

Attention to all EMs (Extraordinary Ministers)

This is a reminder for all those who distribute communion.

First, we thank you for your generosity in serving the parish community in the liturgy by distributing communion. We are blessed to have you share in this ministry.

However, it should be noted, that being invited to share in the ministry of communion **does not grant a lay minister the faculty to give blessings** during the liturgy. A sacramental blessing during the liturgy is reserved to bishops, priests, and deacons alone. Many of you are aware of this, but it has been observed on some occasions in the past few months that there are those who are still making gestures of blessings.

When someone approaches them with their arms crossed, ministers of communion are called to pray with them, not give blessings. Therefore, Father Giovanni, our pastor, has asked lay ministers of communion to do two things.

First, please only say these words when praying with people who come up with their arms crossed:

“May God bless you.”

For unity’s sake we are asking all lay ministers of communion to use these exact words.

Second, although many of you may have become used to certain actions, **no gestures should be made to simulate a blessing** - such as making a sign of the cross over another person. Also, under no circumstances should someone touch another person who is coming up for communion. The reason behind not touching someone is two-fold:

- although we know this is done in a caring way, we aren’t always certain if individuals (or parents of children) desire/consent to this type of action
- Out of reverence for the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, we shouldn’t be touching other things after handling the precious Body of Our Lord - it risks crumbs, fragments of the blessed Sacrament being transferred to clothes or persons.

If you would like to make a reverent gesture to someone you have just prayed with, you may acknowledge them with a bow, keeping due care not to spill the hosts you are holding. (If those in line remain standing there after you have said, “May God bless you,” you may kindly gesture them to move)

We thank you for your understanding and consideration in this regard, and ask for your cooperation in disseminating this information.

If you have any questions, you may ask John Wallace or Fr. Raj.