

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNION DISTRIBUTORS

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Hiawatha

(Revised – 5/18/18)

Values & Standards of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Ministers

Values:

- Value 1 – We are one team with one purpose.
- Value 2 – We express our love for Jesus Christ through service.
- Value 3 – We create an irresistible environment.

Standards:

- Standard 1 – Show Up, fulfill your role on the team!
- Standard 2 – Be joyful!
- Standard 3 – Be prepared!
- Standard 4 – Be a minister and worship!

ROLE

To serve and assist at Mass as an extraordinary minister of communion whenever there is a need for ministers to assist in distributing the consecrated bread and wine. Communion under two forms is the regular practice whenever Mass is celebrated at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. This role includes preparation before Mass, and specific responsibilities during and following Mass. Communion ministers serve for a term of three years and are commissioned as they begin each term. Those who are currently commissioned in a parish of the Archdiocese may exercise this same role in other parishes of the Archdiocese on special occasions with the permission of that pastor. With additional special training, those who are commissioned as Eucharistic ministers may also take Communion to the sick or homebound.

This role is one of great responsibility, not only because we serve in distributing the Body and Blood of Christ to our sisters and brothers at Mass, but also because the worshipping community requires a number of responsible communion ministers each time we celebrate Mass. A love for the Mass and the People of God who gather to celebrate Mass is central to this role. Faithfulness to the established schedule and careful attention to the specific duties of this ministry are vital.

PREPARATION BEFORE MASS

Dress – Dress to the dignity of the role. Some attire is inappropriate for liturgical ministers. T-shirts with inappropriate captions, short shorts, mini-skirts, low cut tops, low cut dresses, and tops or dresses with spaghetti straps or that are strapless are discouraged.

Prayer – Prepare for your role with prayer, either at home or as you arrive at church.

Know alternate positions – Be prepared to assist other Communion distributors by knowing where to stand after your section is finished with Communion (See diagram.).

Sign-in - Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to Mass and sign in on the sheet outside the vesting sacristy. Initial next to your name on the sign-in sheet and note which Communion position you wish to take by adding your initials under the specific bread or cup number (ex. C2 or B5). You can then be seated in the congregation. Review the chart for where people stand and note any special responsibilities highlighted on the sign-in sheet. Remember to get your name tag from the rack in the coat room.

Please arrange for a substitute - If you are unable to distribute at the assigned time, please find a substitute from the list of other Eucharistic ministers. If you do not arrange a substitute, others who are not prepared or dressed for this role end up having to serve. Having people not show up and not arranging a substitute in advance communicates that the role is not that important to you. Your role as a communion distributor is a most important role.

If you are not scheduled to observe, please stop at the sign in area to see if additional Eucharistic Ministers are needed. Check with the Sacristan.

Group prayer with the other ministers will be in the sacristy ten minutes before the start of mass.

DURING MASS

Come forward and go to your designated place at the beginning of the sign of peace. All communion distributors will stand at the first step in front of the altar (See diagram).

1. The sacristan and altar servers will bring the gold bowls and extra purificators from the credence table to the altar.
2. The priest will distribute the consecrated bread to all the distributors after he has received communion. The deacon or sacristan will then give the cups to the cup distributors. They should distribute to the bread distributors and the altar servers, and then proceed to each station. **Musicians and choir members will receive communion last from Bread 6 and Cup 6. Be aware that sometimes the musicians go early. All communion distributors are to distribute to the sick/handicapped in the front row of their sections before moving to their designated places.** The ushers should have others from the back of the church lined up and ready as you get to your position. If there are others that are unable to come forward for communion, an usher will alert you when your section is finished and take you to the person who was not able to come forward.
3. The priest may switch places with bread ministers occasionally so as to be able to distribute communion to different sections. He will alert you to this when he plans to change locations.
4. Do not hold the cup for children or handicapped persons as they receive—hand the cup to them.
5. If bread distributors are running low on hosts, simply turn and catch the eye of the sacristan, who is standing behind the altar. The sacristan will bring another bowl of hosts to you and switch bowls with you. Do not pour hosts from one bowl to another. If the sacristan is unable to attend to this need, the communion minister should simply return to the altar for additional hosts. Do not break hosts unless the sacristan or priest tells you to do so.

6. If you finish in your section and notice that there are other sections unfinished, move to the alternate position to assist.

Reverence for the Eucharist is part of the duty of a communion distributor. Your demeanor in serving in this role should always clearly exhibit a reverence and care for the Eucharist and those who take part in the Mass. When presenting the Body or Blood of Christ to those coming for communion, be sure to use the proper timing – “the Body (or Blood) of Christ” and only after they respond, “Amen” do you distribute. **Remember that we are presenting the Body and Blood, so it should be held up in your line of sight as you make eye contact with the person receiving. Those receiving should bow their heads as a sign of reverence as they say, “Amen.”**

IMMEDIATELY AFTER DISTRIBUTING: Purifying the Vessels

1. Immediately after communion, those distributing the hosts return to the altar. There the hosts will be combined into the ciborium by the sacristan. The sacristan will return the empty bowls to the Eucharistic Ministers, you may need to carry two back to the Credence table. The sacristan takes the remaining hosts in the ciborium to the tabernacle. Those who distributed hosts are asked to remain at the altar to assist in taking empty communion bowls back to the side table. Never stack the bowls. If the deacon is assisting, he will purify the vessels at the credence table. If the deacon is not, please do this yourself. Consume any visible crumbs from the bowl.
2. The distributors of the consecrated wine go directly to the side table (credence table) to consume what remains of the consecrated wine. Please make every effort to discreetly consume the remaining consecrated wine. Turn away from the assembly as you do this. Others at the credence table can help consume what remains, if necessary. NEVER leave consecrated wine on the credence table. After consuming the remaining wine, each of the cups used for communion should be rinsed with a small amount of water and the water consumed so that any remaining consecrated wine is also reverently consumed. If the deacon is assisting, he will purify the vessels at the credence table. If not, please do this yourself.

AFTER MASS

Immediately following Mass, those who served as communion distributors return to the credence table to take the vessels to the work sacristy to clean the vessels. Purify the vessels a second time with water and consume. A simple way to do this is to fill the wine pitcher with water and use the pitcher to pour water into each of the vessels.

The vessels are to be washed by the Eucharistic ministers in the sink located in the work sacristy. **Follow the instructions posted above the sink regarding washing all of the gold communion vessels. All of the gold vessels and Fr. Mark’s chalice need to be washed without immersing them. The gold cups and chalice in particular have cavities in their bases and stems where water gets trapped and is not easily removed. The trapped water causes corrosion and eventually destroys the finish. Hold the vessels above the warm soapy water, wash gently with**

the soft dish cloths, rinse, and dry very gently. Never use any kind of abrasive cleanser or materials. The gold plating on these vessels scratches very easily. If you are wearing rings, please be careful that they do not scratch the vessels when you are washing or drying them.

After all vessels have been washed, the gold cups and bowls will be stored in the locked cabinets in the work sacristy. Fr. Mark's chalice, the large gold plate, and the glass pitcher for the wine will be stored in the vesting sacristy. After the 8:30 Mass, please set up the credence table for the 11:00 Mass. Also, put used purificators in the basket for dirty linens in the work sacristy (in the large cabinet to the right just inside the door). If necessary put out a clean corporal.

Do not leave without assisting in this process. The sacristan will help give direction, but it is not the responsibility of the sacristan to clean and put away the vessels alone. The sacristan will work with you to see that the vessels are properly purified and arranged for later use. **Communion ministers, unless they are responsible for taking communion to the sick following Mass, should all offer assistance.**

SPECIAL NOTES

Be aware that we now have a few parishioners that are gluten intolerant. They need to receive a special low gluten host. There is a small supply of these hosts in the vesting sacristy. They are in a special marked container in the freezer of the small refrigerator in the vesting sacristy. The individuals needing these will alert the sacristan. The sacristan will put these hosts in a small glass bowl that will be placed on the altar. The priest will always be the one to distribute these hosts to these individuals.

All Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses will have five bread distributors plus a priest and six cups. Please study the diagram and learn how to do both bread and cup positions.

On some occasions (Christmas and Easter) when there are larger crowds, an extra bread and cup minister may be added to distribute at the marked alternate positions.

Your service as a minister of communion is a valuable service to our community as it gathers for worship. Thank you for your faithfulness and attention to the many details of your service to others in this role!