**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION GUIDELINES**

**Good Shepherd Catholic Church**

**January, 2024**

**Introduction**

We are glad you have answered God’s call to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. It is a privilege, honor and gift to bring Jesus to your church family. Following are the guidelines of the universal and local church for this ministry.

**Requirements**

One must be a baptized and confirmed Catholic who is living in union with the Church and faithfully participating in the Sunday Eucharist. They should have the physical health to stand, walk comfortably and be able to manually distribute the Blessed Sacrament without complications. Our pastor will submit to the bishop the names of the candidates, indicating they have been trained and ministry requirements are met. One must participate in sessions to renew the commitment to the ministry, continue faith-filled education and discuss any issues that may have arisen with this ministry. A Eucharistic Minister should regularly participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Basic Information**

Dress appropriately, in a manner imparting the dignity of the ministry.

Any time you cross the altar, it is appropriate to bow. Whenever you carry the Blessed Sacrament in the ciborium, carry it reverently, always aware of the Real Presence of Christ with you.

Be attentive to when you are scheduled. If you have a cold, cough or flu-like symptoms, please find a replacement. It is recommended to use hand sanitizer before distribution of Holy Communion. The number of Eucharistic Ministers should be based on the number of people in attendance. As a guideline, there should be one Eucharistic Minister per 100 people.

We encourage you to arrive at Mass in time to read the Scripture readings before Mass, and take time in prayer, asking God to help you be an instrument to draw others to Him.

**During Mass**

Eucharistic Ministers should approach the altar area during the Sign of Peace, and reach it prior to the Lamb of God. Remain on the floor level to the right of the altar. The priest will retrieve the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. He will also be returning it to the tabernacle after Holy Communion.

After you receive Holy Communion, you will be handed the ciborium. Remain in that area until the priest gives out Holy Communion to the servers and musicians. Then together, you both form the Communion lines in front of the altar. Be attentive to any in the front pew in need of receiving the Sacrament.

During distribution, the consecrated host should be elevated before the communicant, then say, “The Body of Christ.” They should respond, “Amen.” People have the option of receiving in the hand or on the tongue. Both are acceptable, as well as if they kneel. Any adults and children coming up with their arms crossed is an indication they are unable to receive Holy Communion. In that case, you may extend your hand above or near their head and say, “May God bless you.” (Do not touch their head and do not make the Sign of the Cross with your hand.)

Distribute the Blessed Sacrament with reverence. Individual names should not be used. It may be helpful when distributing Holy Communion in the hand, to place your thumb atop the consecrated host, and your index finger below it. Just the opposite tends to work better for receiving on the tongue, namely, thumb below the consecrated host and index finger above it.

After Holy Communion, be attentive to whether someone in the back pews is waiting to receive. They should be standing or raising their hand to alert you. You may also be notified by an usher before Mass of anyone in the back in need of receiving Holy Communion where they are seated.

After you finish distributing Holy Communion, return to the **server** side of the altar and wait on the floor level for the priest to receive the ciborium from you. Then at the credence table, dip your fingertips in the ablution cup of water, and dry your fingertips on the purificator next to it. Then return to your pew, bowing to the altar if you cross it.

**After Mass**

It is your responsibility to clean the vessels after Mass. Take the entire tray of items into the sacristy (or carry the items individually). Lay out a towel to place the washed items: Chalice (do not immerse!), ciborium, and glass bowl. Water and wine cruets need only be washed if there is a need. The wine cruet may need to be wiped with a wet toweling to clean the stopper and the cruet lip. Place the purificators from the credence table in the linen bag to be laundered. Dry the vessels and return them to the cupboard unit. The tabernacle key should be returned to the sacristy. The hand towel and corporal can be used more than once without the need for laundering. The purificator that is next to the ablution cup by the tabernacle need only be replaced about once a month. For consistency, perhaps practice replacing it following the first Sunday of the month (unless it appears soiled before that).

**PROPER HANDLING OF A DROPPED CONSECRATED HOST**

First of all, special care should be taken with each consecrated host you distribute. Hold the host carefully until it is properly placed in their hand or on their tongue. There is no need to rush the Communion line. Should a consecrated host fall either from your hand or from the hands of the communicant, carefully pick it up and consume it immediately. If they pick it up to consume it, that is their choice. Be sure to indicate, “The Body of Christ” before they consume.

If a consecrated host is dropped, walk over to the credence table and retrieve the purificator next to the ablution cup. (The ciborium may be placed on the altar while you do this.) Unfold the purificator and place it over the area where the Blessed Sacrament was dropped. You may then begin to distribute Holy Communion again. If needed, the people may need to back up the line enough to continue to distribute, in order to avoid the communicants from stepping on the purificator.

After the recessional hymn, the Eucharistic Minister should clean the area of the dropped host prior to cleaning the vessels. Obtain a clean purificator from the sacristy drawer. Saturate it with warm/hot water (without it dripping wet). At the site of the dropped host, remove the purificator from the area. Place the wet purificator flat over the area. Continue to press the wet purificator downward onto the carpet until you believe the carpet has been fully dampened. Scrape the wet purificator inward from all angles and toward the center, making it into a ball, to scoop up any particles of the Blessed Sacrament that may be in it. Then place the dry purificator over the wet area. Dab it enough to soak up as much water as you can. Use the same process of scraping all edges to the center of the cloth, forming it into a ball. Please both purificators into the white basin in the lower sacristy cupboard. Cover the linens with plain, warm water and leave them soak while you clean the vessels.

After that you may drain the water into the sacrarium and rinse the purificators well.

We understand that mishaps do happen, but by taking the time and special care in distributing the Blessed Sacrament these incidents will be a seldom occurrence.

Thank you, and may God bless each of you in this special ministry.