



# TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

2026

THE DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH  
OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

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## INTRODUCTION:

In your planning to train leaders, also consult the diocesan “Revised Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, 2020”, Office of Divine Worship. These Norms are referenced in this training guide. These guidelines follow the Liturgical Ministry Series: Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (LTP), 3rd edition. We recommend reading this book to gain a greater spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill your role with knowledge and reverence.

### WHAT IS LITURGY?

The word liturgy comes from the Greek word meaning “public work” or “work of the people.” The liturgy is a celebration of divine worship of the whole people of God – doing what is ours to do, the proclamation of the Gospel, and charity in action.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LITURGY?

- Recognizes that it is God who gathers us together in God own presence
- Helps us build community
- It is ordinary and cosmic
- The Paschal Mystery is central
- We encounter Christ and one another
- It is different from devotion(s)
- It reflects and shapes our faith
- It edifies us as believers in the world sent forth in mission
- Provides an opportunity to serve

### WHAT IS AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION?

- The bishop, priest, and deacon are the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

- The laity have the faculty to serve when there are insufficient clerics to distribute Holy Communion at Mass, and to bring Communion to the sick or confined. The layperson is the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

### AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING:

- Shows charity, compassion, and listens with empathy
- Reflects on his/her faith and seeks to grow in his/her faith
- Distinguished by his/her faith, Christian life, good morals, good reputation in the ecclesial community, and is instructed in the performance of this service
- Recognizes that God has been good and gives back to God what He has given him/her

**Note:** In the Diocese of Raleigh, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion should:

Be a Catholic with good moral character and strives to live the message of the Gospel. (Read 2.1 Diocese of Raleigh (DOR) Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) 2020)

Regularly participate in the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist and practice the faith. (Read 2.1 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

## MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Dress simply, modestly and appropriately. Avoid wearing jeans, shorts, sneakers, flip-flops, tank tops, and t-shirts with signs and slogans including religious ones. Follow your parish's written policy for appropriate attire.
- Know and abide by the standards of the diocese and your parish.

**Note:** In the Diocese of Raleigh an extraordinary minister should:

Be over sixteen years of age and has received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion). (Read 2.1 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

Must be registered as a member of the parish to which you have been delegated. (Read 2.1 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

Participates in a single liturgical ministry, e.g., extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, lector, or cantor (this is to encourage participation from members of the parish community). (Read 3.5 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

## PREPARATION

- Reflect on Sunday Readings before going to Mass
- Arrive with plenty of time to prepare yourself before Mass begins
- Be responsible, including in the smallest things
- Know where your station is ahead of time
- Participate fully, consciously, and actively in all aspects of the sacred liturgy
- Always be ready, attentive and prepared to serve. Be informed of when you are going to serve and who to notify when a last-minute inconvenience arises, and you are unable to serve.
  - When the presence of an additional priest or deacon is presented, it may mean that you will not need to serve at a particular Mass, even if you had been scheduled.

## DISTRIBUTION

- During the "Lamb of God" you can approach the altar
- Extraordinary ministers can approach the altar in two groups, those who will distribute the consecrated hosts can go to the right side and those who will distribute the chalices with the Blood of Christ on the left side or vice versa.
- See to it that people with special needs receive Communion in a timely manner. An usher or other person can alert you of the presence of special need parishioners. Ideally, these people should have an assigned place.
- Make eye contact, show joy and full attention to each person who is going to receive communion.

**Note:** In the Diocese of Raleigh,

After the presiding priest has received Communion, the extraordinary ministers approach the altar and bow for Communion. (Read 4.1 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

Do not greet or have a conversation with the communicant. (Read 4.8 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

It is a common pastoral practice for ordained ministers of Communion to impart a blessing to those who approach with their arms folded. Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers should simply say "May God bless you" or "May God continue to work in you." (Read 4.7 DOR Norms for EMHC 2020)

## BODY OF CHRIST

- The communicant makes a sign of reverence (bows) as he/she approaches the extraordinary minister to receive the communion, the extraordinary minister says, "the Body of Christ." It is not permissible to change the formula, for example, one should not say "Mary, the Body of Christ."
- In no way should you raise the host excessively. Let us remember that it is Christ who serves, and all of us who are served.
- The communicant may receive communion on the hand or tongue, standing or kneeling. The communicant must audibly respond, "Amen."
- If the communicant is a child and does not know how

to respond, ask the child or his/her parents if the child made the First Communion.

- If a host or part of a host falls to the floor, immediately pick it up with reverence and place it under the hand with which you hold the paten, then you can consume it or give it to the priest or sacristan.

### BLOOD OF CHRIST

- The communicant approaches the extraordinary minister to receive the Blood of Christ, (do not raise the chalice too high) the extraordinary minister says, “the Blood of Christ.” It is not permissible to change the formula, for example, one should not say “John, the Blood of Christ.”
- The communicant may receive the “Blood of Christ” standing or kneeling, audibly answering “Amen,” and will take the chalice.
  - Use the entire purificator. Open it and wipe the rim of the chalice inside and outside with a clean spot on the purificator each time. You have a moment to turn the purificator and find a clean spot as each person receives from the chalice.
- If a drop of the “Blood of Christ” falls on the floor, absorb it or clean it with the purifier immediately. If you need help, ask the sacristan or an usher before continuing.
- If a communicant pours out the “Blood of Christ” on himself, hand him the purifier and kindly encourage him to wipe his/her chin or clothes.
- If the communicant approaches to receive by intinction (consecrated host immersed in the chalice), cover the chalice with the purifier and gently tell him to consume the host. Only the bishop or a priest can give Holy Communion like this.

### ONCE DISTRIBUTION IS COMPLETED

- Generally, the paten and chalice are returned to the altar by the extraordinary minister, and the deacon or priest will be on standby to receive them.
- The extraordinary minister may consume what is left in his/her chalice or may ask for help from another extraordinary minister, when done returns to his/her place in the assembly.

### AFTER MASS

- It is important to pray at the conclusion of Mass. Include a special prayer for people who received Communion and for those who were unable to receive Holy Communion.

### SPIRITUALITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

Trust that God is in charge. The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit which is present in the entirety of the Eucharistic Liturgy. Continue to live the mystery through the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, in His Word, in the minister, in the assembly, and in the poor. Realize that this ministry is a profound exercise of your baptismal call especially in the mission of bringing Christ to others.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What does it mean to you to serve as a minister of the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ?

How do you understand the connection between the Body of Christ you distribute and the Body of Christ that we are as believers?

What are the challenges this ministry offers you? Challenges particularly present when someone you may not be in right relationship with approaches you in the Communion line?

What do you understand is the impact of eating and drinking our Savior on our lives as believers?

Are you resolved to administer the holy Eucharist with the utmost care and reverence?

Are you resolved to undertake the office of giving the Body and Blood of the Lord to your brothers and sisters, and so serve to build up the Church?

How can you honor this presence of Christ not only in what you distribute, but more importantly in those who consume him?

## PRAYER FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right,  
Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.

-Excerpt from the *Breastplate of St. Patrick*

