

DIRECTIVES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION OUTSIDE OF MASS TO PERSONS WHO ARE SICK OR ELDERLY

1. Who may bring Holy Communion to persons outside of Mass?

Besides priests and deacons, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may bring Communion, provided they are installed as Extraordinary Ministers and authorized to do so by the priest of the parish or the Catholic chaplain of the hospital or other institution where the Extraordinary Minister will bring Communion.

2. What procedures do Extraordinary Ministers follow to take Communion from church or chapel?

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may be called forward after the Communion Rite at Mass, receive the pyx containing host (s), and be sent from the church or chapel with a blessing or go to the tabernacle after Mass, put the host (s) in the pyx and depart.

The Extraordinary Minister will then proceed directly from the church or chapel to the place where Communion is to be distributed.

3. What Rite is to be used when giving Communion?

The Rite of Communion of the Sick is to be followed.
(See separate section on Rite of Communion of the Sick)

4. Is there a period of fasting before Communion for persons who are sick?

Persons who are sick and those who take care of them are not bound to any Eucharistic fast.

5. What does the Extraordinary Minister do if the person being visited cannot receive the whole host?

A small portion of the host may be given to persons who can receive the host but not the whole host. The extraordinary minister may consume the remaining portion of the host.

6. May a person who is sick and unable to receive Communion under the form of bread, receive Communion under the form of wine?

Only sick people who are unable to receive Communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine alone at the discretion of the priest. If not consecrated at a Mass in the presence of the sick person, the Blood of the Lord is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after Communion. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel that is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains after the sick person has received Communion, it should be consumed by the minister, who should also see to it that the vessel is properly purified. (Norms # 54)

7. Is it necessary to follow the policies and procedures of hospitals or other institutions when bringing Communion?

When bringing Communion to persons in hospitals or other institutions, it is necessary to follow the institution's policies and procedures. These may include: observing isolation procedures and any NPO signs. NPO means Nothing By Mouth. If in doubt about giving Communion because of a person's medical status, ask the person's nurse before giving Communion, whether the person is physically able to receive Holy Communion.

8. What does the Extraordinary Minister do with a host that is not properly consumed?

If the host is not properly consumed by the communicant, the host may be placed in a clean tissue or handkerchief and returned to church or chapel where the host is placed in a designated vessel with water.

9. After Communion is distributed, what does the Extraordinary Minister do with any remaining hosts?

Care should be taken to bring only the amount of hosts needed for distribution. Any remaining hosts are to be returned directly to a tabernacle. If this is not possible, then the remaining hosts are to be consumed by the Extraordinary Minister. Hosts are not to be kept in a house, in a car or on one's person.

10. Can Communion be given during the Triduum?

Communion to persons who are sick may be given at any time on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. On Holy Saturday, Communion may only be given as Viaticum for those in danger of death.

11. Should candles be used during the Communion Rite?

The custom of using lit candles in the home while the Blessed Sacrament is present may be continued. Lit candles may not be used if there is an oxygen tank or oxygen machine present.

Lit candles are not to be used while bringing Communion to persons in hospitals or other institutions without the authorization of the institutions.

12. What is the role of the Extraordinary Minister when visiting persons who cannot receive Communion?

The Extraordinary Minister may offer to pray with the person being visited and invite other persons in the house or room to pray. If the person states that he or she wants to receive the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Communion, offer to contact the parish priest or priest chaplain for the person.