

# Prairie Catholic's Guidelines for our: Eucharistic Ministers

## **Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist**

"The Eucharist constitutes the very life of the Church, for the Lord said, I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry; no one who believes in me shall ever thirst."

"In every celebration of the Eucharist there should always be a sufficient number of ministers for the distribution of the Eucharist. Priority is always given to ordinary ministers (bishops, priests, deacons) When there are large numbers of the faithful present and there are insufficient ordinary at hand, special or extraordinary ministers properly appointed beforehand should assist in the distribution of Communion."

Your willingness to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, reflects not only response to your Baptismal call to serve the people of God, but a commitment to Christ as you share in the preaching, teaching and leading aspects of the church. You offer the Eucharist, recognize the Body of Christ in those to whom you offer Eucharist and ultimately you act as the Body of Christ by fully participating in the life of the parish and the wider community. Your willingness to commit to a monthly schedule, to prepare properly for your service and to arrive on time dressed appropriately for your assigned Mass, further reflects that commitment.

## **General Ministry Information:**

- All Eucharistic Ministers are appointed by the pastor for a term of .....
- Upon completion of a term or terms, an Extraordinary Minister returns to the Assembly, allowing someone else within the parish community to respond to the invitation to serve.
- Those invited to serve in this ministry are designated only for service in this parish. Unless permission is given.
- Your respect for the Ministry should be reflected in your appearance and attire; appropriate attire includes being properly groomed and wearing a suit and tie or clean, nicely creased trousers with shirt and tie or nice sweater; pants suit or skirt or slacks with blouse/sweater. Please note: no shorts at any time! Jewelry or clothing which would be distracting to the Assembly should not be worn.

**There are usually four Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist assigned to each of the regularly scheduled Week-end Masses, Holy Day Masses.**

## **Ministry to the Sick / Homebound:**

- Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, whose responsibility is not only for the assistance in the distribution of the Eucharist at every regularly scheduled Week-end Mass, **but to homebound parishioners and those in hospitals and nursing centers as well.**
- The expectation is that you will bring Eucharist to the temporarily homebound person(s) on your way home after you have attended Sunday Mass.
- When carrying the Blessed Sacrament, be careful to place it in a safe spot. You may place the pyx in a small cloth bag and wear it around your neck or you may put it in your pocket, or pocketbook. If you do that, you should be careful to place it alone, rather than in a cluttered area. Do not leave it unattended. You should go directly after Mass to the person (s) to whom you will be bringing communion and not let other activities distract you from your ministry, e.g., go shopping .
- You do want to remember that you are carrying the Blessed Sacrament and attending to the business of the Lord so if you meet someone, you do want to smile and greet your neighbor, but you want to be careful about stopping and engaging in a long conversation. Use your good judgement!

- When you are asked to bring Eucharist to the homebound. a greeting; penitential rite; a short reading from Scripture; intercessory prayers; the Lord's Prayer; reception of Communion; a prayer after Communion and a blessing.

### **Before Mass Information:**

- On the day you are assigned to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, it is appropriate and a good practice, to develop the habit of taking time to prepare for your service with quiet prayer and if possible, a reflective reading of Scripture.
- Plan on being in the sacristy at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled Mass time;
- Your hands should be clean, with neatly trimmed and clean nails. It is good practice to wash your hands with soap and water before the liturgy.
- Your participation in the liturgy should be whole and complete, by paying respectful attention to the proclamation of the Word, joining in the singing and offering the peace greeting, etc.

**You should sit in the Assembly with family or friends, within the 1st 3rd of the Church, close enough to the altar to move there easily during the sign of peace within the liturgy.**

- If, at the Mass to which you are assigned, there is the unexpected presence of a deacon or another priest, the 4th person named on the schedule should refrain from coming forward.
- Ministers come forward to the altar, **during** the "Sign of Peace", and stand behind the Celebrant. Time your arrival to **precede** the Celebrant's readiness to begin the Breaking of the Bread as **this is a significant liturgical action**. There is no need to continue the peace greeting on the altar as your attention at this time should be focused on the altar.
- If the priest looks to you,, he is looking to you to bring additional ciboria, from the tabernacle, to the altar, for distribution.
- You should participate in the singing of the Lamb of God chant.
- You receive Communion after the celebrant. After those on the altar have received Communion, you go to your stations at the front of the Church. Priest goes to the front of the altar steps and stands One minister stands by the baptismal font and the other stands by the piano.
- You should be alert to the needs of the faithful in the first row or two on either side of the Church, as often, physically challenged or elderly parishioners are there, to whom you should bring the Eucharist so they do not have to come forward.
- When offering Eucharist, state in a clear, audible, but not loud voice, "The Body of Christ." Remember - you are a presence of Christ to each person as you minister, so, smile kindly, and refrain from appearing annoyed or stern or appear to be in a hurry.
- Allow each communicant a moment to respond "Amen".
- If you drop the Consecrated Host, do not serve it to the person in front of whom you dropped it. Pick up the Host and consume it yourself.
- When there are no more communicants at your station, you bring any unconsumed elements to the altar as quietly, efficiently and reverently as possible. You may return to your seat within the Assembly and join in the communal silence or singing which may be occurring at that time.

## Distribution of the Precious Blood:

- Please be aware of leaving a significant distance between the minister offering the Eucharistic Bread and you offering the cup.
- Hold the Chalice before each communicant and say "**The Blood of Christ**". The same comments hold true about modifying this statement as those for "**The Body of Christ**." The Communicant responds with an "Amen" and the minister hands the cup to the communicant, who takes the cup, takes a sip and hands the cup back.
- Wipe the rim of the cup carefully with the purifier, (inside and out) and turn the cup a quarter turn for the next person it is!)
- If your cup is emptied,, you should take the empty cup to the credence (table) where the altar server will pour water in. You swirl the cup gently, then consume it, wipe the entire cup with the purifier, and then return to your seat within the Assembly.
- Please note, that if there is a substantial amount of Precious Blood left, no one is expected to consume an extraordinary quantity of Precious Blood. Please be responsible in getting others to assist you. If you have a wheat or alcohol related illness, you will not be expected to consume the Precious elements. In that case, please put your cup on the altar for the priest to consume and return to your place within the Assembly.
- If you drop or spill the Precious Blood - **DO NOT PANIC!** Stop what you are doing. Your demeanor will reassure those communicants in line or, in particular, the person who may have caused the spill. If the spill is small, your purifier may be all you need to blot the spill. Delay the communion line as little as possible If it is a large spill, go to the sacristy for a large towel or cloth. Soak up the Precious Blood as well as you can and then place a clean towel over the spot, get another chalice (if yours is empty or broken) and begin distributing at a spot removed from the spillage place so that no one needs to step on it. After the Liturgy, get a cold wet cloth and carefully scrub the place where the spill occurred. The cloths used to soak up the original spill should be placed with the purifiers to be rinsed out in the appropriate manner.

## Miscellaneous Information:

- Be sure to have the schedule **before** the start of the new month so that if arrangements for a substitute have to be made, there will be ample time to do so. **Remember it is your responsibility to secure a substitute should you have a schedule conflict.**
- When you come forward from the Assembly to fulfill your ministry at Mass, and when returning to your place within the Assembly after fulfilling your service within the Liturgy, do so quietly and efficiently without calling attention to yourself.
- If you are taking the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, you approach the tabernacle, open the door, genuflect (or deeply bow if unable to genuflect) then remove the ciborium.
- If you are taking the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle, you open the door of the tabernacle, place the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, genuflect (or deeply bow if you are unable to genuflect) and close and lock the tabernacle door.
- After you have finished distributing the Eucharist, and have returned any remaining Hosts to the altar you may dip the fingers you used to distribute Holy Eucharist into the small bowl next to the Tabernacle and dry them on the purifier next to the bowl.
- **You do not process out with the celebrant at the end of Mass.**
- A Liturgical Minister may perform only one liturgical ministry at a time, at Mass, thus, e.g. if you are performing the function of Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist at Mass, you may not also perform the function of lector at the same Mass.

## **Step 1**

Practice your Catholic faith through a prayerful relationship with God. Take advantage of the sacraments regularly. If you have not been to confession in a while, go before you start the process of becoming a Eucharistic minister and continue to go regularly.

## **Step 2**

Understand the role of an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist. If enough ordained ministers are present at Mass, extraordinary ministers should defer to them and not distribute Holy Communion.

## **Step 3**

Contact your parish office for a schedule .Sign up to serve at some Masses throughout the year.

## **Step 5**

Arrive at Mass early when you are serving as a Eucharistic minister so that you can prepare spiritually. Check in with the priest who is celebrating Mass so that he knows that you have arrived.

The Extra ordinary ministers meet twice a year. Please call to get trained as Eucharistic minister 608 326 6511