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- Recite the 'Glory Be' or 'Hail Mary'
- Concluding with Blessing yourself.

*If homebound does not watch or listen to Mass.*

- Start with blessing yourself.
- Recite the Kyrie – Lord, have mercy etc.
- Read a piece of Scripture from the Mass leaflet.
- Recite the Our Father together with the homebound
- Distribute the Holy Communion.
- Recited the 'Glory be' or 'Hail Mary'.
- Bless yourself.

These are guidelines in how to distribute Holy Communion but be practical – if a person is elderly and unable to respond, keep it simple. If family members or other people in attendance, encourage them, if they wish to receive as well.

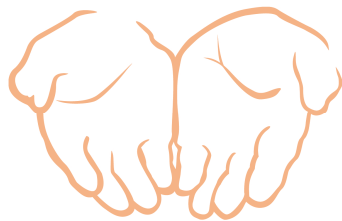
### Prayers for the Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist

#### **Blessed Are You, God of Creation**

Blessed are you, God of all creation!  
I thank you for calling me to serve  
your holy people.

Grant that I may approach You with  
reverence and humility.

Grant me the grace to serve others  
and allow them to encounter You in this sacrament. I ask through  
your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



#### **Come To Us**

O You who clothe the lilies,  
Who feed the birds of the sky,  
And lead the lambs to pasture

# The Ministry of the Extraordinary Minister



## Of the Eucharist

*Shrule & Glencorrib Churches*

## Introduction:

The purpose of this booklet is to give a brief introduction to the ministry of Eucharist. It is an ancient ministry from the early church that was lost down through the ages but rediscovered after Vatican II. This booklet gives a brief timeline of the Eucharist, along with procedures and common practices.



From the first days of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion consisted of the reception of both species in fulfilment of the Lord's command to "take and eat ... take and drink." An extraordinary ministry of the Eucharist serves

in their ministry, first and foremost as a member of the Body of Christ. Through baptism, we were claimed as one of Christ's own when the sign of the Cross was traced on our forehead. Through the waters of baptism, all that separates us from God is washed away, and by our confirmation, we are anointed to share in the priestly, prophetic and royal ministry of Jesus. Our prophetic role is expressed through our witness to the Gospel, our royal ministry expressed as brothers and sisters of Jesus, we are called to inherit the Kingdom of God, and our priestly ministry is expressed through actions in serving and building up the Kingdom of God on earth. The extraordinary ministry of the Eucharist is one such ministry that does this.

Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are called to share the gift of Jesus Body & Blood with the people of God. Like all ministries in the Church, this ministry carries with it, great honour and great responsibility. The ministry provides the opportunity to both serve and deepen the personal relationship with God, through whom, with whom and in whom we live and move and have our being. The purpose of this booklet is give aims, purpose and explanations.

***Thank you for your ministry.***

Similarly, if the Precious Blood is spilt, note the area where it was spilt and after Mass, take some water & a cloth to wipe the area where the spillage occurred. Then ensure this water is poured on some earth, and not down a sink.

## Bringing Holy Communion to the Homebound

A key component to Extraordinary Ministry of the Eucharist is to bring Holy Communion to the homebound. It is in fact, as already stated, the reason why the early Christian community started to keep or reserve Holy Communion after celebrating the Eucharist, so the Christian community could bring Holy Communion to those who were sick or ill, or unable to attend. In bringing Holy Communion to the homebound, EM's are actually continuing a tradition that dates back to the early Church as far back as 100AD! Traditionally, those who distribute Holy Communion during Mass bring Holy Communion to the homebound, but practically, neighbours, friends or parishioners do the Homebound Ministry and family members': **NB:** In line with Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection, EM's taking Holy Communion are now required to be Garda Vetted.

## Procedures for Taking Holy Communion to the Homebound

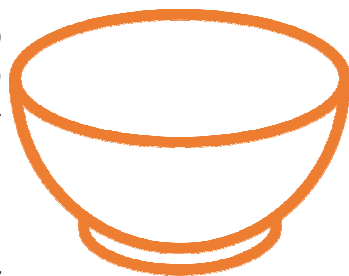
- Contact homebound to notify them that you will be bringing them Holy Communion.
- Arrange suitable time when to call.
- Received Holy Communion at the Mass, and ideally, go straight after Mass to the homebound.
- Take a Parish Newsletter and the Mass leaflet for the next Sunday so they can follow the Mass if they are using radio and/or TV

*If homebound watch or listen to Mass:*

- Start with Blessing yourself.
- Recite the 'Our Father'
- Distribute Holy Communion.
- Pause for Reflection (also opportunity for them to drink if needs

### What to do...

1. **A Host is dropped:** Pick up the Host immediately. You may consume it there or hold it in the palm of your hand. When you return to the sanctuary, you can return to the Host to the priest, informing him that it fell on the ground.
2. **A person receives Holy Communion, attempts to swallow but unable to do so.** You may take the Holy Communion in either your hand or place the Host in a tissue. When you return to the sanctuary, inform the priest of what has happened.
3. **If during the distribution of Holy Communion under both species, some of the Precious Blood is spilt from the chalice.** If possible, mark the area where the Precious Blood was split. When you return to the sanctuary, inform the priest & show him the spot after Mass.
4. **If Bringing Holy Communion to Homebound:** Please indicate to priest how many hosts you require.



### What to do with the Host after falling on the ground or someone unable to consume it?

Often the recipient will consume the host, but if it is returned to you, take the host and bringing it back to the sanctuary; after returning the ciborium to the altar, go to the sacristy and place the Host in a bowl of water.

When the host has dissolved, pour that contents of the bowl on some earth.

### From Passover to Eucharist

It began when Jesus asked His disciples to prepare a room so they could celebrate the Passover Meal. The apostles & Jesus would have been seated at a short-legged table sur-

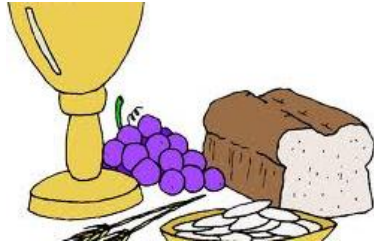


rounded by cushions. On the table, would be a bowl of saltwater and a dish of bitter salad recalling the days of slavery in Egypt, along with a container of mashed apples, raisins and plums coated in cinnamon to recall the brick making they did as slaves. Along with these, there would be plates of unleavened bread & a roasted lamb next to a large cup filled with wine recalling the night of the Passover that led to their freedom.

Jesus would have begun the meal with a psalm that praised God, and then would have taken some bread. Here, in breaking tradition and custom of the Passover meal, Jesus shared the break with new words, 'Take and eat. This is my body that will be given up for you'. This break is now Jesus body. It would be given up to the Romans and offered on the cross for us. Jesus broke with the Jewish traditions by breaking the bread, and this is the first celebration of the Eucharist in history. At the end of the meal, Jesus took the cup filled with wine and instead of making the usual toast, he again broke with tradition by saying, 'Take and drink...This is my Blood... it will be shed for you and for the forgiveness of sins. As the apostles drank of the one cup and ate of the one bread, they expressed their unity with Christ. Finally, Jesus gave them the instruction and authority to celebrate the Eucharist with these words, 'Do this in memory of me'. They would have concluded the celebration by singing of psalms.

### From Meal to Worship:

Gradually, the apostles and early church developed the Eucharistic celebration into the structure that endures to this day. They first name it the 'Breaking of the Bread' but soon saw the need to separate the rite from a meal because of abuses. They also wanted a more prayerful setting for this act of worship and so moved the celebration to the Day of the Resurrection, Sunday. Initially, at the gatherings, apostles and disciples would speak and share and tell recalling what they had witnessed with Jesus. Along with recalling events, following their Jewish tradition, there would be readings from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) along with singing of Psalms and instruction. As time passed, and as the apostles and witnesses to the events grew older or were dying, the events of Jesus they had witnessed were put into writing, and the emergence of the New Testament began. By 150AD Justin Martyr gives an account that the structure of the Mass as we know it today was in place. If people were sick and unable to attend the celebration, then the Eucharist was brought to them.



These celebrations were held in people's homes until the Edict of Milan 313 AD which formerly ended the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. It was now possible for celebration of the Eucharist to take place in public. The basic structure began with a welcome, followed by readings from the Hebrew Bible with Psalms, the readings from the life of Jesus (Gospel) along with instruction (usually readings from the New Testament). This was followed by prayers of intercession and prayers of thanksgiving (Eucharistic Prayers) with distribution of Holy Communion. Along with bringing the Eucharist to the homebound, the church started to keep the Eucharist in the church usually in a side room or in the sacristy in a locked secure box called a 'tabernacle'.



- When they have taken from the chalice & returned it to you, wipe the place where they received from with the purifier. Turn the chalice slightly clockwise or anti-clockwise, and hand to the next person.
- If you have no more of the Precious Blood for Holy Communion, cover the chalice with purifier, and wait in position until ministers are finished with distribution of Holy Communion.
- As you return to the sanctuary, cover chalice with purifier.
- As receiving from the chalice takes longer time than receiving from the ciborium so the ratio is 2 chalices to 1 ciborium, where the extraordinary ministers with chalices stand on either side of the extraordinary minister with the ciborium. This ensures manner of distribution flows.

### Meaning of Words Said:

When the priest/extraordinary minister says, 'The Body of Christ' or 'The Blood of Christ' – that is a statement of Faith. When the person replies, 'Amen', they are giving their assent to that statement. The word 'amen' comes from a Hebrew word meaning 'so be it'.



'amen'  
a Hebrew  
word meaning 'so be it'

### **How to Distribute Holy Communion:**

Most parishes usually distribute Holy Communion under the 1 species, namely the Host. In some parishes, the Extraordinary ministers may receive the Host & Precious Blood. Extraordinary ministers are not obliged to receive both, and if they wish only to receive the Host, simply inform the priest.

### **How to Distribute the Host:**

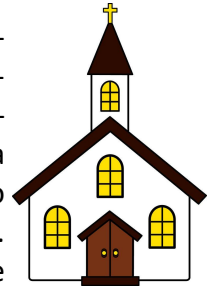
- When distributing Holy Communion from the ciborium, hold the Host up & say to the person, 'The Body of Christ'
- Keep your voice loud enough for the person to hear, but not so loud as to be a distraction.
- When the person replies, 'Amen', place the Host in their hand or on their tongue.
- Wait until they move and repeat the process for the next person.
- Remember it is the personal choice of the person whether to receive the Host on the hand or on the tongue and if they wish to receive from the chalice.

### **How to Distribute the Chalice:**

- Always ensure that if you are distributing Communion from the chalice, that you also have a purifier with you.
- As you move towards your station, use the purifier to cover the chalice.
- When distributing Holy Communion from the chalice, hold the chalice up & say to the person, 'The Blood of Christ'
- Keep your voice loud enough for the person to hear, but not so loud as to be a distraction.
- When the person replies, 'Amen', hand the chalice to the person.

### **The Growing Body of Christ:**

313 AD was a turning point for Christianity. Persecutions suddenly ended, and the Roman Emperor Constantine gave large sums of money to support Christianity and build places of worship. His mother was a convert and made several trips to the Holy Land to identify places where Jesus was and collect artefacts. With the building of places of worship, modest house churches ceased to exist, and worship became more formal. Processions, courtly movement, sung litanies, incense, bells, kissing of sacred objects, genuflections became a pattern to accompany the ancient structure of the Eucharist. Celebrants wore robes worthy of Roman senators, which eventually were called vestments. These remain long after the fashion changed! Simple plates and cups of house worship became elaborate chalices and patens reflecting a high church desire to use the most precious metals and stones along with the finest crafts people so the glory of God could be reflected in Eucharistic celebrations.



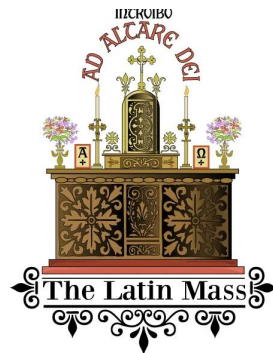
### **The Eucharist becomes Distant:**

The collapse of the Roman Empire heralds the arrival of the Dark and Medieval Ages. The Dark Ages saw a break down in the social, economic and political structure of Europe with only the Church the uniting force. A growth in ignorance of theology along with poorly educated clergy created a fertile ground for fear, with suffering, hell and damnation to the fore, especially as Europe approached the first millennium. People stopped receiving Holy Communion frequently for fear they were not in a state of grace. The medieval times saw a growth in stunning cathedrals right across Europe. Colourful religious processions in honour of local saints, pilgrimages to holy shrines, birth of new religious orders such as Franciscans and Dominicans led some to call this time 'the age of faith'. However, during these times active participation in the Eucharist declined. The altar was often hidden and removed from public view to avoid theft of precious goods such as chalices and candle sticks. There was a decline in literacy which meant that few people could not understand Latin. People in-

stead had to be given notice at the time of consecration, so a bell was rung. Clergy became more and more ignorant of the theology of the faith. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, questions emerged about the Real Presence, such as Berenger of Tours who held that Jesus was not present in the Host, and that it was only a symbol of His presence. The Church rejected his views in 1215 by affirming Christ's Real Presence and introduced the concept of 'transubstantiation'. Processions with the Blessed Sacrament, what we know today as Corpus Christi Procession were started and the tabernacle was moved from the sacristy to above the main altar of the church at this time.

### Reformation & the Tridentine Mass

The Council of Trent in 1545 was to deal with Martin Luther's Reformation of 1517. The Council Fathers called for a renewal of the Eucharist and an end to abuses around it. In 1570, Pope Pius V responded to this call by publishing a book that would be the standard book for the celebration of the Eucharist for the Western Church. The priest would celebrate both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This was due to a large portion of people been illiterate. The practice of people been devotional rather than liturgical became prominent, where they would say their own prayers during Mass. The priest along with the people celebrated the Eucharist facing East (rising sun). The sanctuary continued to be elaborately decorated to reflect the glory of God, emerging as the sacred space. Large railings were often put in place to prevent theft or damage to the sanctuary, and the practice of people coming to the railings to receive Holy Communion emerged. The railings further separated the priest from the people. The only time a priest might leave the sanctuary was to go to a pulpit which was often located in the middle of the church so he could be seen and heard by the people. This was a time when churches did not have sound systems so to be seen and heard this



- When all ministers are back, go to sanctuary step, bow & return to your seat.

### Purpose of these procedures:

These are the standard norms & polices for receiving Holy Communion at Mass throughout the world that ensure reverence in how Holy Communion is distributed.

- Common procedures ensure that distribution is done with reverence. There is no distinction in how people receive, as all receive Holy Communion in the same manner. This prevents division & clichés emerging.
- Standard way implies less confusion & allows people to develop regular pattern on receiving, so distribution can be done with greater respect.
- Standard norms for distribution of Holy Communion encourage people to leave their seats to receive. Worship of God is done in many forms & utilising our blessing to 'come' in receiving of Holy Communion. The person is invited to 'come' to God. Where the practice of receiving in the seat occurs, it unintentionally shows a lack of respect by implying that the person expects God in the Eucharist to *come* to them.
- The practice of receiving in the seat is for those who have difficulty in moving. Members of the congregation who do not have

this difficulty are to be encouraged not to abuse or take advantage of this situation. The purpose of the standard norms can be explained to them if necessary.



**NB:** If rota is based on a month; extraordinary ministers minister from the first day of the month to the last day **inclusive**. Therefore is the end of the month is a Saturday, the extraordinary ministers finishes their ministry on the Saturday and the next months extraordinary ministers begin their month on Sunday.

### Procedures for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist for Coming to Sanctuary for Distribution of Holy Communion in Shurle & Glencorrib:

1. Approach the altar at the start of the Our Father.
2. Bow at the step of the sanctuary – wait for the other person if more than one.
3. Stand to close to credence table.
4. Shake hands with those around you at the ‘Sign of Peace’ – priest, other extraordinary ministers & altar servers.
5. Sanitised hands after the ‘Sign of Peace’.
6. Receive Holy Communion from the priest.
6. Receive the ciborium/chalice from the priest & go to station.

### Station of EM in Church of Immaculate Conception, Glencorrib for Distribution of Holy Communion:

- EM distributes Holy Communion in the porch first.
- Then take up station just inside porch.
- Bring Holy Communion to Choir, leaving required number of hosts in pyx.

### Station for EM in St. Joseph’s Church, Shurle for Distribution of Holy Communion:

- EM’s go to the **station** located mid way down the aisle, remaining stationary allowing people to come to them.
- Once finished return to sanctuary
- If celebrant has not given communion to choir, EM may do so. Leave required number of hosts in pyx for choir.

### Following Distribution:

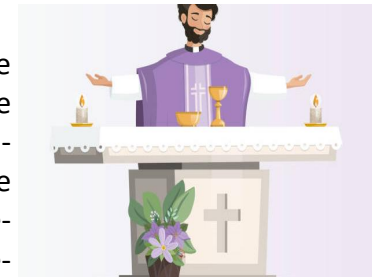
- Return to the sanctuary
- Return ciborium/chalice to priest
- Sanitise hands & wait for any fellow minister at credence table.



was necessary. This format remained in place until 1960’s with Vatican II.

### Eucharist In Era of Vatican II

The first document approved by the Church Fathers at Vatican II was the ‘Constitution on Liturgy’. There were already some changes taking place in the liturgy before Vatican II such as the revival of Gregorian chants, the encouragement of frequent reception of Holy Communion and lowering the age for First Communion to age 7. Vatican II sought to return in so far as possible to the early Church traditions of celebrating the Eucharist. Processions were reintroduced. The Mass was celebrated in the local language and people were encouraged to be active in the liturgy through movement, word, song and response. Scripture readings were reorganised into a set pattern so that over time, people would hear readings from all the books of Scripture. The structure of the readings followed early church tradition where the Gospel demonstrated the fulfilment of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the second reading focused on the teaching aspect of faith and belief. People were encouraged to receive either traditionally on the tongue or in the hand; a tradition from the early church. The practice of receiving both species was reintroduced, usually occurring on Holy Thursday, the day that marks the celebration of the Last Supper and First Eucharist. Laity could minister as extraordinary ministers were encouraged to bring Holy Communion to homebound family members or neighbours, in deference to an early church tradition.

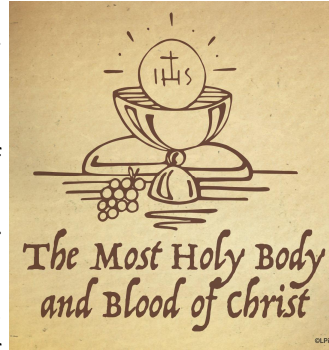


### Conclusion

The brief sketch of the Eucharist shows that while there have been changes over the centuries, the basic structure of the celebration remains the same. The changes introduced at Vatican II implies that the manner in how the Eucharist is celebrated now is very similar to how it was celebrated 2000 years ago.

## REVERENCE

Our belief as Catholics is that Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, where he said, 'This is my Body' & 'This is my Blood'. Acknowledging the power of God's Word, we understand and accept in faith, that the bread & wine became or 'hold' the actual Body & Blood of Jesus. When Jesus commanded the apostles gathered around Him to 'Do this in memory of me', Jesus gave them both the instruction & authority to do that He had done. Each time then, a priest celebrates the Eucharist, the Catholic belief is that the bread & wine become or 'hold' the actual Real Presence of Jesus.



As ministers of the Eucharist, how we present & handle ourselves convey a message. As such, all our actions in the ministry need to be neutral as possible from how we approach the altar to how we distribute Holy Communion. It is necessary to take every care & effort so that we do not become a distraction or seek to make a statement by our actions. How we dress, or how we act and behaviour are important then, hence the importance of following the standard norms of the ministry & following our own way of doing things.



Our faith tells us that God reaches out to us through others, and while many may be in the ministry to 'help out' – this may be God's way of reaching out to you. The Church has a profound way of understanding this; even with people who come to Mass. The Church understands those who come to Mass 'as the people God has gathered before Him' & that they are not there because they decided to come, but rather that God called them, and they answered. Similar,

with every ministry including Extraordinary Ministers; the Church sees

them as people who have answered the call by God to serve His people. In this context, people involved in ministry at Mass are both honoured guests, and appointed servants to God. This means we are called to serve the people of God.

God invites each of us to put aside our own will, in service of others. This is achieved in ministry by adapting standard norms over our own or indeed of the local priest. The norms to be used in ministry are not just the priest's or the communities, but they are to be the norms followed throughout the whole world. People should not wear political labels for example, and Holy Communion ought to be given to people in their seats only if they find it difficult to walk. Otherwise people ought to 'process' to receive the Eucharist as mark of respect & reverence, recalling the symbolic nature of processing or 'coming to God' at Holy Communion.

In many parishes, following Vatican II, various ways of distribution, away from the norms took place. While at parish level, it may seem normal, for visitors & stranger alike, variation in distribution can make them feel unsure, awkward & unwelcome. It is challenging and difficult to change such practices, that even a 'battle of wills' can break out in congregations. The focus is always on showing reverence to the Eucharist. The responsibility of all volunteers to follow the standard norms. All ministers of the Eucharist are called to ensure the standard norms regarding Extraordinary ministers & the distribution of Holy Communion are followed to avoid such unnecessary & avoidable confusion.

*Respect*