

GENERAL
GUIDELINES FOR EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS
Incorporating Implementation Practices for St. Joseph Parish
From the General Instructions of the Roman Missal [GIRM]
Revised November 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009

9:00 AM SUNDAY

“Father, I pray for them: may they be one in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.”
John: 17

1. Weekly Schedule and Rotation

Note that you are assigned to a specific team with a three-week rotation. By volunteering for this ministry either as a regular scheduled minister or as a substitute, you have made a commitment for a full year beginning with the first Sunday of Advent 2009 (the start of the liturgical year) and ending usually the last week of November 2010. It is an enormous privilege to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ and the community relies on your generosity and attendance to this important ministry. You are asked to check your team schedule before each weekend liturgy and mark your calendar in advance as a reminder of your commitment. With some exceptions, captains will not make weekly reminder calls.

2. Finding a Substitute

Whether it's preplanned for a vacation or an unexpected last minute illness, occasional substitutions are inevitable. Your captain will appreciate it if you make your own arrangements for a substitute but please notify him/her of the person who will take your place. In the case of a sudden illness or an emergency, your captain is willing to find a substitute for you if you telephone him/her with your request. A list of substitutes and their phone numbers is provided on your schedule.

3. Learning the Positions for Serving [Diagram]

- ❖ **MEMORIZE THE POSITIONS!**
- ❖ **LOOK for DOTS on the FLOOR of the church to remind you where to stand!**

You will find a diagram of the altar platform on the St. Joseph website with marked locations to help you learn where to stand while serving. It is important to note that the basic concept for understanding the positions, or stations, is determined by looking at the religious mosaics above the side altars; one side is Joseph, one side is Mary. Refer to the diagram and ask questions until you have a clear understanding of all positions.

Even when you are not serving get into the habit of looking at the altar platform and counting the ministers to see if there are enough. Be prepared to go to the altar platform to fill in for absentees at any time.

9 AM Sunday Count 11 ministers + 1 priest = 12 total

4. Knowing Your Assignment [Learn to match the wording on the medallions with the gold dots on the church floor. This will help you learn where to stand]

- Medallions are used each Sunday to indicate your assignment. You will pick up a cross/medallion from a basket located on a table nestled underneath the high pulpit near the Mary Side Altar. The medallions are located on the same table with the cups and bowls.
- IF you select a CUP medallion also pick up a purificator and place it/hang it across your wrist. This will signal the priest and deacon that you are a CUP minister.

Ministers carry their medallion in their hand as they wait to receive communion. As you leave the platform (with a bowl or cup) to take your position, **lay your medallion down on the altar. DO NOT PUT IT IN YOUR POCKET!**

- The words on the medallions indicate three things:
 - 1) the vessel you are to serve, i.e. cup or bread
 - 2) the side of the altar to stand on, i.e. Joseph or Mary
 - 3) the exact position to stand, i.e. transept, pew, pillar, platform etc.

The wording looks like this:

CUP/ JOSEPH / PILLAR

(Translation: Cup on Joseph side of the altar at the Pillar)

OR

BREAD / MARY / TRANSEPT

(Translation: Bread on Mary side stands at the base platform neat the handrail.

The minister faces north and communicants will come FORWARD to the altar to receive.)

5. Approaching the Altar

At the kiss of peace, since it is important to move immediately to the altar, you are asked to refrain from offering a blessing to others. Approach the altar platform towards the back, ideally ascending the platform stairs at the point of the new handrail. Remember the procedure with the medallions [detailed above]. Ministers pick up a medallion and hold it during communion. Lay the medallion on the altar as you leave the platform.

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6. Procedures on the Altar

- Once you have picked up a medallion, the captain [or a designee] and **all** other ministers help to bring the empty bowls/cups to the altar.

- The cups and purificator cloths are distributed on both sides of the altar and the bowls of bread are placed in the center for the Priest to distribute. At this point, all EM's step back from the altar and wait for the Priest to return from greeting during the Kiss of Peace and begin the fraction rite.
- **Fraction Rite:** To honor the message in the liturgy of “unity” in “one body/blood poured” **no hosts are distributed and no wine is poured until AFTER the priest holds up the large host, silently breaks it in half then breaks off a smaller piece and puts it into the chalice and distributes among the bowls.** The Priest or concelebrant normally distribute communion to the Eucharistic Ministers. **If** the Deacon is finished pouring wine, he might also distribute bread. You should be alert to the possibility of being handed a bowl to distribute bread as visiting priests may vary this procedure.
- At the same time as the Priest is distributing bread, **the Deacon, if present, pours the wine into the cups. If there is no deacon, then usually the captain or designee pours.**
- Once each minister has a host, the priest says, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to this supper.” Everyone responds with the “Agnus Dei” prayer “Lord I am not worthy ... and my soul shall be healed.” During this prayer, each minister holds a host. **After the priest consumes the host and drinks from the cup, then the ministers consume. The signal will be when the priest hands off the cup to either the Deacon or another minister.** NOTE: If several concelebrating priests are present, each priest receives and consumes the host and the wine first. After all priests have received both bread and wine, then ministers receive and consume.
- Bread ministers stand in the center of the line of ministers behind the priest, receiving a cup first and then passing it on. **Remember that the purificator across your wrist signals that you should get a cup-try to hold your arm in a way that it can be seen. Do not refuse a cup/bowl handed to you by the priest simply because it may not be your assigned vessel. Accept the vessel and take the responsibility of discretely looking around and passing it on to an appropriate minister.** The priest passes out the bowls after distributing cups. Ministers should not take the bowls or cups directly from the altar, rather wait for the priest to hand one to you. *Your flexibility is requested in this procedure, as not all priests handle this in the same way.* Remain on the altar until all cups and bowls are distributed to the ministers. Ministers should wait for the priest to begin moving to his usual position at the base of the platform before stepping down to take their own assigned position.

7. Norms for Distributing the Bread and Wine

Do not fraction (break) hosts into small pieces. BREAD ministers that run out of hosts should take the responsibility to go up to the altar and refill the bowl with hosts from the ciborium.

The correct phrases to use while distributing the bread and wine are:

“The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ”

Make eye contact with each communicant as a sign of welcome and inclusion.

Intinction, the method of administering both elements of the Eucharist at once by dipping the bread into the wine, is discouraged. Since blocking the cup from access with a hand or cloth is awkward and unwelcoming, ministers should simply notify their captain after mass if this occurs. If necessary, the deacon may contact individuals who repeat this practice every week to explain that intinction is discouraged and urging them to contact the priest with questions.

A blessing is offered to adults (place your hand on the shoulder): “May God bless you today and always.”

To children you might say: “Remember that Jesus (God) loves you.”

Accidents, though extremely rare, can occur. Pick up hosts if dropped on the floor, cupping it in your hand until you can consume it behind the altar after serving. Broken glass and spilled wine from cups should be covered reverently with the cloth purificator. Remain standing near the spill during communion to keep the flow of traffic away. Clean up should take place after mass.

8. Finishing Early and Returning Cups/Bowls after Communion

In general, bowls containing hosts are placed on the front edge of the altar making them accessible for other ministers. Do not place empty bowls on the front of the altar since this is misleading to other ministers.

Remember the Joseph Transept Bread/Cup serves the choir- remaining in that one position until all have received.

While communicants are still coming forward, Cup Ministers should always move to, or slide into a spot where the cup can continue to be accessible. Only when communion is finished should cups still containing wine be carried back to the small table behind the altar. At that time, it is the responsibility of the ministers to make a reasonable attempt to consume the unused wine. If this is not possible, simply place the cup on the table and cover it with the white cloth purificator. After Mass in the sacristy, unused sacred wine can be disposed of in the sacrarium (sink).

BREAD ministers will carry their bowls to the altar and put unused hosts into the ciborium. The captain is responsible for returning the ciborium to the tabernacle as expediently as possible (without rushing). The Priest (and Deacon) will remain standing until this transfer occurs.

9. Appropriate Dress for Ministers

“There is no appropriate vesture for Special Ministers of Communion, although it is important that they dress neatly and in a way consonant with the importance of the Lord’s supper and their role as ministers of the Eucharist at the Holy Banquet.” [Pastoral Guidelines for Special Ministers of Communion]

10. Cleanup

In general, while you are not assigned to weekly cleanup, everyone is expected to participate. Please allow time after Mass to meet behind the altar platform, carry items to the sacristy, and to wash and dry cups and bowls. A reminder to please use hot water and soap as you wash minimizing the need for a subsequent Captain to rewash smudged glasses. Cleanup only takes a few minutes, provides an opportunity to meet your teammates, and promotes shared responsibility for this necessary task.