

Communion Ministers

“There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

Ministers of Communion are laypeople who volunteer to bring the Body and Blood of Christ to the community. This service is a privilege, a great responsibility, and a humbling experience. Ministers serve as needed at liturgies, assisting the priest and/or deacon in distribution of Communion. They visit sick or homebound parishioners, bringing them Communion and making them feel a part of our parish community. Parishioners in nursing homes and hospitals are also visited by our homebound ministers. Read more... <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/girm/lit4.shtml>

AT ST. JOHNS

To serve as a Minister of Communion you must be:

- at least 18 years of age
- a registered member of the parish
- approved by the pastor
- an example of Christian living
- trained for liturgies and homebound service
- physically able to perform the duties
- willing to comply with the procedures set forth herein
- willing to attend meetings held several times a year
- willing to serve at any Mass within the parish
- willing to visit the sick or homebound parishioners

If you believe that you are called to this ministry, either as a Communion Minister at mass, or to bring the Eucharist to the sick at home, in hospitals or nursing homes, please contact Deacon Leo Martin at (978) 826-7515

Overview

Ministers of Communion speak their own faith in saying, “Body of Christ” or “Blood of Christ,” and they call forth the faith of the communicant. They know how to be truly present to others in that moment. Ministers of Communion make it possible for the Communion rite to take place in a length of time that is in proportion to the whole liturgy. By their actions and appearance, they show respect for the Body and Blood of Christ.

An initial training session is required for each minister. They exercise their ministry approximately twice a month. *Each minister is expected to exchange times or ask another minister to serve if unable to assist on an assigned day, and inform the Deacon of the change in a timely manner.* Every Minister of Communion is asked to list two liturgies at which they would normally be assigned to serve. Occasionally, a minister might need to be assigned to another liturgy.

Ministers of Communion are encouraged to dress appropriately for this public role as a liturgical minister. **Ministers are a model of the “Sunday best,” not “casual attire,”** that the Eucharistic gathering requires. Ministers say by their appearance each Sunday that all are in a holy place and will receive a holy person, Jesus.

Terminology

- *Credence table:* Located in the sanctuary by the Sacristy.

- *Ciborium*: The bowl-like vessel, with a lid, which is used to hold the consecrated Hosts. The name is derived from 'cibus' (food). It is used to distribute the Hosts to communicants and to store the Hosts in the Tabernacle. Plural is *ciboria*.
- *Chalice*: Cup to contain the wine.
- *Corporal*: An additional linen on top of the Altar Table. (From the Latin 'Corpus' i.e. the body)
- *GIRM*: General Instructions of the Roman Missal.
- *Intinction*: Dipping of consecrated host in the consecrated wine. (Note: This is not allowed.)
- *Purificator*: This is a linen cloth used for wiping the chalice.
- *Purify*: Rinse Communion vessels (*ciboria and cups*) with very small amount of water. This is done only by the Priest or Deacon.
- *Pyx*: Small round metal container (Greek meaning 'box') that holds the consecrated Host taken for the sick.
- *Sacrarium*: Special sink in the sacristy that drains into the ground under the building, not into the sewer.
- *Sacristy*: Room located in the back of the church where Communion vessels and vestments are stored.
- *Station*: Location of Ministers of Communion while serving. See "Diagram of Communion Stations."

General Procedures

When serving, ministers may hang up their coats in the sacristy upon arrival.

- Ministers are to arrive 15 minutes prior to Mass to initial by your name on the schedule in the Sacristy, and to prepare yourself for this sacred ministry. If you are substituting for a minister, please initial by their name.
- Ministers process from the back of the church. They line up behind the altar servers, and in front of the lector and priest. When they reach the altar, they bow (together if in pairs) turn (facing towards each other as they do so) and then walk to their pews. **During the Lenten season, ministers will not process, as the priest and lector enter from the Sacristy side of the church. They will, however, process to the back after the end of the mass.**
- Ministers sit in the first pews, along with the lector(s) and cantor. Ministers may sit with their families, if they wish to do so, *but should process with the others at the start and end of mass.*
- All ministers come forward immediately after the Sign of Peace. The minister assigned to Station 2 (Special Duty Cup, see details below) will proceed to the sanctuary to stand at a respectful distance to the left of the priest, to assist with the cup. **After** the priest has received the Body and Blood of Christ the minister will approach the altar to receive communion and assist with the cup. The remaining ministers, immediately after giving the Sign of Peace, will gather next to the altar servers by the Sacristy, and face the altar. After receiving the host and the cup, the priest will hand the cup and a purificator to the Station 2 minister, who will then follow the priest and serve the cup to all who are lined up to receive. After all ministers have received, ministers will approach the altar to receive the remaining cups and the ciboriums. **Please assist the priest by reaching for the cup or the ciborium, as assigned. Please be respectfully flexible and serve where asked, regardless of assigned position.** Ministers will then proceed to their assigned stations. The priest will be at the middle station. Ministers will face the altar until the priest has reached his station and is prepared to begin. They will then face the congregation.
- *Refer to the diagram of Stations on the last page.*

Cup Minister, Station 2. Special Duty

1. After giving the sign of the peace, the Station 2 minister will approach, reverence the altar, and stand at a respectful distance, at the left of the priest.
2. The minister approaches the priest once the priest has received the Body and Blood of Christ. The minister then receives the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. The priest will then hand you the cup and a purificator, and you will proceed after the priest to offer the cup to the rest of the ministers in line.
4. After serving the others, the minister follows the priest and proceeds to Station 2.

Ministers of the Bread

1. Minister #1 stands next to the priest, unless asked to stand elsewhere.
2. Do not face the congregation until the Priest is ready to begin.
3. When carrying the consecrated host, it is not necessary to bow to the tabernacle, as you already carry the Lord in your hands. *When walking to a particular station, ministers, if necessary, will walk behind the priest, as they all carry the Lord in their hands to their station.*
4. Hold the host at eye level, look the communicant in the eye, and say "Body of Christ." This is the exact wording to be used by all. If the host is dropped, simply pick it up and place it in your hand that is holding the ciborium. After all have received Communion, you may consume the host or break the host in small pieces and wash it down the sacrarium.
5. If you run out of hosts, go to someone else to get a few. Depending on your location, time of running out, etc., another minister may come to your location. Please do not break the hosts unless absolutely necessary.
6. If the line at your station finishes before the other stations, look to see if your assistance or remaining hosts are needed. If not, remain in place until completion of the sacrament, and then proceed to the tabernacle holding the ciborium, in reverence, with both hands.
7. When finished the priest will hand his ciborium to the minister in Station 1 (or any minister) The minister will take the ciborium to the tabernacle, and reverently place the remaining consecrated hosts into the ciborium(s) with the lid(s). When the lids have been placed on the ciboriums the minister will genuflect, **and then** close and lock the tabernacle. If there is a mass immediately following, the key remains in the lock. If it is the end of the day, the key should be removed and placed on the Altar Server table by the sacristy. Ministers may then return to their seats.
8. Ministers will NOT purify the vessels, as only the priest or deacon can perform this function. The purification process will remove all remaining traces of the Body of Christ from the ciboriums. Ministers can assist the priest if asked, and also ensure that all is completed as needed. When all is in order the ministers will walk off the altar, genuflect and return to their seats.

Ministers of the Cup

1. Stand far enough from your partner minister of the bread to allow for ease of movement for the assembly.
2. Each communicant is to hold the cup. Guide them to do that if necessary, but do not try to assist them by "pouring" the cup into their mouth.
3. Wipe the inside and outside edge of the cup meticulously after each person and turn the cup slightly. *Use a clean area of the purificator each time.* These two steps are very important.
4. No one is permitted to dip the host into the cup (intinction). If they reach to do so, just cover the cup with your hand and explain that they can either drink from the cup or not, but cannot dip the host.
5. In the unlikely event that the consecrated wine is spilled during Mass, you may place a purificator over the spill and finish serving the wine, if any is left (you can retrieve an extra purificator from the Altar Table)
6. When your cup is empty, return it to the Altar Server table near the sacristy, proceeding to the table with both hands on the cup. Leave the empty cup, with the purificator next to it, on the table and return to your place in the assembly. Do not place the folded purificator on top of the cup unless the cup has been purified by the priest.
When communion is over, return to the Altar Server table, and if there is consecrated wine left in the cup, consume it or ask others to assist you in consuming it. *All*

remaining Precious Blood must be consumed by someone. Once consumed, you may leave the cup to be purified by the priest or deacon. Only a priest or deacon may purify the cups. The purification process will remove all remaining traces of the Blood of Christ from the cups. Ministers can assist the priest if asked (pouring water, covering cups) and also ensure that all is completed as needed. Purificators will be folded and placed over all cups to denote that they have been purified. When all is in order the ministers will walk off the altar, genuflect and return to their seats.

Purification

1. Only a priest or deacon can purify the vessels. Ministers should ensure that this has been accomplished prior to rinsing and drying the vessels.
2. After the Mass is over *all ministers who served* will, with reverence, help to rinse, dry and put away vessels and linens.
3. The used purificators, cups, ciboriums, chalice, tray and carafe are taken to the sink in the Sacristy. Nothing is to be stacked on top of the ciboriums which have carried the Body of Christ. The purificators are placed in the laundry bag marked for this purpose.
4. The cups, ciboria, chalice and carafe are washed with water, just like washing dishes. Only the sink to the right, which is the sacrarium, is used for this purpose. The towels located in the basket on the stair rail, specifically there for this purpose, are used to dry the vessels. The towels are folded and placed back in basket after use.
5. The washed and dried cups, ciboria, chalice and carafe are put in their assigned areas of the cabinets. All cabinets and drawers are labeled. Nothing is to be placed inside of a ciborium.

Ministers should keep in mind that they are washing the vessels that have contained the body and blood of Christ. It is important to do this with reverence.

Diagram of the station positions:

