

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

Suggested procedure for distributing Communion in the Adelaide Archdiocese

1. Consider what you are about to undertake and ensure that your attire is appropriate. Clothes that draw attention to *you* rather than to Communion unsuitable. Neat, conservative clothing is best.
2. Extraordinary Ministers may be asked to distribute *either* the hosts or the chalice, but apart from exceptional circumstances, Extraordinary Ministers in the cathedral distribute the chalice only. There are usually two ministers on each side, one about two metres from the person distributing the host and the second a further two or three metres towards the sides of the church. Extraordinary Ministers begin Mass in the pews (i.e. they are not part of the procession of the priest and servers).
3. **At Communion time.**
Once you have given the Sign of Peace to the person next to you, move forward to the sanctuary steps. Bow and go up to the credence table (left hand side, near the doorway to the priest's sacristy) and use the hand sanitiser. Once this is done, stand in an arc near the altar on the left hand side.

You will receive Communion from the priest under both kinds. While you have the choice to receive under the form of bread only, it is recommended that you receive both the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood as a deeper sign of the Eucharistic symbol that Jesus gave us of eating *and* drinking.

The priest will always hand you either the bowl or chalice. These are NEVER to be taken from the altar by the Extraordinary Minister. Once you have the bowl or chalice, proceed to your place of ministry.

4. **Distributing Holy Communion.**

a) The Body of Christ.

As you raise the Body of Christ, seek to make eye contact with the communicant and say strongly with faith, but without affectation, "The Body of Christ". If you know the person's name, you may add it: (e.g.) "Clare, the Body of Christ". You may not add any other words or give any other greeting.

Wait for the person's "Amen" and then place the host into the person's hand. (If the person does not say "Amen" just give them the host. If a number of people do not say "Amen", report this to the priest who will comment on it during a subsequent homily, encouraging the people to make their response aloud.)

Touching the person's hand as you give them the host is both acceptable and appropriate. If the communicant wishes to receive Communion on the tongue, simply turn your hand over and place it on the tip of their tongue.

If a host should accidentally be dropped on the floor, bend down, pick it up and either consume it or put it in the hand that is holding the bowl/ciborium and give it to the priest to consume when the distribution is over. (If the communicant does this before you do, that is quite all right.)

b) The Blood of Christ.

Communion from the chalice is recommended at *all* celebrations of the Eucharist in the Adelaide Archdiocese.

When the Ministers of the Cup have been given their chalice and purifier by the priest they go and stand some distance from the Minister of the Host, so as to allow an uncongested flow of people. Normally, there will be two Ministers of the Cup for every minister distributing the Host. Shake the purifier out so that it is fully unfolded.

To distribute Holy Communion from the chalice, say "The Blood of Christ" as you pass the chalice to the communicant. Their response is "Amen". While they are sipping from the chalice, move the purifier along the fingers of your right hand (left hand if you are left-handed) so that you have a clean area of purifier for wiping the chalice. When the communicant passes the chalice back to you, wipe the rim *inside and out* thoroughly, and then rotate the chalice a quarter turn.

If the communicant should approach the chalice with the host in their hand and wish to dip it into the Precious Blood, you do not make any comment or sign to the communicant, but simply tilt the chalice towards them so that they can "intinct" without difficulty. Even though it is the policy of this diocese (and indeed, of the universal Church) that intinction can only take place when it is the priest who does the intincting and the communicant then receives Communion on the tongue, it is more important that charity and pastoral understanding be exercised. It is not up to the Extraordinary Minister of Communion to preclude anyone from Communion, or to tell people how they must receive Communion.

If it happens that there are a number of people seeking to intinct ("dip") the host, then tell the priest after Mass and it will be up to him to ensure that the congregation is properly catechised.

If the Precious Blood is spilled, do the following: Cover the spill with the purifier you are using and go and get another one in order to continue distributing the Blood of Christ. When Mass is over, the spill will be dealt with by the sacristan.

5. After Communion.

After the distribution of Communion, ministers of the Host return their bowl/ciborium to the altar where the priest will gather any remaining hosts ready for them to be placed them in the tabernacle.

Ministers of the Cup either hand the chalice return it to the credence table, consume any remaining Blood of Christ and place the empty chalice and used purifier on the table.

Ministers then return to the bottom of the sanctuary steps, bow and return to their places in the body of the cathedral.

The sacred vessels will be purified by the sacristan after Mass.

6. Blessings.

Babies, children who have not yet completed the sacraments of Initiation, and adults who for whatever reason are unable to receive Communion can still be included in the Communion rite by coming forward to receive a blessing. Children and adults usually approach the minister with hands crossed over their chests to indicate their non-communicant status. Look directly at the person and say, "God bless you".

7. Sacred vessels and hygiene

People may be concerned about the possible transmission of diseases through sharing the common chalice.

Medical experts assure us that AIDS and other viral infections are not contagious provided normal health precautions are taken:

- Use metal vessels
- Wipe the rim of the chalice *both inside and out* after each communicant
- Turn the chalice slightly after each person
- Do not receive from the chalice if you are suffering from a heavy cold, have mouth ulcers or cold sores or any gastric infection.

8. Catholic coeliacs

Coeliacs are intolerant of the gluten that occurs in many grains, including wheat. For some, it is sufficient to use a low-gluten host. This is normally placed in a small pyx and it is prearranged with the priest that he will take this with him when he distributes Communion. The coeliac then comes forward in the usual way and receives the low-gluten host from the priest. For severe coeliacs, however, it is necessary to make other arrangements. They can receive the Blood of Christ from the chalice – as long as it is a chalice that does not contain the intermingled particle of host. In some parishes, such coeliacs receive Communion first, to avoid any chance of ‘contaminating’ the chalice.

