an extraordinary minister; it is also important that they cultivate those virtues after they have been chosen for that position of service to the Church. Again, a bare minimum below which an individual should recuse himself would consist in anything that would prevent him from receiving Holy Communion—grave sin, failure to attend Sunday mass, or a choice not to maintain communion with the teachings and life of the Church. Positively put, however, an extraordinary minister should seek, like all Christians, to cultivate holiness, especially through frequent confession, personal prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament, and attendance at daily mass if possible. They should seek to have a good knowledge and appreciation for the thought and beliefs of the Church, especially through study of scripture and Church teaching. If an extraordinary minister finds it difficult to live a life appropriate to his function, he might recuse himself for a time from the distribution of Holy Communion, or, if necessary, a pastor might ask him not to continue his service.

Training of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

It is important that each parish that employs extraordinary ministers to have a formal program of preparation, so that extraordinary ministers can understand the nature of their service, be well prepared to carry it out, and properly understand the Church's teaching, especially as regards the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion. While each parish's program will differ according to local needs, the diocese has given some guidelines that should be included in all training programs. The training requirement for extraordinary ministers in Ave Maria Pastorate includes:

Terminology for the Blessed Sacrament

The way we speak both reflects and shapes the way we believe, and so it is important that our language regarding the Blessed Sacrament reflect our understanding of its nature, and our faith in the real

presence of Christ. Although all of Christ is present under each species, it is customary to refer to the host after consecration as either simply "the host," or "the body of Christ." Likewise, the chalice may be referred to simply as "the chalice" or as "the precious blood." The terms "bread" and "wine" should be used to refer to the bread and wine brought forward as gifts, but not to the consecrated species, which are no longer bread or wine, but the body and blood of the Lord.

Certification of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Because extraordinary ministers serve the Church in a public capacity, it is necessary that an individual be certified before beginning service as an extraordinary minister. While instituted acolytes (usually seminarians and men preparing for the diaconate) become extraordinary ministers by virtue of their institution, other individuals require a specific commissioning.

Commissioning for an Extended Period

In most cases, extraordinary ministers are certified for an extended period of up to three years. This is done by the bishop, upon request by the pastor of the parish. Extraordinary ministers in Ave Maria Pastorate are certified for 3 years. Our pastor is responsible for selecting the individuals designated to serve and for verifying that they are in good standing with the Church (not in an invalid marriage or a situation of cohabitation, not an ex-priest, etc.), and that their selection would not scandalize the faithful. A form is supplied to aid in this process ([Appendix 5](#)). After the individuals have been selected and trained, our pastor then submits a list to the Chancellor's office. When they receive their certification, they are able to begin functioning as extraordinary ministers until their certification expires. It is advisable that, once the commission is granted, that they receive it through the Order for the Commissioning of extraordinary minister.

Commissioning of extraordinary ministers will take place during all weekend masses on the second Sunday of January (each year). Those being commissioned will be called to the altar after the homily for this special blessing (Blessing 63). All extraordinary ministers (i.e. including those whose commission has not yet expired) are invited to approach the altar during the annual commissioning mass, to receive a special blessing.

Commissioning for a Single Occasion

In some cases, a sufficient number of commissioned extraordinary ministers may be unavailable. In this case, if need requires, the priest presiding at the liturgy can commission extraordinary ministers for a single occasion, following the rite given in the Roman Missal, Appendix III, p 1457.

Preparation for Serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

There are two types of preparation for serving as an extraordinary minister—remote preparation and proximate preparation. Remote preparation includes the prayer and study that aid in appreciating the great gift of the Eucharist and in its distribution with proper care. This is described above in the section entitled Way of Life of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Immediately before serving, however, it is also important that an extraordinary minister take some steps to prepare. First of all, the extraordinary minister should make sure that he/she is prepared to receive communion by being in a state of grace, and having fasted before mass according to the norms of *See Redemptionis Sacramentum* 168 4 *Immensae Caritatis*, 1, VI the Church. Secondly, the extraordinary minister should take time in prayer before mass to prepare for service. It may be helpful to visit the Blessed Sacrament chapel, in order to pray to our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Dress

Extraordinary ministers should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament and the function they are carrying out. Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Blessed Sacrament, generally by being more formal. Any clothing that exposes the legs, upper arms, or other inappropriate parts of the anatomy should not be worn, nor should any

clothing bearing prominent logos or slogans. Clothing should not be distracting; the focus of the communicant should be on the Blessed Sacrament, not on the person or his/her dress.

Actions before Mass

We always schedule our extraordinary ministers who serve during weekend masses. The exact number of ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (i.e. priest and deacons) celebrating mass determines the number of extraordinary ministers that are needed for each mass. For most masses, the celebrating priest serves as the only one ordinary minister; therefore 1 or 3 EMHC are need for all weekend masses, depending on the parish in the pastorate.

Upon arrival to the church (20 minutes early), all extraordinary ministers attending mass should check in at the sacristy and sign in. Also check in with the sacristan to make sure they know you are there if the sign in book is unavailable. The Sacristan will review the book 5 minutes prior to the start of mass and (in what should be rare situations) inform the lector and they will announce if additional extraordinary ministers are need. Extraordinary ministers already seated, but not signed up should immediately proceed to the narthex and sign-in. The intent is to prevent the need for the sacristan to signal the need for extraordinary ministers during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Please be proactive in signing-up upon arrival to church.

Actions during the Mass

During the mass, the extraordinary minister sits with their family and the rest of the faithful, and should participate fully in the mass, listening to the readings, and joining the community in prayer. If possible, extraordinary ministers should sit in the front pews and close to the aisle as a way to easily move to position prior to approaching the altar.

Approaching the Altar

Extraordinary ministers should line up (hands in prayer) at the bottom of the front step of the sanctuary (just after the offering of peace and before the Lamb of God). They are not to approach the altar until after the priest has received both the Body and the Blood of Christ. Immediately after the priest has consumed Holy Communion, the extraordinary ministers will reverence the altar with a profound bow (30 degree bending of the torso) and walk to their position at the sides of the altar. There is no need to wait for a signal from the priest to approach the altar. The path taken should be around the outer edge of the sanctuary; extraordinary ministers should step-up to the sanctuary from behind the ambo (left side) and lectern (right side) of the altar. There will be no hand sanitizer available you are expected to come with your hands already washed and cleaned before Mass. Extraordinary ministers should stand shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the altar.

Receiving Holy Communion when the Body of Christ is offered

Extraordinary ministers should remain in a line standing shoulder-to-shoulder to receive Holy Communion. After all have received Holy Communion and all have received their ciboria (gold bowl) for distribution they may go to their location to distribute. EMHC must never take the Body of Christ from the altar, it must always be handed to them by the priest. The same for when distribution is finished. If

must be handed to the priest and not set on the altar. You are always commissioned by the priest as an extension of his ministry.

Receiving a Vessel when the Body and Blood of Christ is offered

Once the priest finishes distributing the sacred body, the priest will hand a ciboria to each of the extraordinary ministers. After you receive the Blood of Christ offer it to the EMHC near you. Always wipe the rim of the chalice on the outside of the chalice. Very little should be wiped on the inside of the cup. The priest should always consume the remaining precious Blood unless it is too much and he asks you to assist. You must never put the purificator inside the chalice after the Precious Blood is all consumed. Place the purificator over the top of the chalice.

The precious blood should never leave the altar. Do not take the cup to those seated in the pews.

Communicants must approach the altar to receive the precious blood.

It is never appropriate for an extraordinary minister to obtain the Body of Christ from the tabernacle.

Manner of Distributing and Receiving Holy Communion

While the norm for the distribution of communion in the Roman Rite remains under one species and on the tongue, specific permissions have allowed communion under both species and communion on the hand to take place. It is important to consider each of these methods of receiving communion, because they each place particular burdens on the extraordinary minister.

First, we will consider communion under one species on the tongue. The communicant will generally make a sign of reverence (a bow is the norm in the United States), and then approach the minister standing. While standing is the norm in the United States, communion is not to be denied to those who prefer to approach by kneeling. The extraordinary minister takes the host and shows it to the communicant, saying "The Body of Christ." Other words are not appropriate. It is best if the minister take the host between the thumb and the forefinger in such a way that they may place the host on the tongue by pressing down with the forefinger from above. This makes it easier to avoid contact with the tongue of the communicant. The extraordinary minister should pay attention that no small fragments of the host fall to the ground. For this reason, the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* states that "the Communion-plate for the communion of the faithful should be retained, in order to avoid the danger of the Sacred Host or some fragment of it falling" (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 93), however, the communion-plate is currently not used in Ave Maria Pastorate due to lack of training and ministers, it will come in the future. If the communion-plate is used, it is generally held by the server in such a way that it is under the Host at all times. Since it is not routinely used, it may be helpful to keep the host over the ciborium when possible.

Communion in the Hand

The practice of receiving communion in the hand, which is permitted in the United States by a special indult from the Holy See, places additional requirements on the extraordinary minister, because it is now necessary that they make sure that the Sacred Host is properly consumed, and that it is treated

with reverence by the communicant. Pope John Paul II describes this difficulty: “In some countries the practice of receiving Communion in the hand has been introduced. This practice has been requested by individual Episcopal conferences and has received approval from the Apostolic See. However, cases of a deplorable lack of respect towards the Eucharistic species have been reported. This is in no way meant to refer to those who, receiving the Lord Jesus in the hand, do so with profound reverence and devotion, in those countries where this practice has been authorized.” Thus it is necessary for the extraordinary minister to observe the person receiving communion until he consumes the host. If they begin to walk off without receiving communion (as is sometimes the case with children who have not received proper catechesis or non-Catholic adults), it is important that the extraordinary minister follow that individual and either ask him to consume the host, or to retrieve it so that nothing untoward happens. It is important to note that the decision to receive communion on the hand is on the part of the communicant, and no one can compel them to receive on the hand or on the tongue.

Both Species

The permission to distribute communion under both species in certain cases was granted by Pope Paul VI in 1970. The responsibility for determining when it is appropriate to permit communion under both species rests with the diocesan bishop. In the diocese of Sioux Falls, communion under both species is permitted at all masses at the discretion of the local pastor. The Blood of Christ is offered in the Pastorate only on special occasions: Holy Thursday, Easter Sunday, Corpus Christi, 1st Communion, and Christmas. If communion is offered under both species, the ordinary minister of the chalice is the deacon; however, especially large celebrations may require the use of extraordinary ministers. The only words used in distributing the Precious Blood are “The Blood of Christ.” In distributing the Precious Blood, it is important to avoid any danger of spillage. Care should be taken to make sure that the communicant has taken the chalice firmly before releasing it, but the extraordinary minister should, in ordinary circumstances, not hold on to the chalice while an individual receives communion. After distributing communion, the extraordinary minister should take the chalice, wipe the lip of it with the purificator, and rotate it slightly. If Holy Communion is offered under both species, then the decision to receive the precious blood from the chalice or not belongs to the individual communicant.

Communion from the Chalice Alone

Some individuals, for medical reasons, are unable to receive even a small particle of the Sacred Host. For this reason, it is permitted for individuals to receive Holy Communion only by the Blood of Christ.

Intinction

Although it is not customary in the diocese of Sioux Falls, the Church also permits communion under both species by Intinction. This decision is to be made by the pastor. Intinction is often used at 1st Communion within Ave Maria Pastorate. “The communicant must not be permitted to intinct the host himself in the chalice, nor to receive an intincted host in the hand.”

Communion-Plate

Some parishes in the diocese of Sioux Falls have the custom of using communion-plates, which are held under the host as the communicant receives, usually by an altar server. This practice is recommended to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling. When these plates

are used, they are purified in the same way as the other sacred vessels. At this time Ave Maria Pastorate does not use the communion-plates.

Those Unable to Receive Communion

In most churches there will be some people who are unable to receive Holy Communion, or who choose not to. Someone might not be able to receive communion because they have not yet made their first communion, are not prepared through fasting, are not in communion with the Catholic Church, or are in a state of serious sin. There can also be many valid personal reasons. It is important not to judge the motivation for an individual not receiving Holy Communion.

Blessings

Although they are not a part of the approved rite of the mass, it has become customary in many parts of the United States for individuals who are not receiving Holy Communion to come forward and ask for a blessing. Often this is indicated by hands crossed across the chest, although in some cultures, particularly Latin ones, people desiring to receive Holy Communion on the tongue may also come forward with crossed arms. If the extraordinary minister determines that a person is seeking a blessing, it is appropriate that he respond with a prayer that is clearly distinct from the blessing given by a priest. It is recommended that the extraordinary minister say, “Receive the Lord Jesus in your heart,” while raising his hand without a host (in rare situations a gentle touch to the shoulder or forehead is appropriate). It is important that the EMHC does not have the host in hand while inviting the person to receive Jesus in their heart, and that he not touch the person with the fingers he has used for distributing Holy Communion, lest some particles be rubbed onto the individual. See the statement on Blessing found in Appendix 2 for the concerns associated with giving blessing.

Denying Holy Communion

There are practically no situations when Holy Communion should be denied by an extraordinary minister. Church norms state that: “Any baptized Catholic who is not prevented by law must be admitted to Holy Communion”. The extraordinary minister should not make a judgment on the worthiness of any individual to receive Holy Communion. In the case of individuals clearly living a life in discrepancy with church teachings, the decision is to be made by the pastor, in consultation with the bishop, and he will then inform the extraordinary ministers involved. If the extraordinary minister is unsure whether an individual is Catholic or has received their first communion, he should ask them or their parent, and if they reply that they are not, the extraordinary minister should let them return to their pew without receiving communion.

Returning the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar

After distributing communion, the extraordinary minister who distributed the precious blood should turn to face the altar and consume whatever remains of the precious blood. Extraordinary ministers may ask another person to consume the precious blood if large amounts remain. After completing communion, all extraordinary ministers should return to their position behind the altar and hand the cup (or ciboria) to the priest or deacon. Do not place it on the altar.

Note:

1. The purificator should lie across the top of the cup and be handed to the deacon (or priest).
2. If necessary, the cup or ciboria may be placed on the altar. In doing so, be sure to place the vessel on the corporal in an organized manner (e.g. two rows of three cups).
3. Do not stuff the purificator into the cup.
4. If the extraordinary minister has been distributing the Sacred Host, he should take the opportunity to purify his fingers of any particles that may have clung to them. For this purpose, a small bowl of water is provided at the credence table. Alternatively, the EM may touch his fingers to his tongue or a purificator.

After returning the ciborium or cup, the extraordinary ministers should exit the sanctuary as they entered. Note:

Accidents Involving the Blessed Sacrament

While every care should be taken to avoid accidents involving the Blessed Sacrament, the extraordinary minister should be prepared to respond to them should they occur. The most common sort of accidents involves a particle of the host or a portion of the precious blood falling on the ground or another object. If a particle of the host falls on the ground, it should be picked up and consumed. If for some reason it cannot be consumed (for example, if it has already been in an individual's mouth who is unable to consume it), it may be dissolved in water and the water later poured down the sacrarium, however, it is best to contact a priest or deacon should this be necessary. A greater difficulty is presented if some of the precious blood should fall to the ground. The extraordinary minister should insure that no one steps on the spot, perhaps by delegating an individual to guard it. A clean purificator should be used to cover and mark the spot. Then, with the priest or deacon's assistance, water should be brought and poured over the spot. It is important to note that when it is diluted with water to the point where it loses the appearance of wine, the Precious Blood ceases to be the Eucharist. The resulting water, however, should still be treated with respect, and, collected in a non-consecrated vessel (a lavabo bowl, for example) through the use of purificators; it should then be poured down the sacrarium. If some of the precious blood should drop on an individual's clothing or possessions, it should be treated in the same way, with due respect for the individual involved.

Purification of Vessels

The purification should be carried out by a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte (usually a seminarian or deacon candidate) either after communion or immediately following mass. The purification can take place on the altar or at the credence table, or in the sacristy. The purification of the ciboria always takes place within the mass by the priest. If the Precious Blood has been distributed and there are multiple chalices, they are to be purified by the priest immediately after Mass in the sacristy. Lay ministers may still assist in any cleaning or washing of the vessels that take place after the ritual purification is complete. The most important principle at stake in the purification of vessels is respect for the Blessed Sacrament. It must be emphasized that all of the Blessed Sacrament must be consumed, and that none of it may be disposed of in any way. The Church emphasizes this fact by excommunicating anyone who disposes of the Blessed Sacrament (for example, by pouring the Precious Blood down the sacrarium.) This excommunication can only be lifted by the Holy See.

Cleansing of Linens

The individuals, who clean altar linens, in particular purificators, need to act with respect for the Blessed Sacrament. It is obligatory to soak all of the linens in water, so that any particles of the host or precious blood might be dissolved, and then pour this water down the sacrarium. It is not necessary to consume this water. After this process, they may then be washed normally, apart from other linens.

Service to the Sick and Homebound

Extraordinary ministers are also frequently employed in bringing communion to those who are sick or homebound on those occasions when it is impossible for a priest or deacon to bring them communion in a regular fashion. It is important that extraordinary ministers to the homebound obtain a copy of the booklet titled [Communion of the Sick](#), which contains the appropriate ritual that should be followed when distributing Holy Communion to the homebound.

If you desire to bring Communion to the Homebound you must attend a separate training session focused on bring Jesus to the sick.

Guidelines for the Reception of Communion

On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the following guidelines on the reception of communion. These guidelines replace the guidelines approved by the Administrative

Committee of the NCCB in November 1986. The guidelines, which are to be included in Missalette and other participation aids published in the United States, seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of Eucharistic communion.

For Catholics

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For Non- Catholic Christians

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians

requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

For those not receiving Holy Communion

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

Glossary

Ablution Cup: A small glass cup with a lid placed next to the tabernacle to purify the fingers of the priest

or deacon who removes the Blessed Sacrament outside of mass.

Altar: Place of Sacrifice; central location for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Ambo: Place where the readings from sacred scripture are proclaimed during mass. May also be used for the homily.

Blessed Sacrament: The consecrated hosts and precious blood, in which Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is truly present.

Burse: 1. Square cloth envelope of the liturgical color of the day, in which the corporal may be placed when not in use. 2. A small pouch for carrying a pyx, with a cord which goes around the neck.

Ciborium Plural, ciboria: Sacred vessel with a lid for holding consecrated or unconsecrated hosts

Chalice: Sacred vessel in which wine, after Consecration, becomes the Precious Blood.

Chalice Veil: A cloth in the liturgical color of the day which may be placed over the chalice and paten. The burse may then be placed on top.

Communion-Plate: A metal plate, sometimes with a handle, which is held by an altar server to catch any fragments of the host that might fall during Holy Communion. Also called a communion paten

Corporal: Linen square which is unfolded on the altar during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The chalice and paten are placed on the corporal. It is folded in a way that captures any fragments of the host that might have fallen. Before being placed in the laundry, it is soaked, with the water being poured down the sacrarium.

Credence Table: Table near the altar on which are located the various sacred vessels, the lavabo bowl and towel, the water and wine cruets, etc., used during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Cruets: Glass vessels that hold water and wine for the mass.

Evangelary: A book which holds the gospel readings for mass. Often called the Book of the Gospels.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy: Either an instituted acolyte or a lay person who meets criteria of CIC can.230.

Communion Host: A small wafer of unleavened bread, which is consecrated in the mass so as to become the Body of Christ.

Instituted Acolyte: A man who has been permanently commissioned to assist at the altar, and who, by virtue of his office, is an extraordinary minister of holy communion. Usually, he is a seminarian or deacon candidate.

Lavabo Bowl and Pitcher: A bowl and pitcher used to wash the priest's hand during mass. Lectionary: Book which rests on the ambo, containing the Scripture readings for mass.

Luna: Round glass case within which is kept a large consecrated host so that it may be inserted into the center of the monstrance.

Monstrance: Sacred Vessel which holds the luna with the consecrated host for adoration and benediction.

Ordinary Minister Of Holy Communion: A bishop, priest or deacon who by virtue of their office ordinarily distributes Holy Communion.

Pall: Square of stiff material covered by linen which is used to cover the chalice and paten. Paten: Small metal plate on which hosts are consecrated during the mass.

Precious Blood: A term for the real presence of Jesus Christ under the appearance of wine.

Purificator: Small linen cloth folded three ways, which is used to purify a chalice when communion is received. Before being placed in the laundry, it is soaked, with the water being poured down the sacrarium.

Pyx: Small metal container used to carry sacred hosts when communion is taken to the sick or homebound; it is carried in the burse with cord around neck.

Ritual Books: Any official book approved by the Church, containing the rites used in the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments.

Roman Missal (Sacramentary): Ritual book containing the prayers recited at mass by the priest.

Tabernacle. Locked and secured place of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Sacrarium: A sink-like receptacle in the sacristy, which drains directly into the ground, rather than into a sewage system. It is used for disposing of water which may have come into contact with sacred things.

Sacred Vessels: Any vessel which is used to hold the Blessed Sacrament. Sacred vessels must be made out of certain materials, and are to be blessed according to the rites of the Church.

Sacristy: Room where sacred vessels are kept and where the priest and deacon vest when there is not a separate vestry.

Sanctuary: Area of the church building set aside for the celebration of the sacred rites. The altar and ambo are placed within the sanctuary.

Sanctuary Lamp: A fixture containing a candle or an oil lamp, usually suspended by a chain or affixed to the wall. It is located near the tabernacle. When lit, it indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.

Appendix 1

Rejoice in the Lord, Always! A Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist, December 12, 1993

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, On the third Sunday of Advent the Church proclaims our joyful expectation of the fulfillment of God's promise in the prophetic antiphon: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near." Truly, at this time of year, we celebrate through the liturgy, the nearness of the Lord in a twofold way. The approaching feast of Christmas reminds us of all the wonder and glory associated with the coming of the Son of God, through the gentle love of the Virgin Mary. And peering into the wider lens of the Advent season, we also look into the future, to the day when Jesus Christ will return, Judge and Savior, when "all who want it may have the water of life, and have it free." (Revelation 22:17) In the midst of this season of sacred memory and hopeful awaiting, I write to you in praise of that singular miracle which Jesus Christ has given the Church as the wellspring of our salvation and the ultimate meaning of our individual lives, the Holy Eucharist. This belief has been reasserted for our times in the words of the Second Vatican Council: the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. (Lumen Gentium, 11) For we believe, that at every offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is placed on the altar before us. Not just a sign, or a symbol, not just indication or illustration - but the very Body and Blood. Christ's words were these: "This is my body. . . this is my blood." Why should we doubt this, or try to explain it, or attempt to qualify it in any way at all? Do we question the miracle by which life is created, or suppose that life is less miraculous because science has the expertise to describe it? Do we question the feelings that well up inside us when we see a mother nursing her baby, or a father placing his life on the line for the sake of his child? It is the same kind of profound reaction with which we must greet the miraculous words of our Savior, those words which daily bring to life a sacrifice and a triumph enacted in the past but "re-presented" daily in the Holy Mass. Under the signs of bread and wine, signs that recall the goodness of creation, we are able to enter into the deep and wide mystery of God's presence in humankind. Many events come to mind - the unleavened bread of the Passover, the Manna in the desert, the multiplication of the loaves, the transformation of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana - these events and others reawaken in us some grasp of the pervasive influence of our God. For by partaking in the banquet of this mystery, we are also enabled by the mercy of the Everlasting Father to escape the Angel of Death - to be fed the bread of heaven in the arid desert of our hungering human natures - to be granted the refreshing wine of Love's inspirited libation, our "cup of blessing." In this way, the Eucharist reawakens in us a sense of the fundamental agreement made between God and mankind - that a woman would bear a child who would erase the sin of Adam and Eve, and restore the flow of grace between the Creator and the created. In the wisdom which is fed to us by the living Word of God, we come to understand that the Eucharist is first a sign of redemption - a sign of God's forgiveness extended to the entire human race. The Eucharist is also sign of remembrance by which is

fulfilled the direct commandment of our Lord to His Apostles: "Do this in memory of me." Thus, sustained by uninterrupted generations of the ordained priesthood, the sacrifice of the Last Supper and the Cross is made alive and present to the Faithful in their celebration of the Mass. In turn, the Faithful are able to unite themselves to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so that the Church may be drawn together in all places and at all times, through the abiding source of her unity, the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayers and works, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new worth. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1368, trans. from original) It is this "new worth" which transforms the Church from simply a human gathering into a living temple inhabited by the actual, real and true presence of Jesus Christ. And where the Son of God dwells, there dwells also His Father whose love offers the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is Christ present in word and power. It is not irreverent to declare that in the Eucharist, we "have" God, for His presence is true and real. We call this presence real "because it is a presence par excellence, since it is substantial, in the sense that Christ, whole and entire, God and man, becomes present." (Council of Trent, 1551) In a time such as ours, with the deposit of our faith questioned by many and rejected by some, it is sad to think that the immense wonder of the principal source of God's love should be questioned and rejected as well. It is to arouse the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Atlanta against this tendency exhibited both within and without the Church that I now write. At such times, when the central mystery of God's redemptive act is assailed, then the Faithful must meet the doubters with renewed conviction and visible witness. God has given us everything by giving us the life and death and Resurrection of His Son - now we must respond by giving ourselves devotedly to His real Presence. For who does not desire to sit in the company of a best friend, and to know in advance the joy of heaven, where friends will gather forever around the throne of God - singing, feasting, rejoicing and remembering in such a way as will suffice for eternity. As a faithful reflection of this vision, and in order to offer a strong and visible witness to the world, particularly to the people of North Georgia, I will establish at the Cathedral Parish of this Archdiocese Perpetual Adoration of Jesus Christ in His most holy Eucharistic Presence, and I encourage all parishes to promote Eucharistic devotions. This initiative is taken in union with and inspired by the example of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, who has written: The Church and the world have a great need for eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in the sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease. (*Dominicae cena*, 3.)

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In the tradition of our Holy Church, we call upon the Mother of God to aid us in this undertaking, inspiring us by her maternal example. For after the Annunciation, Mary waited upon the coming of the Lord, protected by the fostering love of her husband Joseph. When He was born, she cared for His childly wants, remaining with her Son as He grew to maturity and wisdom. When His destiny was revealed, there stood the Mother at the foot of the Cross, broken by sorrow, but steadfast in faith. And when finally the Holy Spirit was given to bring life to the Church, Mary, the first model of all Christians was there, always ready to take her place in the meaning of what her Son came to reveal. Brothers and sisters, through participation in Perpetual Adoration of the Eucharist, may we hope to fashion in ourselves the example of Mary, who by accepting the will of God, attained for herself and for all people the "new worth" of the Son of God, and "the merciful and redeeming transformation of the world in the human heart." (*Dominicae cena*, 7.) By receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord at Mass, and by adoring His presence in the tabernacle, may we also entreat the Father, "Be it done unto me according to thy word," thus uniting our lives forever to the birth, death and rising of Jesus Christ. Given, with my blessing, on Gaudete Sunday, December 12, 1993. John F. Donoghue Archbishop of Atlanta 25

Appendix 2

Blessings at the Time of Holy Communion

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the practice of giving blessings in lieu of Holy Communion has become quite commonplace. While motivated by significant pastoral concerns, it is important to note that it is not an approved liturgical rite. Several concerns have been voiced about the practice that suggests it may receive a negative judgment from the Holy See. These concerns include the following:

1. The liturgical blessing of the Holy Mass is properly given to each and to all at the conclusion of the Mass, just a few moments subsequent to the distribution of Holy Communion.
2. Lay People, within the context of Holy Mass, are unable to confer blessings. These blessings, rather, are the competence of the priest (cf. *Ecclesia de Mysterio*, Notitae 34 (15 Aug. 1997) art 6, & 2; can. 1169, &2; and *Roman Ritual De Benedictionibus* (1985) n. 18)
3. Furthermore, the laying on of a hand or hands-which has its own sacramental significance, inappropriate here-by those distributing Holy Communion, in substitution for its reception, is to be explicitly discouraged.
4. The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 84, “forbids any pastor, for whatever reason or pretext even of a pastoral nature, to perform ceremonies of any kind for divorced people who remarry.” To be feared is that any form of blessing in substitution for communion would give the impression that the divorced and remarried have been returned, in some sense, to the status of Catholics in good standing.
5. In a similar way, for others who are not to be admitted to Holy Communion in accord with the norm of law, the Church’s discipline has already made clear that they should not approach Holy Communion nor receive a blessing. This would include non-Catholics and those envisaged in can. 915 (i.e., those under penalty of excommunication or interdict, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin). For those reasons, while the Archdiocese has no policy prohibiting the use of blessings at the time of Holy Communion, it may be appropriate to avoid promoting the practice until a more definitive judgment regarding its value in the liturgical celebration can be obtained.

Appendix 4: Self-Knowledge Assessment (Return completed form to Parish Office)

Name: _____ Date completed: _____

True or False

1. _____ EMHC exist because of the priest and deacon shortage.
2. _____ EMHC have existed for centuries in the Catholic Church.
3. _____ Serving as an EMHC a right for anyone who is catholic.
4. _____ The proper term used to refer to an EMHC is Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
5. _____ The church regulates EMHC to express universal catholic worship across the world.
6. _____ EMHC may be called for extended (or single) periods of service.

7. ____ There are 4 basic occasions when the church calls upon EMHC to distribute Holy Communion.
8. ____ Any parishioner may serve as an EMHC.
9. ____ I have watched the required video and read the EMHC training manual.
10. ____ An EMHC should recuse himself from serving if he is in a state of grave sin.
11. ____ All EMHC at All Saints must attend one training class each calendar year.
12. ____ The correct terminology is sacred body, and the precious blood.
13. ____ EMHC must be certified and have a certificate in hand prior to serving.
14. ____ EMHC are only commissioned for 2 years.
15. ____ EMHC should sign-in before mass to indicate their intent to serve.
16. ____ EMHC should arrive at church early to sign-in and pray before the Blessed Sacrament.
17. ____ EMHC must sit in the front row of the church.
18. ____ EMHC should only approach the altar just before the priest has received communion.
19. ____ Two lines of EMHC are formed on the altar when receiving the ciborium/cup from the priest.
20. ____ The appropriate words to use when distributing the host are "The Body of Christ".
21. ____ EMHC may not place the sacred body on the tongue of the communicant.
22. ____ Both species are distributed by EMHC at all masses.
23. ____ EMHC may distribute only the precious blood if requested by a communicant.
24. ____ Communicants are permitted to intinct the host himself.
25. ____ EMHC may use good judgment to determine who is worthy of receiving the sacred body.
26. ____ EMHC may offer special blessings to communicants.
27. ____ There are only 3 situations where an EMHC may deny Holy Communion to a communicant.
28. ____ EMHC should always place the ciborium on the altar when finished distributing Communion.
29. ____ EMHC should stuff the purificator in the cup when finished distributing the precious blood.
30. ____ EMHC may pour excess precious blood down the sacrarium.
31. ____ EMHC may purify a chalice and ciborium while at the altar.
32. ____ Linens used during communion are soaked in water-which is poured down the sacrarium.
33. ____ EMHC who serve the homebound must learn the Rites of Communion for the Sick.
34. ____ EMHC may store the sacred body at home for 2 days prior to taking it to the homebound.
35. ____ EMHC should leave behind a copy of the bulletin & Missalette when visiting the homebound.
36. ____ EMHC may perform a communion service in the absence of a priest.
37. ____ Catholics should fast 1 hour prior to receiving Holy Communion (15 minutes for homebound).
38. ____ Canon law does not object to reception of communion by members of Orthodox churches.
39. ____ Non-Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion.
40. ____ EMHC (for homebound) are required to complete Safe Environment Training before serving.

Answers: 1T, 2F, 3F, 4T, 5T, 6T, 7T, 8F, 9T, 10T, 11T, 12T, 13T, 14F, 15T, 16T, 17F, 18F, 19F, 20T, 21F, 22F, 23T, 24F, 25F, 26F, 27F, 28F, 29F, 30F, 31F, 32T, 33T, 34F, 35T, 36T, 37T, 38F, 39F, 40T.

Appendix 5

Extraordinary Minister Interview Form This form is provided as a sample to assist parishes in interviewing candidates to become Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

E-mail _____

Are you 18 or more years old? if under 18, how old? Circle which settings you wish to serve as an EMHC.

1. During Mass
2. To the homebound
3. Both 1&2

Circle which sacraments have you received

1. Baptism
2. First Penance & Reconciliation
3. First Communion
4. Confirmation

Marital Status (circle)

1. Single
2. Separated 3. Engaged 4. Widowed 5. Married 6. Divorced

If married or engaged

1. is this or will it be your first marriage? Yes___ NO___
2. is this or will it be your spouse/fiancée's first marriage?
3. Is this/will you be married by a Catholic bishop/priest/deacon in a Catholic Church?
Yes___No___

Write the weekend mass that you routinely attend:

Contact Phone _____ Email _____