

St. Patrick Parish (Version 1)
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)
Guidelines for Homebound Ministry – Issued November 01, 2022

“If the Eucharist is to be the center of the Christian life, then those who cannot attend the eucharistic liturgies because of age or sickness must be provided with more frequent opportunities to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist.... The Christian community cares for its own... Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion go from the celebration of Eucharist to feed the sick and homebound persons of the parish not only the Body and Blood of the Lord, but also with the Word and with their very presence. These three actions: Sharing the Word, the Host and the minister's presence, bring about one result, that is, the strengthening and comforting of those members of the parish who cannot be present to celebrate Eucharist with the whole community.” *Diocese EMHC Training Manual 2019*

It is important for Homebound EMHC to read Section Eight of the Diocese EMHC Training Manual and be familiar with its contents.

1. Situations For Taking Communion to The Sick:

A minister of Holy Communion may encounter two types of situations when taking Communion to the sick.

- A. The first is a regular visit to someone suffering from the effects of age, illness, or infirmity.
- B. The second concerns a visit to someone who is dying. In this situation, the Church refers to the Holy Eucharist as Viaticum. This last word means “food for the journey,” keeping in mind that death is a journey into the afterlife. An EMHC should contact the parish pastor to arrange a visit to the gravely ill individual. See Item # 15 Viaticum for more information.

2. Ministry In Private Homes

“There are two basic forms of the rite for giving Communion to the sick and homebound.

- A. Use the longer form in private homes when time permits an extended visit.
- B. Use the shorter rite when you are visiting many rooms in a nursing home, hospital, when you have a large number of private homes, or when the comfort of the communicant calls for the shorter rite.” *ibid*

3. Preparation Before the Visit

- A. Make sure that your ministry is coordinated with the Homebound Coordinator to provide comprehensive pastoral care in the parish community and updated parish records.
- B. Call the homebound parishioner, or contact person, a day or two beforehand.
- C. If this is the first visit to this person, ask if there are any special arrangements, such as letting yourself in, or if the person is unable to swallow or has health problems.
- D. Collect information about the person who is sick and other helpful information for your visit to the home or nursing home.
- E. Determine if any other family members will be present who are Catholic and will be receiving Holy Communion.
- F. Carry the Blessed Sacrament in a pyx in a burse. Have respect and reverence for the presence of Christ.
- G. Wear attire appropriate to the ministry.
- H. Be sure to notify Homebound Coordinator of any information related to visiting the person or information you observe during your visit.

4. Take The Following Items with You:

- A. The Hosts for all who will receive, in a pyx carried inside a burse.
- B. A Corporal (White Cloth): This is so that you can place the pyx down on a table during the visit. And a LED Light: Used in place of Candle (optional).
- C. Baggie or Tissue: Place to put a Host that someone put into their mouth, and then took out – see Item #12 on how to Dispose a Consecrated Host.
- D. The latest parish bulletin
- E. Communion of the Sick or Pastoral Care of the Sick Books (text of the rite to be used)
- F. A Missalette or other source containing the reading for the day (if other readings desired).

5. Obtaining Consecrated Hosts for your Visit(s):

There are three methods for obtaining consecrated Hosts for your visit(s):

- A. Leaving Directly from Mass on a Weekend.

Rite for Sending EMHC to the homebound from a parish mass (weekend)

It is most appropriate for EMHCs to the homebound to be sent directly from the celebration of the Eucharist. Before Mass, the EMHC should bring an empty pyx to the sacristy indicating to the priest/deacon how many hosts will be required.

At the conclusion of any announcements, the celebrant will call the EMHCs forward, offer an exhortation and gives them the pyx. The celebrant says, in these or similar words:

“Dear brothers & sisters, this Eucharistic assembly sends you forth now to our brothers and sisters who are unable to be with us here today. Bring to them our greetings and love, read today's Holy Scriptures to them, pray with them, and minister to them this Most Blessed Sacrament. The EMHC then returns to their place.”

When Mass has concluded, remember that you carry with you the Most Holy Eucharist. Go directly to the sick to whom you will distribute the Eucharist. Do not go anywhere else or make any other stops.

- B. Obtaining Hosts after a Mass (weekday or weekend):

If an EMHC forgets to give their pyx to priest/deacon before Mass, do not go to the tabernacle on your own, give the pyx to the priest/deacon or seminarian indicating the number of Hosts required. He will provide you with the needed Hosts.


- C. Obtaining Hosts outside of Mass:

To obtain Hosts outside of Mass go to the Parish Office (when open) and ask for the Small Tabernacle Key. Go to Adoration Chapel and proceed to the small tabernacle located on back wall on the left side of the Monstrance. Open the tabernacle and remove the number of Hosts needed and place in your pyx and then place pyx in your burse. Remember to purify your hands after locking the small tabernacle.

Note:

Once you have obtained the Hosts, remember that you carry with you the Most Holy Eucharist. Ministers should avoid any activity not in keeping with the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. Go directly from the church or chapel to the homebound to whom you will distribute the Eucharist. Do not go anywhere else or make any other stops. Radio in car should be off or playing sacred music.

6. **On - Site Preparations**

- A. If the situation permits - after exchanging a friendly greeting with the homebound person, friends, and care givers, place the white cloth on a table with the LED light. Otherwise keep the pyx in the burse until time for Holy Communion.
- B. If necessary, fill a small glass with water and place it on the table (help with receiving Holy Communion for sick person).
- C. Say an opening Prayer after placing the pyx on the white cloth or the initial greeting with pyx remaining in the burse to acknowledge the presence of Jesus: Sample prayer:
 Jesus comes to visit and give you His Body, Body, Soul, and Divinity in Holy Communion. Within your heart and mind, share with Jesus, your joys, blessings, and sufferings, and anything you desire to bring to Our Lord, asking that He might speak to your heart and heal you. Amen – *pause for moment of silence.*

7. **As You Begin the Visit**

- A. Begin by sharing greetings, introductions and listening to the conditions and desires of the person who is homebound. This is a suitable time to give a copy of the Bulletin.
- B. After an appropriate time, ask person if ready to receive Holy Communion. Invite family members to participate and determine any Catholic members prepared to receive Holy Communion.

The Celebration (Refer to Communion of the Sick (CSB) or Pastoral Care of the Sick Books) (Longer Form)

Pace the ritual with sensitivity. Be aware of the sick person's ability to follow and participate. Adapt to the situation of each person and each visit.

8. **Greeting and Penitential Rite**

- A. Give a simple greeting, such as, "Peace be with this house..." or "Grace to you and peace from God our Father..." or other options in the CSB. After which, proceed with the penitential rite, as in the ritual text. This may be the "I confess to Almighty God," or one of the options with the "Lord have mercy/Christ have mercy".
- B. Conclude the penitential rite with the prayer "May Almighty God have mercy on us..."

9. **Liturgy of the Word**

- A. Using the Liturgy of Word Readings** (or other sources), if the homebound person is able and willing, they may read the scripture passage, or it may be done by the EMHC. After the reading share some ideas from the Sunday homily and the bulletin or from person meditations. This is also a suitable time to provide any other information you may have brought along to share. *Note: there are commentaries on the readings provided in the Communion of the Sick booklet (CSB).*
**** (when visiting on weekend use Sunday Readings)**
- B. It is especially good to have a brief period of quiet reflection of the Word, before continuing with the Universal Prayer. The CSB provides five suggested Universal Prayer options.
- C. Begin with the Opening Introduction before the petitions. The homebound person and their companions may wish to offer petitions for particular needs, which they can provide, or you have determined from your conversation.
- D. It is suggested that where possible to include the name of the person in the petition. E.g., "That God may pour healing grace into all who are sick, especially you Mary, we pray:"
- E. Remembering that every liturgical action is a celebration of the whole Church, the Universal Prayer should be included based on each visit situation. Conclude the intercessions with the usual summarizing prayer.

10. Holy Communion

- A. Introduce and lead in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.
- B. Take a Host from the pyx, Hold at chest level "over the open pyx and invite the faithful to partake of the Sacred Food by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God..." After the "Lord, I am not worthy..." give Holy Communion to the homebound person – saying "The Body of Christ." They respond "Amen"
- C. During the distribution to the elderly or infirm, if the communicant is unable to swallow (host is spat out or dropped from the mouth), the Host should be collected in a baggie or tissue. Host then to be returned to the parish for proper care. [Place the baggie or (tissue in a baggie) with host in the Adoration Chapel and behind the small tabernacle and notify Fr. Bateman or one of deacons.]
- D. See Item #12 should you have remaining Hosts at end of all your visits.

11. Prayer after Communion and Conclusion

- A. After a suitable period of quiet reflection, offer the Prayer after Communion using one of four options in the CSB.
- B. Conclude by invoking God's blessing using one of two of options provided in the CSB as you make the Sign of the Cross + on yourself.
- C. **Do not** bless those present or with the pyx.

12. After the Celebration

After concluding your visit, immediately go to the next visit. When all your visits are completed, should there be any remaining hosts – the preferred option is to directly return the remaining Hosts to the Adoration Chapel Tabernacle.

Note: If it is difficult to do this, then you may consume the Host(s) yourself as you give communion to the last person you visit. DO NOT leave Hosts in the pyx or take the Eucharist home.

13. Purification of Pyx:

The empty pyx needs to be purified. This is done by pouring water into the pyx and then either consuming the water or placing the water in the ground or a planter with soil and wiping it clean. It is then placed back into your burse and kept in your home.

14. Sick Calls Register- (see attachment)

All homebound visits must be recorded in the Sick Calls Register unless you are assigned to York or UPMC Hospital Ministry.

- A. The reason for the Sick Calls Registry is so that we know who is being visited - if a family member or someone asks if we have seen their mom - we will know when and what happened because it is recorded in the book. This will also permit us to know who has or has not been visited from our Holy Communion Listing and any recurring situations (e.g., Not Home, etc. that need to be addressed.)
- B. Each time after your visits are completed the "Sick Calls Register" located in the parish office must be completed for all your planned homebound visits. All people on your Communion List must be recorded into the Register – even if you call ahead and they tell you they cannot be visited. All people visited in a nursing home or individual hospital visit must also be listed.
- C. It is important to record any reason why Holy Communion was not administered.
- D. Register should be updated upon completion of visits or within next several days.
- E. See attached Aid entitled: **Sick Calls Register Guidelines** for location and details on how to complete the register.

15. Viaticum (Food for the Journey)

- A. In rare circumstances, you may encounter a person who is nearing the time of death. This is a sensitive and special time not only for the person who is dying, but also for family and friends who are gathered. An EMHC should immediately contact the parish pastor/priest to arrange a visit to the gravely ill individual.
- B. In an emergency situation (No Priest or Deacon available) the EMHC may perform the shorten right of Viaticum Outside of Mass.
 - 1) Begin with the Greeting,
 - 2) Followed immediately by the Lord's Prayer, the "Lord, I am not worthy...", and
 - 3) Communion as follows:
 - 4) EMHC holding the Host says:
 - a) Jesus Christ is the food for our journey; he calls us to the heavenly table.
 - b) This is the bread of life. Taste and see that the Lord is good.
 - 5) The sick person says: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you..."
 - 6) Then EMHC says: "The body of Christ"
 - 7) Followed by: "May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you and lead you to eternal life. Amen
 - 8) The rite concludes with the Prayer after Communion and the invocation of God's blessing as the rite for the homebound – "May the Lord Bless us and protect us..."

16. Ministry In Nursing Homes, Hospitals and Prisons

- A. There is no on-site preparation, and the only off-site preparation involves bringing with you the Hosts in a pyx carried inside the burse, a text of the rite, the latest parish bulletin, and the missalette (if you expect to read from it).
- B. Whenever possible it would be good to add a penitential rite and/or a short Sacred Scripture reading.
- C. However, when you bring Communion to people in many rooms of a nursing home, hospital, prison, or other large residential facilities, you do not have time to use the full form of the rite.
- D. By way of concession for this special situation, the Church provides an extremely abbreviated rite, which consists only of the Liturgy of Holy Communion:**
 - 1) Begin with the Sign of the Cross and Greeting,
 - 2) Followed immediately by the Lord's Prayer,
 - 3) "Behold the Lamb of God" and the "Lord, I am not worthy...", and
 - 4) Holy Communion. The rite concludes with the Prayer after Communion and the invocation of God's blessing as the rite for the homebound.
- E. The comfort of the communicant should always be assured. The age of the communicant is also important. For example, if the communicant is a child, it is best to use a text of the Bible suited to children.
- F. When ministering to the sick in nursing home, be sure to check with a nurse before giving Communion to someone if there is doubt. The Eucharist may be broken into a smaller piece to aid a sick person.

Thank you for your willingness to serve our Lord and the parish!

Fr. Bateman, Fr. Hoa, Deacon Michael, and Deacon Jim