

Guidelines for the Distribution of Holy Communion

These norms are designed to allow for the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass in any venue in a safe manner for both ministers and communicants.

All liturgical norms that govern the ordinary distribution of Holy Communion are observed in these norms, preserving the integrity of the celebration and distribution of the Eucharist.

Reception of Holy Communion on the tongue remains permissible, as required by the liturgical law of the Church, with the admonition that the faithful should be reminded of the unique risks posed by receiving the Eucharist in this manner. They should be strongly encouraged to receive Communion in the hand for the duration of the pandemic.

These norms are to be observed by both ordinary and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and remain in effect until otherwise abrogated.

I. General Norms for those receiving Holy Communion on the hand

- a. **Social distancing** rules must be observed during the procession to and from a communicant's seat.
- b. Given the safety concerns involved, it is strongly encouraged that the celebrant reminds those attending Mass of the **proper way to receive Holy Communion**. This reminder is designed to avoid any physical contact between the minister and the communicant.
- c. The minister must make every effort to **avoid touching the hand of the communicant** (see below).
- d. When approaching the minister, the communicant is required:
 - i. To remove his or her face mask;
 - ii. If necessary, hold the mask with one hand
 1. It is recommended that all who attend Mass wear a face mask that has loops that extend over the ears, allowing one side to be loosened without the need for a complete removal of the Mask
 - iii. Extend the free hand forward while holding it still, allowing the minister to place the Eucharist in the palm of the open hand(s).
- e. In order to minimize the possibility of contact with droplets between the communicant and minister, there are two acceptable ways to accommodate the dialogue that occurs between the communicant and the minister. The pastor of each parish is asked to choose one of these methods to be followed in his parish.
 - i. **First Method:**
 1. Each communicant will come forward and while retaining his or her face mask and standing in front of the minister, receive the consecrated Host from the minister.

2. While the communicant retains his or her mask, the minister will say “Body of Christ” and the communicant will respond “Amen”.
3. The communicant will step aside, remove one side of their mask, consume the consecrated Host and return to their seat.

ii. Second Method:

1. While retaining a face mask, each communicant will be asked to stop six feet in front of the minister before coming forward to receive the Eucharist.
2. The minister will say “Body of Christ” and the communicant will respond “Amen”.
3. The communicant will come forward, receive the Eucharist silently, and after stepping aside, remove his or her face mask and consume the consecrated Host.

II. General Norms for those receiving Holy Communion on the tongue

- a. Holy Communion will be distributed to those who wish to receive on the tongue in one of **two distinct ways**
 - i. A separate line will be formed for those receiving on the tongue or
 - ii. If there is a single line, those receiving on the tongue will come up after everyone else has received Communion in the hand
- b. **Social distancing rules** must be observed during the procession to and from a communicant’s seat and at the altar rail (if applicable)
- c. **Kneelers** are permitted provided:
 - i. They are wooden or composed of a durable substance that allows for easy cleaning;
 - ii. Provision must be made to sanitize the top of the kneeler in a reasonable time in between communicants.
- d. Use of a **Communion Rail** is permitted provided:
 - i. The places where each communicant will kneel are to be clearly marked 6 feet apart;
 - ii. The rail must be disinfected with a sanitary wipe after each person leaves his or her place.

III. Requirements for Ministers distributing Holy Communion

- a. **Distribution of Holy Communion in the hand:**
 - i. **Before Communion begins**
 1. Each minister **must sanitize his or her hands**

2. **A face mask is required** for all who distribute Holy Communion. It is recommended that a minister wear either a medical mask or N95 mask.
3. Although there is little medical evidence that wearing gloves provides any additional protection from infection, **the use of gloves is permitted by the minister.**
 - a. If a glove is used, it must be removed correctly after the distribution of Holy Communion (i.e., a glove should be removed inside out) and placed in a designated container for proper disposal (i.e., burning).
4. Extra care must be taken **not to touch the communicant's hand.**

ii. **During the distribution of Communion:**

1. If the minister makes contact with the hand of the communicant, the minister will be required to sanitize his or her hand thoroughly
 - a. For such sanitization to be possible, a table with hand sanitizer or a bowl with a solution of 70% alcohol and a towel should be placed in proximity to the minister who is distributing Communion.
 - b. If alcohol is used, it must be poured down the sacrarium after the conclusion of Mass.

iii. **After the distribution of Communion:**

1. Each minister is required to thoroughly sanitize his or her hands.
2. A face mask must be retained if the EME returns to a place within the assembly

b. Distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue:

i. **Before Communion begins**

1. All the requirements listed above are applicable
2. The minister is **strongly encouraged to put on face shield.**
 - a. When a face shield is used, it must be removed properly after the distribution of Holy Communion is complete, placed in a designated place and must be properly sanitized after Mass.
3. **The use of gloves by each minister is strongly encouraged.**

ii. **During the distribution of Communion**

1. **The minister is required to disinfect his or her hands after each communicant** who receives on the tongue.
 - a. The hand used to distribute Holy Communion must be sanitized in between each communicant.

- b. For such sanitization to be possible, a table with hand sanitizer or a bowl containing a solution of 70% alcohol and a towel should be placed in proximity to the minister who is distributing Communion.
 - i. If alcohol is used, it must be poured down the sacrarium after the conclusion of Mass.
- c. The procedure is the same whether the minister wear a glove or not.

iii. After distributing Communion:

- 1. The minister is asked to properly remove face shield (if used) and mask.
- 2. Hands must be thoroughly sanitized
- 3. If gloves were used, the gloves must be removed in the proper manner, then the minister must disinfect his or her hands.
 - a. The gloves should be burned after Mass.

c. After the conclusion of Mass:

- i. All vessels and face shields must be purified and sanitized