

# **HOLY FAMILY CHURCH**

## **2014-2015 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)**

### **Expectations & Duties**

*Congratulations. You are being renewed and/or prepared for ministry as an EMHC because you have felt the call to serve the faith community of Holy Family Church, and have been approved by our priests. You have had to think about the kind of person you are and the meaning of the actions you will perform. You have reflected on your faith, how good God has been to you, and what you have to offer back to the One who made you and blessed you.*

*As an extraordinary minister of Communion you are first and foremost a member of the Body of Christ, one of the holy people of God. In confirmation you were anointed with chrism as one who shares in the priestly, prophetic, and royal ministry of Jesus, the anointed one, the Christ. The fullest and most central expression of your ministry as a baptized Christian has been your participation in the celebration of the Eucharist. As a baptized Christian, you are already participating fully and deeply in the ministry of Jesus. As a minister of communion, you are called on to serve the Body of Christ, the church, as it performs its most important work – the Eucharist. Like all ministry, this is a great honor and a great responsibility. Undertake it with intention to grow in your devotion to the Mass, to the church that celebrates it, and to the Lord!*

*Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should possess certain characteristics and qualities. First, being a minister of communion is a “great office.” It is an honor, and one who has been chosen for the job should acknowledge that. However, we must remember the role of ministry, with Jesus as our model, is about humility and service. We must be humble servants. Second, being a minister of communion requires a great deal of hospitality. Where God reigns, all are welcome. Everyone has a place at God’s table. All who gather are honored guests. Our task is to welcome those who approach the Lord’s table to extend to them the hospitality that has been extended to us by Christ himself. Third, we must be thankful. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word for “thanks.” The giving of thanks and praise in the Eucharist is the central and essential action of the church. We must receive the great gift of the Lord’s presence with grateful hearts and share that gift generously and joyfully with others, both in the ministry of communion and in our daily lives. Fourth, as Catholics, we have been taught since our earliest days to treat the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist with the utmost reverence. As ministers of communion, we are the teachers of reverence. The reverence that we owe to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist we also owe to the Scriptures, the gathered assembly, and the priest, because Christ is present in all of them.*

1. It is expected that every EMHC at Holy Family Church will respect the Body of Christ by living a faith-filled life; you must become what you give. *Good EMHCs take their spiritual growth seriously. Develop your love for Christ and the Church through the Mass, prayer, and service. When you serve as an extraordinary minister, be attentive to all your words and actions.*
2. This ministry must be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. Therefore, all EMHCs will be educated and prepared for ministry by Holy Family Church at least once a year. *An EMHC is called by God to handle what no one dares to touch. We are unworthy but like the apostles on the road to Emmaus, ready to be filled with grace and wonder in the sharing of the Body of Christ.*
3. EMHCs, once approved, trained, and renewed will serve for a period of three (3) years. Each EMHC must be willing to serve at Mass at least once each month. Each EMHC must be prepared to serve when attending Mass at Holy Family, even if you are not assigned to serve at that Mass. *During the middle of their third year of service, we ask each EMHC to re-evaluate their call to this ministry. Are you being called to serve another liturgical ministry? Are you being called to increase your faith development, to continue the renewal process as an EMHC? Do you need a rest and want to opt out of this ministry for a year or so?*

4. Once assigned a Mass, EMHCs are expected to serve that assignment or, as soon as a scheduling conflict is identified, find another EMHC to either swap assignments, or serve as a substitute. This swap/substitution may be accomplished by either calling an individual EMHC, or sending out a blast email. Whenever a blast email for swap/substitution request goes out and the request is filled, one more blast email must go out to let everyone know the request has been filled.
5. In the event that an EMHC assigned to a Mass becomes sick or has an emergency please notify the assigned Team Leader right away. If the EMHC cannot find a substitute, assigned EMHCs must present themselves to the Team Leader and be ready to serve as an EMHC for that Mass.
6. **EMHCs, like all liturgical ministers, should function in only one ministry per Mass celebration.** EMHCs should take an active part in the celebration of the Mass, joining with the assembly in the prayers, songs and acclamations. *On the day you are assigned to serve as an EMHC, it is appropriate and a good practice, to develop the habit of taking time to prepare for your service with quiet prayer and if possible, a reflective reading of Scripture.*
7. Suitable attire is very important. **The focus at the liturgy is the Eucharist.** Anything that detracts or calls attention to oneself and away from that central point, including one's dress, should be avoided.

Female EMHCs will either wear a dress, suit or pant suit (no jeans or shorts). Dresses and shirts must be either short or long-sleeved with modest necklines and length. Sandals, when worn, should have a back strap.

Male EMHCs will either wear a full suit and tie (preferable), or a dress shirt, jacket and slacks (no jeans or shorts).

T-shirts, especially shirts with information of any type (logos, pictures, writing, etc.) are inappropriate and should never be worn.

Many people are allergic to perfumes of any type. When serving as an EMHC, please refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, after shave, etc.

Joyfulness, appropriate dress, and reverent demeanor should be what clearly identify Holy Family's EMHCs.

*"All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor; their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine."*

— Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds In the Dioceses of the United States of America

8. Arrive early! **At least 20 to 25 minutes before Mass**, EMHCs are expected to arrive and sign in at the church sacristy (near the chapel). If the Team Leader has not yet arrived, please wait. The Team Leader will open the appropriate envelope containing assignment slips. Please select a position, and familiarize yourself with your assigned position. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your Team Leader – that is why they have

been chosen to serve in that position. **You may serve as an EMHC only if you have taken or been given an assignment slip for a position at that Mass.** If you are an EMHC, are not assigned to serve at the Mass you are attending please remain in the Sacristy to assure that all assigned EMHCs have signed in and are ready to serve. **If any EMHCs are not present 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass, volunteers will then sign in and get a position slip from the Team Leader.**

9. After signing in and receiving their position slips, all EMHCs are free to go into the church and pray, or go the foyer and visit with each other and the faithful coming to church.

*It is important that EMHCs get a feel for the faith community of Holy Family, its wants and needs, its moments of joy and hope. A good EMHC also will be a good minister of hospitality. Do not be afraid to introduce yourself to people before and after Mass. Make connections. When you do, you are drawing the faith community of Holy Family a little bit closer, and you are enhancing the communion of all. Please try to attend and/or serve at as many different Mass times as possible.*

It is also appropriate for EMHCs to participate in prayer with the priests, deacons, acolytes, servers and lectors in the narthex, before the beginning of the Mass. After prayer, priests, deacons, acolytes, servers and lectors will assemble for the opening procession. The need must be quite extraordinary for an EMHC to be part of the opening procession.

10. Holy Family's EMHCs are liturgical leaders. Your movements are important during Mass.

**To Bow or Not To Bow...** In liturgical language, a bow is a sign or gesture of reverence and is appropriate at certain points during the liturgy. Likewise, it can be inappropriate at other times. Some helpful hints on when to bow or not:

1. When the Eucharistic Ministers approach the sanctuary at Communion time, it is appropriate to bow in front of the altar, before coming up the steps.
2. When returning to the sanctuary after distributing Communion, if you are carrying the Consecrated Hosts or the Precious Blood, it is **inappropriate** to bow to the altar or the tabernacle. Nothing is more sacred than what you already hold in your hands.
3. When serving in ministry during the liturgy, your actions can help to model for the congregation the actions and gestures they should also be using during the Mass. For example,
  - ❖ Bowing during the presentation of the Book of the Gospels as it is taken from the altar to the ambo.
  - ❖ Bowing during the creed at the words "*and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man and became Man.*"
  - ❖ Raising your hands in the prayer position in praying the "*Our Father*".
  - ❖ Singing during all parts of the Mass that call for the congregation to sing.
  - ❖ Bowing your head before receiving Communion in both species. "*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.*" (GIRM #160)

11. Shortly after the Sign of Peace begins, move with careful reverent purpose and good posture to the main aisle before the Lamb of God begins and form two lines in the center of the aisle – facing the altar, Precious Body ministers on the right, and Precious Blood ministers on the left. The Lamb of God is a prayer prayed by all the congregation. Unnecessary movement should be avoided to maintain the spirit of prayerfulness for all. When all have assembled, the team leader will then lead the ministers, with careful reverent purpose and good posture, up the sanctuary steps to assemble in the sanctuary. The Precious Body ministers will lead the Precious Blood ministers into the sanctuary. Precious Blood ministers should not line up past the altar.
  
12. In order to serve as examples for the faithful, all EMHCs, when receiving in the sanctuary, will receive both the Body and the Precious Blood, unless a medical condition or reason would otherwise preclude such participation. (If for a valid reason, an EMHC will not be consuming the Precious Blood, please take the chalice, reverence the Precious Blood and return the cup to the sanctuary cup minister. Other signs or signals may be perceived by others as disrespectful.) **In order to maintain uniformity, all present in Holy Family’s sanctuary (deacons, acolytes, servers, EMHCs, etc.) will receive the Precious Body preferably by hand (or tongue), while standing.**

*When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive Him, taking care that nothing is lost: “This is the blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” – Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, fourth century*

**Note:** ***Our actions teach the faithful*** that it is not appropriate to reach for the Precious Body with one hand – “throned” hands are the best way to receive the Body of Christ; this has been the practice of the church for centuries. Please be sure to feed yourself with your other hand from your throned hand. After receiving the Body of Christ, your throned hand should never be raised to your mouth.

13. After the priest consumes the Body and Precious Blood, he will then give the Body and Precious Blood to the deacon or acolyte. The deacon or acolyte will be the cup bearer in the sanctuary and will follow the priest with the chalice; if a deacon or acolyte are not present at Mass, the team leader will serve in this position. The priest will give the Body of Christ to all in the sanctuary. While the cup bearer is giving the Precious Blood to all who are not EMHCs of the Precious Blood, the EMHCs of the Precious Blood will move in a line to the altar (Please go to the altar – the priest or deacon should not have to come to you.) to receive the Precious Blood and a purificator from the priest, consume some Precious Blood (unless feeling ill), wipe with a purificator, and then move with careful reverent purpose and good posture down the sanctuary steps to the assigned position. Once the priest has given the remaining EMHCs the communion bowls, move to assigned positions with reverent purpose and good posture down the sanctuary steps **AFTER** the priest and/or deacon have begun to move toward the sanctuary steps.

**ALWAYS** use both hands to carry the Precious Blood or Precious Body, while moving anywhere in the church (departing or returning to the sanctuary or moving to a new position).

14. It is **CRITICAL TO KNOW**: When giving Holy Communion, one says “**The Body of Christ**” and “**The Blood of Christ.**”

**No one who distributes Holy Communion may add to, or modify these words.**

– GIRM, #161, 286-287; NHDRHC, #14, 41, 43; see also GIRM, #24.

When giving Holy Communion, hold the Body or cup containing the Precious Blood in front of you so that you are looking eye-to-eye, through the Body or Precious Blood, to the recipient. **Are you communicating the joy with which you are giving communion?** A kind smile to each communicant as you present the Body or Precious Blood is the action of an outstanding minister. If receiving in the hand, physically touch, with gentle reverence, their hand when you place the Body on it. If receiving on the tongue, make sure your fingers do not touch the tongue.

After a communicant receives the Precious Blood the minister wipes the top of the communion cup, turns the cup a quarter turn, and then presents it to the next communicant. Intinction, the dipping of the host into the Precious Blood is not allowed at Holy Family. Simply cover the communion cup with the purificator and instruct the communicant intending to intinct, that this is not allowed in our Parish.

**NOTE:** Before using a purificator, EMHCs should unfold the cloth so that the back side of the purificator is used to wipe the lip of the cup. When wiping the lip of the cup, extreme care should be taken to be sure the purificator does not touch the Precious Blood. Unless there is a spill, the EMHC is to assure that the Precious Blood does not come into contact with the purificator.

While giving communion, EMHCs should never rush or seem distracted. Holy Family asks their EMHCs to give communion with *gentle reverence*.

*If, then, you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the apostle as he says to the faithful, “You are the body of Christ and his members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord’s table, you receive your mystery.” You reply “Amen” to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear “The body of Christ,” and you reply “Amen.” Be a member of the body of Christ so that your “Amen” may be true.* – St. Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430 A.D.)

15. A communicant may not be refused Holy Communion if he or she does not stand or chooses another sign of reverence. **EMHCs may not determine the worthiness of the person receiving communion.**

EMHCs should watch all communicants to ensure they consume the Body and Blood before returning to their pews. If a communicant still has the Body in their hand, gently stop them and say in a subdued voice “Please consume the host now.”

16. Blessings: When you encounter children under age, and other approaching with their arms crossed over the chests, simply lay a hand on the cheek or shoulder (touch is important) smile with warmth and say, “God bless you.” OR, “Jesus loves you.” or other suitable short blessing. **Making the sign of the cross with a hand or a thumb is a gesture reserved for the ordained.** Please do not ignore under age children or those wishing to be blessed – this is their spiritual communion (those desiring to receive Christ spiritually, in their hearts).

17. What if:

You or a communicant drop the Body of Christ (host). Remain calm. If it is not seriously soiled, pick it up and consume it. If it falls from a mouth, or is otherwise soiled, hold it in your other hand until you have finished distributing Communion. Once back in the sanctuary, give the host to the acolyte to be placed in a dish of water to be dissolved and poured into the sacrarium.

The Precious Blood is spilled. Don't panic. Immediately cover the area with a purificator and use the purificator to blot up the Precious Blood. Leave the purificator over the spill. If you have Precious Blood remaining in your cup, move with reverent purpose and good posture to the sanctuary and get another purificator, then return to your assigned position and continue. After Mass, return to the soiled purificator and cleanse the area with another purificator and clean water; the water should be poured into the sacrarium. All soiled purificators should be soaked in the sacrarium before being placed in the laundry basket.

18. If you have completely served all the faithful coming to you for communion, look around. If there are other areas of the church with a good number of faithful still coming forward for communion, move with careful reverent purpose to facilitate serving the remainder of the faithful, or where indicated on your assignment slip.

**Do not pour from one cup to another at any time.**

19. Once all wishing to receive communion have been served, move with careful reverent purpose and good posture up the sanctuary steps. EMHCs with communion bowls, either give your bowl to the priest or deacon, or place your bowl **on the corporal.** EMHCs with communion cups after you have consumed any remaining Precious Blood while standing near the credence table, give your cup to the acolyte or deacon, or place your cup **on the corporal** on the credence table. Purificators should be refolded and placed near the cup or on the credence tray. NEVER insert your purificator into the communion cup. As you return your vessel, move with careful reverent purpose and good posture down the sanctuary steps by the credence table and stop at the base of the steps, face the altar and remain standing until all EMHCs have assembled. The team leader will initiate/lead a final bow to the altar. After all EMHCs make a reverent bow in unison, return with reverent purpose and good posture, to your pew. *The Table of the Eucharist is now complete.*

20. As a true servant of the Mass, EMHC duties are not complete until every vessel has been properly washed for use at the next Mass. Every stain from the Precious Blood must be soaked out of purificators and corporals. Every corporal must be gently shaken into the sacrarium. Your prayerful help and cheerful presence are also needed after Mass!
21. After you have been a EMHC for some time and feel you are fairly skilled in the ministry, you are responsible for ensuring you receive ongoing formation. You may want to: participate in catechetical courses which will enhance your knowledge of Church teaching, attend a good Catholic biblical studies class, participate in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, or attend prayer services. Above all, make sure you attend a required Holy Family sponsored refresher course at least once a year, as well as at least one Holy Family EMHC retreat, and are commissioned at Holy Family (during Mass) at least once a year. An EMHC commissioned at Holy Family is commissioned to serve only the people who attend liturgies at Holy Family.

*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. In all matters they should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop (Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America). – NDRHC, #28*

## 22. Ash Wednesdays and Special Feast Days

From time to time, the need for Holy Family's EMHCs assistance during special liturgical celebrations may be requested. You may be asked to assist with the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday. If you are assigned to assist in one of the Ash Wednesday services, please check with the deacon or the priest to determine when, where and how to receive and distribute ashes, and what script you will use: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." OR, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." You mark each person's forehead with the sign of the cross with your thumb while saying one of the scripts. Be sure to wash your hands after administering the ashes.

You may also be asked to assist with the blessing of the throats on the Feast of St. Blaise. If you are assigned at one of the services, you should follow the directions given for Ash Wednesday and use the appropriate script when giving the blessing.

**You are a Holy Family treasure. May God bless your service!**

