

St. Rita Catholic Church
Santa Rosa Beach, Florida

Ministers 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 the intention to grow in your devotion to the Mass, to the church that celebrates it, and to the Lord, through whom, with whom and in whom it can be done.

In January 1973, the Holy See issued a document entitled Immensae Caritatis which granted bishops permission to mandate lay people as special ministers of the Eucharist. The institution of special ministers was further formalized by the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

Ordinary Ministers of the Eucharist are bishops, priests and deacons. There are two types of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Acolytes, who are instituted by the bishop, serve in this function in a permanent fashion and may serve anywhere in the universal Church. Normally, they are candidates for the priesthood or diaconate. Other qualified lay people may be mandated by the diocesan bishop for a specified period of time in a particular parish. They must be approved by the local pastor.

Qualifications for Ministers of the Eucharist

1. Have received all of the Sacraments of Initiation.
2. Be a practicing Catholic. This means that you attend Mass on every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation,
You regularly give to the support of the Church, you make your annual Easter duty, and you do not belong to any organization, which is opposed to the Catholic faith.
3. Be a person of lively faith, good morals and live a true Christian life.
4. Follow both the diocesan and parish guideline for Eucharistic ministers.

St. Rita Procedures

Please dress appropriately for your ministry. You are in the House of God. Dress modestly and neatly. Suit & tie are not necessary, nor heels & hose. But jeans & tee shirts do not show respect to your service for Christ.

The schedule is available on the very last weekend of the month. BE SURE TO GET ONE. **If you can't make the Mass(s) that you have been assigned, your obligation is to call Terry.** Her phone number is on the schedule. No shows are getting more numerous and awkward to handle.

Arrive **15 minutes** before Mass and check in with the Mass Coordinator. **Many are slipping on this one.** If you are not checked in by 5 minutes before Mass time, you will be replaced. Occasional misses happen. These will be accepted. But repetitive misses without notification will be interpreted, as you are not interested in your ministry. We rely on you to fill your assignment.

All special ministers should approach the altar after they have offered the sign of peace with those around them. Stand close to the step so that those sharing Holy Communion with you do not have to stretch awkwardly to reach you.

Ministers of the Host: stand in the sanctuary behind the priest after using hand sanitizer at the credence table. The priest and deacon will share communion with you first. Afterward, help them distribute the chalices and purifiers to the Ministers of the Cup standing at the foot of the altar. **Never offer the Blood of Christ before the Body of Christ.**

When all ministers have received communion, go to your appointed position. Approach those who can not move through the communion line AND are in front pews first. If they are in the rear, wait until the line is done before going to them. The Ministers of Hospitality will alert you to their presence and location. They will let those in the rear know that you will come after the lines are done. Signal a Minister of the Cup to go with you.

Never bow when carrying the Cup or Ciborium.

No names. The act of giving & receiving Communion is an act of faith in the presence of Christ. The minister who says, “The Body (Blood) of Christ,” is making a statement of faith to which the communicant gives assent by saying, “Amen.” For this reason, Ministers of the Eucharist are discouraged from naming individuals to whom they are ministering.

Blessing children & adults who have their arms crossed. Simply place your hand over their head and say, “God bless you”.

Dropped Host. Pick up the Host & reverently consume it.

As you are distributing the Eucharist, be aware of those who come up to receive the Host without knowledge of the sacred nature of Holy Communion (especially at Easter). They do not know the ritual or, particularly, to consume the Host immediately. So keep watch. The Ministers of the Cup should keep aware of what is going on, and act if necessary. If you see someone who does not consume the Host go after the person and ask them nicely to consume the Host now. If they refuse, ask them to return the Host to you. Then either consume the Host in a discrete manner (the best solution) or put it back in the ciborium for distribution.

Watch the length of your line as you near the end of your Hosts. Get more from another minister or the Host may be broken. Christ is totally present in every particle.

Return your ciborium with any remaining Hosts to the altar and wait while Father consolidates the Body of Christ into one ciborium to be placed in the Tabernacle. After he has done so return the empty ciborium to the credence table. If your ciborium is empty take it directly to the credence table.

After depositing the ciborium, **remember to wash your fingers** in the ablution bowl on the back left side of the credence table.

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Ministers of the Cup: It is wine before the consecration – the Precious Blood after the consecration. Please remember the distinction and use it in your speech. By doing so, you will be reminding everyone of the gift of Christ's blood on the cross and of what we believe when we partake of the Cup.

When you check in with the Mass Coordinator you will be given your floor assignment. They are numbered. (Diagram is attached.) Your position to receive Holy Communion at the step of the altar is also numbered. The numbering of each place was designed for efficient movement. Numbers 1, 2, 3 & 4 are on the choir side; numbers 5, 6, 7 & 8 are on the Ambo side.

When the Minister of Host for your side begins to move into position, move to your position.

When offering the chalice, say, "The Blood of Christ" with no personal names added. Nor should you expand the words of our belief to, "The Precious Blood of Christ". While the communicant has the chalice move your purificator to a clean area. When you take the chalice back, wipe the area where they took a sip with the purificator AND turn the chalice one-quarter (1/4) turn.

Intinction: If someone wishes to receive the Precious Blood by intincting the Host (dipping it) into the chalice, COVER THE CHALICE WITH YOUR HAND AND SAY, "OUR BISHOP HAS DENIED THE PRACTICE OF INTINCTION IN OUR DIOCESE. I'M SORRY."

When you run out of the Precious Blood leave your position and return the chalice to the right hand side of the credence table.

If your line is done and you still have Precious Blood in your cup, move to another position. Never leave the floor until all have been served.

When all have been served, reverently consume the remaining Precious Blood at your station. Then move to place the cup on the credence table. If it is impossible to consume the remaining Precious Blood in your cup, ask another minister to help or place it on the altar. **Never** place a chalice on the credence table with the Precious Blood remaining in it.

Spilled Precious Blood: (1) immediately wipe up the Precious Blood with the purificator; (2) leave the purificator over the spot until Mass is over; (3) after Mass, wash the spot with soap and water, rinse all cloths used in the sacrarium (special sink in working sacristy) & pour any water used into the sacrarium.

Two Grand Plans: The Swing Team Plan. The Vigil and 8:00 a.m. Masses are similar in the size of the congregation. Therefore we use the "Swing Team" Plan. The front has a full complement of ministers. The north wing has a team, but the south (Mary Star/Sea) does not have a team. After the Ministers are done with the north wing they "swing" to the south side. If warranted, they then go to the center. The numbering system on the **Diagram A** reflects this plan. During the "Snowbird Season" these Masses may need the Full Team Plan.

The Full Team Plan. The 10 a.m. Mass is full or stuffed with people. In that case we have all sides covered with a full team. **Diagram B** will then cover the requirement. When the north or south side teams are finished, they should help the opposite side before going to the center. If there are 12 or more people in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel the Mass Coordinator will ask another minister to serve them (Host only). After that minister is finished in the Chapel, the minister should go to the south side (MSS) and help there first before moving to the center.

Purification & cleaning of vessels after Mass: On the schedule, those who are to purify all the vessels after Mass are designated with a star next to their name. It is very important that these duties be fulfilled as a sign of reverence and devotion to the Eucharist. It is easy to get distracted talking to friends right after Mass. Please, know your job is not done and that you can talk with your friends later. It is not fair that others see the job left undone and do it. It is not their turn - it is yours.

At the credence table, pour water into the vessels and rotate the cup rinsing all of the surfaces. Then drink the water in a reverent manner. Jesus is present in each and every particle of the elements (including the smallest particle or drop). Bring all the vessels to the working sacristy and wash them with hot water and soap. Please dry the vessels thoroughly.

Hand wash the purificators with the same soap used on the vessels. Pay particular attention to lipstick stains. Rinse and remove excess water into the sacrarium. Hang on rod.

The Last Point: Christ called you to this ministry to His people. And now near His people say, “Thank you” for saying, “Here I am, Lord.” And serving us so well!