

St. John Vianney Catholic Community

The Distribution of Holy Communion Within our Community

January 2007

The following are basic procedures for the distribution of Holy Communion by all ministers of the Eucharist at St. John Vianney parish. These instructions are divided into three parts: before liturgy, during liturgy and after liturgy. Each part, as necessary, focuses on the roles and functions of all involved liturgical ministers.

BEFORE THE LITURGY

Ministers of the Eucharist

- (a) If you cannot make your assignment, contact another minister of the Eucharist and arrange for a replacement so all stations will be covered.
- (b) Please be certain to arrive at church no later than twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of mass, and sign the minister sign-in sheet located in the hallway outside the sacristy. When signing in make sure that you do so in communion station numerical order.
- (c) Check to see if there are any notes or special instructions for the mass as sometimes there will be concelebrants and/or deacons who will be assigned communion stations.

DURING THE LITURGY

All Ministers:

Hospitality, Eucharist, Presider, Deacons, Concelebrants & Sacristans

- (a) During the Sign of Peace all signed-in ministers of the Eucharist proceed to the sanctuary. Ministers of the cup gather at the right side of the altar (Mary's shrine side), and ministers of the bread gather at the left side of the altar (Joseph's shrine side). Please stand together on the top level of brick, in front of the wood steps ([predella](#)), in a single line, facing the altar.
- (b) While gathering, the servers will bring the trays with communion vessels to the altar and the sacristan will remove any previously consecrated bread from the tabernacle and place it on the altar.

SACRISTANS NOTE: When removing any previously consecrated bread from the tabernacle, make certain the door of the tabernacle is closed. Do not leave the door open after removing the ciborium.

- (c) Hospitality ministers begin the communion procession as the fractioning rite begins (during the singing or recitation of the Lamb Of God). The procession of the assembly begins from the last pew in the church and moves forward. The assembly members proceed to the front of the aisles and wait until all ministers of communion have taken the places for the distribution of communion to begin.

- (d) Fractioning of the consecrated bread and wine is done by the assigned minister's of the Eucharist with the presider. The presider hands the flagon of consecrated wine to the minister for fractioning. The presider then prepares his bread bowl from the offering bowl and assists in the consecrated bread distribution.

SACRISTANS NOTE: It is not the duty or responsibility of the sacristan to fraction either the consecrated bread or wine except in unusual conditions. It is the duty of the assigned minister of the Eucharist to do so. Sacristans should not take away these duties and responsibilities except in unusual situations.

- (e) In some instances there may be concelebrating priests and deacons at the altar. If so, they will fraction while all ministers of the Eucharist remain at the top level of brick.
- (f) As indicated above, any and all concelebrating priests and deacons will be assigned communion stations. In some instances assigned ministers of the Eucharist may not be required.
- (g) When fractioning is completed, the ministers are handed their communion vessels, but remain at the altar (do not proceed to your communion station) until after the presider has taken communion.
- (h) All ministers proceed to the communion stations in full view of the assembly. No ministers are to walk behind the reredos walls in order to proceed to the communion stations. Additionally, ministers take the most direct route (and not the longest path) to their communion stations. Please hold your vessel up, as is comfortable and possible for you; and always move with reverence to your station.
- (i) When proceeding to the communion stations, ministers do not stop, bow or genuflect towards the tabernacle (keep in mind you are carrying the Lord, so there is no need to show reverence to the tabernacle which at this point is technically empty, and the focus for the assembly is directed to the movement of the consecrated bread and wine from the altar to the communion stations
- (j) As a sign of unity do not begin offering communion to the assembly until the presider and all other ministers reach their communion stations. All ministers of the Eucharist, including the presider, should begin offering communion to the assembly together at one time.
- (k) When giving communion to a member of the assembly be certain that you make eye contact with the communicant, and then say **only the prescribed formula** for the type that you are distributing ("The Body of Christ" in the case of the consecrated bread; "The Blood of Christ" in the case of the consecrated wine). Be certain to speak so the communicant hears you and wait for their "Amen" before giving them communion.
- (l) For member of the assembly not receiving communion, as indicted by their hands crossed over their chests, the minister may offer a greeting using the words "May God bless you and keep you in his love". You may extend your hand toward them but keep in mind not to touch them with your fingertips.
- (m) Once there are no further communicants at any aisle, all ministers of the Eucharist first check to see if any other stations in the church requires assistance **before receiving communion**. If any cup minister has remaining consecrated wine, check to see if any other cup ministers need their cups replenished.

SACRISTANS NOTE: While communion is taking place be sure to monitor its flow and help to direct ministers of the Eucharist to other stations when their station is finished.

- (n) As a sign of service (ministers are in service to the community) and hospitality (lunch or dinner hosts always are certain that the guests have been served before they eat, and the same holds true when offering the sacred body and blood of our Lord at the Eucharistic feast) all ministers of the Eucharist are communicated after the assembly. In doing so all ministers are to conduct themselves in a reverent manner, getting into a communion line and receiving under both types as appropriate. Please do not make a show of this action! Ministers of the Eucharist are to receive in the same manner as all members of the assembly.
- (o) After receiving communion the ministers proceed to the sanctuary and return the vessels for amalgamation and purification.
- (p) Cup ministers return the cups and purificators to the credence table located at either side of the sanctuary. Please proceed to the table closest to your communion station.
- (q) Bread ministers return the bowls to the altar for amalgamation. If one bread minister assists another by taking additional bowls to the altar, make certain that you only carry a maximum of two bowls, and that any remaining consecrated bread is not poured into one bowl, or that the bowls are not stacked one on the other. ***These actions take place only at the altar and not in the assembly.***
- (r) The assigned bread minister remains at the altar to receive the bowls and amalgamate the remaining consecrated bread into the ciborium. After all has been amalgamated the minister returns the ciborium to the tabernacle, closes and locks it, genuflects and then takes the tray with the used bowls to the credence table located at the left side of the altar (Joseph's shrine side).

SACRISTANS NOTE: It is not the duty or responsibility of the sacristan to amalgamate the remaining consecrated bread. It is the duty of the assigned minister of the Eucharist to do so. Sacristans should not take away these duties and responsibilities except in unusual situations.

- (s) When proceeding to either the credence table or altar, all ministers do so in full view of the assembly. DO NOT proceed by walking behind the reredos walls. In proceeding to the appropriate place take the shortest appropriate route (e.g. bread ministers returning from Mary's shrine side stations may proceed directly to the top of the altar without walking completely around it and moving up to it from the location where you received communion).
- (t) Immediately return to your seats within the assembly as purification of the vessels takes place following mass. When leaving the sanctuary it is not necessary for you to genuflect or bow to the tabernacle. Simply proceed without ceremony to the seats.

FOLLOWING THE LITURGY

- (a) All bread and cup ministers proceed to the sacristy to purify the vessels used for the distribution of communion. **Please do not leave this task for others to do.**