



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Standard Operating Procedures for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Homebound

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Homebound (EMHCH) assist the priests and deacons of the parish in distributing communion to the homebound. They are called not only to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ, but also to take on Christ's likeness. They accomplish this by strengthening their faith from within and sharing it with the homebound.

In liturgical terms, the word "ordinary" means primary or first. The Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are the ordained clergy. "Extraordinary" means in addition to Ordinary. EMHC are not "extra hands helping out", they are an integral part of the Communion Rite. The faithful are a royal priesthood, and it is appropriate that some of their number, as lay ministers properly trained, participate in the distribution of Holy Communion.

TO BECOME AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION TO THE HOMEBOUND

- Any fully initiated Catholic (16 years and older) of good standing with the Church called to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the Homebound may approach the Director of Ministries or inform the parish office to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the Homebound. This includes a commitment to the ministry and a deep devotion to the Eucharist.
- The minister must be a licensed driver and must have a car available for their use.
- Training is required prior to taking the Eucharist the first time to a homebound person. Initial training will be conducted by the Chief of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Homebound Ministry.
- Annual training is scheduled regularly. Please check parish bulletin. All EMHCH are required to attend these training sessions to acquaint them with their roles as ministers of Holy Communion. EMHCH "should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence" (*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, #28)
- To be properly disposed to bring communion to the homebound, EMHCH, like all other Catholics should not be conscious of grave sin. It is encouraged that all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

- **Note:** The above paragraphs apply to all family members who bring the Eucharist to a homebound family member.

THE PROCESS

- People call OLPH and request to be added to the Visitation List. They need to provide the name(s) of the persons being visited, their address, their phone number, and the day of the week and the time they want to be visited.
- Julia Chun assigns the person to an EMHCH.
- After that EMHCH visits the person the first time, if the person wants to continue to have visitations, the EMHCH and the person will agree upon the day of the week and the time.
- The EMHCH will then provide this information to Julia Chun who will then provide it to the Parish Office for its Visitation Roster.
- If an EMHCH is unable to meet an appointment, the EMHCH will contact Julia Chun to get a replacement.

PRE-VISITATION PREPARATIONS

- Pyx (A pyx is a small vessel, which usually looks like a gold pocket watch, in which the Holy Eucharist is carried to the homebound.)
- Burse (A burse is a small leather bag attached to a cord that is used to carry the pyx. The cord is worn around your neck. The burse on a cord keeps the Eucharist being dropped out of pockets and or lost.)
- Missalette
- Copy of **Communion of the Sick** booklet
- Note: Do **NOT** use a candle, since the homebound person may be using oxygen.

Weekday Preparations:

In addition to the above,

- Contact the Parish Office so the readings for that day may be retrieved and printed.
- Pickup this printout when getting the Eucharist.
- You may also wish to review the **Commentary for Daily Readings** to understand what the readings are about so you can share them with the homebound person. **Celebration and Word Among Us** are other excellent sources.

AT MASS

- EMHCHs are to place their *pyxes* on the tray on the *credence table* before Mass.
- Color dots will be clipped to the Powerbox Panel above the Credence Table. Green means Go. Red means Stop.
- Post the number of hosts needed to the dot and stick it to the top of the pyx. This will be the number of hosts needed **THAT DAY ONLY** (include the homebound person as well as other persons present who wish to receive). You are never to get more than one day's supply.

- At the “*sign of peace*”, the second Minister of the Hosts will proceed to the *credence table* and bring up the tray with *communion plates* and *pyxes*, if any, to the altar for the *Breaking of the Bread*. The Minister will place the *communion plates* and *pyxes*, if any, on the altar and return the tray to the *credence table*. Then stand beside the Altar Servers.
- After Communion, the EMHCH who have pyxes with green tags on them, will receive their pyxes from Father. The pyxes with red tags on them will be placed in the tabernacle in the Sacristy. They will be picked up by the EMHCH later.
- Anyone authorized to take the Eucharist to the sick must go directly from the church to the place where the sick person lives or is under care. During that journey, it is customary not to speak to anyone, except out of necessity. Prayer and recollection should occupy those who are privileged to carry the Blessed Sacrament during this ministry. Moreover, no one is permitted to leave the Eucharist in his/her home or car before or after taking God’s sublime Gift to the sick.
(*Liturgical Question Box: Answers to Common Questions about the Modern Liturgy by Peter J. Elliott; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, c1998, p.154.*)

THE VISITATION

Eucharistic Fast

The homebound person to who you minister may ask about the Church’s regulation on the Eucharistic fast.

One who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception only of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before Holy Communion.

Those who are advanced in age or who suffer from any infirmity, as well as those who take care of them, can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have taken something during the previous hour.

(*Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition, Canon 919, first and third paragraphs*)

Thus, if elderly or ill persons (and those who care for them) have taken food, drink or medicine only a short while before your visit, they are not prevented from receiving Holy Communion.

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

Use the **Communion of the Sick** booklet (which taken from the ritual book, *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rite of Anointing and Viaticum*). (A copy of this booklet will be given to each trainee at the time of their initial training.) The page number for each part of the rite in the booklet follows the heading in parentheses. As the EMHCH becomes more familiar with the booklet, he/she is encouraged to try all of the prayers for each part in the booklet and thereby give the homebound person a fuller experience.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Greeting (p. 11)
- Sprinkling with Holy Water (p. 12)
- Penitential Rite (pp. 13-14)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Reading (from Sunday's Gospel from that season's Missalette or pp. 14-16)
- Response (p. 17)
- General Intercessions (p. 17)

LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

- The Lord's Prayer (p. 17)
- Communion (p. 18)
Note: If you have hosts left over because someone who was to receive did not receive, consume these hosts.
Also, when you are finished, remove any host particles that may be left in the pyx.
- Silent Prayer (p. 19)
- Prayer After Communion (pp. 19-20)

CONCLUDING RITE

- Blessing (pp. 20-21)

After the rite has been concluded, do not leave immediately but visit with the person(s).

CONCLUSION

- The preceding pages may seem be overly detailed to those who have been active in this ministry for many years, but it serves both new and established Ministers to help create a more standard process.
- At times you will make mistakes in these procedures. What is most important is to maintain an attitude of reverence and worship towards the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and be warm and hospitable to the person(s) you are ministering to.

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