

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION TRAINING NOTES:**

- ◆ The primary purpose for these notes is to clarify the position of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC); words matter – EMHC are NOT Eucharistic Ministers; the bishop, priest, and deacon are Ordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and are called Eucharistic Ministers. The EMHC assists in the act of the distribution of Holy Communion. To become an EMHC you must be approved by the Pastor and attend a formal training class conducted by the diocese. You will then be commissioned for a period of four years to support this parish only. The commission is renewable but you serve at the pleasure of the Pastor. It is a formal appointment in the Church and should be executed as such – with great reverence and humility.
- ◆ An acolyte is a special minister in the Church reserved for those men seeking reception into the sacrament of Holy Orders. He is permanently installed at a special diocesan mass by the bishop. His appointment is not limited in support to the local parish. While the acolyte is not an Ordinary Minister of the Eucharist he is the preferred minister in the distribution of Holy Communion.
  - Canon Law describes the EMHC as follows:
    - Can. 230 §1. Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.
      - Nevertheless, the conferral of these ministries does not grant them the right to obtain support or remuneration from the Church.
    - ☐ §3. When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, Lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside offer liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion, according to the prescripts of the law.
    - Can. 910 §2. The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is an acolyte or another member of the Christian faithful designated according to the norm of can. 230, §3.
  - Your commission as an EMHC only extends to this Parish in which you were appointed – you may be appointed by a priest in another Parish if he feels he needs assistance, but this circumstance is dealt with on a case-by-case basis and is solely at the discretion of the priest / Celebrant.
- ◆ It is our intent to ensure we are following Canon Law, which proscribes what can and cannot be done with regards to the liturgy – which is not just the Mass, but all public manifestations of the Church.
  - No one – not even a priest – can add, delete or change the elements of the Mass; particularly with regards to:
    - ☐ Assembly
    - ☐ Proclamation of the Word
    - ☐ Ministry
    - ☐ Sacraments

◆ As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion the number one thing to remember is to be reverent and respectful of the office you are undertaking – you are safeguarding and distributing Jesus in his sacramental form.

- Please arrive 15-20 minutes before your scheduled Mass and sign in / prepare for the act of Communion through quiet prayer and contemplation – by signing in, the Celebrant or other members of the scheduled team can determine whether there is need to solicit volunteers.
- Dress code policy located in the sacristy.
  - ☐ If you are not scheduled for a Mass but are asked to fill in, please consider your attire before assisting – minimally, a collared shirt, slacks and leather shoes for the men, modest attire for the women.
- Please sit in the reserved seating in the transept area (the transverse part of a cruciform church, crossing the nave at right angles – see Figure 1 below) on both sides of the church (two EMHC per side) so as to make the procession towards the altar more natural and less distracting to the congregation.

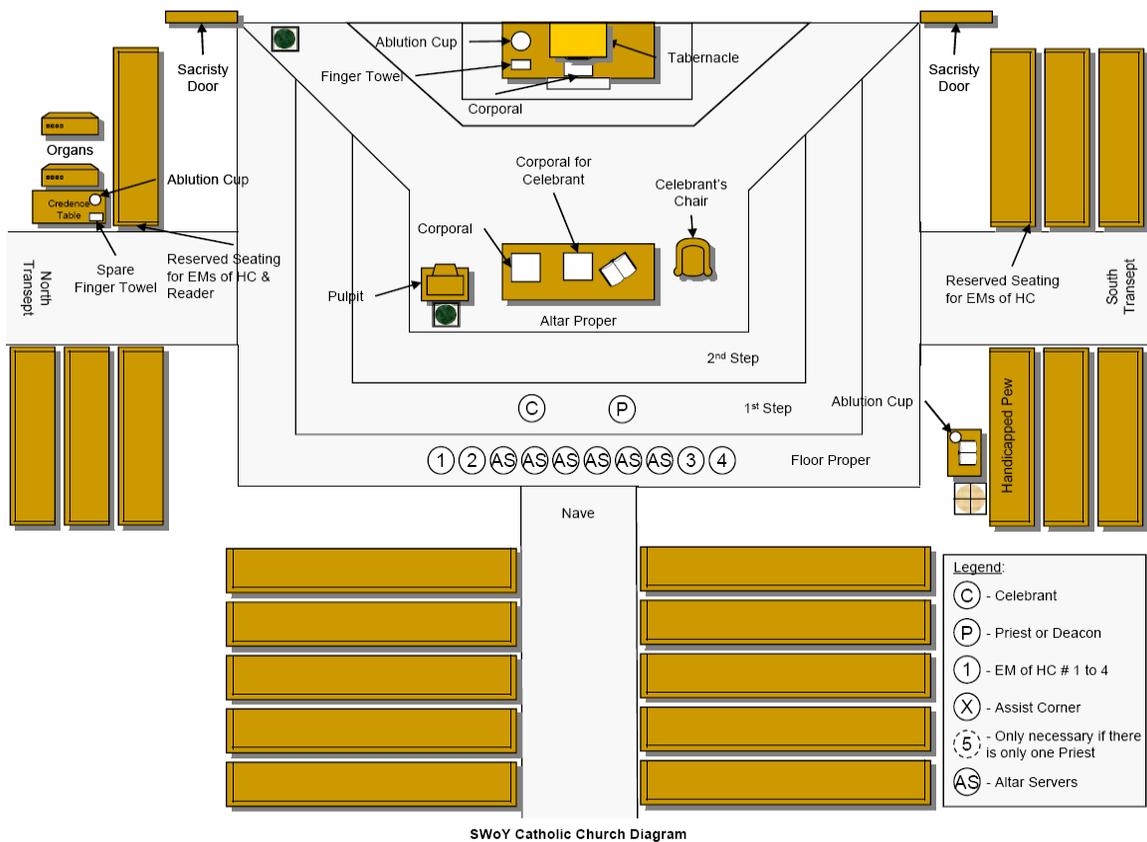
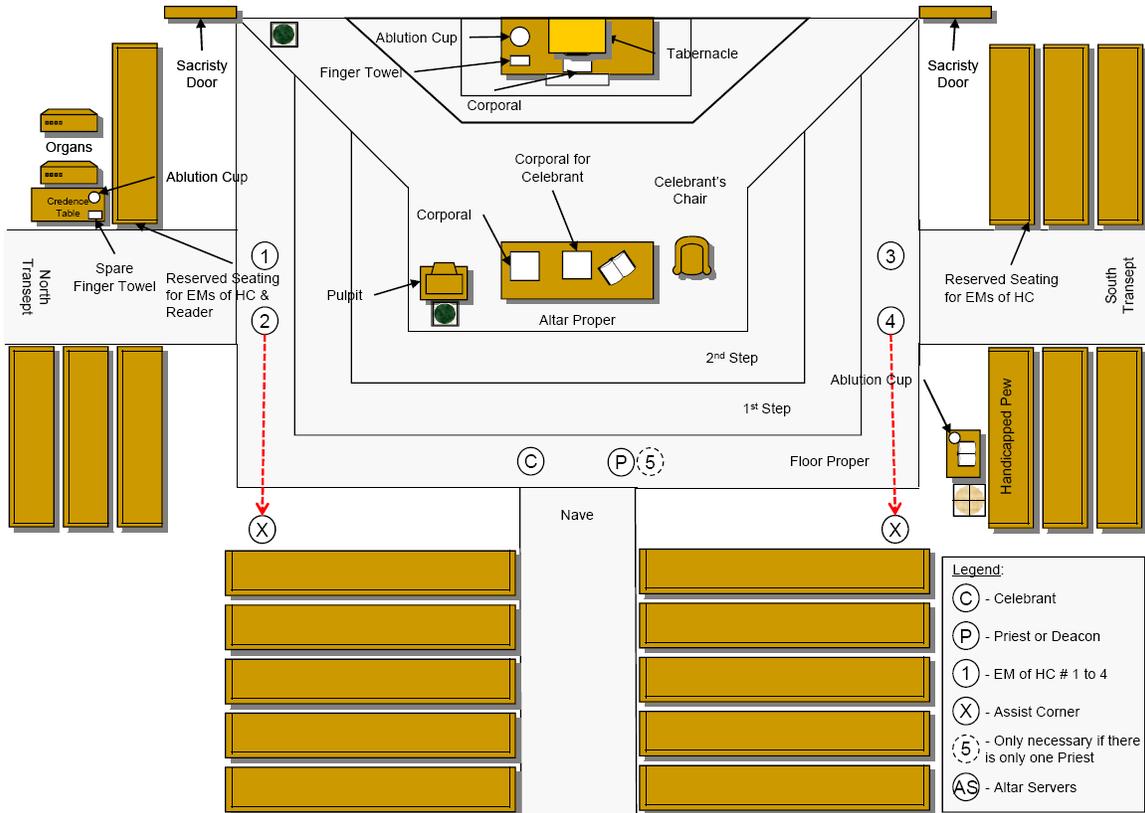


Figure 1

- Remain in your pew, kneeling during the “Lamb of God” and when the celebrant drinks the precious blood of Christ, approach the altar from the FRONT "book-ending" the altar servers (two on each side; see Figure 1) to receive communion, then receive your ciborium, and move to the transept side you were sitting on to distribute communion (this will eliminate the traffic across the altar).
- When the priest approaches you to offer Communion, make a slight bow towards the Tabernacle – do not make the sign of the cross until the priest has moved to the next Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

- Once you have been given a ciborium, do not wait for everyone else; go to your station as follows:
  - ❑ The two EMHC on the left side of the altar (See Figure 2) should go to the north side transept.
  - ❑ The two EMHC on the right side of the altar (See Figure 2) should go to the south side transept.



SWoY Catholic Church Diagram

Figure 2

- ❑ If there is a need for a 5<sup>th</sup> EMHC because there is only one priest, that minister will go to the center with the priest.
  - If there is only one priest, and less than five (5) EMHC, one should still go to the center with the Celebrant unless there are not enough EMHC to have at least one at each transept station.
- ❑ To distribute communion stand on the floor-level marble tile – the floor proper (see Figure 2) – and distribute Communion until your line is complete.
  - An exception – if there are handicapped individuals in the right transept handicapped pew, move forward and deliver Communion to them (do not give Communion to their attendants in the pew unless they ask) and then return to your station on the altar and proceed with the distribution of Communion.
- ❑ When presenting the host, focus on the host (eye contact with the communicant is not necessary), announce “the Body of Christ” and gently place the host either on their tongue or in their cupped hands.
  - If there are not enough altar servers to have one for each station, the

altar servers should go with the EMHC.

- If there is not an altar server attending your station with a paten, place your ciborium below the chin of the communicant receiving Communion on the tongue so as to catch any particles of the host (or the host itself) that could be dropped.
- If the communicant does not respond to the “Body of Christ” announcement, say “Amen” for them.

If you are on a transept side and you are the EM closest to the main front pews (numbers 2 & 4 in Figure 2), when your line is complete, go to the corner of the front pews (circled ‘X’ on the diagram) on the side you are on and assist the center procession from there. When the line has subsided until it only extends until the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew, return your ciborium to altar and return to your seat (this will avoid the congestion on the altar that results from waiting until the main lines are finished).

If there is someone in the far back pew of the church requesting communion, the EMHC on the far transept side of the church who is closest to the Sacristy (number 1 in Figure 2), should walk down the aisle side, distribute Communion, and proceed back up the aisle side.

When your ciborium is empty or you have finished distributing, return it to the altar and place it on the Corporal (linen on the corner of the altar – see diagrams).

Use the Ablution cups on the credence tables closest to the organ and the baptismal font (see Figure 2 --- PLEASE USE THESE to limit congestion on the altar). If you are the first one there, do not use the thumb and forefinger you used to distribute Communion to remove the lid; rather, use your other hand, or grasp the cross on the lid between the middle and ring finger of the hand you distributed Communion with.

Cleanse the thumb and forefinger you distributed Communion with and dab them dry on the finger cloth (there is no need to unfold it).

Unless given an indication from either the celebrant, the priest assisting, deacon, acolyte or the sacristan that they will need assistance transporting the ciboria to the sacristy, return to your seat. If they need you to come back up to the altar to assist, they'll give you a sign (a head nod or a wave to return to the altar).

- If you are making visits to the homebound / nursing homes, the priest acting as the non-Celebrant will bring the Pyx and Burses to you while you are standing – if the door to the tabernacle closes while he is distributing the Pyx and Burses, remain standing until the distribution is complete – and then immediately exit the church so that you may proceed directly to your appointed homebound/nursing home assignment(s). Note: You should have already picked up your kit prior to Mass and placed it in your pew; pick it up on your way out.

○ Some Special Circumstances / Instances:

If a communicant requests that you break the host into a smaller piece for their consumption, grasp the ciborium at the base with both hands, grasp a host between the thumb and forefinger of both hands, break the host and give the smaller fragment to the person requesting it – if you feel you will be unable to do this without dropping the host, ask the person politely to take a seat in the pews reserved for the EMHC and alert one of the priests, deacon or acolyte so that he might do it.

If the host is dropped to the floor:

- Ask the communicant to step back.
- Go down on one knee, pick up the host, and return it to your ciborium.
- Ask an altar server to stand in front of the spot, taking care not to step on the area where the host had been, so that you can “mark” the spot.
- Go to the Ablution cup and get the finger towel – go back to the spot and use the towel to mark it.
- Stand in front of that spot to continue distributing Communion and then alert a priest so that he may purify the area properly.

If you run out of hosts, and it is more expedient to let the other EMHC finish distributing on that side, please do so – if both lines are long, alert the closest EMHC or priest and transfer hosts from their ciborium so that you may continue to distribute the host. As a general rule, it is better / less distracting to let the other EMHC on your side proceed alone.

If you feel that one of your peer EMHC is not following proper procedures, privately address it with them and constructively address your concerns; if they continue to act inappropriately, inform one of the priests so that they may address the issue.

*If you have been scheduled for a Mass and cannot attend, please make every effort to find a replacement – this applies to visits to the homebound / nursing homes as well.*

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion you are touching the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus in the form of the consecrated host, and at times you will be asked to protect the integrity of the sacred species:

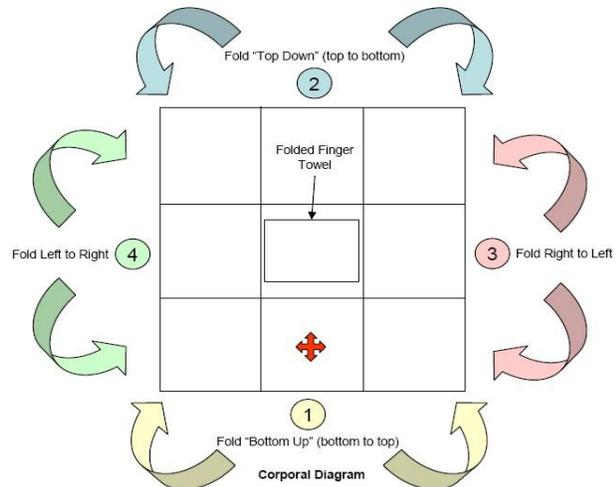
- If someone attempts to leave the Communion procession without consuming the host, follow them and politely ask them if they are Catholic. If they say ‘no’ inform them that they should not receive Communion and take the host from them; if they say ‘yes’ ask them to consume the host immediately. If in either case they refuse, alert the priest.
- If someone approaches for Communion, and you doubt they are Catholic, ask them – if they say ‘no’ do not give them a host; politely ask them to return to their seat.

## Visits to the Homebound / Nursing Homes:

- ◆ Pick up your kit before Mass and inventory it to ensure it has all the necessary items inside:
  - Crucifix or Holy Card
  - 1 bottle of tap water
  - Burse and Pyx (will be received from priest after Communion)
  - Corporal
  - Finger Towel
  - Rite of Holy Communion ritual book
- ◆ Before entering the room of a communicant, knock and announce your presence; await a response before entering – this is a sign of respect for the privacy of the individual and will help you avoid any embarrassing incidents.
- ◆ The rule of thumb in homebound / nursing home visits is use your best judgment – if you feel an individual is not capable of receiving or comprehending that they are receiving Communion; you are not obliged to give them the Holy Eucharist.
  - Follow the instructions in the guide and you can administer a blessing with the Pyx.
  - If the communicant lights a candle (or asks you to) be sure to extinguish it before you leave.
- ◆ If you notice a discernible change / decline in an individual's health or disposition, please alert the priests so they may inquire as to whether the individual may require / desire confession or anointing of the sick.
- ◆ Do not hesitate to bring copies of the bulletin, Catholic Herald, etc. with you to distribute on your visits – if you feel compelled to give an individual a birthday / get well card that is also appropriate.
- ◆ Do not place the Burse and Pyx in your purse – ideally they should be on your person (in a breast pocket is optimal)... if this is not possible, keep the Burse and Pyx in the kit until you are ready to distribute Communion.
- ◆ Remember that the homebound / infirm are not bound by the fasting rules – if possible, offer them a sip of water before distributing Communion; if they protest because they feel they are breaking the fast, remind them they are not bound and that it will only help them consume the host more easily.
  - To distribute Communion, place the kit on flat surface to use as a table and open it.
  - Unfold the Corporal on top of the flat surface / table.
  - Place the Burse and Pyx in the center of the Corporal.
  - Bow slightly.
  - Follow the guide – you may substitute the readings in the guide with the Gospel / weekly reading(s), and you may deliver a brief recounting of the Homily.
    - ☐ A good rule of thumb is:
      - “Read” the text in **BLACK**.
      - “Do” the text in **RED**.
  - Recite the “Our Father” including, “Deliver us Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours, now and forever.”
  - Say, “This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, happy are those who are called to His supper.”
  - Distribute Communion.

Immediately after the communicant receives the host, silence should be observed for approximately 3 minutes for prayer and contemplation.

- Recite the closing prayer.
- Place the Burse / Pyx back in your pocket or in the kit.
- Fold the Corporal as follows (see diagram):
  - ☐ Bottom up (bottom to top).
  - ☐ Top down (top to bottom).
  - ☐ Right to left.
  - ☐ Left to right.



- Each time you unfold the Corporal to distribute Communion to the next individual, place it on the flat surface / table like a book with the “spine” to the left and it will open naturally / correctly every time (the intent here is to ensure that no particles of the host are outside the center of the Corporal while repeatedly opening / closing it to distribute Communion).
- Upon distributing your last host, use the small vial of water to cleanse the Pyx (over the center of the Corporal) and wipe it clean with the finger towel.
  - ☐ If you forgot to fill the vial when you picked up your kit, fill the vial from the tap so that you can cleanse the Pyx – do NOT try to cleanse the Pyx under the tap.
  - ☐ Drink the water used to purify the Pyx – do NOT pour it down the drain.
- Place the folded finger towel in the center of the Corporal, and fold the Corporal as instructed above.
- When you return to the church, open the kit and place the used linen in the hamper in the Sacristy - at this point there should be no linen in the kit.
- If you have unconsumed hosts, return them to the church (parish office if it is a weekday) and give the kit / Pyx to a priest or the sacristan.
- If you encounter any inappropriate behavior during a visit, please report it to the Pastor immediately.

NOTE: If the communicant regurgitates, use the finger towel and a (paper) cup to scoop up the fragments. Dilute the fragments by filling the cup half way with water. Either (a) return the cup with the fragments of the host directly to the church / parish office and give it to a priest, or (b) go outside and dig a shallow hole in the dirt pouring the dissolved contents of the cup in the hole and then covering the hole with dirt – bring the empty cup directly to the church / parish office and give it to a priest.