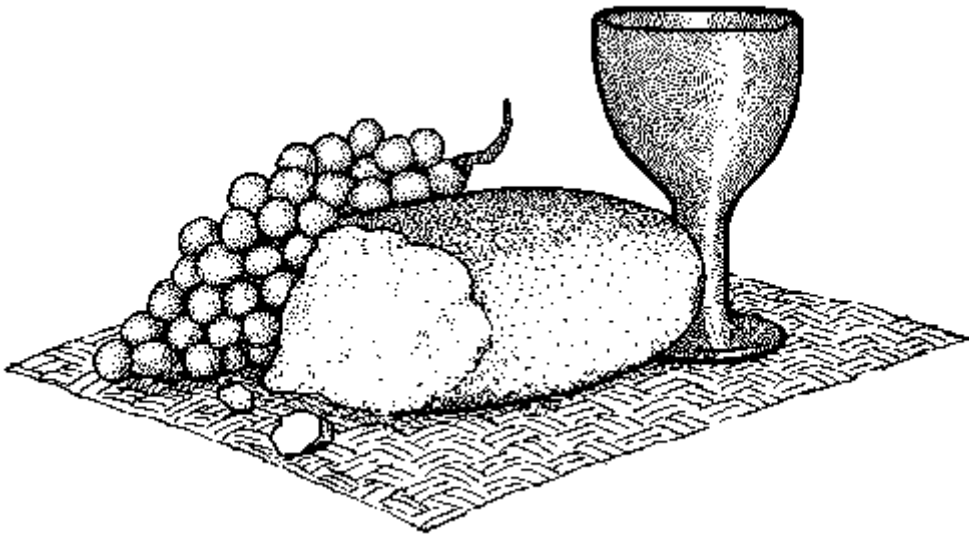


# St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

## Eucharistic Minister Information booklet



**November 2008**

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<http://www.stmarkscatholic.org>



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## **Qualities of a Minister of Holy Communion**

What qualities should a minister of communion bring to this ministry? Pope Paul VI's instruction *Immensae caritatis* (1973) notes:

The faithful who are special ministers of communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence towards the most august sacrament of the altar.

What are the "good qualities of Christian Life"? Individual ministers bring their own unique good qualities with them to the ministry of communion. Some of these good qualities are a pure gift, a matter of personality and temperament. Others have been developed through discipline, experience and struggle. When these good qualities are brought to the ministry of communion, both the qualities and the ministry are enhanced.

As the ministry of communion matures and deepens, it should lead individuals to focus on certain qualities that they wish to develop or refine within themselves. For each person this will be different. Ministers of communion may find it helpful to keep a journal, to develop a relationship with a spiritual director or a wise friend, or join with other ministers of communion to reflect on the effect their ministry is having. While each member will bring or develop different qualities, four particular good qualities are:

- Humility
- Hospitality
- Gratitude
- Reverence

## **Ministering Communion at Mass**

### **Reverence**

As ministers of communion, we are teachers of reverence. It is especially important to note personal reverence in the following situations:

- How we act as we approach the altar,
- How we handle the sacred species of bread and wine
- How we gather and pray as a community
- How we dress to perform our ministry
- How we respect others

These not only express our own attitudes, but also form the attitudes of others.

## **Schedules**

Every minister is responsible for serving when scheduled. Courtesy and common sense dictates that a scheduled minister should notify the appropriate person or *find a substitute when he or she is unable to serve at a scheduled time*. Ministers should also notify Cheryl Jacobson via e-mail if they will be out of town for a period of time or if they will be unable to serve at a particular liturgy each week.

The schedule is posted on the parish web site and printed in the parish bulletin monthly.

**<http://www.stmarkscatholic.org>**

A list of active ministers of communion and their telephone numbers is available through the parish office.

## **Illness**

If a minister of communion has the flu, a cold or other illness that can be spread easily, it is far more thoughtful to the community to find a substitute than to risk spreading illness by handling what others will eat and drink.

*It is the responsibility of the scheduled minister to find a substitute. Please do not rely upon someone else to find you a replacement for your ministry.*

## **Just before Mass**

Many parishes have a procedure for signing in before Mass. The practice at St. Mark is to have the communion ministers arrive 15 minutes before Mass and gather in the Chapel. During this time, the communion ministers find out what communion station they are assigned and if there are any special circumstances. It also serves to let the priest, deacon and sacristan know that you are present at the Mass.

## **As the Liturgy Begins**

In some parishes, ministers of communion sit in the assembly together in a special area. At St Mark, we have no set arrangement for our ministers. However, it is suggested that you try to sit near the front and near the end of the row so you do not disturb people to get out performing your ministry.

## **After the Prayers of the Faithful and just before the offering**

With reverence, the Communion ministers will leave their seats and gather in the Chapel to bring up the gifts up to the altar.

***However it is suggested*** that when the communion ministers meet 15 minutes before Mass in the Chapel one minister is selected to leave after the homily and pour the wine into the Chalices whereby they will be ready for all the ministers at the proper time to avoid a delay for the community.

### **During the Communion Rite**

After the Lamb of God, the priest or deacon will stand in front of the altar on the main floor. At this time, the communion ministers are to proceed, *without haste but efficiently*, to the priest or deacon to receive the Body of Christ. Next, they are to proceed up to the altar to receive the Blood of Christ from the deacon.

After receiving the Blood of Christ, each minister will receive either the Body or Blood of Christ, and then proceed, *without haste but efficiently* to their predetermined communion station.

**Note: Do not be surprised** ...At times, you will receive a special instruction from the priest, deacon or sacristan. Please listen carefully and ask a question for clarification if needed, *then act on the instructions*. Please do not engage in a conversation about the request or instruction at this time.

### **The Distribution of Communion**

Once the minister of communion is in place, he or she gives full attention to each person who comes forward, greeting each communicant with a pleasant expression. However, this expression should not ever include the person's name (ex. Bill...The Body of Christ etc.) The time of Communion is a personal time between each person and Christ. Ministers should not interfere with this in any way.

Ministers offer the consecrated bread by holding up one piece to the communicant's view, and saying clearly, "The Body of Christ." The minister waits until he or she responds, "Amen." The communicant then holds out the cupped hands, or opens their mouth and extends their tongue.

Ministers offer the Blood of Christ by holding up the cup to the communicant's view, and saying clearly, "The Blood of Christ." This minister waits until he or she responds, "Amen." The communicant then takes the cup and drinks a small amount. (Do not try to tip the cup towards the person's mouth.)

The minister then receives the cup back from the person with both hands, wiping the rim of the cup inside and out with a purificator where the person drank, and removing any lipstick or lip balm to the extent possible. The minister turns the cup about a quarter turn before presenting it to the next person so that he or she will drink from a different spot than the previous communicant.

### **Persons needing Assistance**

Persons who tremble due to illness or age may need some assistance drinking from the cup, or they may steady themselves by placing a hand on your arm or shoulder. Accept the gesture graciously, and be ready to offer further assistance if necessary.

### **Persons in the Communion line & not receiving Communion (present for a blessing)**

Adults and children, who approach you with their arms crossed over their chest, are requesting a blessing. Also, small children (who may not cross their arms) should also receive a blessing. As a minister of communion, your role is to simply make the sign of the cross over their heads (without touching their head) and bless them with a short prayer such as "May the Lord bless you." *Please note: do not hold the Body of Christ or Blood of Christ in your hands/fingers as you trace this blessing over the person.*

### **What do I do if I have no more Blood of Christ in the Chalice and there are still many people in line still receiving the Body of Christ?**

Please keep in mind that our ministry is not complete until after everyone is served. If you have served all the Blood of Christ from your Chalice and we still have the community to serve, please place your Chalice on the table behind the Ambo, go to the tabernacle, and get a Ciborium with the Body of Christ in it, then move to the longest line and assist.

### **Serving the Choir**

If your area is completed please move to the choir and start serving the choir until it is completed.

### **After Communion**

When all have received communion and your vessels are empty,

- Place the Chalice on the table behind the Ambo, and then return to your place in the community.
  - If any of the Blood of Christ remains after communion, the minister should consume it in a reverent and unobtrusive manner.
- The remaining Body of Christ in your Ciborium is to be placed in the tabernacle. The empty Ciborium is to be placed on the table behind the Ambo and the minister returns to his/her place in the community.

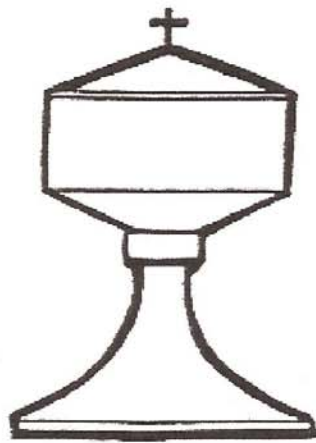
**Note:** *At no time should any of the Holy vessels touch another Holy vessel.*

Ministers should return to their seats, offer silent thanksgiving, and participate in the post-communion hymn.

### **After Mass**

All the communion ministers who served the Mass should gather in the sacristy to assist the sacristan purifying the vessels and putting away the vessels for the next liturgy.

While performing duties in the sacristy, please keep in mind, this is not a gathering place and the tasks in this room should be done with the greatest of reverence as quietly as possible.



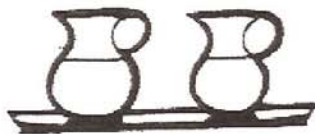
**Ciborium**

The ciborium contains the hosts changed into the Body of Jesus at the Consecration and received by God's people at Communion.



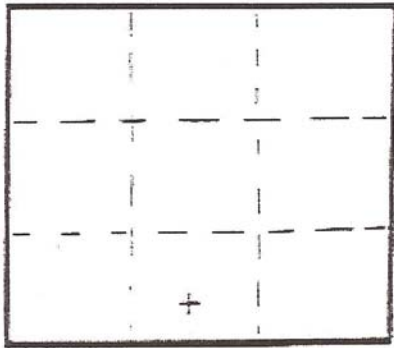
**Chalice**

The chalice is a vessel consecrated by the Bishop. After the Consecration of the Mass, the chalice contains the Blood of Jesus.



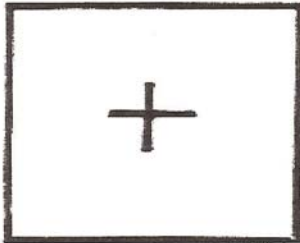
**Cruets**

The cruets are small pitchers which hold the water and wine. The one which holds the water has a picture of a fish. The cruet holding the wine has a picture of grapes.



**Corporal**

The corporal is a square piece of linen which is spread on the altar under the chalice.



**Pall**

The pall is a small linen square that the Priest uses to cover the chalice.



**Purificator**

A linen cloth used to wipe the edges of the chalice.

**Communion Minister stations**



**Chalice, Blood of Christ**  
Eight Stations during every Mass



**Ciborium, Body of Christ**  
Six Stations for large Masses, Sundays  
Four Stations for small Masses, Saturdays

