

Practical Instructions and Procedures for EMHCs

Before Mass:

- If you are unavailable to serve on your assigned day, request a substitute on Ministry Scheduler Pro. If you are unable to find a substitute, please email or leave a voicemail with the pastor.
- Dress with an eye toward modesty and pleasant appearance, yet without drawing attention to yourself. Casual dress (shorts, jeans, T-shirt, etc.) is not acceptable. Since it is not unusual to be asked to substitute, always dressing appropriately for Mass is a good idea.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. When you enter the sacristy, sign in at the counter on the ministry schedule. If you are filling in for someone, please record your name and indicate that you are the substitute.
- If there are more EMHCs present for Mass than necessary, please know that you may be asked to give up your role for that specific Mass.
- If for any reason you feel you should not distribute Communion on the day you are assigned, please do not hesitate to communicate this to the priest before Mass.
- Put on a cross necklace denoting that you are an EMHC. These are found hanging beside the cabinet with the communion vessels.
- Pray before Mass with the priest, deacon, and other ministers in the sacristy.
- Assemble at the main entrance of church for the opening procession. Walk behind the cross and candles, bowing at the base of the sanctuary steps before going to your pew.

After the Lord's Prayer:

- During the Sign of Peace, move promptly into the sanctuary, bowing toward the altar. Line up evenly on both sides of the altar, just below the steps.
- After the priest and deacon receive the Body and Blood of Christ, move up the steps to receive Holy Communion. The priest and deacon will distribute the Body of Christ first to all the EMHCs, altar servers, and cantor.
- Sanitize your hands after receiving the Body of Christ.
- The priest and deacon will then distribute the Blood of Christ and a purificator to select EMHCs, who will then distribute the Blood of Christ to those around them in the sanctuary. All remaining EMHCs will receive a ciborium to distribute the Body of Christ.
- Move to your assigned position as given by the priest or deacon. Positions will vary by Mass time.

When distributing the Body of Christ:

- While holding the ciborium, offer the consecrated Host to communicants with the words "The Body of Christ." Do not add any other words, such as "*This is the body of Christ*" or using the person's name. Strive for appropriate eye contact while being warm, inviting, and reverent toward the communicant.
- For those receiving on the tongue, a helpful technique is to place the edge of the consecrated Host touching their tongue and "drop" the flat surface onto their tongue, rather than try to insert it into their mouth. Allow the communicant to respond "Amen" before placing the Host on the tongue.
- The norm is that communicants receive Holy Communion while standing, although a person has the right to receive Communion while kneeling.
- For infants, young children, and any others not receiving Holy Communion (usually denoted by arms crossed over the chest), offer a simple greeting of goodwill by saying, "May God bless you," "May peace be with you," "Receive Jesus in your heart," or something similar. Do not make any gesture with your hand and do not touch the person in line. Proper blessings in this manner are reserved for the priest or deacon at Mass.

- If a person appears confused or does not respond “Amen,” extend his or her hands, or give a visible indication that he or she is receiving, quietly ask, “Are you Catholic?” or “Are you receiving Communion?” If a young child comes forward and you are unsure whether he or she should receive, check with a parent in line or ask the child, “Have you received your First Communion?”
- If a consecrated Host falls to the floor and the communicant does not pick it up, you can pick it up and either consume the Host immediately yourself or save it in your palm to give to the priest or deacon at the end of Communion.
- If a person starts to walk away without consuming the Host, you must go to them and politely yet firmly tell them to consume the Host. If the person refuses or otherwise will not return the Host, get the priest or deacon to intervene immediately.
- If you are running low on Hosts, you may break them in half or ask the priest or deacon for more.
- If you are the first EMHC to finish distributing at your assigned position, go to the main entrance of church to distribute the Host to anyone who was unable to come forward for Communion. An usher will often direct you where to go.

When distributing the Blood of Christ:

- Offer the chalice to communicants with the words “The Blood of Christ.” Again, do not add any other words.
- Wipe the chalice with the purificator on both the inner and outer surfaces. Use the entire purificator and unfold as you go. Rotate the chalice slightly between communicants.
- Never take the Precious Blood anywhere other than your assigned position (i.e., do not take the chalice to anyone sitting in the pews, Cry Room, or Holy Cross Chapel).
- If someone attempts intinction (dipping the consecrated Host into the chalice), ask him or her to consume the Body of Christ first. If the person insists, allow it, but hold the purificator under the chin so there is no danger of the Precious Blood falling to the floor.
- If the Precious Blood spills, use your purificator to soak up all of the Precious Blood, blotting the area and not wiping. If the spill is substantial, go to the sacristy and get more purificators. Tell the priest or deacon about the spill after Mass so he can properly finish attending to the affected area.
- If your chalice becomes completely empty of the Precious Blood, return it to the altar and remain near the credence table until the end of Communion.
- If you are ever distributing to two lines of communicants, simply alternate between the two lines. Stand in a way that allows you to pivot back and forth easily.

After the Communion Rite:

- Those distributing the Body of Christ should take their ciborium to the altar, place it on the corporal, and then wait by the credence table.
- Those distributing the Blood of Christ should take their chalice to the altar. If you are comfortable, you may consume any remaining Precious Blood. Otherwise, you may return the chalice to the priest or deacon for him to do so. Do not put used purificators inside the chalices.
- The priest or deacon will consolidate the consecrated Hosts into one or two ciboria and take them to the tabernacle. Once he closes the tabernacle doors, bow slightly and return to your pew.

After Mass:

- Bring the communion vessels to the sacristy and assist the sacristan with washing, drying, and replacing them inside the cabinet. Wash all vessels with soapy water, rinse thoroughly, and dry with a towel. Be sure to remove any jewelry that might scratch surfaces.
- Return your cross necklace to its original location.

Thank you for your service here at Christ the King!