

HANDBOOK FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST



St. Michael the Archangel Parish

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A WORD OF THANKS

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Thank you for your interest and enthusiasm in serving at the altar as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Your ministry at Mass, as well as in those situations when you bring the Lord to others outside of the sacred liturgy, is of great value to all who make up St. Michael's parish community.

In the Holy Eucharist we are given and we share with each other the greatest of gifts: the sacramental presence of Christ in his body and blood. This handbook establishes and clarifies specific guidelines and procedures to assist you in carrying out your responsibilities at the altar. Our parish strives to do our best to celebrate liturgies that are both joyful and prayerful. We thank you for your willingness to serve and support us.

Again, thank you for your dedication in serving God and all who take part in the eucharistic banquet. Please review these procedures and don't hesitate to ask questions regarding areas about which you may be unclear.

May our God truly fashion us into a eucharistic people.

Your brother in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. James L. Sorra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. James L. Sorra
Pastor

Qualifications

To serve as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist (EME) individuals must meet all of the following minimal requirements:

- Be a member of the Catholic Church in good standing (if married, the marriage must be recognized by the church)
- Have received the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Be a practicing Catholic who strives to live life in conformity with the teachings of Christ and who participates faithfully in the sacramental life of the church. EME should be attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist regularly (Sundays and Holy Days).
- Be at least 18 years of age to be eligible to serve a three year term. Confirmed Catholics between the ages of 16 and 18 may serve one year terms. (There is no official term limit for EME provided one engages in ongoing formation and updating in the ministry and remains a Catholic in good standing.)

Attendance

- EME should arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. This allows us to know that we have sufficient ministers as well as insures that we can prayerfully prepare ourselves for the celebration of Mass.
- Please sign in on the sheet in the sacristy.
- Attendance at your assigned times is essential. If you have a scheduling conflict, please arrange for a substitute to cover for you. We ask that EME take responsibility for procuring their own substitutes.
- EME who are not consistent in attendance will no longer be scheduled.

Dress

- Please wear clean, modest, and appropriate dress clothes when distributing communion. One should never wear shorts or overly casual clothing when ministering on the altar.

Scheduling

- If you know ahead of time that you will not be available for a certain weekend or for a particular period of time, please advise the scheduling coordinator ahead of time. If

you are scheduled and unable to serve, please take responsibility for arranging for a substitute.

- Each year EME will be asked to complete an Information Form. This form will provide the opportunity for you to alter your mass preferences as well as to update other information.

Ministry Terms

- According to guidelines issued by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, EME may serve individual three-year terms. However, terms can be renewed indefinitely provided that updated training is given. St. Michael's will offer an annual updating to satisfy this requirement. Those who have not reached their 18th birthday may serve for renewable one-year terms (minimum age is 16).

Procedures

Before Mass begins:

- Arrive 15 minutes before Mass begins and sign in. The sign-in sheet is located in the sacristy. Signing in assures proper coverage at each liturgy. Note your assigned location and its associated duties. *Remember, it is the responsibility of the assigned EME to arrange for a substitute if unable to make an assigned mass.*
- If you attend a Mass for which you are not scheduled to serve, please check in to see if you are needed.
- Have a seat with the rest of the assembly. It is recommended that EME be seated near the aisles so that it is easier to move to the sanctuary for the Communion Rite.

Sign of Peace:

- At the beginning of the *Sign of Peace*, EME should immediately make their way to the sanctuary and begin their assigned tasks:
- Station #1 will always be the presiding priest. If a deacon or seminarian is assisting, they will be assigned to Station #2 (next to the celebrant).
- Minister #4 goes directly to the tabernacle. Open the tabernacle door, genuflect, and remove the appropriate number of ciboria containing the previously consecrated hosts and bring them to the altar, placing them on the corporal on the right side of the altar (opposite the communion cups). (Leave the tabernacle door open.) Leave the lid to the ciboria at the tabernacle.
- All other assigned EME come into the sanctuary and position themselves on either side of the altar (not on the platform behind the altar). Host ministers should position

themselves on the St. Michael side of the altar where the ciboria are placed and cup ministers should stand on the Holy Family side to facilitate a more orderly flow of traffic when it comes time to proceed to communion stations.

Lamb of God:

- During the *Lamb of God*, the ciboria are brought to the altar.
- After the celebrant receives communion, he will give communion under both forms to the deacon or seminarian, if present. If there is no deacon or seminarian, he will give communion under the form of bread to all EME, then offer the cup. Typically, the celebrant will offer the celebrant's chalice to one of the host ministers, who then will offer it to the other host ministers, altar servers, and cantor. Never pass the cup around between ministers.
- The priest will then present the sacred vessels (ciboria and chalices) to the individual ministers who will then proceed to their designated stations.
- Before distributing communion to the rest of the assembly, be sure the servers, cantor, etc. have been offered communion under both forms.

During Communion:

CUP MINISTERS

- Cup ministers (#3 & 4 in front, #7 & 8 in the center of church, if scheduled) proceed to their stations, keeping as far a distance as possible from the host ministers.
- When distributing, slightly raise the cup and say "The Blood of Christ." (Do not change or paraphrase the words.) Wait for the person to say "Amen." (If they don't respond, say it for them.) Hand the cup to him/her and receive it back. Wipe the spot from which he/she drank and slightly turn the cup.
- If there is spillage of the Precious Blood, use your purificator to clean it up. If this is a larger spill, place your purificator over it, get another purificator from the altar or sacristy, and continue distributing the cup until communion is finished. Then, complete the cleanup.
- When your communion line is finished, assist other lines if needed.
- When you are finished, go to the sacristy, consume any remaining Precious Blood, rinse the cup with some water and consume it, and place your cup and purificator on the counter near the sink.
- Return to your place in the assembly.

HOST MINISTERS

- After the cup ministers have moved to their stations, host ministers receive a ciborium and move to the assigned stations. (#1 & 2 in front, #5 & 6 in the center, if scheduled).
- When distributing communion, raise the host slightly and say “The Body of Christ.” (Do not change or paraphrase the wording.) Wait for the person to respond “Amen.” (If they don’t respond, say “Amen” for them.) Place the host in the person’s hand or on his/her tongue as he/she indicates.
- If a host is dropped, either consume it or place it to the side of the ciboria (and return it to the sacristy after communion). Do not give it back to the person who dropped it and don’t make a “scene” because of it.
- If someone comes forward with their arms crossed, or otherwise indicates that they are not receiving communion and ask for a blessing, you may either place your hand on their shoulder or make the sign of the cross on his/her forehead and simply say “May God’s blessing be with you always.” This is also appropriate for small children.
- When your communion line is finished, assist others if needed.
- When you are finished, go to the tabernacle. Place any remaining hosts in the ciborium, exercising care not to drop them. The Celebrant’s paten should be placed in the niche with the chalice. Hosts should be consolidated into one ciborium if possible. Empty ciboria should be placed in the niche with the chalice.
- Once you have placed the ciboria inside the tabernacle, genuflect (while the door is still open) and close the door. *Do not place a pyx with communion for the sick on the altar nor should it be left outside the tabernacle.* Those who are taking communion to the sick should get their pyx filled following Mass. If you are unable to genuflect then a profound bow is sufficient.
- Return to your seat in the assembly.

Definitions

ALTAR: Table on which the Eucharist is celebrated; upon entering church (or when approaching the altar) one reverences it with a bow

AMBO: Stand from the Word of God is proclaimed: the readings from scripture (including the responsorial psalm), and the homily; it is sometimes referred to as the pulpit or lectern

CHALICE: Cup used at Mass in which the wine is poured to be consecrated into the Blood of Christ and distributed to the assembly

CIBORIUM: Vessel in which consecrated hosts are reserved; it is placed in the tabernacle and used for distribution.

CREDENCE TABLE: Side table upon which is placed the various vessels used at Mass: chalices, patens, etc.

CRUETS: Small glass containers which hold the water and wine

FINGER BOWL: Bowl used for washing the priest's hands

FINGER TOWEL: Used by the priest to dry his hands

MONSTRANCE: Vessel which holds a consecrated host used at Benediction or during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

PATEN: Vessel used to hold the hosts during Mass (also referred to as communion plates)

PURIFICATOR: Cloth used to clean the chalice after someone has received communion

PYX: A small round container used to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. It is sometimes carried inside a leather case called a burse.

SACRARIUM: Special sink whose pipes flow directly to the ground. This sink is used for pouring water which contains trace amounts of the consecrated bread and wine after Mass.

SANCTUARY LAMP: When lit, it indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

TABERNACLE: Large receptacle that holds the Blessed Sacrament. It is proper to genuflect before the tabernacle after opening the door to retrieve the Blessed Sacrament and just prior to closing the door when returning it to the tabernacle.

Date _____ Mass _____

Lector(s): _____

Altar Servers: _____

EME Stations:

1. _____
(Priest-Celebrant – Host in Front/Holy Family side)

2. _____
(Host in Front / St. Michael side; Deacon/Concelebrating Priest if present)

3. _____
(Cup Minister in Front / Holy Family side)

4. _____
(Cup Minister in Front / St. Michael side – Brings one ciborium from tabernacle)

Please sign in for first four positions first.

5. _____
(Host Minister in Center / Holy Family side)

6. _____
(Host Minister in Center / St. Michael side – Brings two ciboria from tabernacle)

7. _____
(Cup Minister in Center / Holy Family side)

8. _____
(Cup Minister in Center / St. Michael side)

