

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION GUIDELINES
ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

General Norms

1. The ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are bishops, priests and deacons.
2. It is the responsibility of pastors, chaplains and religious superiors, within their respective jurisdictions, to evaluate the need for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to identify worthy candidates for this service. The number of extraordinary ministers in a parish, chaplaincy or religious house should correspond to genuine pastoral need. The number should not be so few as to burden unduly any one minister, yet not so large as to make it appear that this ministry is a regular and normal expression of lay participation in the Eucharist.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed by the Archbishop in parishes, religious houses, and chaplaincies in situations of genuine pastoral need where ordinary ministers are not available or are insufficient in number:

- a. to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion within Mass when there is a large number of communicants;
 - b. to allow for a more frequent, even daily, administration of Holy Communion outside of the Mass to those impeded from attending Mass because of sickness or physical weakness.
3. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist ordinary ministers in administering Holy Communion. They may not replace them, except on those occasions when the ordinary minister is impeded from administering Holy Communion because of ill health, advanced age, or other pressing pastoral obligations.

Requirements for Eligibility

4. To serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, persons must:
 - a. be practicing Catholics, distinguished in their Christian life, faith and morals;
 - b. be at least 19 years old;
 - c. have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist;
 - d. demonstrate a deep reverence for and devotion to the Holy Eucharist;
 - e. be an active registered member of a parish in the Archdiocese;
 - f. if married, the marriage must be a valid Catholic marriage.

5. Special care must be exercised in the choice of those candidates who will take Holy Communion to the sick. In addition to meeting the qualifications listed above, they must be persons who will minister to the sick and the aged in a compassionate and understanding manner, always conscious of the serious obligation to respect the confidence of those to whom they minister.
6. Care should be taken that the selection of extraordinary ministers reflects, as far as possible, the diversity of the community to which they will minister. Candidates may be men or women, who are lay people or in consecrated life.
7. The pastor, chaplain or religious superior should interview all candidates prior to presenting them for nomination to the Archbishop. The interview should provide the candidates with the opportunity to express their belief in the Eucharist and their understanding of their role as extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Inquiry should be made regarding the candidate's attitude toward prayer and regular use of the Sacrament of Penance.

Preparation of Candidates

8. All candidates, even those commissioned for other dioceses, must attend an Archdiocesan training session (one time only) before being commissioned for the first time. These training sessions should be scheduled a year in advance, one month apart in each of the three Vicariates. Special emphasis should be given to bringing Communion to the sick. Care should also be taken to provide instruction for ethnic groups in their own language, as needed. A second level of training needs to be conducted at the deanery or local level to make ministers aware of social services for shut-ins, i.e., services to the blind, and other social services. The pastor is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the candidate is trained properly.
9. Upon completion of the Archdiocesan training, the Office for Divine Worship will submit a list of candidates to the Archbishop or his delegate for approval. Certificates signed by the Archbishop or his delegate indicate that the candidates are ready to be commissioned. Once notification is received by the parish or facility that the candidates have completed the training session, the candidates may be commissioned.
10. The commissioning is to take place at a Sunday Eucharist and the commissioning is to be done by the pastor, chaplain, or religious superior of the community for which the person is being commissioned. Where a Catholic priest is not available in a hospital or a school, the local Dean is to do the commissioning.

At the ceremony of commissioning, as well as at other opportune moments, priests should make every effort to instruct the people under their care about the nature of this ministry and the importance of the Eucharist in their lives.

Duration of Service

11. Terms of service are to be three-years, renewable at the pastor's request. Candidates should be interviewed by the pastor before a renewal is requested from the Office for Divine Worship. A person may be renewed if the pastor sees good resulting from the extension, e.g. ministering to the sick.

Note: Retroactive renewals will only be allowed for individuals whose six year term expired after January 1, 2005.

12. Pastoral discretion must always be respected in cases of emergency or unusual circumstance. The distribution of Holy Communion in hospitals and health care facilities is to be coordinated with the chaplain's office, even if the chaplain is non-Catholic.
13. Pastors, chaplains and religious superiors are to review periodically the service provided by their extraordinary ministers, and be diligent in providing on-going formation to deepen the ministers' Eucharistic devotion and liturgical spirituality. Attendance at a specially prepared occasion of spiritual renewal conducted by the vicariate is encouraged for all extraordinary ministers upon their three-year renewal. The cost for such participation should be borne by the parish or institution which the extraordinary minister serves.
14. When serving, extraordinary ministers should always be dressed in a manner consistent with the dignity of their role. A neat appearance and reverential deportment are essential at all times. The crosses blessed by the Archbishop are to be worn as well.

Multiple ministries should not be exercised in the same celebration, i.e., Reader/Extraordinary Minister or Cantor/Extraordinary Minister, etc.

Distribution of Holy Communion to the Sick

15. Extraordinary ministers who bring Holy Communion to the sick are to be trained for the special requirements of this ministry.
16. In administering Holy Communion to the sick, extraordinary ministers are to follow the *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*. A copy of the Rite should be provided by the parish. Booklets containing the Rite are available for purchase at the Archdiocesan training session.
17. The Eucharist that is brought to the sick is to be carried in a pyx, which should be placed in a burse, if possible, and carried on the minister's person with utmost reverence. Extraordinary ministers while bearing the Eucharist should as a rule keep silence, pray, and be especially mindful of the sacred responsibility that has been entrusted to them.

18. Parishes are responsible for providing pyxes to carry Holy Communion to the sick. They are sacred vessels and belong to the local parish or institution. A pyx should always be blessed before being used for the first time. After each use, it should be purified. Once a person's commission is ended, any pyxes they have must be returned to the parish. A pyx received as a gift should be given to the parish as a memorial or as a gracious donation.
19. When extraordinary ministers receive the Eucharist for the sick at Mass, this should occur after the distribution of Communion and before the Prayer after Communion. Errands such as shopping are not to be carried out by the extraordinary ministers while bearing the Blessed Sacrament, nor is the Eucharist ever to be reserved in the minister's house for distribution at a later hour or date. The Eucharist must be borne directly from the church to the house of the sick without interruption. Any hosts which remain after Communion is given to the sick should be consumed by the minister.
20. Only people who are unable to receive Communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine alone, at the discretion of the priest. If not consecrated at a Mass in the presence of the sick person, the Precious Blood is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after Communion for use that day. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel that is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains after the sick person has received Communion, the extraordinary minister should consume it and purify the vessel.
21. Visitation of the sick should be so planned that, even when an extraordinary minister takes Holy Communion to the sick more frequently, a priest will visit the sick person regularly, and be available for the Sacrament of Penance.
22. Priests should be available at all times for the administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to those who are seriously ill. Extraordinary Ministers should advise the priest of the wish of the sick to receive Penance and raise with him the question of the Anointing.

Distribution of Holy Communion at Mass

23. The Extraordinary Minister may distribute either the sacred hosts or the sacred cup.
24. If Communion is given by intinction, it is never given in the hand.
25. The recipient of Holy Communion may never self intinct (dip the consecrated bread into the precious blood).

**Promulgated on the Feast of Easter
This Sixteenth Day of April
In the Year of Our Lord 2006
By The Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell
Archbishop of Hartford**

+ Henry J. Mansell

**Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell
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