

The Function of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- 1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)** who bring Holy Communion to the sick and to the homebound must commit to the diocesan Code of Ethics and submit to background checks according to diocesan policy. (Ministers to family members or others living in their home are exempt from this requirement.)
2. Extraordinary ministers are to use the rite found in Pastoral Care of the Sick, Chapter III, “Communion of the Sick.” They may also use Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside Mass Chapter II, “Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister.” This revised version of the rite is mandatory as of December 1, 2024.
3. The EMHC must fulfill all requirements of safe environment/safeguarding - As acolytes and other extraordinary ministers of holy communion may have contact with vulnerable persons, in the Diocese of Portland, these ministers must fulfill all the requirements of the diocesan safe environment policies regarding their office.
- 4. In the Diocese of Portland.**
 - a. Outside mass,** the delegated extraordinary ministers sign a register in the sacristy indicating their name, the date, and the person(s) to whom they are bringing Communion. They receive the Blessed Sacrament directly from the tabernacle in a metal, secure pyx either with the assistance of others or on their own. **Upon receiving the Blessed Sacrament in the pyx, the minister goes immediately and directly to the intended destination, without any stop along the way for any purpose.**
 - b. During Mass,** the delegated extraordinary ministers sign a register in the sacristy prior to Mass indicating their name, the date, and the person(s) to whom they are bringing Communion. They entrust their pyx to a designated person and take their seat in the body of the church. After Communion, the priest celebrant calls forward those bringing Communion to the sick and distributes the filled pyxes to them. **Upon receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the ministers leave the church immediately, proceeding directly to their destinations without remaining for the final blessing or stopping elsewhere.**
- 5. In St John of the Cross Cluster.**
 - a. Before Mass,** the delegated EMHC sign a register in the sacristy indicating their name, the date, and the person(s) to whom they are bringing Communion. They take their seat in the body of the church for Mass. After Communion, the priest celebrant calls forward the delegated EMHC, the priest celebrant gives them the blessing, he distributes the filled pyxes to them, and he sends them off. **Upon receiving the Blessed Sacrament in the pyxes, the ministers leave the church immediately,**

proceeding directly to their destinations without remaining for the final blessing or stopping elsewhere.

b. If the Extraordinary minister would not leave immediately, they are encouraged to follow the outside mass procedure (4.a.).

6. Should anyone present a pyx in the Communion line after, the minister of Communion should politely decline and invite the person to speak to the priest after Mass.

7. Under no circumstances may extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion reserve the Blessed Sacrament in their homes for any period of time.

8. The distribution of Communion begins after the communion of the priest celebrant. Extraordinary ministers approach the altar once the celebrant has consumed both species. The Roman Missal does not call for ministers to wash or sanitize their hands before the distribution of Holy Communion. If they wish to do so, that takes place at their seat before entering the sanctuary.

9. In the United States, the norm established is that Holy Communion is to be received standing, unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Holy Communion while kneeling. It is also the established norm that Holy Communion under the species of bread may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, according to the choice of the communicant. Ministers of Communion may never refuse Communion to the faithful based on posture (i.e. standing or kneeling) or the manner of reception (i.e. on the tongue or in the hand.)

10. Communicants who receive Communion in the hand must consume the host in the presence (i.e. within the sight) of the minister; in other words, they may not walk away from the minister before consuming the host.

11. When receiving Communion under the species of wine, the minister is to make sure that the communicant receives the chalice securely in his or her hands in order to raise it to the lips. The minister receives the chalice back, purifies the rim of the chalice with the purificator, and turns the chalice slightly for the next communicant. Communicants may never self-intinct a host in the Precious Blood.

12. Extraordinary ministers who are unable to fulfill their function for some reason have no authority to delegate other members of the lay faithful, who are not themselves already extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, to take their place. Nor may a communicant who is not an extraordinary minister himself or herself bring Communion from the Communion line to another person attending the same Mass.