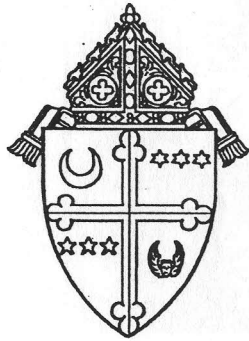


**GUIDELINES FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY  
MINISTERS  
OF  
HOLY COMMUNION**



Archdiocese of Washington  
May 27, 2002  
March 16, 2007 (*revised*)

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GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF  
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I.

General Norms

1. The ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the priest and deacon.
2. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed in parishes, religious houses, and chaplaincies in situations of genuine pastoral need where ordinary ministers are not available or are insufficient in number:
  - a. to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion within Mass when there is a large number of communicants;
  - b. to allow for a more frequent, even daily, administration of Holy Communion outside of Mass to those impeded from attending Mass because of sickness or physical weakness.
3. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion assist priests and deacons in administering Holy Communion. They may not replace them, except on those occasions when the ordinary minister is impeded from administering Holy Communion because of ill health, advanced age, or other pressing pastoral obligations.

4. It is the responsibility of pastors, chaplains and religious superiors, within their respective jurisdictions, to evaluate the need for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to identify worthy candidates for this service. The number of extraordinary ministers in a parish, chaplaincy or religious house should correspond to genuine pastoral need. The number should not be so few as to unduly burden any one minister, yet not so large as to make it appear that this ministry is a regular and normal expression of lay participation in the Eucharist.
5. To serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, persons must:
  - a. be practicing Catholics, distinguished in their Christian life, faith and morals;
  - b. be at least 18 years old;
  - c. have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist;
  - d. demonstrate a deep reverence for and devotion to the holy Eucharist;
  - e. possess the requisite abilities and temperament to carry out their assigned duties.
6. Special care must be exercised in the choice of those candidates who will take Holy Communion to the sick. In addition to meeting the qualifications listed above, they must be persons who will deal with the sick and the aged in a compassionate and understanding manner, always conscious of the serious obligation to respect the confidence of those to whom they minister.

7. Care should be taken that the selection of extraordinary ministers reflects, as far as possible, the diversity of the community to which they will minister. Candidates may be men or women, lay people or those in consecrated life.
8. The pastor, chaplain or religious superior should interview all candidates prior to presenting them for nomination to the Archbishop. The interview should provide the candidates with the opportunity to express their belief in the Eucharist and their understanding of their role as extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Inquiry should be made regarding the candidates' attitude toward prayer and regular use of the Sacrament of Penance.
9. Before being commissioned as extraordinary ministers, candidates are strongly encouraged to complete the archdiocesan program of training and formation conducted by the Office of Worship. This program provides theological and spiritual formation, as well as training in practical and liturgical skills.
10. Once candidates have completed their training, the pastor, chaplain, or religious superior should write a letter to the director or associate director of the Office of Worship certifying that the candidates have completed their training and recommending that the Archbishop appoint them as extraordinary ministers. The Office of Worship forwards the request to the Archbishop for his approval. Upon approval, extraordinary ministers are issued a certificate signed by the Archbishop or his delegate. The certificate is presented to the

extraordinary ministers when they are publicly commissioned.

11. Before assuming their duties, extraordinary ministers should be commissioned according to the rite found in the *Book of Blessings*. This should take place, preferably, at the Sunday liturgy.
12. The term of office for extraordinary ministers is three years, effective from the time of commissioning. The term is renewable, but application must again be made to the Archbishop by the pastor, chaplain or religious superior through the Office of Worship. Pastors, chaplains and religious superiors are encouraged to promote a broad sharing of this extraordinary ministry among the faithful under their care.
13. Extraordinary ministers are designated for service in their own parish or specified institution, and therefore are not authorized to exercise this ministry in other parishes or institutions.
14. Pastors, chaplains and religious superiors should periodically review the performance of their extraordinary ministers, at least on an annual basis, and be diligent in providing on-going formation to deepen the ministers' Eucharistic devotion and liturgical spirituality. Annual attendance at a specially prepared occasion of spiritual renewal conducted by the parish or deanery is strongly recommended for all extraordinary ministers. Eucharistic devotion, including Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, should normally be a part of each annual event.

