

St. Pius X

Eucharistic Minister's Handbook

Liturgical and Pastoral Norms for Eucharistic Ministers

I. PASTORAL NORMS

Parish Planning Coordination

The parish makes its own determination as to the number of ministers needed on a standing basis in order to provide for the liturgical needs of weekend and weekday masses, and the pastoral needs of communion to the sick. The liturgist is responsible for scheduling the work of the Eucharistic Ministers, sees that the roster of Eucharistic Ministers is kept current and that schedules are arranged and published.

Eucharistic Ministers Schedules are generally made every three months. Prior to each schedule, ministers are encouraged to submit any dates or mass time they are unable to minister. We make an effort to accommodate vacations, work, and any other scheduling conflict before a schedule is published. Ministers may also request a change of mass preference at this time. These requests must be submitted to the liturgy office in writing, via email at mmaus@piusx.org or online via the St. Pius MinistryPro website at <http://www.ministryschedulerpro.com/?user=piusx>.

If any scheduling changes or conflicts arise after a schedule is published, it is the minister's responsibility to find a replacement. Lists of all ministers and their phone numbers are available on the bulletin board in the sacristy and online on the MinistryPro website.

Qualifications

A suitable candidate should have a devotion to the Eucharist and possess the time, health and willingness to serve in this capacity. The individual must be confirmed and have an on going relationship with the parish. Because the Eucharistic Minister is a minister of service, it is important that the candidate possess a serious and mature faith commitment. The person knows what it means to say, "The Body of Christ. The Blood of Christ."

II. LITURGICAL NORMS

Proper Attire

The ministers should dress neatly, in a way consonant with the dignity of their role. Good taste and common sense are the best guides in this area, **shorts, tank tops, jeans, sweats, etc., are never acceptable. Appropriate dress is a sign of reverence** the minister has for the Eucharist and for the importance of the ministry.

Assignment and Arrival

Eucharistic Ministers should arrive for their assigned Mass at least 10 minutes prior the Mass; the Sacristan should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to allow enough time to receive special instructions from the liturgist or priest. **Respect for the Eucharist and the Ministry demands that Ministers arrive on time and fulfill their obligations when assigned.** The confusion and disorder that occurs when responsibilities are not fulfilled is disrespectful. It is understood that emergencies do happen. If possible, in these circumstances, call the parish and leave a message with the liturgist.

Reverence at the Tabernacle

Outside of Mass Eucharistic Ministers should genuflect after opening the Tabernacle door, but before removing Consecrated Hosts. They also genuflect just before closing the door after returning the Ciborium (plate) containing Hosts to the Tabernacle. **Once Mass has begun, genuflecting is not necessary.**

Sacristan Duties – two Eucharistic Ministers are scheduled as sacristans for each Mass

1. Check in with the liturgist about any special instructions.
2. Stand by the sign up sheet (near the baptismal font) to make sure all ministers arrive. This includes other EM's, ushers, altar servers and lectors.
3. When all have arrived take your place in the assembly. About five minutes before Mass, if there are still ministers missing please find replacements.
4. After mass is finished, go to the sacristy to purify each the vessels and prepare for the next mass.
 - a. Purify all communion vessels by running a small amount of water in all the pewter chalices, patens, gold paten and the glass flagon. Swirl the water around in each vessel and pour this water in the sacrarium or consume it. **Do not pour any of this water down the sink drain.**
 - b. Put used purificators in the laundry bin in the tall cupboard.
 - c. Wash the chalices, patens, and flagon in warm soapy water and dry well with a dish towel. *(Be sure to clean the rim of the chalices.)*
 - d. Take the designated number of chalices and purificators, and patens out the credence table for the next mass and place any extra vessels away.
 - e. Refill lavabo pitcher. Then take pitcher, bowl and a fresh lavabo towel out to the credence table.
 - f. After 4:00 p.m. & 10:0 a.m.
 - Place flagon on designated shelf in the sacristy. Put the gold paten in the brown cloth bag and place it in the cupboard with the pewter patens.
 - Refill small water cruet and place it in the refrigerator and wipe off the counter top.After 8:00 a.m.
 - Refill small water cruet with water and place it on the credence table.
 - Fill the flagon with the proper amount of wine, using the measuring cup.
 - Place the appropriate amount of hosts and one large host in the gold paten for the next Mass. There is a measuring container in the cupboard for hosts. If the ciborium was more than half full, you will only need half the amount indicated on the measuring container for next mass.
 - Bring large paten and flagon out to the gifts table.

Liturgical Procedure

Before Mass

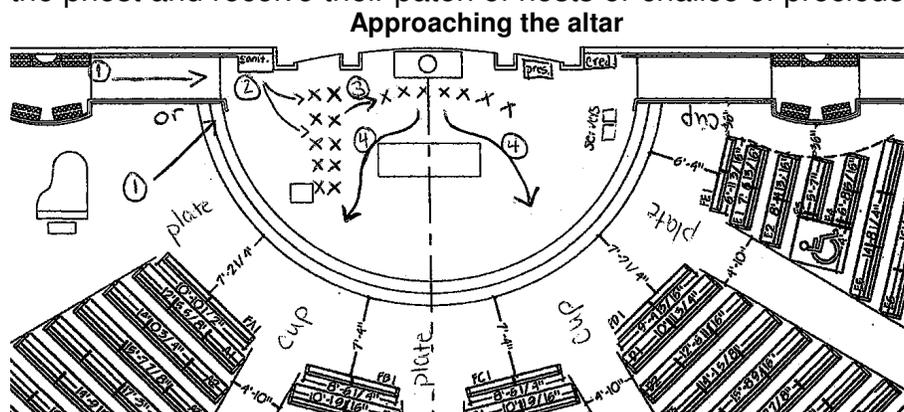
Everyone signs in with the sacristan at the gifts table (back center of church). If you are not scheduled for a particular weekend, it is good practice to check in with the sacristan a few minutes before mass to see if there are any last minute fill-ins needed. Take your place in the assembly.

During Mass

Participate fully in the Liturgy of the Word by praying, singing and listening to the word.

Approaching the Altar (see diagram below)

1. During the Sign of Peace, the Eucharistic Ministers greet those around you then approach the altar from either the north steps or ramp. **There is no need to bow or genuflect before entering the sanctuary during Mass.**
2. Hand sanitizer can be found at the top of the top of the north ramp. All Eucharistic Ministers are to use some, but please be discreet, keeping your attention focused toward the altar. Then depending on the number of ministers for a particular liturgy, ministers form one or two lines facing the altar perpendicular to the altar.
3. After the priest receives communion, all EM's move to form one line behind the altar facing the congregation to receive communion (*see Receiving Communion*) from the priest and receive their paten of hosts or chalice of precious blood.



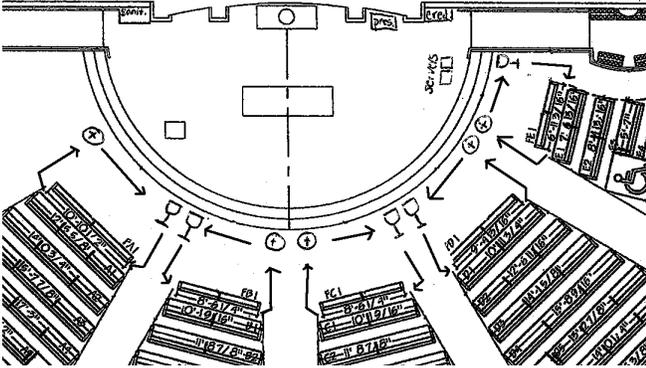
Receiving Communion

- Generally, the priest will distribute the Precious Body to the servers and the first Eucharistic Minister in line.
- The priest will then offer the Precious Blood to the first Eucharistic Minister, who in turn will distribute the Precious Blood to the servers and the rest of the Eucharistic Ministers. Be ready flexible as this sometimes varies depending on the priest.
- After you have received the Precious Blood, the priest will hand you a vessel containing either the Precious Body or the Precious Blood and will designate a position for you for the distribution of communion. If the priest does not direct you, go to the nearest station.

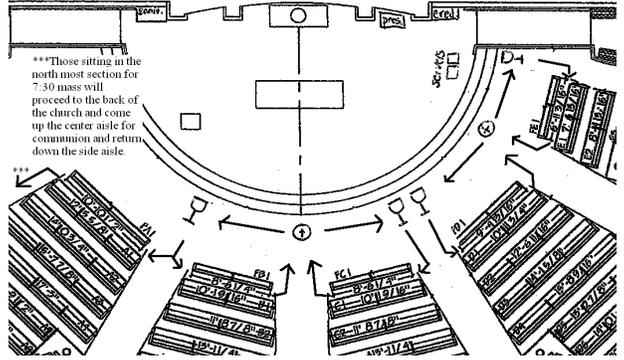
Distributing Communion

- Stand on the main floor at your designated position. (Plate = \oplus , Cup = \cup)
- **For all liturgies, the center aisle is an approach aisle. From there, each aisle alternates cup-plate (approach-return). See diagrams below for specific mass times.

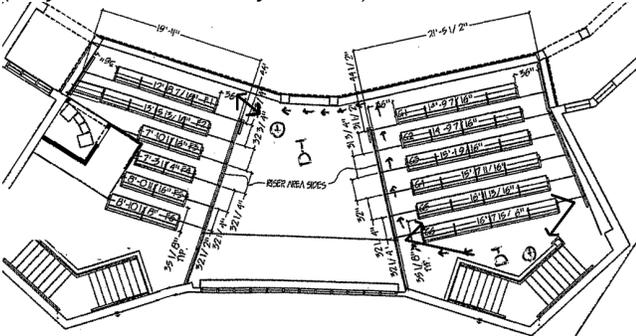
4pm, 10:00am Floor Map
(no balcony used for the 8am mass)



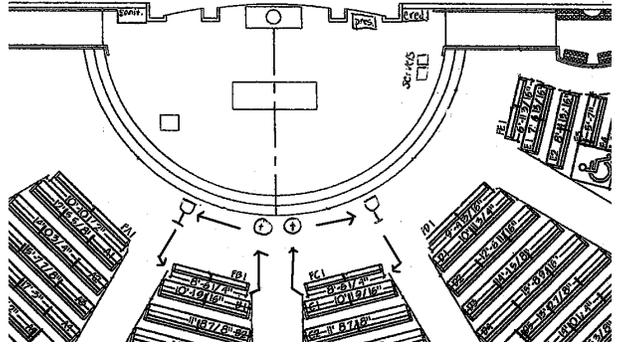
Holy Day Floor Map
(no balcony used)



4pm Balcony Map
(only the north balcony is used)



Daily Mass, Weddings, Funerals Map
(no balcony used)



Balcony: For weekly masses in which the balcony is used, only one cup and one plate minister are needed. These ministers first distribute to section two of the balcony and then to distribute to the section one. To create a better flow for section one, stand in the open center section. If there are only a few people sitting in either balcony an usher will instruct them to come to the main floor for communion.

Holy Days: Those sitting in the north most section will be ushered to the back of the church and down the center aisle to receive communion.

If you are distributing the Precious Body:

1. Hold up the host, look the communicant *in the eyes* and say, “The Body of Christ.”
2. The communicant will bow his/her head and then say “Amen.”
3. Place the Precious Body into his/her hands. Some may choose to receive on the tongue.
4. **When you are finished distributing, assist other positions if necessary.** For example, if there is only one minister at an aisle, you may serve as the second minister. Also check to see if each remaining minister has enough hosts for all of the people in line. (You may trade patens with them if needed.) Check with the musicians to make sure they have received communion as well.
5. When everyone in the congregation has finished bring your paten back to the altar. Place any remaining hosts into the ciborium, and place your empty paten on the credence table. Then return to your place in the assembly.

If you are distributing the Precious Blood:

1. Hold up the chalice, look the communicant in the eyes and say, “The Blood of Christ.”
2. The communicant will bow his/her head and then say “Amen.” If they do not, you may respond “Amen” for them.
3. Hand the chalice to the communicant. S/he will take and drink and then hand the chalice back to you.
4. Use the purificator to wipe the chalice as you turn the chalice a quarter turn for the next communicant. You may need to help the communicant lift the chalice to his/her lips, especially if s/he is a child or an elderly person. Be attentive to the particular physical needs of each person.
5. **When you are finished distributing, assist other positions if necessary.** For example, if there is only one minister at an aisle, you may serve as the second minister. Also check to see if each remaining minister has enough precious blood for all of the people in line. (You may trade chalices with them if needed. Please do not pour from cup to cup.) Before returning to the altar, check with the musicians to make sure they have received communion as well.
6. After either everyone in the congregation has received communion or you have run out of precious blood, take your cup to the up to the altar. If there is Precious Blood to be consumed, please drink what is left your chalice only once you have reached the altar. **Face either toward the tabernacle or the altar when consuming.** Do not consume while you walk. If there is too much for you to consume comfortably, ask another Eucharistic Minister to assist you. Then return to your place in the assembly.

After Mass

Those designated as Sacristans bring dishes from the credence table into the sacristy and purify communion vessels as listed above under “sacristan duties.”

When should we minister Communion to the choir?

Because liturgical norms prefer the communion music to begin as soon as the priest receives communion, the musician will generally receive communion last. After all have received communion, the ministers closest to the musician area will check with the musicians to see if they would like to receive communion. Because some musicians minister at more than one mass a weekend, they may choose not to receive, but please always offer. It may require you to wait for a moment for the musicians to find a place to end their music.

When should we minister to the handicapped in the congregation?

There are several designated handicapped pews within our worship space; however some people may choose to sit elsewhere in the congregation. Be aware of those who may not be able walk to receive communion and distribute to them **AFTER the general assembly**. Generally the priest or a hospitality minister can indicate where these people are located.

What is the proper gesture of reverence for Communion?

The recently released *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* states:

When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.

The U.S. bishops have retained standing as the only posture for sharing in communion. **In any case, the Communion minister may not refuse Communion to anyone simply because they did not make the required reverence or assume the normative posture.**

How do we clean the Communion vessels after Mass?

Those scheduled as the sacristan a particular weekend are in charge of cleaning and purifying the sacred vessels after mass. Instructions can be found under the sacristan duties section above and also above the sink in the sacristy.

Who can bless another person?

According to the official Book of Blessings,

Laymen and laywomen, in virtue of the universal priesthood, a dignity they possess because of their baptism and confirmation, may celebrate certain blessings, as indicated in the respective orders of blessings, by use of the rites and formularies designated for a lay minister. Such lay persons exercise this ministry in virtue of their office (for example, parents on behalf of their children) or by reason of some special liturgical ministry or in the fulfillment of a particular charge in the Church, as is the case in many places with religious or catechist appointed by decision of the local Ordinary (18).

Eucharistic Ministers are encouraged to bless those in the community who comes forward who cannot receive Holy Communion. Our norm is whatever feels comfortable. You may touch the person on the forehead, saying nothing while tracing the sign of the cross on their forehead, this is a sign of universal Christian connection through Baptism. Look at the person, smile and pray it genuinely from your heart.

What should I do if I drop a host or spill some wine?

First, don't panic. It's not the end of the world; everything will be fine. Simply bend down on one knee and pick up the dropped host. Be careful not to spill anymore hosts while you are retrieving the dropped one. Be aware that you may be the only one who saw the host fall. You might have to stop traffic before you can bend down. Do so courteously, remembering that Jesus is also present in the members of the assembly whom you are stopping. Do not consume this host, but bring it to the sacristy when communion is finished so it may be disposed of in a dignified manner.

If you spill some consecrated wine, and if you can manage the cup with only one hand, bend down on one knee and wipe the wine off the floor with your purificator. If the cup is too full for you to manage gracefully, ask the next person in line to hold the cup while you take care of the spill. If necessary, that person can continue to hold the cup while you go to the sacristy to retrieve more purificators.

Please let the liturgist or the priest know what happen so after mass everything will be disposed of properly.

How do you clean consecrated wine from a purificator after wiping up a spill?

If the spill is not large, the purificator would be cleaned in the usual way with all the rest of the purificators. If the spill is large enough that several purificators are necessary, they can be rinsed in a bowl and the contents poured out down the sacrarium.

What do I do if someone who is not Catholic comes to me for Communion?

In most cases, you should give them Communion. As Communion ministers, we are not responsible for judging who is worthy of sharing in Communion with us. We cannot know the heart or conscience of the person standing in front of us. *Our primary obligation is to act as Jesus would and to be as hospitable and welcoming as possible.* If you have serious concerns, speak to your pastor after Mass. But do not cause a fuss during the Mass by refusing Communion to anyone. If a child does not have his or her hands crossed over their chest, it is best to ask...."Have you made your First Holy Communion?" If they are obviously too young, just offer a blessing.

For any other procedural questions, please feel free to reach out to the Liturgy Director or Pastor with your concerns.