

# Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

We thank you,  
most gracious God,  
that through our hands you will enter the lives  
of many of your people.

Through the Eucharist we distribute to them, you will  
draw close to them and nourish their dreams of holiness.

You will be for others the Food of Life.

As we hold in our hands the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ,  
touch us with your grace and an increase of faith,  
so we are more aware of the wonder of what we are doing.

May we distribute with reverence and devotion,  
and grow in the love of those we feed,  
and of all your people.

Make our hearts and hands clean.

Free us from vanity and pride.

May we live our own lives  
in such a way that it will  
reflect that same

Presence

found in the

Eucharist

we touch and give.

We ask this, O God,  
in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## *Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Training Guide*

Welcome, and thank you for agreeing to be trained, or retrained, as the case may be, as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for our parish.

As you know, there are requirements for this ministry...those who aspire to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be people of mature and demonstrated faith. They must be 18 years of age, or a senior in high school to be commissioned in our diocese. They should be effective Christian witnesses and active in the sacramental life of the Church. They must have received the Sacraments of Initiation. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be humble, (this is a great office,) hospitable, (we are honored guests, but also appointed servants). We must have gratitude, (receive the great gift of the Lord's presence with grateful hearts and share that gift generously and joyfully with others!) We must be reverent!

As a minister at Mass, be it lector or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, you will be expected to dress accordingly. 'Sunday best' is the rule of thumb. If you are scheduled to serve and you come to Mass in blue jeans and tennis shoes, shorts, mini-skirt, or t-shirt with pictures and/or logos, we will ask you to step aside for a substitute. How we dress conveys how we feel about our ministry.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned. Once you have completed the course of training, your names will be submitted to the Diocesan Office of Worship. You are then granted permission to distribute communion, in this parish only, for a period of three years. If you then wish to continue in this ministry, you must attend an updated training session and be commissioned again.

This commission is also necessary for taking communion to the homebound, to the hospitalized, or to nursing home residents. Some of our EMHCs, at their request, are commissioned for this ministry only. They also must be re-commissioned after a three-year period.

You have been called by the Holy Spirit to do this most important ministry. Due to the nature of this ministry, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive ongoing support and formation. **It is your obligation to learn as much as you can about the Eucharist. Please read any and all *current* information you find on the Eucharist. When the diocese offers adult education classes, take advantage of them—there is no cost to you. Study Church history. The more you know, the more you will want to know.**

## ***EUCHARIST IN THE EARLY CENTURIES***

We are a *sacramental* people. Eucharist is the sacrament we come to week after week to become more like Christ himself.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy tells us that ‘in Christ “the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth and the fullness of divine worship was given to us.”’ And “For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the sublime sacrament of the whole Church.” (CSL 5) Thus the Church was born. We must remember that the Apostles were not handed a “how to” manual on celebrating Mass. The Holy Spirit gave them courage to go out and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. It was in these early times that they would gather wherever they could and tell the people about Jesus the Incarnate and their own salvation, and how at the Passover meal He broke the bread and said, “Take this all of you and eat it, this **IS** my body which will be given for you...He took the cup and said drink from it, all of you. This cup **IS** the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you...(Luke 22:14-20).

He did not say, “this MIGHT be my body...or this MIGHT be my blood...” When we share in the giving of the Body and Blood of Christ to others, we know we are holding the essence of Jesus in our hands. How awesome that is! At the consecration, transubstantiation takes place. That is, the change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, so that only the accidents of bread and wine remain, when consecrated by a validly ordained priest. (*see Catechism of the Catholic Church hand-out*)

As theologians began to try to understand the mystery of the faith, the liturgy and certain pieties began to develop. The Eucharist did not develop in a vacuum. There were factors, forces and needs that compelled a continuing evolution of the Mass from its simple beginnings as an upper room supper to our present day. If you study Church history, you will understand how and why the Church had to evolve and the liturgy, Eucharist, and daily life had to adapt if they were to survive. With the growing mixture of cultures and civilizations, there were many influences that contributed to that necessary evolution. The Church is a living, breathing organism. It must continue to grow and change to meet the needs of its people. But with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the core of the Church has remained the same for over 2000 years.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

(from *The New Concise Catholic Dictionary*, Reynolds R. Ekstrom)

**Sanctuary:** the word has its roots in the Latin *sanctuarium*, a holy place or a shrine. It is the area in Catholic church buildings wherein the main altar is placed. The Word of God is also usually proclaimed from the sanctuary, from a book called the lectionary. For a long time the sanctuary was clearly divided from the rest of the church worship space by being elevated in some way or by a line of demarcation such as a traditional communion railing.

In general accord with the renewal of the Christian liturgy since the time of Vatican II (1960s), the sanctuary area and the main altar of the church have often been situated more to the center (the midst) of the worshipping community, rather than to one end of the church building’s interior. The main point is that you should be conscious that you are in a sacred space and should act accordingly. Conduct the business of your ministry but don’t linger to banter or tell jokes there.

**Altar:** is a centrally located, table-like structure in a church at which the liturgy of the Eucharist—also known as the sacrifice of the Mass—is celebrated. The word “altar” in Hebrew means “place for slaughtering” or “place of sacrifice.” The altar is sometimes referred to as “the table of the Lord” by Catholics. In-church altars tend to be made of stone and are permanently fixed to a central place on the floor. Movable altars for the Eucharist can be used outside of church buildings and often are made of wood.

The earliest Christian altars were probably ordinary wooden family dinner tables in Christian households. On these, the original agape feasts and eucharistic meals were shared. From the early times of the church, altars have been covered with decorative cloth (a banquet symbol) and highlighted by candles nearby (a symbol of the Spirit’s presence). Eventually altars became ornate marble constructions pushed to the back (east wall) of the church sanctuary and thus far removed from the midst of the worshipping assembly. Tabernacles, crucifixes, candles, icons, and artwork were usually placed on church altars.

Also, although there is a traditional church association between the martyrs/saints and Catholic altars (for years, church altars held relics of the saints in a special altar stone), today Catholics recognize that altars are dedicated to God only. Altar stones and saintly relics in altars are no longer required.

Altars of sacrifice are consecrated (blessed) for official church worship in a special blessing rite. The altar is the center of a worshipping assembly’s prayer of thanksgiving and glory to God. Nothing should be set on the altar that does not pertain to the Mass. You should not use it like a counter top or lean on it. Be conscious of what you are doing and why when you reverence the altar.

## ITEMS WE USE FOR MASS AND WHERE WE USE THEM:

**Pitcher and lavabo basin:** for the hand washing after presentation of the gifts. (also used by the Bread ministers to rinse their fingers after distributing the consecrated hosts.)

**Finger towels:** kept in a small basket by the pitcher and basin

**Covered Ciborium:** a covered dish (sometimes chalice-shaped) used for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

**Chalice:** the metal or glass goblet used to give the Precious Blood of Christ.

**Purificator:** a special cloth used to wipe the inside and outside of the chalice after drinking from it. This is not meant to “purify” the glass in a sense as to wipe away germs (although lipstick does need to be wiped away). The purpose is to catch any Precious Blood that might run down the side of the chalice and onto the floor.

**Cruets, flagons, or decanters:** for the wine to be presented for the sacrifice and the water for the credence table to add to the wine at the consecration.

**Ciborium (or plural, Ciboria):** bowls which hold the hosts for consecration and then distribution of the Body of Christ.

**Sacramentary:** the Roman Missal, which contains the prayers and rubrics for the celebration of Mass.

**Sacristy:** a practical and simple room in a church building wherein vestments and other items used in Catholic worship (e.g., chalices, candles, ciboria, eucharistic hosts and wine, cruets, monstrances, incense, etc.) are kept.

**Sacrarium:** the sink where we wash the chalice, ciboria, etc. This is not an ordinary sink. Any minute particles of the Precious Blood or Body of Christ that are missed during purification must be washed directly into the ground, not into a sewer drain pipe.

## PRACTICUM: EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

**Before Mass:** **ALWAYS CHECK IN WITH THE MASS OVERSEER WHEN YOU ARRIVE.** *If you are not present and checked in by five minutes before Mass, they will be looking for a substitute for you!* If you are not on the schedule, please let the overseer know if you are available to substitute if needed. If you notice that a deacon or another priest is present, check with the Mass overseer to ascertain if they will be serving Communion. If so, you may not be needed at this service; however, sometimes the visiting minister may not be physically able to serve.

**When to go up to the sanctuary:** at the sign of peace, all EMHCs should take their position in line before the sanctuary (in front of the front pew/row). You may exchange the greeting of peace with those in close proximity to your seat before proceeding to the altar, but not for a prolonged period of time. After exchanging the handshake of peace, use the hand washing cloth (the overseer will give this to you when you check in) to cleanse your hands. There is sanitizer in the book rack of the first pew on the left. If you are scheduled to serve on the right side (R), please line up on the right side now; the same is true on the left side (L). If at all possible position yourself in a pew which will eliminate the need for you to cross in front of the altar to reach your correct position. ***The sign of peace ends when the Lamb of God begins.*** (If you are not scheduled, but notice there is not the proper number of ministers in the sanctuary, please step up and take the vacant place.) Father consumes the precious Body and Blood and places the chalice back on the altar, the antiphon is sung. When the hymn begins, all ministers proceed to their designated positions on the altar (*A diagram is included in these instructions.*) **C loft** Minister goes directly to Father; he will offer the bread and then the cup. When he says, “The Blood of Christ,” you respond, “Amen,” take the chalice and the purificator from him, drink from the cup **immediately**, wipe the edge, and then **step back around the end of the altar**. As Father offers the bread to the servers and remaining ministers in the sanctuary, you will follow him with the Precious Blood. After serving all those in the sanctuary you will use this cup to serve the loft and handicap, take it with you to your assigned location as all ministers proceed to their respective positions for serving the congregation. (*See diagram*)

**At Communion:** If there are handicapped persons in the front pew/row the **right** bread minister should service the entire front pew from center aisle to the wall. If you are scheduled as cup minister, you serve the front pew before taking your assigned position.

When there is more than one priest on the altar at Mass, one priest does not give communion to another priest—he holds out the ciborium for the other priest(s) to take it himself. However, we (as EMHCs) do not take the Body and Blood for ourselves. The priest gives it to us, and then in turn we give it to others. At the present time, Father is unable to serve as a Eucharistic minister for the congregation, so an extra Bread minister is assigned for each Mass.

If you are a Bread minister and run low in your ciborium during Communion, you may get some from the other Bread minister’s ciborium. If it appears that neither of you have enough Bread to serve the remaining communicants, then Bread minister **L** should go to the tabernacle and return to the line with the ciborium from the tabernacle. Leave your empty ciborium on the shelf in front of the tabernacle. Return to the line and share the Eucharist from the tabernacle ciborium with Bread minister **R** until all communicants have been served. Reserved Eucharist are **never brought to the altar beforehand, they are to be used only if all consecrated Eucharist from that Mass have been used.** If you see you only have a few more people to serve, in lieu of going to the tabernacle you may break the remaining Bread in halves or quarters until all have received. If it is necessary to use the reserved Eucharist from the tabernacle, **never use the last one. We must always have at least one for Viaticum.** In the Hall we do not go to the tabernacle if we run out of Eucharist. Look to the other ministers to share and tell all to break if possible. If we **do** run out of consecrated Bread, the Precious Blood is adequate for the communicant. All Bread ministers place their empty ciborium on the credence table, then rinse their fingers in the lavabo basin, and return to their seat. Large quantities of remaining Eucharist should be combined in the tabernacle ciborium. If you have used the tabernacle ciborium Bread Minister **L** should carry the empty ciborium from the tabernacle shelf to the credence table for purification by the presiding priest or deacon. Please remember to rinse your fingers prior to returning to your seat.

**Body of Christ:** as the person comes up to you, make eye contact if possible. Hold the Bread up over the ciborium and say, “The Body of Christ.” Wait momentarily for the person to respond with “Amen,” (some people do not respond, in which case you say ‘Amen’ for them). Let your fingers lightly brush his or her palm as you place the Body of Christ in their hand. Touch is an important part of community. If the person prefers to receive on the tongue, it is a matter of technique that you will have to experiment with for yourself to see what works the best—your palm up or down as you give the Body of Christ. Whether to receive on the tongue or in the hand is *always* the choice of the communicant, not the minister. We have parishioners who are gluten intolerant. If you receive a ciborium with a tiny plastic bag it is a low-gluten host. Father usually puts that Consecrated Host in the minister’s ciborium on the side the communicant is sitting on as instructed by the overseer. You do not need to know who will receive it, they will tell you they need it when they approach. **Do not** remove the Consecrated Host from the “baggie.” Just offer it in the baggie the same as you would the regular Body of Christ, they will respond and know what to do with it. (The baggie is later returned to the church to be purified).

If a communicant approaches you with a small round metal receptacle (called a pyx), they are asking for Eucharist to take to the homebound. If they do not specify a number, place one Bread in their pyx, it is not necessary to say “The Body of Christ”. Be sure to offer the communicant the Body of Christ; now, hold the Bread up over the ciborium and say, “The Body of Christ” wait momentarily for the person to respond; there is no set procedure whether you serve the communicant or fill the pyx first.

If the Bread is dropped during distribution, the Extraordinary Minister should pick it up, consume it, then go get a purificator and cover the spot where the Bread fell. After Mass, the purificator can be moistened and the spot blotted to be sure no loose particles of the Precious Body remain on the floor. Try to not let the communicant pick up the lost Bread, you do it and consume it.

**Blood of Christ:** as the person comes up to you, make eye contact if possible. Hold the chalice up and say, “The Blood of Christ.” Wait momentarily for the person to respond with “Amen,” (some people do not respond, again, if they do not, say ‘Amen’ for them). When they hand it back to you, use the fully opened purificator to wipe the rim of the chalice. Be sure to wipe away lipstick residue. Turn the chalice a little (approximately a quarter turn) before you hand it to the next person. If you run out of the Precious Blood, take your cup to the credence table, place it on the tray and return to your seat.

If any Precious Blood is accidentally spilled on the floor, cover the spot with your purificator immediately. Get another purificator from the sacristy and continue to serve. After Mass is over the spot will need to be blotted thoroughly and treated further. See the Mass Overseer after Mass to get instruction on what should be done.

**Intinction:** this is the dipping of the Bread into the Precious Blood. *Self-intinction is not allowed even by an EMHC.* Take the Bread from the person’s hand, dip it into the Precious Blood, and while holding it over the cup, say, “The Body and Blood of Christ.” Wait momentarily for the person to respond with “Amen,” (some people do not respond, again respond for them). Place the Body and Blood of Christ on the person’s tongue. Do not return this dipped Eucharist to the communicant’s hand. We do have people who receive in this manner.

**Small Children:** if a small child stops in front of you with his or her parent, it is not uncommon in other parishes for the priest, deacon or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to place their hand on the child’s head or make the sign of the cross on his or her forehead to show that they are still included in this celebration. This is not a recommended practice, however, and is not done in this parish. The child should be taught to bow reverently to the Body and Blood of Christ.

**SMILE:** remember--always smile and be friendly and welcoming.

## AFTER COMMUNION:

**Bread Minister:** Minister **R** will pour their remaining Bread (if any) into minister **L**'s ciborium, who will take it to the tabernacle. After placing the Eucharist in the covered ciborium, close the door and turn the key. Take your empty ciborium from the shelf and place it on the credence table for purification. If there are less than 12 Breads remaining when all have received, take them directly to the credence table and consume them with the help of the other ministers. Do so with your back to the congregation. Before leaving the sanctuary, both Bread ministers should rinse their fingers in the water in the Lavabo basin and dry them on the finger tip towel Father used at the Washing of Hands.

**Cup Minister:** When all have received, go back to the credence table and consume any remaining Precious Blood in your cup. Do so with your back to the congregation. **Do not drink while you are walking.** Place your cup on the tray and your purificator on the table and return to your seat. Do not put the purificator down inside the cup. The **Bread** minister who has served the handicap (and choir in Church) will bring the empty cup and ciborium to the altar and remain there until Father has finished purifying all the vessels, then they can rinse their fingers in the Lavabo basin. (See Purification instructions below.) If the amount of Precious Blood left in your cup is more than you feel comfortable consuming, ask another minister to help you. This should be done with your back(s) to the congregation. **ALL** of the Precious Blood must be consumed; it cannot be poured down the sink.

## AFTER MASS

### PURIFICATION OF CHALICES AND CIBORIA:

New Vatican rules specify that purification of all vessels used in distribution of Holy Communion at all Masses **MUST** be purified by a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte as soon as distribution to the congregation is completed. When you are finished serving at your designated location, bring your vessel to the credence table, consume any remaining Precious Blood and return to your seat. The vessels used for distribution to the handicapped and the choir loft **must** be brought to the credence table at this time by the assigned **bread** minister. That minister will remain in the sanctuary by the credence table until Father finishes purifying all of the vessels. When he is finished, the minister will cover all the vessels with the clean white cloth (not one of the purificators), rinse their fingers in the Lavabo basin and return to his/her seat. The clean white cloth signifies that all the vessels have been purified and are ready to be washed. Father will return to his chair and, after a short period of silence, will continue with the Prayer After Communion. After the Closing Hymn all ministers will come to the sacristy and assist in washing and drying the purified vessels and returning everything to its proper place, whether it be setting up for the next Mass or putting everything away in the Priests' sacristy. *Please refer to the pictures on the cupboard doors of where things go!* (See Team Effort below.)

### A Team Effort:

Wash communion vessels – hot water and soap; rinse well. **Only one item in sink at a time.**

All purificators should be sprayed with **SHOUT** and placed in the soaking bowls on the counter.

\*While some are washing the vessels, others can be refilling the wine flagon and placing it in the refrigerator. Refill wine flagon – after 5:00pm and 8:00am only.\*

Put out unconsecrated hosts in the large ciborium for the next Mass keeping the large host in a plastic bag to preserve freshness with a sleeve of unopened small host -after 5:00pm and 8:00am only\* cover it with a clean purificator and leave in priest's sacristy. *Please note: the water cruet should be put in the refrigerator after 5:00pm Mass. After 8:00am it may be left on the credence table with lavabo basin and pitchers.* If you are ministering at the last Mass of the weekend, everything must be washed, dried, and put away in the proper cupboards.

## COUNTING OF RESERVED EUCHARIST IN TABERNACLE

Even if none of the reserved Eucharist have been used at this Mass, bread minister **L** should go to the tabernacle immediately after Mass and count the number of Eucharist in the ciborium and record it on the tally sheet in the priest's sacristy. It is necessary to know at all times how many consecrated hosts are in the tabernacle, and sometimes a minister or ministers may have taken some to the sick or homebound. Be sure the glass bowl has been taken to the credence table for purification. After 5:00pm and 10:00am Masses the tabernacle key should be removed and placed inside the locked cupboard in the priest's sacristy. This is not necessary after 8:00am; access to the tabernacle will be necessary for 10:00am. The exception to this is when 10:00am Mass is celebrated in the Hall.

### WHERE TO FIND:

In the priest's sacristy, look for labels on drawers and the edge of the shelves in the cupboard to find where things belong. ***Note: we keep the large flagon in the locked cupboard with the chalices.*** Do not leave the stoppers in the flagons or cruets; They need air circulation to dry or they will mildew. For those of you who aren't sure 'where things go' when putting away or setting up please ask for help.

**Hosts:** Unconsecrated hosts come in cellophane rolls of 100 each. Please do not leave a partial roll in the box. Place it in a Ziploc bag to keep it fresher. Priest's large hosts are in a box in a zip-lock bag. Be sure to close the bag after removing one large host. **PLEASE** be sure all plastic bags are zipped tight. The hosts get stale very quickly when not airtight, especially in humid weather.

**Wine:** in the far right closet in the priest's sacristy. Put empty bottles upside-down in the case. *Please* keep at least three bottles in the refrigerator.

**Laundry Bag:** in the right-hand closet in servers' sacristy, there is a bag for soiled linens. The damp towels from washing communion vessels should be hung on the drying racks attached to the right end of the sink cabinet.

**Clean purificators and finger towels:** in the labeled drawer under the counter in the priest's sacristy.

## PRACTICUM FOR MASS IN THE HALL

When it is necessary to celebrate Mass in the hall, some procedures described above need to be modified:

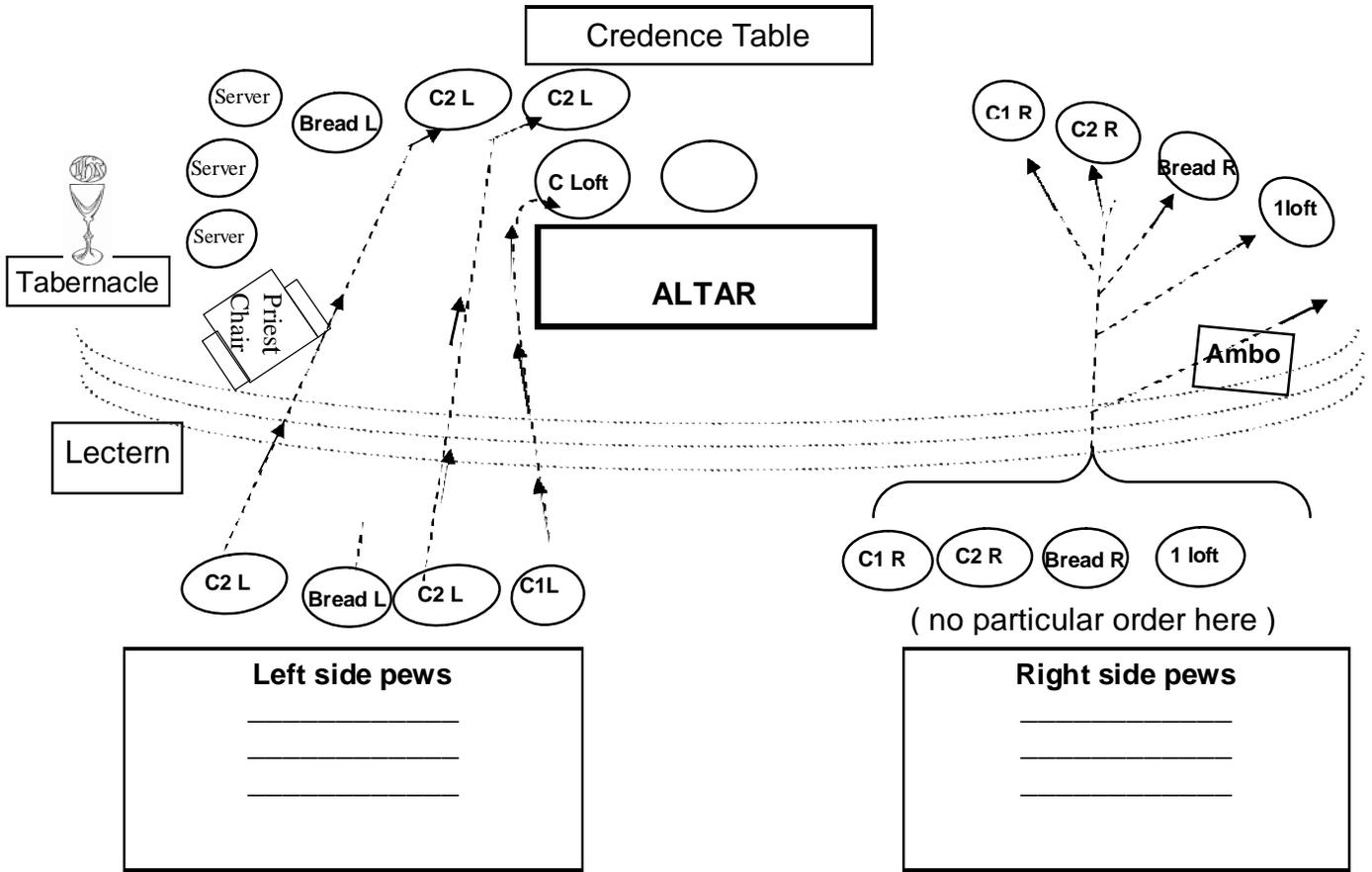
There are 12 EMHCs assigned for each Mass—four bread ministers and 8 cup ministers. After the handshake of Peace, all ministers line up across the front as in the church. Two bread ministers and 4 cup ministers should be lined up on each side, so check to be sure one side is not “overcrowded.” Your schedule will designate which side you should be on by “Right” and “Left”. When it is time to approach the altar, 4 cup ministers and 2 bread ministers move to their right and around behind the altar. 3 cup ministers and 2 bread ministers move to the left and behind the altar. It is easy to remember there are two Bread ministers on each end. The fourth cup minister, which will be designated on the schedule as –C1L, will go up on the altar and follow the same procedure as minister 1L in the church. After offering the Precious Blood to all ministers and the servers, C1L will follow the overseer, who will have hosts to distribute to the handicapped, down the aisle by the kitchen. When all the handicapped have received, C1L will proceed up the aisle on the far left side and take the position next to the Bread minister by the choir. At this time, one of the other cup ministers should move over and continue to serve communicants coming up from left side seats. The overseer will assist Father with purifying the vessels as that person will be responsible to take any extra Eucharist to the tabernacle at the end of the Mass. A diagram is included to show proper positions for all ministers in the hall. If for some reason we are short of people and do not have enough cup ministers, please space accordingly. Both in the church and in the hall, if you don’t end up exactly where you think you should be, it’s usually best to just “go with the flow”. If for some reason you cannot distribute the vessel given to you or you have been given special instructions by the overseer you have to trade with another minister AFTER father has given you a vessel.

The credence table in the hall is the large round table to the right of the altar as you face it. If you are a Bread minister, all remaining Eucharist are combined into one vessel at the credence table. If it is possible to consume what are left, all ministers should help to consume if need be. The Mass overseer should be at the credence table to assist you. If all Breads are not consumed at this time they are combined into the large metal covered Pyx and returned to the church tabernacle by the overseer immediately after the Recessional Hymn. The overseer remains at the credence table to assist the priest with purification of all the vessels and then covers them with the large white cloths. The overseer should remain near the credence table until after the final blessings and then follow the priest and servers down the aisle carrying the Pyx containing the remaining consecrated hosts.

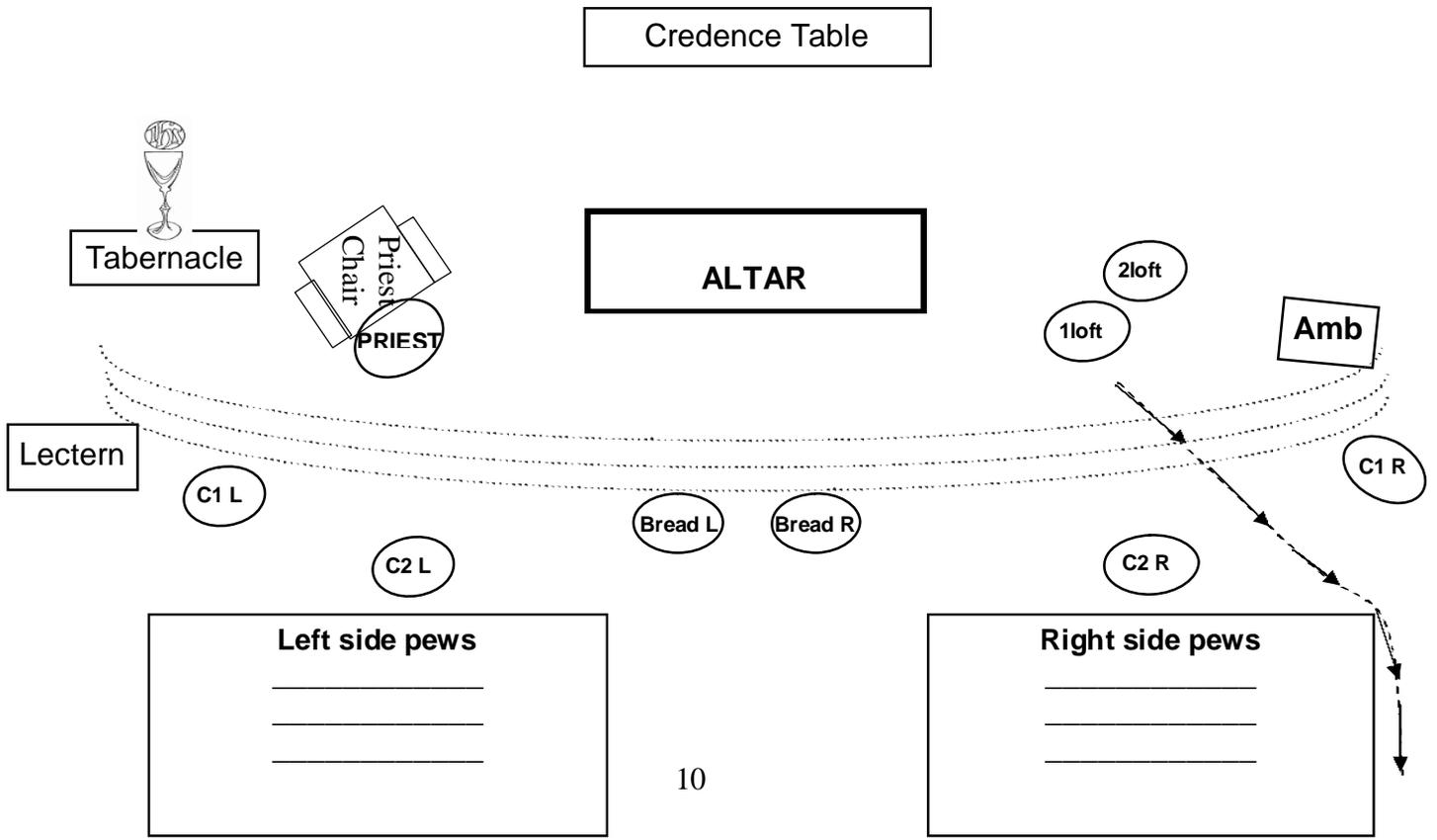
Vessels are washed in the large sinks in the kitchen. Since the only Mass usually celebrated in the hall is 10:00am, all vessels are returned to the cabinet in the hall sacristy, inside the K of C room beyond the kitchen. Please see the instructions of where to place things. After people have left the holy water dishes near the doors also need to be washed and put away. The water is to be dumped on the ground outside or into a plant in the vestibule, not into the sink as it is not a sacrarium.

Thank you to all who are so dedicated to this ministry! Please know that you are very much appreciated!

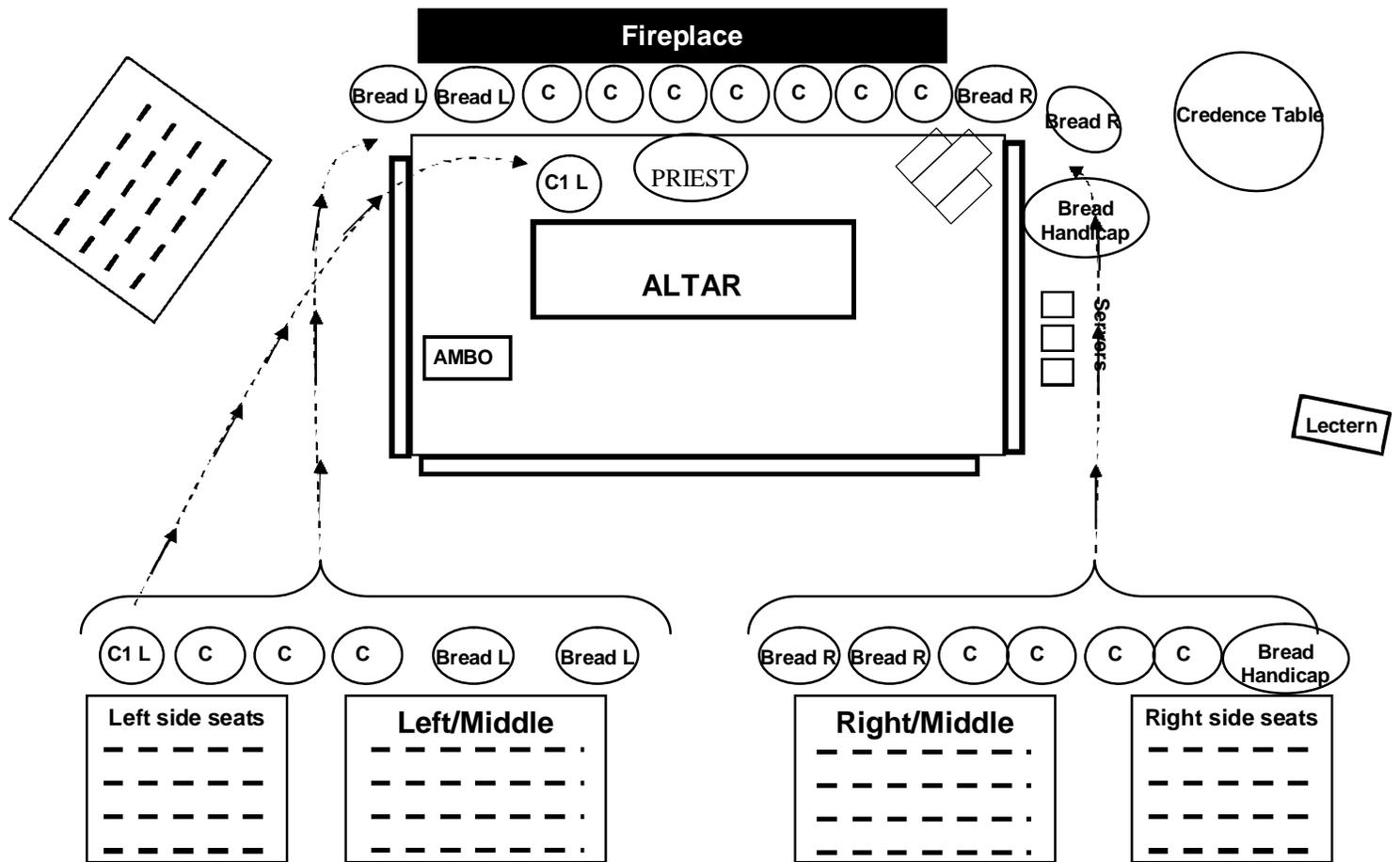
# EMHC POSITIONS in Church BEFORE Communion



# EMHC POSITIONS in Church DURING Communion



# EMHC Positions in Hall BEFORE Communion



# EMHC Positions in Hall DURING Communion

