

## Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops, priests, or deacons. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, *"the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him. (GIRM 162)."*

All Extraordinary 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.

At St. Mark's when Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they approach the altar after the *"Sign of Peace"* and wait as the priest receives Communion. After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the Extraordinary



*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist ordained priests and deacons when needed*

ministers, assisted by the deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people. Extraordinary ministers should always wait to receive the sacred vessels from the priest or the deacon may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. (NDRHC, 40).

The proper and only permissible form for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, *"The Body of Christ"* and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, *"The Blood of Christ."* (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287). No other words or names should be added; including adding words such as *"This is the Body of Christ."*

In those instances when there remains more consecrated wine than was necessary, if needs dictate, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution with the permission of the diocesan bishop. The sacred vessels are to be purified by the priest, the deacon or an instituted acolyte.

### What is a Pyx?

When Holy Communion is taken by an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the homebound or sick, the pyx (sample shown) is either suspended around the neck in a burse (a leather case with the pyx within), or, if that is not available, in a breast pocket with nothing else in it (no pens, pocket liner or anything).



The pyx should never be carried in a pant's pocket or a purse. The Extraordinary minister should also go directly to the home and not make unrelated stops or engage in social conversations while in possession of the Most Holy Eucharist.

### Happy Are Those Who Are Called to His Supper

- Before you receive Holy Communion bow your head as an act of reverence
- After the bishop, priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion says, *"The Body of Christ"* or *"The Blood of Christ"* say *"Amen."*
- Even if you are uncertain about the propriety of using Extraordinary Ministers in a given case, the gift of Communion is a greater good and should *never* be refused. However you are always welcome to speak to the pastor or deacon at a more appropriate time about your concerns.

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

#### An Extraordinary Gift

Peter Warshaw quietly and reverently enters the Church on Friday afternoons and devoutly prays before the Blessed Sacrament. As the head of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion he has just returned from bringing Holy Communion to some of the sick of the parish. His love of the Holy Eucharist and his thoughtful concern for others are evident in everything he does. Always considerate he takes along a copy of the latest bulletin when he visits homebound parishioners since they often appreciate receiving news about the parish. At a recent Liturgy meeting, where he also volunteers his time, it took some prodding to get him to admit—because he never seems to complain—that the ministry could really use more help especially due to the unavailability of a few ministry members who are away for the winter. Sometimes this shortage of volunteers requires that Peter be available to help at more than one Mass on weekends.

It also seems that whenever you find a need, you will also find Peter helping out. Whether it's delivering food for *Meals on Wheels*, being a Reader at Mass, filling in as an usher, serving as Secretary to the Holy Name Society, or driving a fellow parishioner to a doctor's appointment, Peter is there to offer a hand. His beloved wife, Mary Jane, who passed away a few years ago, was always a supporter of his volunteer efforts since she also gave many hours to the Church. Parishioners who know the Warshaw family well say there is good reason to believe that she still has influence. Apparently whenever you hear Peter say, "That's Jane working from Heaven," that's exactly what he means.

#### How You Can Give a Helping Hand

The commissioning of new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion by our pastor is a special privilege. Those who bring Communion to the sick who cannot be present at Sunday Mass share in the Church's total ministry to the sick after the manner of Jesus. If you have a calling to help, you are especially needed during these winter months when a commitment for one weekend Mass for January, February and March would provide an invaluable service to Monsignor Carton and your faith community.

To be commissioned you must show great devotion to the Holy

Eucharist and, like Peter Warshaw, be an example of piety and reverence. In every way, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must have an extraordinary love for the Holy Eucharist and for the Church, the Body of Christ.

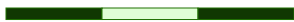
Extraordinary ministers are truly "extraordinary" not "ordinary." You will only be asked to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the guidelines noted on the previous page.

The need for volunteers is an urgent present and future need. Volunteering is easy, just call the parish office.

The requirements for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in

our diocese include:

- † must be exemplary Catholics either male or female;
- † must be 18 years of age or older (exception: junior and seniors in Catholic high school may be trained and mandated to serve only at school Masses);
- † must have received all Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) and if married, must have had a valid marriage in the Roman Catholic Church.



*"When you help to distribute the Blessed Sacrament at Mass or to the sick, you forget all about yourself and focus on the true presence of Our Lord."*

Ann Carville



**A Blessing for Sending Forth:**

*As you go, take with you not only the Sacrament which we have celebrated but the Word of God which we have heard. Please assure the sick, the lonely and the afflicted who you visit of the prayers of this parish community.*

*Go in peace.*

