

Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church

Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

- 1. The EM should only function within their parish community:
(Exception: If a Pastor directs you to do otherwise)**

Lay Ministers are delegates of the Pastor who appointed them and so the scope of their ministry is determined by the scope of the Pastor's own authority: they are ministers for their parish and not for the entire Church or diocese and generally **do not go outside the parish and minister to anyone who is not a member of the parish.** (cf canon 100 – 107) [By implication the EM can give Communion to a Catholic caregiver who is present but not a member of the parish.]

The Catholic Church generally does not share the Sacraments across ecumenical lines. Doing so is limited both by the beliefs of the Church as well as by its discipline. In general this issue will arise in the context of care facilities where other residents see you ministering to Catholics in residence. **We never, ever just offer Communion to those present or indiscriminately to a group.** If you are uncertain about someone receiving Eucharist asking the question, "Are you Catholic?", is most appropriate. If they mention a different denomination, ask them if you could assist them in contacting a member of their clergy.

- 2. All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine.**

Can. 898 **The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this sacrament most devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with the highest adoration.**

How we treat the Blessed Sacrament says a lot about both our beliefs and our consciousness at all times of the sacredness of the Eucharist. We should be always be conscious of the sacredness of the Blessed Sacrament and be careful not to become too "casual" with It as to treat It as mere bread.

Can. 934 **Church law allows the reservation of the Eucharist only in a chapel or church dedicated for that purpose.** If our home or car has not been dedicated by the bishop as a chapel then we are being disrespectful keeping the Eucharist there for an unnecessary period of time such as overnight.

Can. 935 **No one is permitted to keep the Eucharist on one's person or to carry it around.** In general it is appropriate to **take the Eucharist from the Church and go directly to the sick.** We might stop for gas if needed but we do not leave the Eucharist in the car (or much less take it with us) while we do grocery shopping on our way. We do not just carry the Eucharist around with us while ignoring that we have God in our pocket or purse.

Can. 939 **Only a pyx should be used to transport the Eucharist to the homebound.** Using a purificator or any other container is not acceptable.

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3. The proper method(s) of consuming or disposing of a consecrated host in certain situations are as follows:

A. In a situation where a communicant drops the Sacred Host on the floor in the Church when receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the EM should pick it up and **consume it immediately.**

B. In the case where a consecrated Host **cannot be consumed** such as when the EM serves the Sacred Host to an elderly in a Senior's Home and the senior spits it out, being unable to swallow it, the Sacred Host should be disposed of by following these steps:

- The EM must dissolve it in water using a clean container to the point where the Host no longer has the appearance of bread. This may require that the Host be broken up in pieces prior to placing it in water.
- The next step is to pour the liquid down a sacrarium (a special sink with a drain going directly into the ground, not the sewer) as found in a church or chapel. When such is not available, the liquid should be poured on the ground in a location that would not be walked over, such as behind a flower bed that is along a wall, at the foot of a statue, or similar places.

C. **It is strictly forbidden to pour the Precious Blood into the ground or into the sacrarium.** "The reverence due to the Precious Blood of the Lord demands that it be **fully consumed** after Communion is completed and **never** be poured into the ground or the sacrarium." (NDHC, 55)

In the case of spilled Precious Blood, the EM must immediately address the spill by using a purificator only and also washing the area with water and rinsing the purificator in the sacrarium.

4. After the celebration of each Mass purification of Sacred Vessels must be completed BEFORE any washing is done in the sink:

"In particularizing upon the dogma, we are naturally led to the further truth, that, at least after the actual division of either Species into parts, Christ is present in each part in His full and entire essence. If the Sacred Host be broken into pieces or if the consecrated Chalice be drunk in small quantities, **Christ in His entirety is present in each particle and in each drop.** By the restrictive clause, *separazione factâ* the Council of Trent (Sess. XIII, can. iii) rightly raised this truth to the dignity of a dogma [a defined teaching].

Purification Process: The EM should use water in all the used sacred vessels to absorb all visible particles and droplets from the vessels which is then consumed by a EM. It is also appropriate to purify pyx's by rinsing with a little water which you drink so that not even a fragment of bread is left in it.