Eucharistic Minister Responsibilities

(updated August 14, 2018)

1. We do not schedule Eucharistic ministers as we do readers and greeters. We need so many of them (at least 36 each Lord’s Day) that keeping up with who can and who can’t make their date would be a nightmare. Instead, we have a “pool” of trained ministers, and count on them to step forward to take on the role as they choose before the liturgy starts. To make sure we have sufficient assistance, we have a “medallion process”—a basket of wood and metal crosses is set out, or in the hands of the presider or minister coordinator. As someone volunteers to serve as a Eucharistic minister they pick up one of the medallion crosses. When all are picked up—we are set.

2. During the Sign of Peace, please go to the sacristy and sanitize your hands with Alcohol gel. Then go to the side aisle (by the Mary statue) for the prayer. You are welcome to kneel in one of the open spaces at the ends of the pews in that section, if you’d like. It is also OK to stand, if that’s more comfortable.

3. After the call to communion (the congregational response: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof …”), music for the communion processional will begin. The communion song is the signal for you as assisting ministers (eight at most liturgies; six at 5:00 pm on Saturday) to step forward and face the side of the altar. The presider and minister coordinator will administer communion as you stand there.

4. The presider then will assign you your stations as he hands to each the vessels with the consecrated hosts or the cup of the Lord’s blood (yellow-host and red-cup spots are marked on the floor at the head of each aisle to make it simpler for you). Please be ready to take either the cup or plate, without a request for one or the other. As each group of you has been assigned, you may move to that location and commence the distribution. You need not wait for all the ministers to be in place before beginning to distribute communion. For the ELDERLY and/or DISABLED, please offer communion, host (before the procession) and cup (after the procession), to parishioners in the first pew of your section before distributing to the rest of your section.

5. **Ministers of the cup should take care not to block the communion flow**. They should directly face "towards the traffic" (i.e., towards the one administering the consecrated hosts), allowing room for those who might not choose to receive from the cup to slip by. With the smaller "six minister" arrangement (at 5:00 PM), where the cup minister may be approached from left or right, stand on the sanctuary step and face the congregation (which hopefully will still allow room for others to slip past if they choose).

6. DISTRIBUTION--Ministers of the Lord’s Body: raise the host to the height sufficient to make eye contact, and say, "The Body of Christ." After the recipient responds "Amen" place the host in their hand or on their tongue as their body language suggests. Ministers of the Cup: extend the cup towards the recipient slightly and invite, "The Blood of Christ." After they respond "Amen" let them take the cup. When they return it, wipe the lip of the vessel and give it a quarter turn before the next communicant. (NOTE: *Intinction* is sanctioned for special circumstances – not for general distribution, but we will have visitors who do it in their home parishes. Wipe the entire rim of the cup if someone dips their host.)

7. For congregation members who come forward with crossed arms, indicating that they won’t be receiving communion but would like a blessing, smile and administer a brief blessing such as “May God bless you” or “God’s blessing upon you.” Do likewise for small children who come forward with their parents.

8. When your section of the assembly has received, check on the other ministers, and if appropriate, assist them. If your vessels are empty, return them to the table behind the altar (but *please fold your purificator, rather than stuff it in the chalice*). If you have consecrated elements remaining, take them to the altar and leave your vessels there. We’re instructed by the Church to leave consecrated hosts and wine for consumption of clergy, but they may ask you to help consume whatever is left. If you approach the altar with a vessel, the priest may ask you to assist in distributing the Eucharist to the musicians. To minister to the musicians, please stand in the area behind the altar on the musicians’ side. After that, return your vessels to the small (credence) table.

9. **WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS GO WRONG**

* If the Precious Blood is spilled on someone’s clothing or person, give your purificator to him/her to wipe it off.
* If the Precious Blood spilled on the floor, put your purificator over it and stand in a position so that people walk around it. After the communion procession, please tell Father that the Precious Blood was spilled.
* If hosts are dropped, pick it up and eat it.
* If you’re a “germaphobe”, Eucharistic Ministry is not for you. A Eucharistic Minister should be both willing and able to offer both the body and blood of Christ. (For example, if your arm is in a sling, don’t volunteer!)