

You may have noticed that there have been some changes in the manner of service given by our **extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion** this summer. Because of new directives from the Vatican, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and from our own bishop, Bishop Lennon, there will be some changes that will help us to pray together in a better fashion and will give all of us an opportunity to renew our love and reverence for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist.

Many of our **extraordinary ministers (EMs)** henceforth to save space) came to a formation session here at our parish on June 22nd. Another series will be given throughout the diocese in September and October, and all those who wish to engage in this ministry must attend a formation session before January 1, 2010. Essentially, the formation reminds us that EMs are extraordinary in their commissioning. Priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers along with officially installed acolytes. EMs are commissioned for a particular place (parish, institution, school, etc.) and for a period of time (five years with renewals of this commissioning). This is done as a wonderful way of helping all of us to renew our understanding and spirituality as ministers in the Church.

EMs are not authorized to lead communion services. Certified/commissioned EMs who belong to our parish and wish to take communion to the sick (a great ministry) may bring their **pyx** (host container) to the sacristy before Mass so that we can send them forth at the end of Mass; or they may bring it to the sacristy after Mass. Their choice. Not much else really has changed. One **reason** for the pyx not being filled in the communion line/procession is to help the EMs take a moment of reflection for themselves as they receive Our Lord in the Eucharist. They also will come up into the sanctuary for communion distribution after the priest receives communion at Mass. Again, in this way, the fraction rite at the Lamb of God is not obfuscated by the movement of people. This **movement** may distract us from that precise and important liturgical moment/rite. When we see the Host broken at the Lamb of God, we are reminded that we all share in communion from the one Bread of Life given to us as food for our journey and as the sacrament that unites into the Body of Christ.

As with all slight modifications and changes, it will take us some time to get used to a newer and updated way of praying together. Thanks for your patience. And don't forget to sign up for this ministry. We need many people each week to help with communion. Each Mass has **12 communion stations** (four for the Precious Blood, 8 for the Hosts). That's 60 stations and the need for 60 people each weekend, not to mention daily Masses, funerals, weddings, and communion to the homebound and nursing homes.