

Procedure for Distribution of Vessels and Holy Communion

Our Lady of Grace Church, West Babylon, New York

December, 2006

Before Mass

- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion arrive at church no later than 15 minutes before Mass, and check in with the captain in the Albin Avenue sacristy. The ministers are assigned numbers indicating the station to which they are assigned (or, they have been pre-assigned by the captain).
- After receiving their assignment, the ministers are seated with the assembly, anywhere toward the front and near an aisle on the parking lot side of the building.
- The ministers use the remaining time before Mass to ask God's grace to bring the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine to their fellow parishioners effectively.

At the Fraction Rite (Lamb of God)

- The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion line up **in numbered order** (see diagram) next to the altar servers.
- After the priest and deacon have communed, and after they have communed the musicians, they bring the Eucharistic bread and wine to the EMHCs, beginning with minister number 1 (the captain when no deacon is present).
- The priest continues distributing the Eucharistic bread to the other EMHCs and the servers.
- The deacon, after bringing cup to minister number 1, **gives that cup to minister number 1**, who then follows the priest down the line to offer the Eucharistic wine to the other ministers and servers. When they reach the end of the line, **the priest and minister number 1 wait until all vessels have been distributed.**
- Meanwhile, the deacon returns to the altar table and distributes the remaining vessels to the ministers: cups are distributed to ministers number 2 and 3; plates are distributed to ministers number 4-8. Ministers number 2 and 4 turn to serve Holy Communion to any people with disabilities who may be seated behind them. **Then all remain in place until all vessels are distributed.**
- **When all vessels have been distributed, the priest signals with a nod for the ministers to go to their stations. Minister number 2 leads the line; other ministers follow.** (See diagram for location of stations. The stations will be marked by numbered pieces of tape for the first several weeks until ministers get used to where the stations are located.) Ministers 1 and 8 serve Communion at parking lot side section; minister 4 and the deacon serve at Albin Avenue side section, and then move to their other stations.

Please note:

- **Ministers 1, 4, 5 and 8 need to stand at an angle**, both to invite people forward, and to help create a clear line of sight for the people as they receive communion and then move to return to their seats.
- **Stations D(eacon), 4, 1 and 8 (see diagram) must be filled last by the ministers serving the side sections.** Otherwise, the people in the side sections will be blocked from returning to their places.
- **Ushers wait until all ministers have taken their places**, and then direct the procession from the nave to the ministers of the Eucharistic bread at positions 5, 6, 7 and P(riest). From there, the people may approach one of the ministers of the Eucharistic wine and return to their seats.
- When the ushers come forward to receive Holy Communion, they may signal to one of the ministers of the Eucharistic bread (number 6 or 7) that there are people with disabilities in the back of the church who cannot join the communion procession. One of these ministers, **along with cup minister 3 or another who still has some Eucharistic wine**, goes to the back to bring Communion to these people.
- As ministers are finished serving Holy Communion, those with plates of the Eucharistic bread bring them to the altar for the deacon to consolidate and place in the tabernacle, cleanse their fingers at the credence table, **and return to their seats.** Those with cups of the Eucharistic wine return to the second credence table, consume any remaining wine from their cups, place the cups on the table, cleanse their fingers at the first credence table **and return to their seats.**
- The deacon consolidates the Eucharistic bread and places it in the tabernacle. **Servers remove the plates from the altar table to the second credence table. The deacon goes to the second credence table, purifies the vessels, and then returns to his place.**

After Mass

- **Ministers take the purified vessels from the credence table to the sacristy and cleanse them.**

Alternate Procedure for Masses Without a Deacon

When no deacon is present, the captain assigns an additional minister. The captain does not assign him/herself a number, but takes over some of the functions of the deacon. He/she approaches the altar table at the Fraction Rite, distributes the Eucharistic bread into the plates, receives Communion after the priest, brings the cup to the music ministers and then to the EMHC number 1. The captain then gives that cup to minister number 1, and goes back to the altar table to distribute the remaining vessels to the other ministers. He/she takes the last cup and goes to station D to distribute communion. The priest will purify the vessels after Holy Communion.

Important Reminders for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- ✓ On days you are serving, please plan your time so that you can arrive at church no later than 15 minutes before Mass. This is important both for the captain to make sure that all ministers are present, and to give yourself a few moments to prepare spiritually to exercise your ministry.
- ✓ Please remember to come to church dressed in your “Sunday Best” to minister the Eucharist. How we dress for an occasion says something about the importance of what we are doing. All who minister at the Eucharist – whether presiding, reading, singing or serving Holy Communion – are representing the parish and exercising important functions in the service of the rest of the community. Our mode of dress should reflect that.
- ✓ If you are unable to keep an assignment, please arrange with one of your fellow ministers to take your place as early as possible. Call your captain to let him/her know that you will not be present and have gotten a replacement. If a last minute emergency occurs, if it is at all possible, please call your captain to let him/her know that you cannot be present.
- ✓ If you are at a Mass where you are not assigned to serve, please check with the captain in the Albin Avenue sacristy to see if he/she needs an extra minister due to a last minute absence.
- ✓ If you have any special needs regarding your assignment (e.g., preference for a particular Mass time, unavailability on a particular weekend, absence for a period of time), please make this known to the scheduler as least a month before the new schedule is due out. Once a schedule is finished, changes cannot be made, and the ministers are responsible for getting substitutes for any assignments they cannot fulfill.
- ✓ We will do our best to fulfill any special requests about scheduling that are made far enough in advance, but cannot always accommodate requests that may put an unreasonable burden on the scheduler or on other ministers. We appreciate your willingness to be flexible (about Mass times, number of assignments, etc), as the task of scheduling over 130 ministers and trying to accommodate their requests is not an easy one.
- ✓ At least once a year, spend some time in prayer and reflection to ask God if you are still called to this ministry and are able to fulfill the requirements of it. Sometimes, the circumstances of our lives change, and sometimes God just calls us to something new. If your prayer brings you to a reaffirmation of your ministry, then give praise to God!!