Ministries of the Sick

Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
serving the Homebound, the Hospital and Nursing Homes
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion bring the Sacrament to those who cannot attend the Mass due to infirmity. The reason for the word “extraordinary” is that the “ordinary” ministers of the Sacrament of Holy Communion are ordained clergy. In order to meet the needs of all those who are ill, the clergy need the help of lay volunteers to function as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. They are commonly referred to simply as “Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.” Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can work in hospitals, in nursing homes, and visit the homebound; they are not limited to only one area.

All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be Catholics in good standing and must be commissioned to work in the ministry. A Catholic in good standing meets all of the following requirements:

1. Fully initiated in the faith by having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
3. If married, the marriage must have been performed or convalidated in the Catholic Church.
4. If not married, they are not cohabitating in a relationship outside of marriage.

Basic expectations for all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are as follows:

1. Pass Level II Background Screening.
2. Complete Diocesan Safe Environment Training.
3. Attend training workshops.
4. Undergo training with an experienced Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
5. Show reverence for the Eucharist in their demeanor at Mass, their attire and the manner in which they handle the Blessed Sacrament.

Dress Code:

**Men:**
- Slacks
- Dress or Collared Shirt
- Tie and Jacket *(Optional)*

**Women:**
- Modest Dress
- Dress Slacks/Capris
- Skirt

**Prohibited:**
- Jeans
- Overalls
- Shorts
- Sweat Pants
- Leggings
- Flip-Flops
- T-Shirts
- Low Cut Blouses
- Sleeveless Tops
MINISTERING AT THE HOSPITAL

Our parish ministers to those at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point. Several days per week, to the extent available, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion visit the Catholics in the hospital, and bring Holy Communion to those able to receive. New Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must first meet the parish’s requirements for the ministry. Those serving in hospital ministry are then required to complete a packet and be approved by the hospital. The hospital will then provide a badge to the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, which must be worn while ministering in the facility. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion that does not yet have a badge should check in and obtain a regular visitors’ badge. New Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should train by shadowing more experienced Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, until they are comfortable to make the visits on their own. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion attend morning Mass before going to the hospital.

General Procedures

1. Before Mass, get the black bag from the bottom drawer in the Sacristy. Check the small calendar in the bag to see how many received Holy Communion in recent visits to estimate the number of hosts you should bring. Place that number of unconsecrated hosts in a pyx to be taken to the Altar for consecration. See a Sacristan if you need assistance.
2. After Mass, retrieve the pyx and wearing it reverently around your neck in the burse, proceed directly to the hospital.
3. Upon entering the hospital, check in at the front desk, sign in the clergy registry and obtain the list of Catholic patients. Note that for privacy reasons, this list is to be turned back in at the front desk when you complete your visits.
4. Follow all hospital protocols, while making your visits:
   a. Use hand sanitizer upon entering AND exiting each room.
   b. Do not go into a room if a doctor or nurse is present, or if the room is marked as “isolation”.
5. Upon entering a patient’s room, greet the patient and introduce yourself as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from St. Michael’s Parish. Check the chalkboard for dietary instruction. “NPO” means the patient may not have anything to eat including the Eucharist. If you see “NPO”, just offer to pray with the patient.
6. If the patient would like to receive (and is permitted to do so), begin with the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 10.
7. The patient may use water to swallow Communion if needed and there is no one hour Eucharistic Fast rule required for patients before receiving the Sacrament.
8. NEVER give Holy Communion to a patient that has medical tubes inserted in their mouth.
9. Before administering Holy Communion, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may show the Host to the patient and ask if they would be able to swallow an entire
Host, or if they would prefer to only receive a smaller portion of the Host. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may break the host for patients who cannot swallow a whole one. Also, if more patients are receiving than expected and the hosts are running low, they may be broken and given halves.

10. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should NOT visit patients in the 1600s, 1800s, 2600s or 3600s rooms.

11. When finished at the hospital, the black bag should be returned to the Church and left on the shelf of the small table in the confessional leading into the Sacristy. All materials, including pyxes, should be placed in the bag. If you have Hosts left after your visit, you may consume them while saying the appropriate prayers, or bring the pyx containing the Hosts to the Parish Office so they can be brought back to the Church and placed in the Tabernacle.

“I was sick and you visited me.”

Matthew 25:36
MINISTERING IN NURSING HOMES

Our parish provides services to a number of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the area. Each facility may have slightly different protocols or procedures to follow.

Some of the nursing home or assisted living ministries have a group Communion service first before visiting the rooms of residents unable to make the group service. At these group services, in addition to providing Communion, prayers are often said as a group. Sometimes there are scripture readings as well.

Atria Baypoint Village Procedures

1. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should attend the 7:30am Mass on the day of their visit. Following Mass they should obtain the pyx with about 30 consecrated hosts from the Sacristy and proceed directly to the facility.
2. Upon arriving, ask the front desk for the list of Catholic residents and their room numbers.
3. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion proceeds to visit the residents in their rooms.
4. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion knocks on the patient’s door and identifies themselves as being from St. Michael’s and asks if the patient wishes to receive Holy Communion.
5. If the patient says “yes”, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
6. Some residents may have Offertory Contributions for the parish. These should be mailed to the church and not collected by the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. If applicable, remind them that a bus service picks up and drops off residents from their facility at one of our Sunday Masses each weekend.
7. Return any remaining consecrated Hosts, or any materials that belong to the church to the Sacristy or Parish Office.

Atria Windsor Woods Procedures
(Assisted Living Facility)

1. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should attend the 7:30am Mass on the day of their visit. Following Mass they should obtain the pyx with about 30 consecrated hosts from the Sacristy and proceed directly to the facility.
2. Upon arriving, ask the front desk for the list of Catholic residents and their room numbers.
3. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion split the list of Catholic residents and proceed to visit the residents in their rooms.
4. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion knocks on the patient’s door and identifies themselves as being from St. Michael’s and asks if the patient wishes to receive Holy Communion.
5. If the patient says “yes”, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
6. After visiting all available residents on the list, return any remaining consecrated Hosts, or any materials that belong to the church to the Sacristy or Parish Office.

Atria Windsor Woods Procedures
(Nursing Home)

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will attend 7:30am Mass on the day of their visit and obtain approximately 14 consecrated hosts to take in a pyx to the facility.
2. Upon arrival, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must sign in at the reception desk and obtain the list of Catholics currently in the facility.
3. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion proceeds to visit the patients in their rooms.
4. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion knocks on the patient’s door and identifies themselves as being from St. Michael’s and asks if the patient wishes to receive Holy Communion.
5. If the patient says “yes”, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
6. Leave the patient a copy of the bulletin.
7. Use the hand sanitizer on the wall in the hallway, after exiting each room.

Bear Creek Nursing Home Procedures

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must obtain and complete an information form for volunteering at Bear Creek Nursing Home. The form is available at the nursing home office.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion go to Bear Creek Wednesday mornings following the 7:30am Mass.
3. Before Mass, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion fills two pyxes in the Sacristy for consecration. Retrieve the pyxes from the Sacristy after Mass and proceed directly to the facility.
4. The receptionist at Bear Creek provides a list of patients to the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in charge of the ministry, who will sort it by room number on a spread sheet.
5. Upon entering the facility, the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must sign in at the reception window. Be sure to also sign out when leaving.
6. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion divide the list of patients. The front hall is short term rehab and the back hall contains long term patients.
7. Upon entering the room, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion identifies himself or herself as being from St. Michael’s and asks if they would like to receive Holy Communion. If so, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.

Braybrook Procedures
1. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will attend 7:30am Mass on the designated day of their visit.
2. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion obtains a pyx with consecrated hosts from the Sacristan and goes directly to the facility.
3. Upon arriving, enter the code on the keypad located at the door. Make a mental note of (or write down) the code because it is not posted inside and you will need it to leave.
4. NEVER allow a resident to go outside.
5. Some patients will be just inside, awaiting your arrival. With the help of the staff, gather them in the designated area.
6. Once everyone is situated, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
7. Give everyone a copy of the bulletin and remind them that you will be back next week.
8. Notify the staff that you are leaving.

Brookwood Procedures
1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be given the name and room number of the patient requesting Holy Communion by the Parish Office.
2. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will attend the 7:30am Mass and obtain their pyx from the Sacristan following Mass. Proceed directly to the facility.
3. Upon arriving, use the button to the left of the front doors to gain access to the facility.
4. Proceed to the resident’s room. If you do not know where you are going, ask the staff member at the front for assistance.
5. When entering the room, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should identify himself or herself as being from St. Michael’s. Once the resident is ready, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
6. Before leaving, see a staff member at the front and obtain a code to leave the facility. You will always need a code to exit the facility.

7. If you are using materials from the church (such as a pyx) return them promptly to the church or the parish office.

**Consulate Procedures**

1. Usually two Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion visit Consulate every Wednesday.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will attend the 7:30am Mass and receive two pyxes with consecrated hosts.
3. Proceed directly to Consulate after Mass.
4. Sign in at the front desk and retrieve the patient lists from the Activities Office. There are two lists: long term patients and short term patients. Each Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion gets a list and a pyx.
5. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion visit patients in their rooms.
6. When entering a room, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should introduce himself or herself as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from St. Michael’s and ask if they would like to receive Holy Communion.
7. If so, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
8. Do not assist the patient with any medical or housekeeping issues. You should notify the nurse about whatever they need.
9. If you notice anything suspicious or abnormal, notify the nurse.
10. If the patient is not able to receive Communion, offer to pray with them.
11. After Communion or prayer, mark the patient off on the list.
12. When all patients have been visited, the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion meet in the conference room. The patients’ lists should be signed at the bottom by the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
13. Sign out at the front desk and bring pyxes and patients list back to the Parish Office.

**Hudson Manor Procedures**

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will attend the 7:30am Mass and receive an appropriate number of consecrated hosts. After Mass, retrieve the pyx from the Sacristy and proceed directly to the facility.
2. When you arrive, see a staff member at the front desk to notify them that you are there.
3. Clients are not usually ready until after 9:00am. Find a place where you can be seated with the Eucharist until you are ready to begin the Communion Service.
4. When ready, proceed to the old TV room (with the double doors). If someone is seated there, you can use the dining room for the Communion Service.
5. If clients do not gather, you may go to their rooms to notify them you are there to distribute Holy Communion. If they do not answer to your knock, do not knock again.
6. Once the group is ready, begin with a short prayer and ask if the group has any intentions. Once this is completed, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
7. When you are finished, notify the front desk that you are leaving.

**Jennifer Gardens Procedures**

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be given the names and room numbers of the individuals requesting a visit by the Parish Office.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will attend the 7:30am Mass and receive the number of consecrated hosts needed. Proceed directly to Jennifer Gardens after Mass.
3. Sign in at the front desk as a visitor.
4. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion visits each patient in their room.
5. When entering a room, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should introduce himself or herself as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from St. Michael’s and ask if they would like to receive Holy Communion.
6. If so, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
7. Sign out at the front desk before leaving.

**Solaris Procedures**

1. Usually three Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion visit Solaris every Wednesday following the 7:30am Mass.
2. Take four pyxes from the Sacristy following Mass containing consecrated Hosts and proceed directly to the facility.
3. Take about 30 Bulletins for distribution to interested residents.
4. Upon arrival at Solaris, request two copies of the Catholic list of residents from the Social Director.
5. Divide the lists among the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for the three wings of the facility.
6. At each room, greet the resident, introduce yourself as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from St. Michael’s and ask if they wish to receive Holy Communion.
7. If they say “yes”, begin the Distribution of Holy Communion following the guidelines on page 11.
8. Make sure the Host has been consumed. Offer water, if the patient is allowed liquids.
9. Return your pyxes and lists to the Parish Office.
MINISTERING TO THE HOMEBOUND

Our parish ministers to many people who are homebound. The service to the homebound is very similar to the ministry within nursing facilities or hospitals; the major difference is that the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion goes to the person’s home. This provides greater flexibility in working out a mutually agreeable time and day between the recipient and the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Holy Communion can be brought to the homebound on any day of the week.

General Procedures

1. On receipt of your referral from the Parish Office, make contact with the homebound person by telephone and determine if the two of you can agree on a mutually acceptable day and time for the visit.
2. Usually, the time would have to be after a Mass (either weekday or weekend) so that you can obtain the consecrated host and go directly to serve the homebound. It is not acceptable to allow the host to be kept for hours before making your visit.
3. On arrival at the recipient’s home, introduce yourself as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion from Saint Michael’s Parish. With the homebound ministry, you will get to know the people you serve. You will likely minister to the same people on a weekly basis until they either recuperate to the point they can attend Mass or until the Lord calls them home.
4. Move from general talk to prayer within a short time, by saying something like “OK, let’s pray now.” Follow the guidelines on page 11 for the Distribution of Holy Communion.
5. After giving them a brief time for silence, wish them well and move along to your next homebound visit. Do not feel obligated to visit for extended periods and do not render any unrelated services. You are there to bring Holy Communion.
6. As with recipients at hospitals and nursing homes, the homebound are exempt from the one hour Eucharistic Fasting rule.
7. If the homebound person has difficulty with a whole Host, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should break the Host and give them a smaller portion. They may also have water to help in swallowing the Host.
Guidelines for the Distribution of Holy Communion

1. Once the patient/individual has indicated that they would like to receive Holy Communion, begin by making the Sign of the Cross and recite the Lord’s Prayer.
2. Next, holding your open pyx in one hand, raise a Host above the pyx with your other hand and say: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.”
3. If the patient/individual does not say the response, initiate it for them, saying: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”
4. Then say, “The Body of Christ” and administer the Eucharist on either the hand or the tongue.
5. After a few quiet moments, recite the prayer after Communion, saying: “God our Father, Almighty and Eternal, we confidently call upon you that the Body and Blood of Christ which (patient’s name) has received will bring (him/her) to everlasting health in mind and body. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

General Rules:

1. **NEVER** take it upon yourself to try to judge a patient’s worthiness to receive Holy Communion. Even if a patient indicates that they have not been to Church for a long time, let them know it is OK for them to receive while in the hospital or nursing home.
2. **NEVER** wake a patient if they are sleeping to ask if they would like to receive Holy Communion.
3. If the patient/individual cannot consume the Host, retrieve the Host and wrap it in a tissue. Keep the Host safe until you return and give the Host to the Parish Office so that someone can dispose of it properly.
4. When bringing Holy Communion to the sick, it is never acceptable to go anywhere except to the facility/home you are visiting with the Eucharist in your possession. Excessive or inappropriate amounts of time spent with patients with the Eucharist in your possession is also inappropriate. While you should not rush to distribute Holy Communion, it is important that you distribute the Eucharist and return your materials to the Church (if applicable) in a timely manner.
5. If you have Hosts left over after your visit that have not been consumed, they should be returned to the Parish Office immediately and you must **always** notify someone in the office so that the Hosts can be placed in the Tabernacle.
Regarding Special Celebrations and Holidays

1. We do not make special trips to nursing facilities or homes on alternative days for special celebrations (i.e. Ash Wednesday, Blessing of the Throats, etc.). The only time a visit to a facility or home should be rescheduled is for a holiday that falls on that day (i.e. Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving, etc.) or because of an emergency which prevents the visit.

2. Regarding Ash Wednesday: Ashes are only permitted to be distributed in nursing facilities and homes.
   - When ashes are being distributed in nursing facilities, it is important to be mindful of that facility’s restrictions. If a certain section or wing of the facility is not permitted ashes, do not under any circumstances disobey a facility’s expectations.
   - Ashes ARE NOT permitted in the hospital under any circumstances. Cleanliness in these environments is imperative to help patients recover, and just as you would not want dirt circulating in the hospital room, spreading the ashes around the hospital can be dangerous for patients’ health.
   - Like the nursing homes, for homebound parishioners you may take ashes to them if you normally visit their home on a Wednesday. Do not reschedule your visit for this purpose. In the same way, please evaluate their condition before bringing them ashes. It may not be in the interest of their health to place the ashes on their forehead.
   - This protocol also applies for other celebrations throughout the year such as the Blessing of the Throats for the Memorial of St. Blaise on February 3rd.

3. We do not bring Holy Communion to the sick on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday. Visits to the hospital, all nursing facilities, and parishioner’s homes are cancelled on these days. If a person is in danger of death and requests the Eucharist, the priest on duty can bring it to them.

4. There are several days out of the year where the priests may have to be away and no one is here to celebrate Mass. A Communion Service will be held on those days and consecrated hosts will be provided to you from the Tabernacle. Your normal schedule should be followed.