

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Faith Community

July 12, 2005

Dear Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist (EME):

May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you! I have wanted to write this letter for some time to convey some of my concerns and observations regarding the commitment of some of our Eucharistic Ministers. A number of these issues I have seen, and others have been brought to my attention.

As Pastor of the Catholic Faith Community of St Andrew the Apostle, I want to thank you for your service to the Eucharistic Ministry. This is a very important ministry that is entrusted to you by the community of St Andrew the Apostle. You, in turn, serve this community when you serve the Eucharist to our sisters and brothers. You are the visible sign of Jesus as you serve the Body of Christ (the Eucharist) to the Body of Christ (the community). In addition, this visibility extends beyond just serving the Eucharist to your attendance at masses at which you do not serve the Eucharist and further into other activities of the ministry and of the community. Accordingly, it is important that you remain "visible" extending hospitality to those around you. There is no private ministry.

Recently, I have been made aware of a problem in the Eucharistic Ministry; namely, that of ministers not showing up for their assignments. At some masses, the "show rate" has been as low as 25%, and although sufficient ministers were eventually recruited from the congregation to staff those particular masses, this situation presents an unnecessary hardship on those responsible for filling minister stations. This "no-show" rate concerns me, and I am asking you all to either meet your commitments or your absence will be viewed as a desire not to continue on in this ministry and therefore your name will be removed from the schedule until you inform us that you are willing to meet your responsibilities. I have asked the Chair and Co-Chair of the ministry to periodically provide me with data on the "no show" issue and, if a trend exists for an individual EME, I am directing that the individual's certification not be renewed.

On a related matter, attendance at periodic EME formation and information meetings has not been good. It has been very bad. The most recent meeting held to explain the process of providing "spiritual communion" to those who are not able to receive the Eucharist was attended by approximately 50% of the EMEs. I directed that this meeting be mandatory and yet the attendance was poor. Once again, I'm asking you to be more "visible" and committed so that you will be re-certified when the time comes. Formation is essential for growth in ministry and communication is essential for good order, otherwise chaos reigns.


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Another issue that has been brought to my attention is the dress of EMEs when serving. Although dress guidelines have been established, they are not routinely being followed. I would like you as ministers of the Eucharist to dress “out of your reality.” That is, if your “reality” in your daily activities is shorts, jeans, tank tops, short skirts, etc., then when you are scheduled to serve the Eucharist, I’m asking you to dress “out of your reality” and in a more conservative way. A general guideline is to dress as if you were going to an important job interview.

One final item needs mentioning. During this past year, we have experienced several changes in the way we conduct our services. In order to communicate these changes to you as soon as possible, they are provided to you in three ways--- e-mail, parish website, and hard copies posted in the sacristy. It has been apparent to me that these communications are not being read in a timely manner. Therefore, I ask you to please avail yourselves frequently of these sources of information to keep current on the latest procedures and processes.

Once again, thank you for your support and dedication to this ministry. I speak for the parish staff, our faith community, and myself when I say that we appreciate your service as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.

Yours in His love,


Fr. Joseph I. Hennessy

JIH/skh