

St. Patrics Church, MT Dora
EMHC, Sacristan, Ministers of the Sick

Policy and Practice

Updated in August 2026; Effective September 1st, 2026

Introduction

St. Patrick Catholic Church community is grateful for the faithful service offered through these ministries. The Church entrusts this sacred service to us with confidence and with the expectation that we will carry it out with reverence, humility, and care. This document is intended to serve as both instruction and guidance, helping us serve God and our parish community in a manner worthy of the sacred liturgy. These protocols are to be observed so that our ministry may reflect liturgical decorum, consistency, order, beauty, and promote a deeper appreciation for sacred worship.

➤ **Proper dress:**

- Ministers serving at the altar and in the distribution of Holy Communion are asked to dress modestly and professionally, in a manner that reflects reverence for the Eucharist and the sacred liturgy. As Scripture teaches, we seek to glorify God in our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20) and to present ourselves with modesty, dignity, and humility (1 Timothy 2:9–10).
- Always come to Mass prepared to serve in case you are needed as a substitute.
- We are also reminded to approach one another with charity, respect, and understanding.

➤ **Sacristans**

- Must be in good standing with the church: Baptized, confirmed, married in the church, communicant, Safe-environment trained and fingerprinted, and valid diocesan mandate
- Must attend on-going formation (ministers' workshop) and keep up to date with any changes
- Sacristans do not take communion to the sick/homebound except if they have mandate as ministers of the sick/homebound

- Sacristans will place the appropriate number of hosts in the large ciborium. This number should be determined by the head count taken with the clicker by the sacristan. As the faithful are ordinarily to receive from the hosts consecrated at that Mass, sacristans should prepare enough hosts for those present, with approximately twenty additional hosts as needed. Ordinarily, no more than thirty regular hosts should remain in the tabernacle after Mass.
- The sacristan places the requested number of hosts for the sick and homebound in the pyx, according to the request of the Minister of the Sick. All pyxes should then be placed in the small wooden tray and kept on the credence table.
- Families can bring gifts to the altar. The gifts, large ciborium and wine filled cruet, will be placed on the table before (in-front of) the Baptismal Font.
- The gifts are brought to the altar by the family, led by an altar server, at the prompting of the deacon or priest. Ensure the altar is prepared before sending the gift bearers to the Altar.

➤ **Ministers of the Sick:**

- Must be in good standing with the church: Baptized, confirmed, married in the church, communicant, Safe-environment trained and fingerprinted, specifically trained for this ministry and with valid diocesan mandate
- Must attend on-going formation (ministers' workshop) and keep up to date with any changes
- Must adhere to all diocesan policies including respect for privacy and confidentiality in serving the sick and homebound
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass and inform the sacristan how many consecrated hosts are needed for the pyx.
- Proceed to the altar after the Deacons cleanses and clears the altar to receive the pyx from the priest or the deacon. Leave immediately after final blessing and go straight to give communion to the sick and homebound
- Do not hang around or chat or go shopping with the consecrated host. Consume the Eucharist if one or three are

left. However, return the leftovers to the tabernacle immediately after your last visit.

- Do not go to the tabernacle after mass to take out host for the sick except in emergency situations.
- If you are unable to attend mass but intend to go to visit the sick later during the day let Fr. Rowland or Fr. Vibin or Michael or Joe know, so you can have access to the tabernacle key.

➤ EMHC

- Must be in good standing with the church: Baptized, confirmed, married in the church, communicant, Safe-environment trained and fingerprinted, specifically trained for this ministry and with valid diocesan mandate
- Must attend on-going formation (ministers' workshop) and keep up to date with any changes
- **Ministers should receive Holy Communion at the Mass at which they are scheduled to distribute Holy Communion. Ministers should examine their conscience, strive to remain in a state of grace, and seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation when needed. If a minister is conscious of grave sin, he or she should refrain from serving until reconciled.**
- Do not take communion to the sick/homebound except if you have a mandate as ministers of the sick/homebound
- Ensure that the Eucharist is always handled properly and reverently.
- If you suspect that someone is not a communicant, you can politely withhold given the holy communion to the individual.
- If you gave someone holy communion and they put it in their pocket, quietly walk up to the person and retrieve the host from him/her or instruct him/her to consume it while you watch.

PREPARATTION

➤ **Captain Responsibilities**

- The captain meets with the **sacristan** prior to Mass to confirm the number of ministers. If there are fewer ministers than scheduled, let the **sacristan** know to remove what is not needed.
- Prior to Mass the captain goes to the altar to review the credence table. Check for the right number of cups and ciboria. Purificators is placed in a basket near the hand sanitizers on both sides. (We know the **sacristans** and deacons do this, but it is always good to have another set of eyes)
- If you do not wish to serve as a captain, please notify Michael. He can set it up on the Ministry Scheduler, so you are not scheduled as captain.

➤ **Arriving for Mass**

- Arrive early to mass to ensure instruments for service ("instrumentum laborum") are available and prepared
- Please be at church no later than 20 minutes prior to the start of Mass. Please go directly into the Ministry Room and check-in using the kiosk. Stay or come back 10 minutes prior to the start of Mass so we can pray together.
- If you have not signed-in 15 minutes prior to the start of Mass, you may be replaced. This will give the captain time to find a replacement if need be. Please check with the captain to see if you are still needed or are replaced. This also gives the **sacristan** time to adjust the number of vessels.
- Enter the Ministry Room through the Narthex "Gathering Space". Do not walk through the Control Room or Sacristy.

SERVING

➤ **When to Proceed to the Altar**

- Go to the altar as soon as the Deacon says, "Let us offer each other the sign of peace." Bow once prior to going up. Go up on either side, not in the middle.

- Cup positions will pick up a purificator from either side of the altar near the hand sanitizer.
- Captains no longer need to go to tabernacle.
- All positions will stand behind the altar, as usual, but you do not need to stand on your numbered position.
- Do not talk while on the altar.
- Do not be distracted or cause distractions. Take a reverential posture/comportment

➤ **Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ**

- Examine your conscience prior to coming to mass. Go to confession regularly. If you are not in a state of grace do not serve.
- The priest will distribute the Eucharist to the ministers followed by the deacon, or captain when the deacon is not present, who will distribute the Precious Blood.
- When the deacon is absent the captain should stand near the altar so that the priest can distribute the Precious Blood to him/her and in turn he/she will give it to the EMHC's.
- When the priest is finished, he will hand the cups and ciboria to the EMHC's. Cup positions will have their purificators so that the priest will know who gets a cup and who gets a ciborium.
- Under no circumstances should an EMHC take anything off the altar. This task is for the priest and deacon alone. The priest will distribute all the vessels if no deacon is present.

➤ **Returning when finished serving.**

- Host positions will return their ciborium to the sacristy. There will be a corporal left there. Place your ciborium on the corporal there and walk back to your seat.
- The body and blood carried by EMHC to the sacristy through the gathering area: cup positions will cover their cup with their purificator and go to the sacristy. You should go through the Gathering Space (Narthex), not the Control Room. (*You may motion to the handicap people on your way back to see if they wish to receive the Precious Blood.*) The sacristy is where you will consume the Precious Blood that is left in your cup. You

can ask another minister to do this if you cannot. Please do so in a reverential way. You then may return to your seat.

- The leftover body of the Lord is gathered into one ciborium and one of the EMHC brings it and places it on the altar.
- **Sacristans:** When the cups have been emptied of the Precious Blood, purify them, and wash them after mass, and place them together on the counter and cover all of them with a cloth.
- The priest or deacon will take the ciborium left on the altar by the EMHC and place it in the tabernacle.

➤ **Tabernacle Key**

- Before mass place the key in the tabernacle.
- Remove the key from the Tabernacle immediately after reposing (returning) the leftover Eucharist.
- Place the key on the Chalice and move it to the credence table.
- Return the key to its safe place in the sacristy immediately after mass
- Do not use or give out the key except to clean the tabernacle, or return the leftover host, or to count and confirm the number of hosts needed for the next mass, to transfer leftover Eucharist from one ciborium to another.

➤ **End of Mass**

- Please wait until the music is over to help the **sacristans** bring back the sacred vessels from the credence table, if any.

➤ **Weekday Masses and Funerals**

- Weekday Masses and funerals will be the same as always unless a deacon is present.
- **Sacristans** – please be aware of how many hosts are in the tabernacle so as not to overload the ciborium there

➤ **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- How to bless those that come with arms crossed?
- You may say:
 - “The peace of Christ be with you.”
 - “Receive the Lord Jesus in your heart.”
 - “God bless you.”

- You **cannot** make the sign of the cross on them. This is something only a priest or deacon can do.
- Do not touch the person; do not contaminate your hands.
- What to do if a host is dropped?
 - The person intended to receive the host can pick it up and consume it, OR
 - The EMHC can pick it up and consume it or put it in their hand (the hand holding their ciborium). Take it to the sacristy when you are done serving and dissolve it before putting it down the special sink/drain (Sacrarium). (This should only be performed if the host was compromised.)
- What to do if precious blood is spilled?
 - Lay your purificator on the precious blood
 - Go and retrieve another purificator
 - Tell the **sacristan** when you go to the sacristy, and he/she will clean it
- Can you break the host if you are running low?
 - No, you should direct people to another minister
 - Only when you know there are no more hosts should you break one
- What to do if someone walks away holding a host?
 - Stop your distribution and politely ask that person to consume/eat the host
 - Do not run after them if they refuse
 - Notice where they sit and what they are wearing so you can let a priest or deacon know
- How do you include the handicap in distributing the Precious Blood?
 - If the priest gives the host to someone in the front row, follow up with offering them the cup
 - On your way back to the sacristy you can ask or motion to the people sitting in the back. An usher may help with this

- **Gluten Free hosts**
 - People requesting a Gluten Free host must let a **sacristan** know so he/she can place one in a pyx. This will be placed on the altar during the Consecration. The person requesting it should be told to go to the designated EMHC line to receive
- What do you say when you are distributing Host and Precious Blood?
 - Say: "The Body of Christ" "The Blood of Christ" only
- What do you do when your line is finished and others are still distributing?
 - Only go to another line if there are more than 12 people in line
 - Do not go to help another line if there is already someone else there helping
 - Front cup positions may go to the cup positions halfway back if their lines are finished
- **Ministry Scheduler**
 - Please check your profile to see if you are signed up for the correct Mass. Put in any days or times you are not available. You can remove a position you are uncomfortable with doing in your profile. This is where you can remove the captain position if you do not wish to take on the responsibilities of the captain or the cup or host positions for the same reason.
 - Look at your schedule to know what position you are assigned. This is where you can request a substitute if you are not available. This can be done even hours before you are scheduled, and this will allow others to take your place.
 - At Mass, we serve God and the parish community, not the preference for a particular priest. Ministers are expected to be willing to serve with any priest celebrating Mass. If a minister consistently chooses to serve only with a specific priest, the pastor or ministry leadership may review that minister's continued service.
 - Contact Michael if you are having problems with the MSP app.

- If you have any questions or need clarification, reach out to your ministry leader or to Michael or speak with Fr. Rowland

Effective September 1st, 2026

Signed.....
Micheal Orola, Director of Liturgy

Signed.....
Fr. Rowland Onuegbu, SDV