

If sufficient notice prior to the production of each new roster is given our rostering system can take this into account and omit your name for the period of your absence.

Once a roster has been issued, if you need to be away during the period of that roster, we would ask you to make arrangements for a 'swap' with another reader. Each new roster will contain the contact details for your fellow ministers to facilitate this.

CATHOLIC PARISH OF FORSTER TUNCURRY



HANDBOOK FOR MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

Thank you for accepting the invitation to be a Minister of Communion during our community's celebration of the Lord's Day.

The ministry of assisting in the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ is a privileged and responsible one. To those who exercise this ministry belongs the awesome privilege of assisting the community assembled to worship God in the most profound act of our common worship, the reception of Communion.

This is therefore not a ministry to be undertaken lightly. It requires prayerful preparation and dedication.

The purpose of this Handbook is to offer guidance for the Parish's Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and the contents have been formulated in light of the requirements of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, sound pastoral liturgical practice, and the specific situations that exist in the Parish of Forster Tuncurry. I commend it to your reading and study.

Again, on behalf of the worshipping community, thank you for accepting the role of Minister of Communion.

Fr Andrew Doohan

February 2014.

Communion to consume the remaining Precious Blood it may not be possible. *If other Ministers are unable to assist you, please leave the chalice on the credence table covered by an opened purifier.* In this circumstance, the consumption of the remaining Precious Blood will be attended to after Mass is finished.

There is **no need** to remain in the sanctuary of the church after you have completed your ministerial task. After you have placed the vessel you were using on the credence table (and consumed the Precious Blood if you were ministering to the chalice) you can immediately move back to your seat, again moving deliberately. It is customary to again reverence the altar (not the tabernacle) as you return to your seat. The same practices apply to reverencing the altar on your way back to your seat, as on the way from your seat before communion.

There is **no need** to remain in the sanctuary area until the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the Tabernacle since this is a practical action, and not an intrinsic part of the ritual. The 'correct' practice is to come up at the appropriate time, fulfil the ministerial role, and then immediately return to your seat.

MINISTERS OF COMMUNION TO THE SICK

If you are one of the Ministers of Communion taking communion to the sick, you will be called forward by the presider before the final blessing at the end of Mass. Please be ready to move immediately after being called forward so as to not unreasonably delay the Mass.

After you have received the pyx containing the consecrated hosts, you will be commissioned to your role by the presider, after which you should return to your seats to make ready for your departure from the church.

At the end of the recessional hymn, you are asked to make your way without undue delay to those to whom you are taking communion.

ROSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

New rosters will be prepared every two months. They will generally be available two weeks before the current roster finishes

If you know you are going to be away at a particular time of the year, please let the Parish Office know as early as possible so that this can be recorded on our rostering system.

takes place will depend on whether the Mass is a Sunday Mass or a Weekday Mass.

At a **Sunday Mass** it is possible, and indeed preferable, to leave the purification until after Mass is finished. In this case, please be aware of the following:

- Please consume any of the Precious Blood that remains in the chalices as noted below.
- Leave the bowls and chalices on the credence table, *covered by opened purifiers*.
- After Mass is finished, it would be appreciated if a few Ministers of Communion could return to the credence table to assist the sacristans with the purification of these items as noted below.

At a **Weekday Mass** it would be preferable for the purification to be completed immediately after Communion is finished. In doing so, please be aware of the following:

- Please consume any of the Precious Blood that remains in the chalices as noted below.
- Please wipe the bowls or other items used for the distribution of the consecrated host into the chalices using the purifiers. Please **do not** use water in these bowls or other items.
- Rinse the chalice with water, and consume the remaining liquid.
- Wipe the inside of the chalice with the purifier.
- Leave the bowls, chalices and purifiers on the credence table.
- If necessary, or appropriate, the purification can be left until after Mass is finished, although this would be unusual in practice.

The need for Ministers of Communion to assist in the consumption of any Precious Blood remaining after Communion is now common place, and should take place while standing at the credence table in the sanctuary to ensure the appropriate amount of reverence. Please do not consume the Precious Blood while still standing at the station where you distributed communion, and **under no circumstances** while walking back into the sanctuary.

Occasionally, there may be a significant amount of Precious Blood remaining after communion. In this case, while it is preferable for the Ministers of

THE PROPER NAME FOR THIS MINISTRY

The formal title for those exercising this ministry is **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**. The term is usually and acceptably shorted to Ministers of Communion.

They are ‘extraordinary’ because Bishops, Priests and Deacons are the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and where sufficient numbers of these are present they are to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. It is conceivable for Holy Communion to be distributed without the assistance of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, by a priest alone if necessary, although this would unreasonably delay the celebration of Mass. In this regard Ministers of Communion are unlike Readers who have a proper and indispensable role in the celebration of Mass.

It is never correct to refer to “Ministers of the Eucharist”, since only those who have been ordained as Priest are called Ministers of the Eucharist in the understanding of the sacramental life of the Church.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific dress requirements for those acting as Ministers of Communion.

Having said that, however, care should be taken to ensure that what you wear reflects the significance of the ministry you are carrying out on behalf of the worshipping community. It would be appreciated if Ministers of Communion wear appropriate and suitable clothing, based on the location in which we live, the weather on the day, and the significance of what you are doing.

THE NUMBER OF MINISTERS NEEDED

The number of Ministers of Communion required at each of our Sunday Masses will be a total of five (5). At weekday Masses, only two (2) are normally required (although on occasions an extra may be required).

It sometimes happens, for a variety of reasons, that the ministers rostered for a particular Mass are not able to fulfil their ministry. Please be aware of this, and if necessary, move up to ensure that the correct number of ministers is available to assist in the distribution of communion.

Please ensure that you do not ‘jump the gun’ in presuming you may need to assist in the distribution of Communion. Your haste may mean that one of the

rostered ministers does not have their chance to fulfil their ministry. Common sense should be applied in this regard.

MOVING FROM YOUR SEAT

In light of the request from Bishop Bill to give due deference to the Fraction Rite (the ‘breaking of the bread’), Ministers of Communion should move into the sanctuary **either** during the Sign of Peace **or** after the ‘Lamb of God’ has concluded.

Under no circumstances should Ministers of Communion be moving during the Fraction Rite, i.e. while the ‘Lamb of God’ is being sung or said, as this would be contrary to the request of Bishop Bill.

Please consider sitting closer to the front of the Church when you are rostered for this ministry so that your movements do not unnecessarily delay Mass.

As with any movement during the liturgy, the Minister of Communion should move from their seat *deliberately*. This does not mean you have to rush nor to adopt a slow pace, but rather to walk with purpose. Remember that you are exercising a very specific ministry within and for the assembly, and your ministry commences as soon as you move from your seat.

After leaving your seat, move forward towards the sanctuary, and make a reverence **to the altar** (since the altar is the focus of our liturgy) before moving into the sanctuary and to the side of the altar to await communion. This is particularly important for Ministers of Communion since Jesus is present on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine. For the same reason, the tabernacle is not revered during the celebration of Mass.

There is **no** need to wait for all Ministers of Communion to move in order to all reverence together. The action is a practical one, not a necessary part of the ritual, and to ritualise this practical dimension only serves as an unreasonable delay to the Mass.

The ordinary form of reverencing the altar is to bow. This is **not** a simple nod of the head, but rather a profound bow of the head and shoulders.

WASHING OF HANDS BY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

The practice of Ministers of Communion washing their hands before distributing Communion originated largely for two reasons, completely disconnected from each other.

to the minister distributing the host, as this will cause delays in the procession, and therefore in the celebration of Mass.

BLESSINGS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

It is an increasingly common practice for children who have not yet celebrated First Communion to process with their parents and to receive a blessing instead of communion. It also happens from time to time that adult members of the Assembly may ask for a blessing, particularly when they are not Catholic or not-yet Catholic.

When this happens, the generally accepted practice for Ministers of Communion is to **either** place your hand on their head **or** trace the sign of the cross on their forehead, and say something along the lines of “May God bless you” or “The Lord bless you now and always” etc. The wording is not set, and it is entirely at the discretion of the individual Minister of Communion who should find a set of words with which they feel comfortable.

It is **never appropriate** for a Minister of Communion to make a sign of the cross with the consecrated host – this is a “benediction” and is strictly reserved to ordained ministers alone.

SELF-INTINCTION

This is a problematic issue, particularly when some parishes around Australia have virtually adopted self-intinction as normative practice. It is, however, contrary to the current liturgical practice of the Church, and is not the accepted practice in this Parish under any circumstances.

For those ministering to the chalice, please hold the chalice in such a way that it needs to be offered to those who wish to receive from it. If someone then comes and wishes to self-intinct, simply (gently and quietly) say “I will offer you the chalice once you have consumed the Host”. In this way, you are not denying the member of the Assembly the chalice, but are, instead, reminding them of the correct practice, and leaving the final decision to them.

If they are insistent, then please ask them (gently and quietly) to see me after Mass.

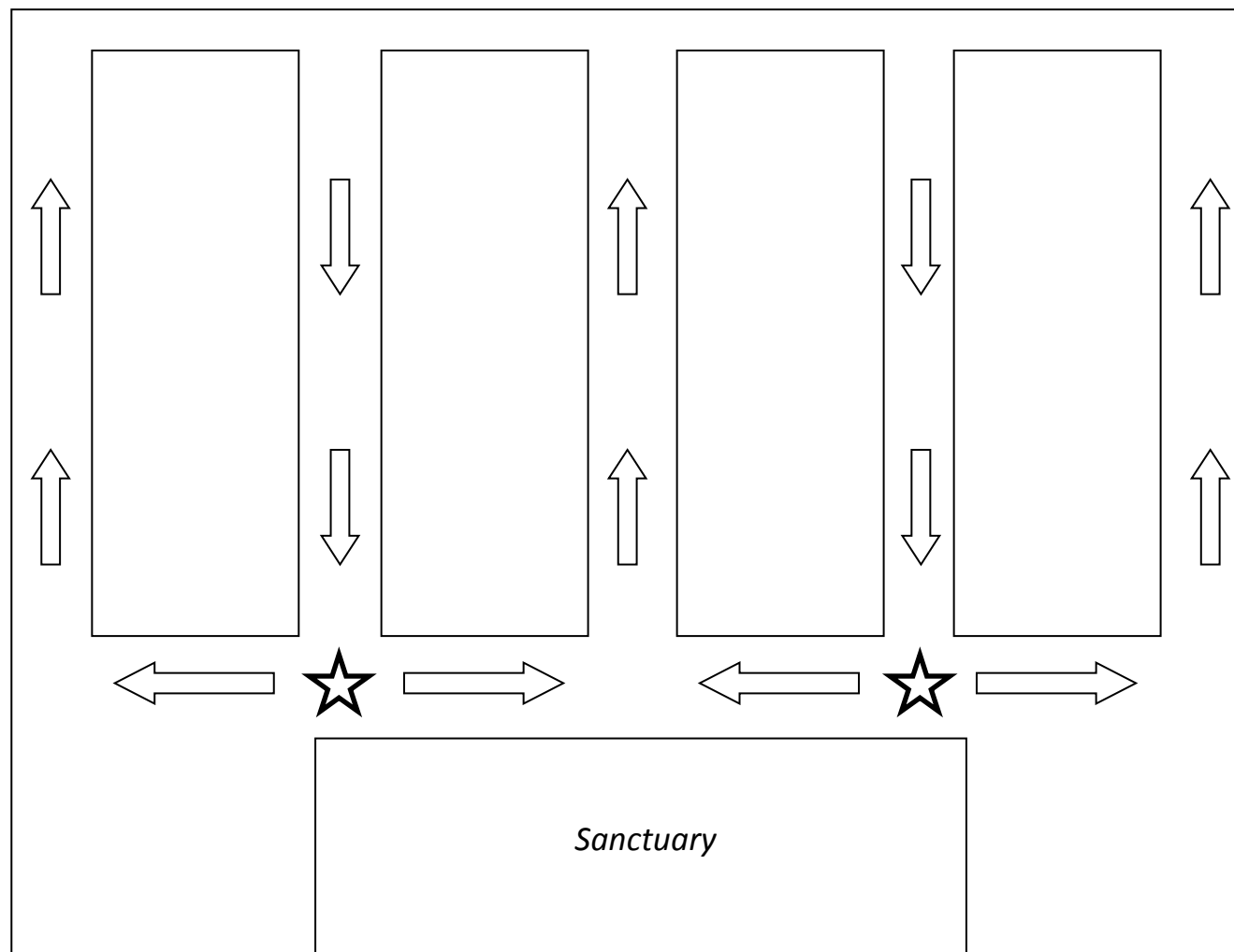
AFTER COMMUNION IS FINISHED

It is now common and accepted practice for Ministers of Communion to assist with purifying the vessels used in the distribution of Communion. When this

Please ensure that the definite article is used, i.e. the word “The” at the beginning. The invitation is “**The** Body of Christ” or “**The** Blood of Christ”. Australians have a tendency – a bad habit if you will – of dropping the definite article at the beginning of short sentences like this, but doing so can actually change the meaning of what the Minister of Communion is saying.

Lastly, do not be timid in the distribution of communion. Be faithful, be strong in conviction, and be aware of what it is you are doing.

With effect from the first weekend of February 2014 Communion will be distributed to the assembly according to the following diagram:



Each of the Stars in the diagram represents one ‘Communion station’ with one minister distributing the Host and two ministers with the Chalices (one on each side).

Please note that the diagram is not to scale nor accurate in layout. Both our churches do have four sections of seating however, so please adjust your place of standing accordingly.

For those ministering the Chalice, please ensure that you do not stand too close

The first is a genuine concern for hygiene and a wish to avoid the spreading of germs during the distribution of Communion. While an admirable motivation, a group of five people all dipping their hands into the same small bowl of cold water and then using the same cloth to wipe them won’t avoid this possibility, and may, in fact, do the exact opposite to that originally intended.

Generally speaking there would be no need to wash your hands prior to distributing Communion, but if you should wish to do so please make use of the facilities in the sacristy. Ministers of Communion who are unwell, suffering a cold, etc, are respectfully asked to refrain from exercising their ministry in those circumstances.

The second reason often put forward for Ministers of Communion washing their hands is to mirror the action of the priest, who washes his hands after the preparation of the bread and wine. The priest washes his hands as “an expression of his desire for interior purification” (*GIRM*, 76) because of the particular role he has within the liturgical assembly (i.e. as presider). Accordingly it is not appropriate for others within the liturgical assembly to imitate this action as they do not have the same role.

RETRIEVING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT FROM THE TABERNACLE

It is preferable and the ideal that all those at a particular Mass receive Communion from the bread and wine that is consecrated at that Mass, just as the priest himself is bound to do.

In other words, it is preferable that the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle not be used as a means of being able to provide Communion. In fact, the Blessed Sacrament is only reserved in the Tabernacle for two purposes: to enable Communion to be taken to the sick and dying, and for personal adoration and prayer.

It is likely that the Parish will eventually adopt this practice of everyone receiving Communion from the bread and wine that is consecrated at Mass, and so Ministers of Communion will not normally need to approach the tabernacle. There may, from time to time, and in particular circumstances where they may be asked to do so by the presider.

Please note: Until the practice begins in the Parish, the status quo will continue. Ministers of Communion should be aware of when the practice changes (it will be announced in the parish bulletin) and adjust their practice accordingly.

If a Minister of Communion is to retrieve the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, they should move directly to the tabernacle, unlock it, remove the Blessed Sacrament, and then move directly to the altar and place it there on the corporal. *It is the accepted practice to leave the doors of the tabernacle unlocked and open once the Blessed Sacrament has been removed.*

There is **no** need to genuflect before removing the Blessed Sacrament from the Tabernacle. It is customary to genuflect only when ‘enthroning’ (i.e. returning) the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.

PREPARING FOR AND RECEIVING COMMUNION MYSELF

As already mentioned, Ministers of Communion should be aware that they are carrying out a public ministry on behalf of the worshipping community, and that their ministry commences as soon as they move from their seat.

In that light your behaviour when standing in the sanctuary of the church is very clearly visible and nothing should be done to distract members of the Assembly from their prayerful preparation for Communion. Specifically, please observe the following:

- Please do not look around the church: your focus should be the altar, just as if you were sitting in the Assembly.
- Please do not gesture to other members of the Assembly, either in the sanctuary or the body of the church.
- Please do not beckon other Ministers of Communion sitting in the Assembly to move into the sanctuary to fill out the numbers – this is not your task.

When the Presider is ready to offer Communion, please move closer to the altar, preferably into a semicircular formation, so that the distribution of Communion to the Ministers of Communion doesn’t unduly delay Mass. The same requirements for the reception of Communion apply to the Ministers of Communion as to the other members of the Assembly (see below), and it is important that the Ministers of Communion model good practice in the reception of Communion to the Assembly.

When receiving the Chalice, please wait until the Chalice is presented to you along with the words “The Blood of Christ” before raising your hands to take it from the Presider. *There is no need to pre-empt this action by raising your hands beforehand.*

It is also most inappropriate to do anything that might cause concern to the members of the Assembly, particularly where the action might raise a question of hygiene. As such the routine licking of your hands after receiving communion is to be avoided.

DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION TO THE ASSEMBLY

There are a number of things to be said here.

Firstly, when distributing communion, in either form, that action should be your focus. Do not look around the church. Do not sing. Focus on what you are doing, and who it is you hold in your hands. In doing so, you are giving the proper reverence to the Eucharistic species.

Secondly, with the revised practice requiring members of the Assembly to bow as an act of reverence before receiving communion, please ensure you do not offer communion until after the member of the Assembly have completed their act of reverence (if in fact they make one as some do not). This might appear to slow down the communion procession, but that is entirely in keeping with the mind of the Australian bishops when they requested the inclusion of this practice. The reception of communion ought to be a dignified part of the celebration of Eucharist, not a mad rush.

Please note: Despite the request of the Australian Bishops, some people still do not bow.

Thirdly, the distribution of communion, again in either form, is an act of faith undertaken by you, but one which invokes a response from the Assembly. When you hold the consecrated host up before another member of the Assembly, or offer the chalice, you say “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ”. This is in effect a statement of faith. You are declaring your belief in this to the other person facing you. And you are inviting them to make a response of faith (“Amen”) to your declaration. So make the declaration clear and firm (without shouting) so that the faith-filled response is engendered in the other person.

There is **no** need to include the name of the person in this statement, i.e. “The Body of Christ, Bill” or “The Blood of Christ, Mary”. This individualises what is in effect a corporate act, and is also exclusory of those people whose names you don’t know (or can’t immediately recall). “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ” should be the only words used.