



# PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

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DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

**Pastoral Considerations for Liturgical Ministries  
Diocese of Bridgeport**

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## Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

### 1. When do I bow or genuflect before the altar and the tabernacle?

Because the altar symbolizes Christ, and is consecrated as the place “on which is effected the Sacrifice of the Cross made present under sacramental signs,”<sup>1</sup> it is appropriate for all ministers to bow profoundly when passing before the altar during Mass. “If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself.”<sup>2</sup>

The only time that you would not bow to the altar nor genuflect to the tabernacle would be when passing in front of them while holding the Most Blessed Sacrament in your hands or when holding a ciborium or chalice, even if empty.

### 2. Can I distribute communion as an EMHC if I myself do not receive communion?

No. Part of the nature of the distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful is the significance that Christ gives himself to his people, contained within the sacramental re-presentation of his sacrificial offering. When an EMHC does not first receive the sacrament of Holy Communion before distributing to others, that connection is broken, preventing the person to distribute Holy Communion to others.

### 3. What should I do if an instituted Acolyte shows up to serve at the same Mass at which I've been assigned to distribute Holy Communion?

The ministry of the instituted acolyte is universal and not particular: while an EMHC is mandated to serve in a specific parish, school or institution, the ministry of the acolyte applies to the universal Church. For this reason, an acolyte must exercise his ministry before an EMHCs is asked to do so. This is required because the acolyte “is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the Priest and the Deacon [...] and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an Extraordinary Minister.”<sup>3</sup> These are “his own proper functions which he must carry out in person.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *GIRM*, 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 98.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 99; “It is the office of an acolyte who has been properly instituted to give communion as a special minister when the priest and deacon are absent or impeded by sickness, old age, or pastoral ministry or when the number of the faithful at the holy table is so great that the Mass or other service may be unreasonably protracted,” *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass*, 17.

When such instituted acolytes act as EMHCs at Masses without a deacon present, “the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants.”<sup>5</sup> It is also the task of the instituted Acolyte to assist in the purification of vessels, especially in the absence of a deacon.<sup>6</sup>

**4. What should I do when I am distributing the Precious Blood and someone comes up to dip the host into the chalice (*which is the practice of intinction*)?**

“The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction.”<sup>7</sup> Practically, this means that the person approaching the minister must consume the host before receiving from the chalice.

**5. What should I do when an accident occurs during the distribution of communion?**

“If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently; and if any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the *sacrarium* in the sacristy.”<sup>8</sup> Care should be taken that these remedies should not be delayed, so that further foot traffic in any affected areas would be prevented.

Therefore, if a consecrated host falls on the ground, immediately pick it up and place it on the priest’s paten on the altar, so that he may consume it at the proper time. If the Precious Blood accidentally spills on the ground, immediately wipe up the spillage with your purificator, and placing it on the credence table, obtain a fresh purificator for continued distribution. Obtain an additional clean purificator to place over the affected area of spillage to mark it for cleansing with water after the Mass concludes.

**6. What are the considerations I must know regarding the distribution of Holy Communion to someone who is gluten intolerant?**

A person who has gluten intolerance and who desires to receive Holy Communion needs to discuss their situation with their pastor or chaplain to determine the most appropriate way to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord.

It is important to remember that, when low-gluten hosts are consecrated at Mass, they are to be kept in a separate *ciborium* or on a separate paten to segregate them

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 191.

<sup>6</sup> *GIRM*, 192; *Norms*, 53.

<sup>7</sup> *GIRM*, 50.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 280.

from ordinary hosts. Due to the sensitive nature of gluten intolerance, even the slightest contact with a normal host can have difficult – if not disastrous – effects in someone with gluten intolerance.

**7. I know that I must observe a fast for an hour before receiving Holy Communion. Is there a period of fast for a sick person?**

Though there is a normative fast from solid food, alcoholic drink and beverages for a period of one hour, the Eucharistic fast is reduced to 15 minutes for “the sick who are living in hospitals or at home, even if they are not confined to bed; the faithful of advanced age, even if not bedridden, whether they are confined to their homes because of old age or live in a nursing home; sick priests, even if not bedridden, or elderly priests, whether they are able to celebrate Mass or to receive communion; persons who care for the sick or aged, and the family of the sick or aged, who wish to receive communion with them, when they cannot conveniently observe the fast of one hour.”<sup>9</sup>

**8. What should I do when the sick person is unable to finish consuming the host?**

If the sick person is unable to consume an entire host, a smaller piece may be given to him or her by reverently breaking the host into a size that is capable of consumption. Care must be taken to avoid the unnecessary creation of consecrated particles. A glass of water may be provided to assist the sick person in consuming the host.

If the host is rejected by the sick, it should be wrapped in a purificator and brought back to the Church or Chapel from which the EMHC was sent. There, the EMHC must contact his or her pastor or chaplain to attend to the proper disposition of the partially consumed host.

**9. Can the EMHC bless people who come up with their arms crossed?**

On occasion, someone will approach the EMHC with their arms crossed over their chest. For many, this is a sign that they would like a blessing instead of Holy Communion. Perhaps they are seeking a spiritual Communion for personal reasons, perhaps they are not Catholic. Whatever the reason, the fact remains: If the person is in the line of the ordinary minister, a blessing may be offered. It is not required. The purpose of the Communion line, is to receive Holy Communion. The blessing of the assembly properly occurs at the end of the Mass. As the body of Christ, the assembly is blessed together before we depart to live the fruits of the liturgy.

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<sup>9</sup> *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass*, 24.

So what is an EMHC to do? Since it is the role of the EMHC to distribute Communion and not to retrieve it or repose it, it is also not the role of the EMHC to offer a blessing. That is reserved for the ordinary minister during Mass. After Mass, we may bless each other (and do). While liturgical law restricts to ordained ministers the imparting of liturgical blessings, lay people are not forbidden from using similar gestures in non-liturgical settings.

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, an EMHC may (without the Blessed Sacrament or any gesture of a blessing), offer these words to anyone who comes forward to join in a spiritual Communion: “Receive the Lord Jesus in your heart.”

**10. Why can't laypeople lead a Communion service in the absence of a priest anymore?**

Though some parishes have fallen into the practice of allowing EMHCs to lead Communion Services during the week, this practice is not in keeping with the revised norms. Morning celebrations of Mass at parishes are more than the personal reception of Holy Communion; it is to be the act of joining my life with Jesus' Sacrifice that is re-presented in grace during the celebration of Mass. Though there may not be daily Mass every day at your parish, the Diocese of Bridgeport is blessed with more than 80 parishes and finding a daily Mass at a neighboring parish should not be difficult.

**11. Why can't EMHCs go to the tabernacle? I have been doing this for years.**

The revised norms require that only the *ordinary* minister go to the tabernacle. As *extraordinary* ministers, it is our job to assist the priest and deacon in *distributing* Holy Communion. Since there is a direct connection between the actions of the priest at the altar during Mass and the Blessed Sacrament that is reserved in the tabernacle, the norms require that the priest retrieve the consecrated hosts. Since the deacon is also an ordained minister whose role it is to assist the priest at Mass, it is appropriate for the deacon to retrieve the reserved Blessed Sacrament.

**12. Can laypeople expose the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic Adoration?**

Although the *Rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction of the Holy Eucharist* allows for an EMHC to “publicly expose and later repose the Holy Eucharist for the adoration of the faithful” in the absence of a priest or deacon, EMHCs ordinarily do not have this permission in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Permission can be granted if

permission is requested from the bishop or vicar general in advance. Arrangements should be made with the priest and/or deacon for the exposition and reposition of the Blessed Sacrament when Adoration is planned.

**13. My son or daughter is in high school and was asked to serve as an EMHC. Can he or she also serve in our parish?**

Students of sufficient age who apply for a mandate to serve in their respective Catholic high school may also receive a mandate to serve in their home parish, with the approval of their home pastor, which must accompany their application for formation.

In addition, faculty members of any Catholic high school located in the Diocese can seek a mandate to serve in their respective high school and, if interested, can also seek a mandate to serve in their home pastor.

## Pastoral Considerations for the Ministry of Reader

### 1. What is the best way for me to proclaim readings from Sacred Scripture?

The *Order of Readings* specifies that “a speaking style on the part of the reader that is audible, clean and intelligent is the first means of transmitting the word of God properly to the congregation.”<sup>10</sup> The *Order* also emphasizes that “the Liturgy of the Word must be celebrated in a way that fosters meditation; clearly, any sort of haste that hinders recollection is to be avoided.”<sup>11</sup> When proclaiming the readings, the reader should have an unhurried, purposed disposition that is focused on expressing the spiritual and salvific content of the readings. In the proclamation, take care to avoid any dramatic or theatrical flair which would only serve to tarnish and obscure the profundity of the passages being read. To make the proclamation a living word, emphasize words that are important to the passage.

It is helpful to realize that the formulation of the scriptural readings found in most editions of the *Lectionary* in the United States have distributed the passages of Sacred Scripture into what are known as “sense lines.” These assist the reader to create natural breaks, pauses, and emphasis in the scriptural text, facilitating the proclamation of what can at times be a difficult and lengthy passage. Remember as well that most churches contain voice amplification systems which employ the use of microphones. When using a microphone, it is especially important to be cognizant of the volume and diction of your speech when proclaiming the readings.

One of the most important elements of a successful proclamation is preparation. Readers should thoroughly prepare themselves to proclaim the Word of God through study, prayer, and practice. Familiarity with the text, its role within the context of the whole of Sacred Scripture, and its relationship to the other readings for the day should be carefully considered. It is helpful to set aside time for prayer along with the texts to be proclaimed. Practice your proclamation aloud at home and be sure to pay special attention to the pronunciation of difficult words or phrases.

### 2. What is the *Book of the Gospels* and when is it used?

The proclamation of the Gospel is the apex of the Liturgy of the Word, the moment when the teaching of Christ the Lord is proclaimed to the assembly. “The liturgical

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<sup>10</sup> *Order*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> *Order*, 28.



traditions of both West and East have consistently made a certain distinction between the books for the readings. The *Book of the Gospels* was always fabricated and decorated with the utmost care and shown greater respect than any of the other books of readings.”<sup>12</sup>

The *Book of the Gospels* bears such importance that it “is presented to a deacon at his ordination and that at an ordination to the episcopate [it] is laid upon the head of the bishop-elect and held there.”<sup>13</sup> It is used at Mass at the discretion of the priest celebrant, typically on more solemn occasions.

**3. Another reader came to the same Mass at which I have been assigned to read. Can we divide the scriptural readings between us?**

It is not possible for ministers to “divide a single element of the celebration among themselves, e.g., that the same reading be proclaimed by two readers, one after the other, with the exception of the Passion of the Lord.”<sup>14</sup>

When there are several readers at the same Mass, the priest celebrant will determine whether the task of proclaiming the scriptural readings will be divided between them.

**4. A period of silence is suggested after each of the scriptural readings and after the homily. What is its purpose and how long should this silence be observed?**

The period of silence which the liturgical rites encourage during the Liturgy of the Word is meant to foster prayer and meditation: “The dialogue between God and his people taking place through the Holy Spirit demands short intervals of silence, suited to the assembled congregation, as an opportunity to take the Word of God to heart and to prepare a response to it in prayer.”<sup>15</sup> A recommended action for successful implementation of a period of silence would be to begin with shorter periods of about 10-15 seconds before moving to longer periods, such as 30 seconds or more. This will help to eventually establish an appropriate period of time during the Liturgy of the Word for silent prayer and meditation.

**5. What is a Commentator?**

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<sup>12</sup> *Order*, 36.  
<sup>13</sup> *Order*, 36.  
<sup>14</sup> *GIRM*, 109.  
<sup>15</sup> *Order*, 28.

The commentator “provides the faithful briefly with explanation and exhortations so as so to direct their attention to the celebration and ensure that they are better disposed for understanding it.”<sup>16</sup> If the priest celebrant decides to employ the use of a commentator, his “remarks should be thoroughly prepared and notable for their restraint,”<sup>17</sup> performing his function “in a suitable place within the sight of the faithful, but not at the ambo.”<sup>18</sup>

**6. Can my non-Catholic brother or sister read at my wedding or our parent’s funeral?**

A non-Catholic who is baptized may read at the discretion of the presider of the wedding or the funeral but this is not the common practice. If the presider makes an exception, the person who is to read should be properly prepared. A person who is not baptized may never read at a Eucharistic celebration.

**7. We have young people read at Mass sometimes. Can that continue?**

Yes. In the Diocese of Bridgeport, young people under the age of 16 may function as a reader at Masses celebrated with his or her school, during the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and at parish Masses where a large number of children and young families may be present, provided it is permitted by the pastor or episcopal chaplain on a case-by-case basis. Such instances require that the young person must be properly prepared and competent to exercise the ministry.

**8. Why can’t I read from my iPad at Mass?**

Since liturgical books serve as “signs and symbols of higher realities, care must be taken to ensure that they truly are worthy, dignified and beautiful.” For these reasons, “the books of readings used in the celebration are not to be replaced by pastoral aids, for example, by leaflets printed for the preparation of the readings by the faithful or for their personal meditation.” This includes electronic devices.

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<sup>16</sup> *GIRM*, 105b.

<sup>17</sup> *GIRM*, 105b.

<sup>18</sup> *GIRM*, 105b.

## **Pastoral Considerations for the Altar Server**

### **1. What are some best practices when selecting candidates to serve at the altar?**

The following best practices are suggested when selecting candidates:

- An initial interview should be conducted by the pastor, deacon, chaplain or lay leader in charge of this ministry and its formation with the candidate to make sure they are of the right mind set and disposition to carry out their role in this ministry.
- Verification must be obtained regarding the candidate's reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and if applicable, Confirmation.
- An orientation meeting should take place for all Candidates to review the scope of the ministry, formation requirements, expectations, etc.
- Formation for this ministry can take many forms, including online sessions coordinated by The Leadership Institute.
- Offer opportunities to serve at other Liturgies, such as Funerals, Weddings, Christmas, Easter, etc. depending on expertise and provide appropriate training for such venues.

### **2. Where do I sit during Mass?**

This will depend on the layout of your church's worship space and your assigned responsibilities. Simply, you should sit as close as possible to where you will be performing your liturgical functions. Ultimately, your pastor will instruct you regarding where you are to sit.

### **3. Is there a certain way I should bow?**

There are two types of bows: bow of the head and a profound bow. The bow of the head is simply a slight bend forward of the head. A profound bow is made from the waist. A profound bow is made when crossing in front of the altar and during the Creed at the words "and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became Man."

### **4. What does it mean to "purify" the sacred vessels?**

The practice of purification is carried out by a priest, deacon or instituted acolyte. Purification ensures that any remnants of the sacred species are reverently consumed. No altar server is permitted to purify the sacred vessels for any reason.

**Resource A****Can EMHCs give blessings?**

With this proper understanding of the role and usage of EMHCs, we can now begin examining the question at hand. As noted in the introductory paragraph, this is one of those practices that seem to vary by community. In some places children and non-Catholics are instructed to come up with their arms crossed in order to receive a blessing from the EMHC, whereas in other parishes, they are asked to remain seated. Even the blessing given varies greatly from place to place. Whatever the practice may be, let us now ask whether EMHCs are permitted to give blessings during communion.



In 2008, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments received a letter asking precisely this question. The congregation responded in a private reply with five observations on why this practice is not permitted.

**Blessing given at end of Mass**

The Congregation for Divine Worship points out in their first observation that the liturgical blessing of the Mass is given to everyone gathered in the church just a few moments after the distribution of Holy Communion. This occurs when the priest, making the sign of the cross, says, “May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

In other words, there is no need to bless only some members of the congregation (e.g. children and non-Catholics) during communion, when the entire congregation is blessed by the priest just moments later.

**Laity unable to bless at Mass**

In the second observation, we are reminded that within the context of Mass, blessings are the competency of the priest, not lay persons. Article 18 of the Book of Blessings notes that even though lay persons may give some blessings, “whenever a priest or deacon is present, the office of presiding [over a blessing] should be left to him.”

A 1997 instruction, *Ecclesiae Mysteriorum*, on the collaboration of the lay faithful further indicates that the laity should never say prayers or perform actions during the Mass which are proper to the priest, as this may lead to a confusion of roles. Since the blessing of the congregation during Mass is reserved to the priest, lay persons must avoid doing so.

### **Laying on of hands discouraged**

The third observation addresses the practice in some places where the EMHC lays hands on a member of the congregation as a sign of blessing. The private reply states that this practice “is to be explicitly discouraged” because the laying on of hands has its own “sacramental significance” which is inappropriate here. The Catechism notes that since this specific sign commonly accompanies the administration of sacraments (e.g. Confirmation) and the succession of the apostles, the laying on of hands must not be used here.

### **Additions to the rite prohibited**

Finally, even though the private reply does not specifically mention this, we ought to recall that “no one may on a personal initiative add to or omit or alter anything in [liturgical] books” as canon 846 of the Code of Canon Law clearly states. Nowhere in the Roman Missal or the GIRM are the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion instructed to bless those unable to receive communion; therefore, this practice of blessing is one of these additions to the rite which is strictly prohibited.

### **Making use of the sacramentals**

Sometimes we may be tempted to think that since something is not part of the Mass it has no spiritual importance. But this would be to neglect the power of the sacramentals, such as blessings, which are liturgical actions signifying spiritual effects obtained through the intercession of the Church. Done properly and in the right context, these blessings better dispose us to receive grace and sanctify various occasions in life.

One such sacramental that lay persons may administer is the blessing of sons/daughters, which can be as simple as praying over your children: “May the Lord keep you and make you grow in his love, so that you may live worthy of the calling he has given you, now and forever. Amen.”

Therefore, even if EMHCs are not permitted to give blessings during Mass, the desire to bless is good nonetheless and can become a fruitful aspect of our faith when done in accordance with the Church’s rites. As a parent, I have always enjoyed the practice of blessing my young children before bed and teaching them to reverence the Eucharist with a simple bow of the head as they walk past the minister of Holy Communion at Mass.

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## **Resource B**

All frequently asked questions are updated regularly online at [formationreimagined.org/liturgical-norms/#FAQ](http://formationreimagined.org/liturgical-norms/#FAQ)

### **What are norms?**

By definition, norms are an authoritative standard. Liturgical norms regulate how the public worship of the Church is to be carried out. In the case of the Holy Eucharist, these norms ensure that the celebration of Mass in our Diocese is in conformity with the universal liturgical law of the Church.

As such, the norms of the Diocese of Bridgeport are based on the teaching and guidance of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Magisterium and the entire prayer history of the Church, the Bride of Christ. More than two dozen clergy, lay leaders, and theologians worked to develop these norms over the course of a year.

### **Why are the norms being updated?**

The current liturgical norms of the Diocese of Bridgeport were last revised in 1983. Bishop Caggiano, as the chief catechist of the diocese, felt it was important to review current norms to ensure the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is appropriately celebrated and those who minister within the context of the liturgy are properly formed. Plus, the Fourth General Synod, which concluded in September 2015, mandated that these norms be revised.

These norms will be in effect *ad experimentum* for one year, after which there will be revisions to the norms before they become particular law in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

### **To whom do the norms apply?**

The norms, promulgated on December 2, 2018 offer standards and required formation for those who serve as Readers (readers of the Word at Mass), Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC), Altar Servers, and Musicians.

Most of the formation for Altar Servers will happen at the parish level. Musicians are invited to watch one module online and then attend a face-to-face conversation with Bishop Caggiano on February 16, 2019. Readers and EMHC who are grandfathered into formation will complete an online module and a face-to-face gathering, which can be hosted at their parish.

### **What happens between now and when formation opens?**

By November 30, 2018, all pastors and/or safe environment coordinators are asked to enter the Virtus database, which holds all information for those who are cleared for ministry and place a check mark next to those who currently serve as a Reader and an EMHC. This check mark serves as a recommendation for ministry by your pastor.

Beginning on December 2, 2018, the First Sunday of Advent, all those who have been approved by their pastor will receive an email welcoming them to the Institute and inviting them to begin their formation.

Those currently in ministry will have between December 2, 2018 and June 1, 2019 to comply with the new formation.

### **What exactly do I need to do?**

If you currently serve in any of these roles, you will be required to register with The Leadership Institute and participate in formation opportunities around the diocese.

Here is a glimpse at that formation:

#### Readers and EMHC

- a. Receive recommendation from your pastor via Virtus database
- b. Receive email confirmation from The Leadership Institute
- c. Follow the link you receive and complete the registration process. This ends with a screen that asks you to set your password for *LEAD*, the Institute's online learning platform. Be sure to write your password down.
- d. Complete one module: "The Revised Liturgical Norms"
- e. Attend one face-to-face meeting. Registration for this is within the platform. Just find the one you wish to attend and click "enroll."
- f. When you are met all requirements, you will receive your certificate ("the mandate") to give to your pastor. Pastors will also receive a list of those to whom a mandate has been given.

#### Altar Server

- a. Review Revised Liturgical Norms online
- b. Participate in any required local formation offered by your parish leadership

#### Musician

- a. Register online with The Leadership Institute (registration opens on December 3, 2018). Visit [www.formationreimagined.org](http://www.formationreimagined.org) to register.
- b. Complete one module: "The Revised Liturgical Norms"
- c. Attend one face-to-face meeting. At this point, this meeting will be held on February 16, 2019 and registration is within the learning platform *and* on the Institute's website. The meeting will be recorded for those who cannot attend.

You will have until June 1, 2019 to complete formation.

### **Why do I need formation if I am already serving in this ministry?**

We know that many of those who currently serve in ministry are faithful people with a generous heart. Though the local formation that happens in many of our parishes is worthwhile, diocesan formation has not existed for several years. This

formation gives those in ministry the opportunity to hear directly from their Bishop and gather with others in ministry to discuss the norms to offer feedback.

Through the sacraments of initiation, we become members of Christ's body called to holiness and charged with the responsibility to embrace Christ's mission of salvation. The majority of laity will exercise their influence in the secular arena – the family, the workplace, the professions – bringing the gospel values to the primary questions of the society and culture. Some, like you, will join the ordained in forming and shaping parish communities into God's household. Your part in that, as liturgical ministers, substantially contributes to the mission of the church. Therefore, ongoing formation is key.

**How often do I need to participate in formation?**

A renewal of the mandate you will receive is only required once every three years. However, resources in the form of articles, videos, and web links, will be sent to you on a regular basis to help you continue to grow in your ministry and in your faith.

**Is formation available in Spanish?**

Yes. Formation is available in English and Spanish.

**What if I do not have a computer?**

Paper registration forms are available online and parishes are encouraged to make these forms available to those in ministry who may not have computer access.

To participate in the required online learning, all face-to-face opportunities will include the chance for those without computer access to view the required modules for credit.

**What if I serve in more than one parish?**

The norms allow those who serve in more than one location to request a mandate for a secondary location. This can be accomplished within the learning platform.

**What if I serve in a parish and a nursing home or retirement home?**

The norms allow those who serve in more than one location to request a mandate for a secondary location. This can be accomplished within the learning platform.

**What if I am a new reader and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion?**

Only those who are currently in ministry need to follow the steps outlined above. Those who are new to ministry will be required to do the following:

- a. Visit [www.formationreimagined.com](http://www.formationreimagined.com) after December 3, 2018 and register online. The system will automatically assign you the appropriate tasks based on the ministry you choose.



- b. Face-to-Face formation will populate on your dashboard of the learning platform. You are required to attend one face-to-face formation opportunity every three years.
- c. You will be required to upload a letter of recommendation. Sample letters are available online and this “task” is an easy to follow process in the online platform.
- d. You will have as much time as you need to complete the required formation. When you are finished, you can print your certificate (“the mandate”) to give to your pastor.

**Who needs a letter of recommendation to serve?**

Only those who are new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be required to upload a letter of recommendation into the online learning portal. This will be an assigned task when you first enter the system and will be required before the mandate is printed.

**What happens if we never update the Virtus database?**

If your parish does not update the Virtus database, The Leadership Institute cannot send emails inviting readers and EMHCs to begin formation. After June 1, 2019, all those in ministry prior to the promulgation of the norms who have not begun their formation will be treated as new and will need to complete the longer formation.

**Who will track the mandates, formation, and renewals?**

The Leadership Institute will track all readers and EMHC. We will send out reminders for renewals and invitations to continued formation. Even those who register via a paper form will be tracked in *LEAD*, the Institute’s online platform.

**Can parishes see how ministers are progressing through formation?**

Yes. All those who serve in various ministries in parishes will be placed in teams within the online platform. Any parish who wishes to do so, may request to have *team managers* assigned to track the progress of ministry participants. Parishes may also use the system to send notifications to all ministry leaders within their parish.

**Can a parish just host their own formation and skip the diocesan formation?**

No. Parish leaders are encouraged to host their own meetings to help liturgical ministers brush up on how the new norms will change anything at the parish, but participation in diocesan meetings (one in person meeting) is still required. In special circumstances, where the parish will be hosting a meeting in another language, coordination between the parish and the Institute should take place to ensure that all information is appropriately covered.

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION: READER**

Dear Bishop Caggiano,

I am writing to recommend \_\_\_\_\_ for service to our parish \_\_\_\_\_ as a reader.

I can attest to his/her readiness to accept this responsibility and his/her compliance with the requirements of this ministry:

1. Being of at least 16 years old;
2. Being a fully-initiated Catholic Christian who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. Being of good moral character;
4. Not being bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. Demonstrating a genuine reverence and respect for the Most Blessed Sacrament;
6. If married, being in a valid marriage according to the prescriptions of the current Code of Canon Law;
7. Being in full compliance with the norms of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

\_\_\_\_\_ understands that this letter is only one part of formation and that he/she will need to complete the required registration and formation online, as well as attend one face-to-face formation session before receiving a mandate for service.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Pastor/Parochial Vicar/Campus Ministers

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parish or Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit this form via U.S. mail to 238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606 or upload this document into your personal profile on LEAD, the Institute's learning platform.

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION: EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Dear Bishop Caggiano,

I am writing to recommend \_\_\_\_\_ for service to our parish \_\_\_\_\_ as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

I can attest to his/her readiness to accept this responsibility and his/her compliance with the requirements of this ministry:

1. Being of at least 16 years old;
2. Being a fully-initiated Catholic Christian who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. Being of good moral character;
4. Not being bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. Demonstrating a genuine reverence and respect for the Most Blessed Sacrament;
6. If married, being in a valid marriage according to the prescriptions of the current Code of Canon Law;
7. Being in full compliance with the norms of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

\_\_\_\_\_ understands that this letter is only one part of formation and that he/she will need to complete the required registration and formation online, as well as attend one face-to-face formation session before receiving a mandate for service.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Pastor/Parochial Vicar/Campus Ministers

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parish or Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit this form via U.S. mail to 238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606 or upload this document into your personal profile on LEAD, the Institute's learning platform.

**Paper Application for The Institute for Catholic Formation**

**Personal Information**

Title:

Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Dr.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

*This is used only to verify your identity in Virtus*

Have you completed your required background check?  Yes  No

Have you completed your Virtus training?  Yes  No



**Ministry Information**

Please check the ministries in which you currently serve or would like to serve.

*\*Indicates you attest to requirements (see next page)*

- Baptism Prep
- Bereavement
- Catechist
  - Early Childhood (ages 0-6)
  - Childhood (ages 7-10)
  - Confirmation Prep
  - Early Adolescence (ages 11-14)
  - Adolescence (ages 15-18)
  - Young Adults (ages 18-29)
  - Adults (over 29)
  - Senior Adults (over 70)
- Director/Coordinator of Religious Education
- Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion\*
- Finance Council Member
- Marriage Prep / Sponsor
- Minister of Hospitality (*Usher/Greeter*)
- Ministry to Seniors (*older adults*)
- Music Ministry\*
- Parent
  - Resources that would be most helpful:**
    - Raising Young Children (ages 0-6)
    - The Childhood Years (ages 7-10)
    - Raising Early Adolescence (ages 11-14)
    - Surviving Adolescence (ages 15-18)
    - Keeping Young Adults Connected (ages 18-29)
    - Caring for Those With Special Needs
    - Caring for Aging Relatives
    - Formation for Myself
- Parish Administration (*e.g. parish secretary, bookkeeper, business manager, etc.*)

- Parish Council Member
- Parish Trustee
- Pastoral Associate
- Reader (*Lector*)\*
- Respect Life Committee
- Sacristan / Adult Altar Server
- Safe Environment Coordinator
- Youth Ministry Coordinator
- Youth Ministry Volunteer
- I'm not interested in a particular ministry; I just want to learn more about my faith

\* The requirements mandated by the revised norms of the Diocese of Bridgeport to serve as an **Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** are:

1. Being at least 16 years old;
2. Being a fully-initiated Catholic Christian who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. Being of good moral character;
4. Not being bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. Demonstrating a genuine reverence and respect for the Most Blessed Sacrament;
6. If married, being in a valid marriage according to the prescriptions of the current Code of Canon Law;
7. Being in full compliance with the norms of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Please indicate that you meet these requirements:

I attest that I meet these requirements

\* All those who wish to participate in the **sacred music program** of a parish or institution of the Diocese of Bridgeport, including salaried employees, volunteers or those hired per diem, must fulfill certain requirements. These include:

1. Being a baptized Christian; (i.e., an exception can be made by any pastor if there is genuine lack of availability of competent musicians to assist in the celebration of the liturgy);
2. Being a Catholic, they should seek to lead a life of Christian faith and prayer;
3. Possessing a desire and willingness to learn liturgical music, including a proper awareness of the nature of sacred music, of the purpose of musical expression in the rites and prayers, and a familiarity with the liturgy of the Roman Rite;
4. Being in full compliance with the requirements of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Please indicate that you meet these requirements:

I attest that I meet these requirements

\* The requirements mandated by the revised norms of the Diocese of Bridgeport to serve as **Readers** are:

1. Being at least 16 years old;
2. Being a fully-initiated Catholic Christian who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. Being of good moral character, leading a life of faith and prayer which is in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
4. Not being bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. Demonstrating a genuine reverence and respect for the Most Blessed Sacrament;
6. If married, being in a valid marriage according to the prescriptions of the current Code of Canon Law;
7. Being in full compliance with the norms of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Please indicate that you meet these requirements:

I attest that I meet these requirements



Please mail this completed form to:

The Institute for Catholic Formation  
238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606

**REQUEST FOR MANDATE**

Dear Bishop Caggiano,

I have completed all required formation to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at my parish \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to respectfully request a mandate to serve at an additional location.

Name of secondary location \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of pastor or chaplain of secondary location

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of request

Thank you, Bishop, for the opportunity to serve in your name.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address (used in LEAD)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person making the request



**Submit this form via U.S. mail to:**  
The Institute for Catholic Formation  
238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606  
or email to [institute@diobpt.org](mailto:institute@diobpt.org).  
*Please submit additional forms if necessary.*

**REQUEST FOR MANDATE**

Dear Bishop Caggiano,

As the chaplain/campus minister/youth minister at \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to request a mandate for the following students to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

I can attest that they have received formation through The Institute for Catholic Formation and that they have received specific instruction appropriate to the *Norms Governing the Liturgical Ministers* and our local parish/school.

I understand that this mandate is good for one year.

I also understand that each pastor or administrator of the respective parish will receive notification of this mandate so that these young people might also be of service in their local faith communities.

First Name	Last Name	Parish	First Name	Last Name	Parish
First Name	Last Name	Parish	First Name	Last Name	Parish
First Name	Last Name	Parish	First Name	Last Name	Parish
First Name	Last Name	Parish	First Name	Last Name	Parish
First Name	Last Name	Parish	First Name	Last Name	Parish

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address (used in LEAD)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Printed name of person making the request



THE INSTITUTE FOR  
**CATHOLIC FORMATION**  
 DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

**Submit this form via U.S. mail to:**  
 The Institute for Catholic Formation  
 238 Jewett Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06606  
 or email to [institute@diobpt.org](mailto:institute@diobpt.org).  
 Please submit additional forms if necessary.

# PRAYER FOR LITURGICAL MINISTERS

## UNA ORACIÓN PARA LOS MINISTROS LITÚRGICOS

Lord, in your light, we see light.

We thank you for calling us to serve your holy people.

Shine in our hearts and minds, our words and actions.

Help us to be your light in the world.

Grant this through the One who is light from light:

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Señor, en su luz, vemos la luz.

Le agradecemos por llamarnos para servir a su gente santa.

Brilla en nuestros corazones y mentes, nuestras palabras y acciones.

Ayúdenos a ser su luz en el mundo.

Conceda este por El quién es luz de luz:

Jesucristo nuestro Señor. Amén.



THE INSTITUTE FOR

**CATHOLIC FORMATION**

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT