

Ave María Catholic Church

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Guidelines



At Ave María Catholic Church, the model of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) is one of a servant of God, ministering to our parish, which is the Body of Christ—the Church. We follow the example of the

Apostles who fed the five thousand. We do this by distributing the Eucharist to those present at our Eucharistic Celebrations.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist you in making your service to Christ more organized, more joyful, and hopefully more spirit filled, for you, as well as for our parish family. We hope that your service will encourage you in your walk with God and that through your participation in sharing the Body and Blood of Christ with your sisters and brothers, that they too will be filled with every blessing of the Spirit of our God. God be with you always.

(Revised: 02/17/09)

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Liturgical Documentation

Institution of the Eucharist

“While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘take, eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

(Matthew 26:26-28)

The Mystery of the Holy Eucharist

On the night before he died, Christ gathered his Apostles in the upper room to celebrate the Last Supper and to give us the inestimable gift of his Body and Blood. “He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection ... Thus, in the Eucharistic Liturgy we are joined with Christ on the altar of the Cross and at the table of the upper room in “the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and in the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord’s body and blood.” *(CSL #47, Norms of Distribution of Communion #1, USCCB, 2002)*

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Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion

We welcome you to this parish ministry as a minister at the altar communicating the Precious Body and Blood of Christ to the faithful at Mass. By virtue of his ordination, the bishop or priest offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church. He receives gifts of bread and wine from the faithful, offers the sacrifice to God, and returns to them the very Body and Blood of Christ, as from the hands of Christ himself. Thus, bishops and priests are considered the *ordinary* ministers of Holy Communion. In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it can be distributed in an orderly and reverent manner. Bishops, priests, and deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord.” *(GIRM #93, 182. Norms for Distribution of Communion #26-27, USCCB, 2002)*

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs)

When the size of the assembly 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., formally instituted acolytes or members of the faithful who have been commissioned [mandated according to established diocese policy and procedures] according to the prescribed rite.” Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. *(GIRM #108, Norms for Distribution of Communion #28, USCCB, 2002)*

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***Requirements for
Extraordinary Ministers of
Holy Communion (EMHCs)
at Ave María Catholic Church***

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) must: (a) have received all of the Sacraments of Initiation (e.g., Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation); (b) be a faithful and practicing Catholic; (c) be at least 16 years of age; (d) regularly receive the Sacrament of Penance; and (e) have nothing permanently impeding them from receiving Holy Communion themselves.
 - Newcomers to the ministry must attend a training session (lasting approximately 2 hours).
1. Read, discuss, and comply with the Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion outlined in diocesan policies; the General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM); the *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, and this handbook.
 2. Read the “Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America”. (www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/norms.shtml)
 3. Receive instruction on the importance of using the proper terminology associated with Holy Communion.
 4. Have a “hands-on” training session with the parish EMHC Coordinator(s).

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5. EMHCs are required to attend at least one refresher training session or retreat on Spirituality each year. These are given either by the parish or as a diocesan event.
6. EMHCs are normally mandated for three years by the diocese’s bishop. Additionally, you are mandated to serve at the Ave María Parish. If you desire to serve as an EMHC at another parish, it is at the discretion of the other parish’s pastor. In other words, the mandate does not mean that you can automatically be an EMHC at another parish in the Diocese of Colorado Springs.
7. Upon completion of training, if you wish to serve the homebound or parishioners in the nursing homes, assisted living, etc., please contact the Parish Office. Additional and more specialized instruction is needed for hospitals, nursing home, residential, and hospice visits.
8. If available, sign-up for Holy Days.
9. As soon as you receive your schedule, check your assignments and be sure you are able to fulfill the scheduled requirements. If you will not be available on your assigned date, *you are responsible to find a replacement for the scheduled Mass.* As a minimum, please contact the EMHC Ministry Coordinator and brief him/her accordingly. If possible, please write the person’s name on the schedule who will be substituting for you.

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Preparing for Mass

General Responsibilities:

1. Please be present at the Church at least 10-15 minutes PRIOR to the Mass; this allows time to prepare yourself, and to accomplish the Procedure Checklist.
2. Place your initials by your name on the schedule.
3. Put on one of the Eucharistic Medallions (hanging by the sign-in schedule).
4. EMHCs are scheduled for all regular Masses, however, at any given Mass, there may not be enough EMHCs present. Therefore, PLEASE serve if we are short EMHCs. *If you are unable to serve as scheduled, if possible, please call the EMHC Ministry coordinator in advance of the scheduled Mass and brief them accordingly.*
5. For Special Masses (funerals, etc) and Holy Days, please make yourself available whenever you can serve. EMHCs are not scheduled by the parish on Holy Days, Christmas, and Easter. Please sign up on the forms in the alcove for these Masses.
6. Our “Sunday Best” describes the type of clothing to be worn by EMHCs.

- The designated sacristan will prepare the tray the Mass chalices, patens, water cruet, finger bowl, corporal, purificator, etc., and bring it to the credence table behind the altar.
- “When Holy Communion is to be distributed under both species, careful planning should be taken so that enough bread and wine are made ready for the communication of the faithful at each Mass. As a general rule, Holy Communion is given from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and not from those reserved in the tabernacle. Precious Blood may not be reserved at one Mass for use at another.” (*Norms #30*)

General Procedures for EMHCs

- “If Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they approach the altar as the priest receives Communion.” At Ave María Parish, EMHCs stand by the sanctuary stairs (after the Lamb of God) until the priest has communicated himself of the Body and the Blood. “After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the [altar servers,] Extraordinary Ministers, assisted by the deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to the EMHCs for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.” (#38 – *Distribution of Holy Communion*)
- “When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before receiving the sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand at the discretion of the communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.” (*GIRM #160*)

At the end of the Sign of Peace, the priest or deacon will bring the paten or ciborium (with previously consecrated hosts) from the Tabernacle to the altar.
- As EMHCs approach the sanctuary steps, please do not continue to exchange signs of peace amongst other EMHCs. After the presider has received both the Body and Blood, ministers will then proceed up the stairs and stand between the altar and the presider’s chair to receive communion. After receiving communion, they will go to their respective communion position.

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The EMHCs will receive their communion vessel from the presider or deacon and proceed to their respective distribution station (refer to diagram on last page):

- 1 Extraordinary Minister with paten \ at LEFT SIDE AISLE (tabernacle side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with chalice / at LEFT SIDE AISLE (tabernacle side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with paten \ at RIGHT SIDE AISLE (choir side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with chalice / at RIGHT SIDE AISLE (choir side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with paten \ in MAIN AISLE (beside the priest)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with chalice \ in MAIN AISLE – LEFT SIDE (tabernacle side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with chalice \ in MAIN AISLE – RIGHT SIDE (choir side)
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with paten \ front of 1st, right pew
- 1 Extraordinary Minister with paten / front of 1st, left pew

** EMHCs with the CHALICE should stand slightly to the side (corner of the altar steps) of the person with the Hosts to avoid crowding.

** If a deacon is present, remember one chalice minister is not needed; the deacon (as an ordinary minister) is required, by virtue of his ordained ministerial office, to be a chalice bearer.

If children and communicants come forward for a blessing during communion, the EMHC will only give a statement (May the Lord be in your heart) with no hand movements indicative of a blessing. ***Touching of hair, signing of foreheads, etc., is discouraged.***

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There are times when EMHCs do not show up. If you are able, please step forward to perform as an EMHC, if such a situation arises.

- Be flexible. If you are finished with distribution at your station, step closer to a nearby station to assist in distribution, if needed.
- Ushers will also alert EMHCs of communicants unable to come forward to receive communion. Please give them communion where they are seated.
- The music ministers may come forward for communion. The EMHC(s) on the **choir side** generally administer communion to these music ministers.

Distribution of Holy Communion and Addressing the Communicant

- EMHCs of the **BODY OF THE LORD**: Raises the Host slightly (eye level) and says, “**THE BODY OF CHRIST**”. The communicant bows their head and responds “**AMEN**” and then receives either on the tongue or in the hand.
- If no response is given by the communicant, the EMHC should reply “**AMEN**” in a low voice on behalf of the communicant.
- PLEASE DO NOT say: “*This is the Body of Christ*” or “*Receive the Body of Christ*” or use the person’s name, if you know the individual communicant.
- No communicant is to receive more than one Host at Mass.

- If a seemingly uncatechized person approaches for communion, the EMHC should discretely inquire if they are a Catholic and already received their First Communion. If not, a brief statement (e.g., May the Lord be in your heart) (with no hand movements indicative of a blessing) will be given instead of giving the person Holy Communion. This especially applies in those instances when a young looking child approaches who looks like they have not yet received their First Communion, but may have.
- EMHCs with the **PRECIOUS BLOOD**: Raises the chalice slightly and says, “**THE BLOOD OF CHRIST**”. The communicant bows their head and responds “**AMEN**” and receives the chalice to drink of the Blood.
- If no response is given by the communicant, the EMHC should reply “**AMEN**” in a low voice on behalf of the communicant.
- PLEASE DO NOT say: “*This is the Blood of Christ*” or “*Receive the Blood of Christ*” or use the person’s name, if you know the individual communicant.
- After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the EMHC will carefully wipe both sides of the rim of the chalice with the purificator. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the EMHC will then rotate the chalice approximately a ¼ turn. Use a fresh/different portion of the purificator for each wipe of the rim.

After Communion Distribution

- Following the distribution of communion to the community, EMHCs will stand behind the altar. Ministers of the Paten will bring any remaining consecrated hosts to the priest/deacon at the altar. Ministers of the Chalice will consume any remaining Precious Blood **and place their purificator over the top of the chalice (not in it)**. Empty patens and chalices are then on the counter top (behind the altar). The presider or deacon collects remaining consecrated hosts in the large ciborium and places it in the Tabernacle.
- Chalices **cannot** be placed on the counter top with Precious Blood in them; it must be consumed. If you are unable to consume the remaining Precious Blood, please request another EMHC to do so. At no time can Precious Blood be poured down the sacrarium.
- All sacred communion vessels will be purified immediately after the Mass by the priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte.
- Once the communion vessels have been purified, they can then be cleansed (with warm water and soap, if/as needed), dried, and stored in the appropriate cabinet(s). As a general rule, they are washed with soap and water after the 9:30 a.m. Mass only, unless otherwise needed.

Purifying and Cleansing

(GIRM #278-280)

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- The priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte at the side table, using a purificator, ***purify*** the vessels used for communion, by wiping the surface of the patens over a chalice; causing any remaining portions/particles of the Body of Christ to be placed into the chalice. A small amount of water is then poured into each chalice and moved around the inside surfaces to purify it of any remaining Precious Blood or host particles. The mixture is then consumed and the chalice's inside surface is wiped dry with the purificator. **The vessels are then ready for *cleansing*.**
- All EMHCs are asked to assist in ***cleansing*** the sacred vessels after each Mass.

POINTERS:

- **DO NOT RUSH YOUR DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION.** This is God's greatest gift to us.
- **MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF REVERENCE.**
- **BE ATTENTIVE AND PRESENT TO EACH COMMUNICANT** in your pleasant expression, eye contact, and kind mannerisms.
- If the PRECIOUS BLOOD in your chalice has been fully consumed, cover your chalice with the purificator, place the empty chalice on the counter top behind the sanctuary, and then go stand between the altar and presider's chair, until all EMHCs are present and communion is finished. All EMHCs then leave the sanctuary together.
- Do not place the purificator into the chalice.
- If distributing the Body of Christ and you run out of consecrated hosts, turn to the priest or nearby EMHC to obtain additional consecrated hosts to continue the distribution of communion. As a ***last resort***, the EMHC may break the hosts in half or quarters, accordingly.

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- If necessary, the EMHC may also return to the altar and replenish their paten with consecrated hosts from the large ciborium (previously removed from the tabernacle).

SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

- **INTINCTION:** The practice of intinction is not permitted within the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Questions are to be directed to the parish priest for clarification in accordance with the General Instruction to the Roman Missal and diocesan policy. If a communicant comes to you and attempts to dip a consecrated host into the chalice of blood, reverently and politely cover the chalice with the purificator and tell the communicant, “*The bishop requests that you consume of the body, before you partake of the blood.*”
- **DISABLED PARISHIONERS:** Ushers will direct you to disabled parishioners who wish to receive Communion.
- EMHCs shall be vigilant and make sure that the Host is consumed *before* the communicant walks away.
- **DROPPING CONSECRATED HOST:** Pick it up, consume it or place it in the palm of your hand, and consume it later in the Tabernacle area.
- **SPILLING OF PRECIOUS BLOOD:** Reposition yourself in front of the area, to protect it, then after you are finished with distribution, place your purificator over the spill. Clean it up, as soon as possible, after Mass by washing the area with plenty of water and using the purificator to blot/absorb the mixture. Dispose of any left over water down the sacrarium and place the purificator for appropriate cleaning.

- If a person’s clothes are affected, instruct them on how to wash out the garment by hand and to pour the mixture of blood/water in the ground outside.
- Some communicants may not receive the Body of Christ, because they are gluten intolerant and they may receive gluten free bread or may only receive the Blood of Christ from the chalice.
- Similarly, there may be some communicants who may not receive the Blood of Christ, because of medical intolerance; allergies; illness; non-alcohol consumption restrictions due to medications, etc. Please be conscious that they may instead bow before the chalice or may simply take the chalice, elevate it as a means of reverence, and return it to you.

Diagram #1
Diagram of EMHC Positions

