

St. Mary Parish
Policies and Procedures for
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
To the Sick and Homebound (Ministers of Care)

October 2022

Eligibility:

- Men and women, sixteen years and older, representative of the parish community, may be chosen.
- Each person selected should be a practicing Catholic, in good standing, whose conduct of life does not contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church as described by the Magisterium, who is fully initiated through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned annually at one of the Sunday Masses on the First Sunday of Advent. Prior to their commissioning, they are required to provide a baptismal certificate and/or Confirmation certificate.

General Principles:

- Bishops, priests, and deacons are the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion and, therefore, assume this responsibility first. Only when the number of ordinary ministers is insufficient to meet the pastoral needs of the sick, that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist in this ministry.
- Extraordinary Ministers may be appointed to bring Holy Communion to the sick, the elderly and homebound, who, by reason of their illness and/or confinement at home or other care facilities, are not able to be physically present for the celebration of Mass. The purpose of this ministry is to bring Holy Communion to them and thus unite them spiritually to the worshipping community.
- Those men and women chosen for this ministry must be comfortable in the presence of those who are sick, aged, injured or dying, so that their presence aids

the person(s) in their understanding and acceptance of their condition as being joined to our Lord.

- Those ministering to the sick and homebound need: (1) formative education in the Church's attitude and teaching toward suffering and death; (2) training in ways to minister to those who are sick; (3) and familiarity with the Rite of Communion for the Sick. Additionally, Roman Ritual, Pastoral Care of the Sick, and, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*, (John Paul II, 1984) should be consulted as primary sources for this formation.
- All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the way they handle the consecrated bread.
- Use of the booklet *Communion of the Sick* is the normative rite to be used.
- The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound carries the Eucharist to the communicant after they have participated in the celebration of Mass. Coming to the rectory door and requesting consecrated hosts or retrieving the Eucharist directly from the tabernacle is not appropriate. If special arrangements are necessary, please contact Fr. Kevin Huber.
- The appropriate vessel for transferring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound is called a pyx. The pyx is carried around the neck in a leather pouch called a burse.

Procedures:

- Upon entering the church for the celebration of Mass, the extraordinary minister places their pyx on the platter located on the credence table.
- For those Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound who obtain the Blessed Sacrament at Mass, please note well:

It is improper to come forward in the Communion procession and ask for the Blessed Sacrament to be placed in a pyx either before or after you yourself have received Holy Communion.

- After the distribution of Holy Communion, before the Prayer after Communion, the extraordinary minister approaches the altar to receive the Eucharist from the priest or deacon. The extraordinary minister then leaves the church to **go**

directly to the person(s) to whom they are bringing Holy Communion.

Under no circumstances may the extraordinary minister keep the Blessed Sacrament until later in the day for distribution.

- The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the Sick is to use the Rite of Administration of Communion to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister as it is found in the ritual book. The Rite of Administration of Communion to the Sick should take place immediately upon arrival. The time for visiting is after Communion has been received and the rite has been completed. In this way, all will come to a deeper reverence of Holy Communion and the abiding, real presence of Jesus Christ in this Sacrament.
- The proper and only permissible form for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "The Body of Christ" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "The Blood of Christ." No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287).
- If a person is unable to receive Holy Communion due to age, religious affiliation, or spiritual state, but would like the minister to pray for them, the extraordinary minister can extend their hand and say, "May the Lord Jesus be in your heart." Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, like any lay person, do not have the authority to bless. As such, praying over a person with the words, "May God bless you," is inappropriate.