

Eucharistic Minister Training

St. Anthony of Padua

Revised: September 2024 (Changes are noted in RED)

Summary

This document is intended to complement the training provided by the Archdiocese for Eucharistic Ministers, or as they prefer, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Included here are specific instructions for our parishes. Part 1 covers the duties of those serving at Mass, and Part 2 covers the duties of those bringing Communion to the homebound, nursing homes, retirement communities or hospitals.

Requirements to be a Eucharistic Minister

<https://www.odwphiladelphia.org/sacred-liturgy/archdiocesan-guidelines/>

- All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, without exception, are to have a current appointment letter from the Archbishop.
- Candidates are to be fully initiated practicing Catholics, high school graduates, not in an invalid marriage, recognized for faith and devotion to the Holy Eucharist as well as for service in the parish. Pastors are reminded to be discerning in the invitation to members of the lay faithful to carry out this ministry.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed for a three-year term and for the place where they are commissioned. Terms may be renewed if agreeable to both the pastor and the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
- All records of active Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are maintained by the parish.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned after participation in a training session, according to the form found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63, "Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion."
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion only serve in the parishes/institutions/schools for which they are commissioned.

Part 1 – Eucharistic Ministers at Mass

1. Duties of EM at Mass

- a. Distribution of Holy Communion from vessels containing either the Body or Blood of our Lord
- b. Greeter – All liturgical ministers (ushers, lectors, EM's) are encouraged to welcome people as they enter the Church.
- c. Distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday
- d. Blessing of throats on St. Blaise feast day

2. Where to Sit

- a. EM's should sit near the front of the Church on an aisle so they can approach the altar quickly at the appropriate time. You may sit with your family

3. Before Distribution of Hosts to Those Present

- a. For the health & safety of the congregation, EM's should purify hands with anti-bacterial lotion in their pew. A bottle is also available at the piano (for now).
- b. Approach altar *immediately* after priest receives the Host
- c. Bow to altar before ascending the first step
- d. Where to stand
 - i. In front of the altar, in the middle of the rug with space for priest to stand on same level. The first EM should stand on the far-right edge of the carpet as you face the altar to allow room for the other ministers and musicians in front of the altar
 - ii. If not receiving chalice, make the priest or deacon aware at that moment.
 - iii. For Daily Mass, EM's should stand at the edge of the rug to the side of the altar.
- e. Distribution of the Precious Blood:
 - i. If there is no Deacon: The priest will offer the Precious Blood to the first EM. That EM should then take the chalice and offer the Precious Blood to the remaining ministers and then go to Station 1 (see below) for distribution to the congregation.
 - ii. If there is a Deacon: The deacon will follow the priest and offer the Precious Blood to the first EM. That EM should then take the chalice and offer the Precious Blood to the remaining ministers and then go to Station 1 (see below) for distribution to the congregation.
 - iii. The cantor and musician should decline to receive the Precious Blood and return to begin the Communion hymn.
- f. In general, the priest or deacon should hand you the ciborium or chalice. IF NOT, you should only take the ciborium from the back of the altar – never from the front or the side.
- g. Always approach the altar from the right and pass behind the altar in a counter-clockwise motion.

4. EM stations and Distribution

- a. Station 1: Precious Blood – Return aisle between the chapel and the center aisle
- b. Station 2: Aisle near the piano
- c. Station 3: Aisle near the chapel
- d. Station 4: Center Aisle (EM or Deacon)
- e. The priest is always at Station 4 – the center aisle - and will typically direct each EM to a station.
- f. Low gluten hosts will now be distributed AFTER everyone else has received. The EM stationed near the piano (Station 2), will return the ciborium to the altar, sanitize their hands at the credence table and retrieve the low gluten hosts at that time, then go back to the station near the piano to distribute.

- g. The EM or Deacon, and the Priest at Station 4 (center aisle) should stand hallway between the first pew and the first step to the altar to allow room for people to pass behind.
- h. EM says to those receiving, “The Body of Christ.,” or “The Blood of Christ.” Person receiving should respond, “Amen.”
- i. EM’s distributing the Precious Blood should wipe the chalice with the folded purificator and turn the chalice one-quarter to be ready for the next person.
- j. If EM at side aisle needs to assist with center aisle, EM stands close to front of the first pew, facing the center aisle. This allows for a smooth traffic pattern.
- k. EM could be asked by an usher to bring Host to someone at back or side who can’t approach the altar easily
- l. EM should be aware of handicapped people sitting in first rows throughout church and give them and their companions Host before moving to regular station for other parishioners who are mobile.

5. Troubleshooting

- a. If you look at the line ahead of you and feel you are running out of Hosts, begin to break them in half
- b. If you are distributing the Precious Blood and are getting near the end of the line with a lot left in the chalice, you may ask the person “Can you consume more than usual?” prior to saying “Blood of Christ.”
- c. If a Host falls to the floor, the EM should pick up the Host and either consume the Host immediately or put it back in the ciborium to be distributed later.
- d. If the Precious Blood is spilled, the EM should retrieve a purificator from the altar and cover the area until such time as it can be wiped up and the purificator rinsed in the sacrarium.

6. After Communion

- a. After they are done distributing Communion, EM’s should approach the altar from the right.
- b. If there is a small amount of Precious Blood remaining, the EM should consume at that time. If there is too much, they should go behind the reredos (where the sink is) with another EM and consume it there, then return to the altar with the empty chalice
- c. EMs should hand the ciborium or chalice to the priest or deacon or place it on the corporal on the altar.
- d. EM should continue in a counter-clockwise motion and go around the altar and the pulpit to return to their seat. **Do not wait for the tabernacle to be closed or for empty ciboriums.**
- e. **The Priest or Deacon will hand the empty ciborium and/or chalice to an altar server to return to the Credence Table.**
- f. Ciboria with consecrated Hosts put by priest or deacon into tabernacle – all bow. Typically, only “ordained hands” go into the Tabernacle.

Part 2 – Eucharistic Ministers for the Homebound

1. Summary

There are many parishioners who are no longer able to attend Mass and rely on our Eucharistic Ministers to bring them Communion on a regular basis. This includes the homebound, but also those living in a nursing home or retirement community. Those facilities in our parish include: Silverstream, Artman, Ambler Rest, Fort Washington Estates, Spring House Estates & Gwynedd Estates. The following outlines the process for this important ministry

2. The Process

a. Obtaining the Hosts

The starting point for Communion is the Mass. Specifically, the Eucharistic Minister (EM) visits the Sacristy before Mass, takes a pyx and burse from the top center drawer and fills the pyx with unconsecrated hosts. Unconsecrated hosts are located in a plastic bag in the lower cabinet to the right of the sink.

The EM places the pyx with unconsecrated hosts on the shelf behind the altar, to the right of the Tabernacle. NOT ON THE ALTAR. The EM leaves the pyx open. The priest or deacon will move the pyx to the altar as part of the preparation of Communion.

The new sequence for the end of Mass:

- i. Period of Silence after Communion
- ii. All Stand
- iii. Prayer after Communion
- iv. Announcements
- v. EM's approach the altar, stand in the center of the carpet in front of the altar and are handed the Pyx by the priest or deacon
- vi. Blessing and Dismissal

Ideally, the pyx should be carried in a burse, hung around the EM's neck. The EM should then leave immediately and head directly to their destination.

b. Visiting the Communicant

The EM begins with a greeting. TVs should be turned off.

The Diocesan training suggested that the EM should give Communion right away, out of respect for Our Lord, and have personal conversations afterwards.

However, some of us have found it is helpful to begin by spending a couple of minutes asking the Communicant how he is feeling, how his week was, and if he has any prayer requests, etc. Talking with the Communicant first can make the prayers more specific and personal. The EM may pray specifically with the Communicant before or after Communion. It is always good to use Deacon Cuff's Prayer Warriors' Prayer Card, and personalize it as appropriate.

The EM may talk about the Gospel, homily, or the special feast day. The point is to help the Communicant feel he is part of the Mass, along with the parish community.

When the EM is ready to give Communion, he and the Communicant use wording from the Communion Rite at Mass, as follows:

EM and Communicant: **Pray the Our Father.** (The EM may also pray the Hail Mary and Glory Be to the Father prayers.)

EM (Holding up host.):

**Behold the Lamb of God.
Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are they who are called to the supper of the Lamb.**

EM and Communicant:

**Lord I am not worthy that you should come under my roof.
Only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

EM: **Body of Christ.**

Communicant: **Amen.**

c. Returning the Pyx and Burse.

The EM consumes any remaining hosts, then returns the pyx and burse to the Sacristy. The EM purifies the empty pyx with water, while saying the following prayer:

**What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,
May we possess in purity of heart,
That what has been given to us,
In time may be our healing for eternity.”**

The EM pours the water used to clean the pyx down the Sacramentum (the small round sink which has a drain that leads to the ground). This sink is to the left of the standard square sink.

3. Additional Instructions and Special Circumstances

a. When Not To Give Communion

The EM must ask each person if he wants to receive Communion. When a person does not accept the invitation, or when a person is not aware or respectful, the EM should not give Communion. When a person says he does not go to Mass or the sacraments regularly, the EM should ask if he wants to talk with a priest. On Sundays, Communion should **not** be offered to others in the room, unless those people are not able to go to Mass.

b. Specific Homebound Protocol

A small table should be set up with a white cloth, candle, and a crucifix. Upon entering, the EM immediately sets the pyx on the table, and lights the candle. The EM brings the homebound a copy of The Paduan. It is wise to call each house ahead of time to ensure the parishioner is home and able to receive Communion.

c. *Specific Institution Protocol*

EMs should coordinate their visits with the institution's pastoral office. Deacon Cuff has already done this with the Artman and Ambler Extended Care. Pastor Ghislaine Cotnoir at Artman appreciates a weekly email prior to the Sunday visits saying who will be visiting. Her email is gcotnoir@libertylutheran.org. At Ambler Extended Care, the contact is Dawn Pistelli at dawn.pistelli@saberhealth.com. The Eucharistic Ministers for Ambler Extended Care send a monthly email to Dawn with their schedule.

At both Artman and the Ambler Extended Care Center, a list of Catholic residents will be left for the EMs. At Artman, the EMs are asked to note who was visited and if a resident requested a visit from a priest. Because of HIPPA privacy considerations, the lists must be left at the facilities.

d. *Communion Services*

EMs may conduct Communion services at nursing homes.

e. *Recipient Fasting*

The sick must fast for 15 minutes before receiving Communion. There is no age limit for this requirement. If a person has just eaten, and it is impractical to wait, the EM may ask the recipient to take a drink of water, then distribute Communion; however, this should not be the normal practice.

f. *Recipient Issues with Swallowing*

Some residents may not be able to receive anything by mouth, or may ask for a small piece of the host. If the EM has any questions about this, he is to ask a nurse on duty. The EM may offer a recipient a small piece of the host.

In the unlikely event that someone begins to consume the host and can not finish, the EM should wrap it in a tissue and return the partially consumed host to the Parish. The EM should hand it to a priest or a deacon. If the EM has access to the Sacristy, the EM may dissolve the host in a small cup of water first, then flush it down the Sacramentarium. Please know that no one is expected to consume a Host that someone has already placed in his mouth. However, we must treat the situation with respect and care, mindful of our belief in the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

g. *Confidentiality*

EMs must abide by confidentiality protocols. An EM may not discuss a visit to a resident outside the team of EMs and clergy. Under no circumstances is an EM to confirm or deny that a person is a resident of a nursing home or health care facility. In other words, if an EM visits a resident and someone asks if the EM has seen the resident, the EM may not say yes or no. If asked why, the EM can cite confidentiality guidelines.

h. *Viaticum*

A priest should be the one to give a person his last Holy Communion. There are specific prayers for Viaticum. A person can receive Viaticum multiple times, as necessary. Sometimes, it may be necessary for an EM to give Viaticum.

i. *Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister Commissions*

The Pastor or another Parish priest formally commission new EMs at a Mass. The commission must be renewed every three years.

Part 3 – Additional Information

1. Training

- a. After vetting by the parish staff, the Candidate should attend a workshop run by the Office of Divine Worship for the Archdiocese or the 4 part video workshop on YouTube.
 - i. Part 1: <https://youtu.be/igRQmRjWscg?si=d9w7SDkAy5LmTVqR>
 - ii. Part2: <https://youtu.be/xCconzQzJ1Y?si=-ZvhF4cBvEC3UZRW>
 - iii. Part 3: <https://youtu.be/eCcpplZN51k?si=X8vblfj4QmFOySu>
 - iv. Part 4: <https://youtu.be/kqoZQYRRcl8?si=65QxnigARLP-8yNE>
- b. Parish-Specific Training will follow conducted by our parish staff

2. Induction

- a. After the appointment letter is received from the Archdiocese, there will be a special blessing at a Mass to be determined, for all new, or renewed EM's

3. Helping Others Answer the Call to Serve as an EM

- a. Recruiting
 - i. Technically only done by the pastor after discerning the person's love for the Eucharist and inviting them
 - ii. Publicity via usual channels
 - iii. Put names of current EMs (photos?) on website/publicity
 - iv. Include comments from current EMs why it's fulfilling
 - v. Possible solicitation from pulpit after Mass
 - vi. Had been discussion of featuring different ministry(ies) each month in Narthex – can be done with Donut Sunday (?)
- b. Recommendations from other EMs
 - i. Current EMs encouraged to suggest someone
 - ii. Warm or "cold" recommendations
- c. Candidate suggestions taken from ranks of other parish activities
 - i. Prayer groups
 - ii. Adoration sign-ins (used to register at previous Monday adorations)
 - iii. Those attending daily Mass
- d. Promote diversity within EM ministry
 - i. Spanish, Asian, Black parishioners
 - ii. Younger parishioners
 - iii. Parents with small children
 - iv. More men

4. Scheduling

- a. Director solicits EMs for dates/times they are UNavailable
- b. EMs should report any specific choices; such as – "only 5:15 Mass" or "never 5:15 Mass"
- c. Software program assigns 3 EMs to each Mass (if no deacon, fourth EM would step forward ad hoc)
- d. If coverage change needed, individual EM should call another EM to cover time slot or switch assignments with that person. Alternatively, EM could send out a group e-mail to roster of EMs, asking for help with coverage.
- e. EMs not assigned to a particular Mass that they attend should always dress appropriately in case they have to fill in ad hoc, as well as to be aware of who is assigned to the Mass (check

schedule that Liturgy Director e-mailed) to judge coverage (when offering a sign of peace to others is a good time to check the congregation if EM can recognize other EMs)

- f. Greeting at the entrance to the Nave and sitting in a designated pew are hints to other EMs as to who is assigned for that Mass

5. Jurisdiction of EMs

- a. EMs can serve only at the parish to which they are assigned
- b. If EMs bring Host to someone who doesn't belong to St. Anthony parish, the pastor of the parish to which that person belongs should be notified.
- c. If vacationing at the shore, mountains, etc., an EM can fill in at any Mass only if the priest celebrating that Mass requests them to help (calls them to the altar).