

# **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER'S HANDBOOK**

Blessed Sacrament Church – Midland, Michigan

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- You will be serving the community of Blessed Sacrament as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (aka. a Eucharistic minister). Your ministry has specific responsibilities. By undertaking this ministry, you are accepting ALL the responsibilities of being a Eucharistic Minister. Your commission does not extend to other parishes.
- You model for the community an attitude of reverence and honor towards the Eucharistic assembly and action. Please consider the clothes you wear also as a sign of your reverence. Remember that you are serving at the banquet of the Lord.
- In general, one or two Ministers of Christ's Body and two Ministers of Christ's Blood serve at each communion station. During crowded liturgies (ie Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday), we have extra communion stations to help with the additional members of the congregation.
- Scheduling periods are June to August, September to November, December to February and March to May. You will receive a Scheduling Form on which you indicate any times or dates when you are not available. This form must be returned by the deadline date given.
- When you receive the schedule, go through and check very carefully for when you are to serve. Mark those dates and times on your calendar! The schedule will tell you if you are a Minister of Christ's Body (Body) or a Minister of Christ's Blood (Blood) minister and whether you have clean-up duty (\*). All of the Ministers of Christ's Body and two Ministers of Christ's Blood are scheduled for each liturgy. Eucharistic ministers at the liturgy volunteer to be the additional Ministers of Christ's Blood.
- If you CANNOT serve on an assigned Sunday, it is your responsibility to find a substitute. Please report trades and substitutions to the Liturgy Office so the correct names will be on the sign-in list.
- You will also be invited to minister on Christmas, New Year, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday and other holy days. There is a special section on the scheduling sheet for these feasts. On Ash Wednesday, Eucharistic ministers impose ashes.

## **PREPARING**

- Take time to prepare for your ministry. Read the scriptures assigned to the Sunday and spend some time in prayer.
- Arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. Check off your name on the sign-in list in the Work Sacristy, on the bulletin boards for Eucharistic Ministers. Ministers of Christ's Body will find their station assignment. If you are volunteering as a Minister of Christ's Blood, write your name on one of the lines.
- If you are substituting for someone, make sure you cross off their name and write in yours.
- Occasionally, there will be special notes to describe changes to this ministry. If present, read these notes ... which will also be on the "Eucharistic Ministers" bulletin board.
- General Ministry Notes for Eucharistic Ministers are also posted on the bulletin board. These

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provide reminders and the Procedure for Clearing the Credence Table after Communion.

- The Ministers of Christ's Body should check their assigned sections before mass to inquire about the needs to bring communion to anyone with special needs. During Communion, Eucharistic Ministers will serve handicap parishioners in the FRONT row FIRST, then minister to the rest of your section, BEFORE going back to serve any special needs further back in your sections. See the "Diagram of the Church for Eucharistic Ministers" for the location of special handicap spaces (for wheelchair access) located in your sections.

## THE COMMUNION STATIONS

- There are four communion stations, numbered 1 to 4. Consult the "Diagram of the Church for Eucharistic Ministers" for their locations. The asterisk (\*) on this diagram indicate the positions for the Ministers of Christ's Body. Two Ministers of Christ's Body are assigned to Station #1 and #4; one Minister of Christ's Body is assigned to Station #2 and #3. Ministers of Christ's Blood position themselves on either side of the Ministers of Christ's Body, at a distance almost to the next aisle.

## YOUR MINISTRY BEGINS

- At the Sign of Peace, exchange greetings with your family and those around you. Then proceed directly to the altar platform as the Lamb of God begins. Do NOT continue to extend the "Sign of Peace" to the other Eucharistic Ministers at the altar.
- There are five Ministers of Christ's Body at most masses. Those ministers and the presider break the bread during the Lamb of God. Do NOT take the bread from the presider's plate. The presider will apportion the bread from his plate to yours. First break the bread in your plate into strips. Then, if there is time, break the strips into pieces. When you finish, you may have flour or tiny particles of bread on your fingers. Do not make a huge display of brushing off your hands. Do this with small, unobtrusive motions. When finished, line up with the other Eucharistic Ministers, behind the altar.
- There are eight Ministers of Christ's Blood at each mass. Please stand in a SINGLE line starting near the back-center of the altar platform and continuing towards the ambo side of the altar platform. When you line up behind the altar (while the Ministers of Christ's Body are breaking the bread), figure out which station you should be going to. The first two (from the cantor stand/organ side) go to Station #1, next two to Station #2, etc. See the detailed diagram for position of ministers and flow.
- The presider will come to each minister to give the Body of Christ. Consume Christ's Body as soon as it is given to you.
- The sacristan (or deacon) will give the Blood of Christ to the Ministers of Christ's BODY from the chalice. Once you receive both the Body and Blood of Christ, move towards the altar and pick up your bread plate. Go to your assigned station. At your station, stand facing the altar until the two Ministers of Christ's Blood join you at your station. Then turn and start distributing communion.

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- The presider will give the Blood of Christ to the Ministers of Christ's BLOOD. Once he finishes serving the Body of Christ to all ministers, he will position himself near the altar, close to where the cups are placed. The first Minister of Christ's BLOOD (towards the organ/cantor side of the altar platform) will approach the presider. The other Ministers of Christ's Blood will following in line, each approaching the presider. The presider will hand you your cup and purificator. Take the cup and purificator from him, as he presents the cup to you. Receive the Blood of Christ and then wipe your cup. Proceed immediately to your station based on how you have lined up. Remember, the first two ministers go to Station #1, the next two to Station #2, etc (see the Detailed Diagram for the position of the presider and the flow pattern to your station).
- When a deacon is assisting, he will replace the sacristan as the Minister of Christ's Blood to the Ministers of Christ's BODY and he will always be a Minister of Christ's Blood to the assembly. Since he will be ministering to the Ministers of Christ's BODY first, he will always be at Minister of Christ's Blood at Station #4.
- Ministers of Christ's Blood should make sure they are positioned at a distance nearly to the next aisle from the Minister of Christ's Body.
- Ministers of Christ's Body should stand at the altar platform edge, facing the altar, until the two Ministers of Christ's Blood are in place. Then turn towards the congregation and begin your ministry.
- When we have an extra communion station in the Gathering Space (usually for Christmas and Easter), the Minister of Christ's Blood assigned to the extra station should line up at the end of the line of other wine ministers, on the AMBO side.

## COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL AND BLESSING OF INFANT AND CHILDREN

- Ministers of Christ's Body ... Make eye contact with the communicant. Call them to an act of faith saying: THE BODY OF CHRIST. Expect them to bow and respond: AMEN. As you place the host/bread in their hand, make personal contact with them through touch. DO NOT RUSH. You are ministering a sacrament. Do not elevate or raise-up the host/bread as in adoration.
- Ministers of Christ's Blood ... Offer the cup to the communicant with the words: THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. As you say this, make eye contact with them. Do not elevate the cup as in adoration. Expect them to bow and respond: AMEN. Let the communicant take the cup. Be ready to receive it back. Using the purificator, wipe the lip of the cup--both the outside and the inside rim. [The purificator is like a napkin and is meant to be opened up for use.] As you wipe the rim, rotate the cup a quarter turn. Then you are ready to present it to the next communicant. DO NOT RUSH.
- If you prefer, you may call the communicant by name (ie. N.\_\_\_\_\_, the Body of Christ).
- If you are a Minister of Christ's Blood and someone approaches you wanting to dip the host/bread into the cup, place your hand over the cup and say to them: "We drink from the cup." You may take the host/bread from them, dip it into the cup and then place it on their tongue, saying, "The Body and Blood of Christ."

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- The sacristan will monitor Christ's Body. Christ's Body reserved in the tabernacle will be brought to add to the plates, as necessary. If you are running out of Christ's Body and the sacristan is standing back by the credence table, try to make eye-contact with them to signal that you are running out. The sacristan will present the ciborium to you and you should scoop out the Body of Christ into your plate.
- We encourage parents to bring their infants and young children with them in the communion procession even though they are not receiving communion. Some of these children may have their hands placed over their hearts as a sign that they are not receiving communion. Bless infants and young children by gently placing your hand on their shoulder. You may include, "May you be blessed" or "Peace be with you". However, saying nothing is also very appropriate.
- When Ministers of Christ's Body have ministered to all in your assigned section, look around to see if you can assist at other communion stations. Ministers of Christ's Blood should NOT double up at other stations.

## COMMUNION OF THOSE WHO ARE DISABLED

- The Ministers of Christ's Body should check their assigned sections BEFORE mass to inquire about the needs to bring communion to anyone with special needs. See the "Diagram of the Church for Eucharistic Ministers" for the location of special handicap spaces (for wheelchair access) located in your sections.
- Be aware of anyone [e.g., those in wheelchairs or who have difficulty walking] who needs you to come to them for communion.
- We have made space for those in wheelchairs at the front of Section #2 and #4 AND in special locations in Section #2, #4, #5 and #7. However, not all those with disabilities sit in those places.
- If those with special needs are seated in the FRONT rows, serve them FIRST ... that means serving them both Christ's Body and Blood before you serve any others in your assigned sections.
- If there are others who are disabled, NOT IN THE FRONT PEWS, go to them and serve them after you are finished serving the assembly in your section. The Hospitality Minister might alert you to those that need communion brought back to them. This includes those seated in the special handicap spaces further back in Sections #2, #4, #5 and #7.
- Occasionally, a family member or friend will ask a Minister of Christ's Body for an additional host/bread to take back to someone who has remained in the pew because it is too difficult for them to walk up to the ministers. If possible, minister to those unable to come forward by going back to them, after finishing your section.

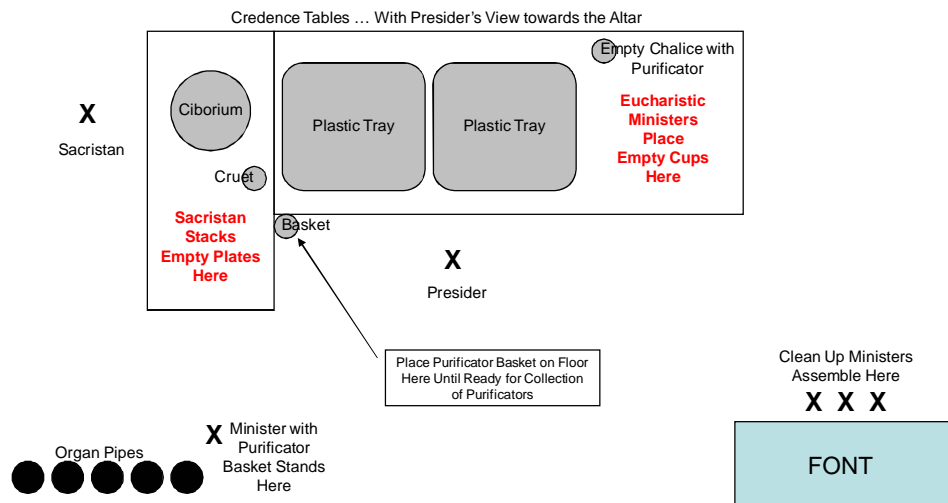
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## AFTER YOU ARE FINISHED SERVING THE COMMUNITY, RETURN TO THE CREDENCE TABLE

- Ministers of Christ's Body should hand their plates to the sacristan. If you are NOT assigned to clean-up, return to your seat. If you are assigned to clean-up, see the instructions for Clean-up Ministers.
- Ministers of Christ's Blood should observe if any other Minister of Christ's Blood might need you to SWITCH your partially full cup with their empty cup. If not, then reverently consume any remaining Christ's Blood, place your purificator in the basket and place your cup on the credence table next to the trays (see diagram). If you cannot consume the remaining Christ's Blood in your cup, ask another minister to help you or place the cup on the credence table. If you are NOT assigned to clean-up, return to your seat. If you are assigned to clean-up, see the instructions for Clean-up Ministers.
- If there are NOT three Clean-up ministers assembled by the font, please fill-in for the minister(s) who might have forgotten to remain at the font.

## Credence Table Set-up for Purification



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MINISTER ASSIGNED TO COLLECT PURIFICATORS

- The sacristan will ask one minister to assist by holding the purification basket and collecting the used purificators from the other ministers. Please stand by the organ pipes (see diagram) while collecting the purificators.
- After the presider completes the purification and he starts back to his seat, take the basket, the

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cruet of water and the purificator used by the presider, back to the Work Sacristy.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ASSIGNED CLEAN-UP MINISTERS**

- Assigned clean-up ministers have an asterisk (\*) by their names on the sign-in sheet.
- Instead of returning to your seat after communion, please wait by the font until the purification is complete.
- After the presider completes the purification and he starts back to his seat, one clean-up minister takes the stacked plates and the other two clean-up ministers each take a tray of cups, back to the Work Sacristy.

## **COMMUNION FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOMEBOUND**

- At the 8:30 a.m. Mass, there will be a small plate with wafer hosts on the altar. Please leave it there; these are the hosts for parishioners who are homebound.
- The sacristan will assist the presider in the distribution of the wafer hosts to the Homebound Ministers. This will occur after the Eucharistic Ministers are finished serving Communion to each other.

## **AFTER THE DISMISSAL**

- Ministers of Christ's Body should check the floor at the station where they served for particles of Christ's Body. These are picked up and placed in the gold ciborium on the counter in the Middle Sacristy.
- Three ministers are assigned clean-up duty. This is indicated on the schedule and the sign-in list with an \*.
- Wash the cups, the chalice, the wine pitcher and the plates using hot, soapy water. The new metal vessels should not be immersed completely in water. While washing, use a sponge of hot, soapy water to clean the vessel and then rinse with hot water ... instead of immersing the vessels completely in water. Drain the dishes, using the dish rack and mat. Dry dishes using towels in the cabinet under the telephone.
- Put soiled towels into the blue laundry receptacle under the sink. Hang wet dish towels to dry on the towel bars inside the cabinet doors. Soiled purificators are placed in the bin (designed for purificators) under the sink.
- After the 5 pm and the 11 am Masses, put away the chalice, all trays, cups and plates in the proper cabinets.
- After 8:30 am Mass, leave the bread plates, the trays with cups, the chalice and the pitcher on the counter since the sacristan will soon be preparing for the 11 am Mass.
- Go in peace with the gratitude of the community.

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*Your ministry is VITAL to the life of the community! Your attention to details and commitment to our worship will improve the quality of our liturgies. Thank you for your generous service to the people of Blessed Sacrament Parish!*

## **CONTACTS**

- For questions regarding Music Ministries or the Order of Worship, please contact Pam Bourscheidt, Director of Liturgy & Music, pamb@blessed-midland.org, 835-6777.
- For questions regarding scheduling, please contact Loretta Schepperly, Office Professional, lorettas@blessed-midland.org, 835-6777 Ext 239.
- For questions regarding procedures specific to a ministry or training, please contact Joe Plevyak, Volunteer Coordinator for Liturgical Ministry Formation, joe.plevyak@gmail.com, 835-2846