

# HANDBOOK

FOR

## EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION &

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSISTING AT MASS



**Saint Philip the Apostle Catholic Church**

7500 Saint Philip Court

Falls Church, Virginia 22042

(703) 573-3808

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSISTING AT MASS**  
**for**  
**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**  
**St. Philip Church (Updated June 12, 2015)**

*“I ask you ... extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, to become ever more aware of the gift you have received in the service entrusted to you for a more worthy celebration of the Eucharist.” (John Paul II)*

### **General Norms**

- If you are unable to keep your scheduled assignment due to illness or last minute travel, it will be your responsibility to obtain a substitute by contacting another EMHC.
- In general, clothing should be “traditional dressed up” or “business professional,” i.e., appropriate for special occasions and guests. At the Eucharistic celebration, the EMHCs are in the House of God, assisting the people to meet the King of Kings in Holy Communion. The clothes worn ought to be in keeping with such a special occasion. As such, the preferred attire for men would be a coat and tie. In warmer weather, either the coat or tie would be optional, but at least one of the two – coat or tie – should be worn. Men should be careful to remove smartphones, etc. from their belts during the Mass. They should likewise not wear any tight-fitting or otherwise distracting clothing. The preferred attire for women would be either a dress, or a blouse and skirt, or a pant suit. Dress or skirt length should not be above the knees. Women should not wear tight-fitting clothes, or low-cut blouses. No one should ever wear shorts, jeans or flip-flops. Everyone should also keep in mind the liturgical feasts and seasons when dressing for service at Mass: for example, bright pastels would not be appropriate on Good Friday.
- In taking care to dress appropriately for the Eucharistic celebration, the EMHCs offer a good example to the congregation, which in turn provides a teaching moment and reminder to them of the uniqueness of the meeting with Christ that occurs at Mass. This realization may in turn inspire members of the congregation to dress appropriately for Mass, too.

### **Before Mass**

- Please arrive 15 minutes before Mass and check in with the sacristan in the sacristy. Usually 2-3 EMHCs will be needed for the 5:30 pm and 8:00 am Masses; 3-4 will be needed for the 10 and 12:00 noon Masses.
- In the sacristy before Mass, it will almost always be necessary to speak with the priest, the other EMHCs, and the sacristan regarding details of the Mass and other matters. While such conversations and social niceties should not be omitted, these should be kept to a minimum in order that all others present will have sufficient silent time to dispose themselves to carry out their duties at the Mass in a devout and fitting manner.
- When taking a seat in the church, please sit on the tabernacle side, for easy access to and from the sanctuary.

### **At Mass**

- When the celebrant has received the Precious Blood of Christ, the EMHCs approach the sanctuary on the tabernacle side and stand at the base of the sanctuary (see Diagram #1).  
\* **For Mass celebrated by Father Donahue:** If there is no assisting priest or Deacon

present at Mass, a "lead EMHC" will retrieve the ciborium/ciboria from the tabernacle in the following manner: Immediately after opening the tabernacle, genuflect as a sign of reverence. Remove the ciborium/ciboria from the tabernacle, remove the tops, close the tabernacle, bring the ciborium/ciboria to the Altar, and then join the other EMHCs at the base of the sanctuary.

- As the altar servers get into a single file line to receive, the EMHCs will fall in behind them (See Diagram #2).
- As each EMHC receives Holy Communion, all but the very last EMHC in line will then proceed to the end of the line (See Diagram #3).
- When the last EMHC in line receives Communion, he/she will be handed a ciborium by Father, then will go to the choir section and immediately begin communicating the cantor, choir, musicians, etc.
- Meanwhile, the other EMHCs will go to Father to receive the Ciborium in the same order as they came up for Communion.
- The EMHCs will then proceed immediately to their designated stations (see Diagram #4), keeping in mind that Fr Donahue will always be in the center aisle, on the choir side; and Fr Steven always will be in the center aisle, on the tabernacle side. These are the other stations:
- **At the 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 12:00 Noon Masses**, there will be two stations in front, and one in back.
  - The first EMHC, after communicating the choir section and anyone else sitting in the section on the choir side wall, will go to communicate the handicapped and those in the back vestibule area. Once finished, this EMHC should not start a new line in front, but rather should return the ciborium to the altar as per the instructions below "After Distributing Holy Communion."
  - If there is another EMHC, that one stays in the center aisle with the priest-celebrant.
  - If Fr Donahue is the priest-celebrant, an EMHC will hold the ciborium for him.
- **At the 10:00 AM Mass ONLY when CCD classes are present**, there will eventually be four stations in front, but at first there will be two in front, and two in back – one in the balcony and one in the back vestibule. Once the vestibule and balcony lines are finished, these two EMHC's will form lines in front.
  - The first EMHC, after communicating the choir section and anyone else sitting in the section on the choir side wall, will go to communicate the handicapped and those in the back vestibule area. Once finished, this EMHC will then come to the front and start a new line at the tabernacle-side station.
  - The second EMHC will go to communicate the people in the back vestibule balcony. Once finished, this EMHC will then come to the front and start a new line at the choir-side station.
  - The third EMHC stays in the center with the priest celebrant.
  - If Fr Donahue is present, the third EMHC will hold the ciborium for him. If there is no assisting priest or deacon with Fr. Donahue, the fourth EMHC is stationed in the center aisle.

Please note, that except for the EMHCs who go to the choir section and the vestibule balcony, all EMHCs should wait until the priest-celebrant is in place before beginning to give out Holy Communion to the congregation.

For each communicant, hold the Host before him/her and say, "The Body of Christ." After the

response "Amen," place the Host either on the tongue or in the hands of the communicant. If a Host falls, please pick it up and place it in the ciborium, but to the side, and make it known to the priest after distribution.

### After Distributing Holy Communion.

- Return your ciborium to the altar.
- Purify your fingers in the abluion cup at the credence table, and then return to your seats, making some sign of reverence as you pass in front of the Tabernacle, either a genuflection or a profound bow.
- At the 10 AM Mass, those taking Communion to the sick should go and stand at the sanctuary step to await receiving a pyx from the priest. Further details for these “**Visiting EMHCs**” are found in “**Instructions for Home Visitations.**”
- Meanwhile, the priest will consolidate the Hosts at the altar, and then the priest, assisting priest, deacon, or the “lead EMHC” will place the filled ciborium in the Tabernacle, remembering to genuflect before closing the Tabernacle door. The lead EMHC can then purify his/her fingers in the abluion cup beside the Tabernacle, and then return to his/her seat.

### Appendix





