

## Leader's Guide

# Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound

Diocese of Green Bay, WI

Draft 2006

*“There was no needy person  
among them...  
they were distributed to each  
according to need.” Acts 4*



The Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound is designed and presented for the development of ministers who assist the sick and homebound in the parishes and institutions of the Diocese of Green Bay. Besides the ritual book, *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, the basic texts and sources for the presentations are the ritual, *Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister*, USCCB, and the *Handbook for Ministers of Care* by Genevieve Glen, OSB, Marilyn Kofler, SP. and Kevin O'Connor.

This Program is Developed and Published by  
the Department of Worship and the Liturgical Commission.

*For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. Matt. 20:28*

# Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound

## Leader's Guide

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# **Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound**

## **Welcome**

Thank you for your interest in the Green Bay Diocesan Leader's Guide to assist in the continued formation and development of well-trained Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound. The desired outcome of the Formation Program is the preparation of effective extraordinary ministers who prayerfully and respectfully take the Body of Christ to the sick and the homebound.

## **Description of Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound**

The Formation Program is a two-hour and fifteen minute session for both experienced and new ministers. It includes four short presentations on theological issues related to Eucharist and a practicum demonstrating procedures for the EMHC as they serve Holy Communion at Mass. Follow-up individualized training with practice in the customs and traditions of particular parishes and institutions is encouraged.

## **History**

The program for the continued formation of Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound was inspired by the questions and requests of parish leaders who were responsible for training liturgical ministers for the hospitals, institutions and parish homes. The Liturgical Commission appointed a Committee to research and to develop a program. The formation program was presented at The Gathering, October 2005. The Leader's Guide and Participant's Notes are available from the Worship Office, Diocese of Green Bay.

## **Leadership of the Program**

There are two options for leadership with the parish or regional programs:

- 1) A trained parish leader conducts the Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound.
- 2) Members from the Diocesan Committee may be hired to conduct the Formation Program.

## **Resource Booklets and the Basic Texts for Participants and Leaders**

Each participant receives a small booklet, *Participants' Notes*, for Extraordinary Ministers to the Sick and the Homebound. The instructors have a *Leader's Guide*, A Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound and purchase the basic texts, *Pastoral Care of the Sick*. (a ritual from a Catholic Bookstore), *Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister*, USCCB and the *Handbook for Ministers of Care* by Genevieve Glen, OSB, Kevin O'Connor and Marilyn Kofler, SP (from Liturgy Training Publications).

## **Cost of the Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion**

The booklet with Participant's Notes is 40 cents. The Leader's Guide is \$3.00. If the parish/region hires a team of presenters from the Diocesan Committee, there is an honorarium plus travel expense for each presenter.

## **Scheduling the Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

To schedule the Program and order materials, call the Worship Department, 920-272-8311 or email: [dwimmer@gbdioc.org](mailto:dwimmer@gbdioc.org)

# Preparation for the Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound

Prepare for the Workshop in cooperation with the Pastor/Parish Director, the Worship Committee and any parish leadership who may be involved. Select an appropriate time and location. Plan for leadership of the Workshop.

Send a letter of invitation to all Ministers of Communion to the Sick and the Homebound and prospective ministers. Prepare announcements for the bulletin and any parish newsletters. If a phone or email reply is organized, send the message by this communication as well.

In cooperation with the Pastor/Parish Director compile directives pertaining to your particular circumstances and give them to the Ministers.

Order **Participant's Notes** for all who attend and distribute them at registration.

Include in the **Participant's Notes** the final evaluation forms reproduced from the master in the **Leader's Guide**. Collect final evaluations as the participants leave the Workshop.

Provide a clipboard, overhead or PowerPoint to record participants' ideas from the group discussions. Provide pencils for participants who may need one.

Provide a clipboard, overhead or PowerPoint to record participants' ideas from the group discussions. Provide pencils for participants who may need one.

Reserve a place to gather the Ministers and present the workshop.

For those who will lead the workshop, order a **Leader's Guide** and the Ritual Book, **Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister** by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. An additional resource, **Handbook for Ministers of Care** may be ordered. Two presenters are suggested, one for each presentation. An additional person is needed for the Role Playing Activity.

Provide a Ritual Book, a Pyx and a cloth as an example of what is taken to the visitation of the sick and the homebound.

Provide a podium and microphone, if necessary, for the presenters.

Prepare for hospitality and refreshments at the gathering of the participants and during the break.





30 min	Large Group	<p><b>Demonstration of the procedures for a visit to bring Communion to the sick or the homebound:</b></p> <p>Use the procedures and qualities from the Leader’s Guide pp. 9, 10 and 11 to demonstrate an effective visit bringing Communion to the sick.</p> <p>Ask participants to watch and listen carefully. Be aware of all the procedures and what is said and done. <i>Script pp. 12-13</i></p> <p>When the visit is ended, give participants 2 minutes to write what they observed that made the visit proper and meaningful.</p> <p><b>Discussion with the group:</b> Share their observations. Record their comments on newsprint or a chalk board.</p>	<p>Leaders 1 &amp; 2</p> <p>Participants set booklets aside to watch and to listen to the demonstration. Leader’s guide pp. 12-13.</p> <p>Provide small pieces of paper to record observations.</p> <p>Note: copy of demonstration in Participants Notes, p. 10-11</p>
15 min		<b>BREAK</b>	
25 min	Large Group for Demonstration: Role Play a Visit to the Sick to bring Holy Communion	<p>Use the <u>Participant’s Notes pp. 5-7</u> to review the <b>“Procedures For the Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound”</b>. Stress <b>Practical Considerations</b>. Review what to do before you visit and what to do during the visit. Note the importance of following the <b>Communion Rite</b>, even when it needs to be simplified. If they have the Ritual, <i>Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick</i>, invite them to review the ritual, pp. 13-22.</p> <p>Ask participants to read the helpful <b>Question and Answer</b> page at home.</p> <p>Encourage the use of <b>Blessing Prayers</b> during their parish Mass. These prayers will have a threefold purpose: to ask for God’s grace, to include the parish in prayers for the sick and to show the people that whenever they may be sick or a family member is sick, the Church will care for them.</p>	<p>Leaders 1 &amp; 2</p> <p>Use Leader’s Guide, pp. 9-11</p> <p>Refer to <u>Participant’s Notes</u>, pp. 5-7</p> <p>Use Leader’s Guide, pp. 12- 13</p> <p>Refer to <u>Participant’s Notes</u>, pp. 8-9</p>
15 min	Large Group	<p><b>Closing Remarks and Commitment Prayer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns.</li> <li>• Take a moment for evaluations.</li> <li>• Together pray the Closing Prayer: <b>“Prayer of Personal Commitment”</b></li> <li>• Assign Guidelines and Bibliography</li> <li>• Gracious thanks for their participation. Safe travel.</li> </ul>	<p>Leaders 1 &amp; 2</p> <p>Use Leader’s Guide, pp. 14 , 16 - 18</p> <p>Refer to <u>Participant’s Notes</u>, pp. 10-15 and evaluation paper</p>

## **Suggested Notes for the Moderator**

### **To Begin the Workshop for the Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound**

**Welcome and Introduction:** Introduce the team with brief comments about the presenters. Ask the participants to raise hands if they have been involved in this ministry 5 or more years, 3 or 4 years, 1 or 2 years, new to the ministry. We praise and thank God for their knowledge and experience. Welcome!

**Thank you** to all who assisted with the hospitality and preparations for this meeting.

**We are honored to take Communion to the Sick and Homebound. They are an integral part of the Body of Christ. Their prayers for all of us are essential for the carrying out of the Mission of the Church.**

**Goals:** Tonight we will pray, study and work in order to develop the skills needed for this ministry. The goals of our workshop are:

- To understand this ministry as a ministry of the Church
- To present and discuss the basic skills needed for persons ministering to the sick and the homebound
- To learn to be a leader of prayer
- To understand how to do the religious ritual of this ministry
- To be able to practice visiting the sick and the homebound
- To have the opportunity for questions
- To commit ourselves to this ministry in prayer

**Thank you** for responding to God's call to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Communion to the Sick and Homebound. To ask God's blessing, let us pray the **Prayer of a Minister of Communion to the Sick and Homebound** found in Participant's Notes, p. 2.

**Tonight there will be an opening exercise, a demonstration, a short break, and a review of procedures. We will close the meeting in 2 hours.**

**At this time I ask \_\_\_\_\_ to begin.**

**+Closing of the Meeting:** Ask the participants to complete the evaluations (enclosed in Participant's Notes). Thank them for their participation tonight/today.

# Formation Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound

## Inspiration

The faithful who are ill are deprived of their rightful and accustomed place in the Eucharistic community. In bringing communion to them the Minister of Communion represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of the whole community toward those who cannot be present at the Eucharist. For the sick the reception of communion is not only a privilege but also a sign of support and concern shown by the Christian community for its members who are ill.

*Pastoral Care for the Sick, Chapter 3, Nos. 72-73.*

## Introduction

Providing the opportunity for the hospitalized, the homebound and those in nursing homes and other health-care institutions to receive Holy Communion frequently is an important pastoral responsibility. The service of Extraordinary Ministers can be of significant assistance in taking the Holy Communion to those unable to be present for Mass.

### Prayer of a Minister of Communion to the Sick and Homebound

Gracious God,  
I am in your Sacred Presence  
about to take the Bread of Life to those who  
are unable to participate in the parish  
celebration of the Eucharist.  
Thank you for the honor to carry Christ to them.

Bless my hands that they may be  
fitting instruments of this Holy Visitation.  
Bless my heart, that I may prayerfully carry  
the Bread of Life to those in need.

May my attitude, my reverence and  
my concern for others be of Your divine heart.  
I ask this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
who lives with You and the Holy Spirit  
now and ever. Amen.

## References from Scripture and Lessons from the Scriptures

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 1 Cor 11: 23-25*

*As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. 1 Cor 12: 12-14*



*"Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven." James 5:13-15*

+

### Lessons from Scripture

1. We receive the Eucharist that is truly the Body and Blood of Christ.
2. We, the assembly of the baptized, also become the Body of the Risen Christ.
3. This becoming unites us in love, and should change our lives.
4. Just because an individual is ill, homebound, or unable to be present at the assembly of the baptized, that person does not stop being a member of the Body of Christ. Just because a baptized member of Christ is sick and homebound, that person does not stop functioning as a member of the priesthood of Christ.
5. We believe in the Communion of Saints.
6. We should not view ministry to the homebound solely as a service TO the sick. This is a ministry of the Body of Christ to the Body of Christ. It is the members building up one another. Ministry TO the sick is just as much ministry BY the sick. Those ministering, and the assembly itself, are blessed and built up, by the presence of those to whom one ministers.



**Opening Exercise**  
**The following list contains 5 items that are improper  
for a visit with the sick or homebound.**

**Check the five items that are practices we want to avoid.**

- \_\_\_ 1. Begin the prayers with the Sign of the Cross, the sign common to all prayer.
- \_\_\_ 2. Comment on how the house needs to be better organized for the sick person.
- \_\_\_ 3. Talk about the last visit to another house and comment about its cleanliness.
- \_\_\_ 4. Be aware of the sick person's ability to follow the prayers and the ritual.
- \_\_\_ 5. Comment on the lack of interest of the parish priest in visiting the homebound.
- \_\_\_ 6. Show respect and reverence for the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.
- \_\_\_ 7. If the person cannot receive Communion, offer a blessing.
- \_\_\_ 8. Follow the Catholic Rite for Communion to the Sick but adjust as needed.
- \_\_\_ 9. Question family members about their worthiness to receive communion.
- \_\_\_ 10. Ask who pays for their care and then give advice for saving money.
- \_\_\_ 11. Assure the sick/elderly person that their parish remembers them in prayer.

**Share your results with a person near to you.**  
**Discuss why these practices are improper.**

**SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. What is your personal experience in relating to those who are ill, or in visiting the elderly or homebound that has called you to this ministry at this time in your life? Please share a personal experience.
2. What gifts did God give you that will help you in this ministry?

# **Demonstration with the following PROCEDURES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND**

## **GUIDELINES**

- Providing the opportunity for the hospitalized, the homebound and those in nursing homes and other health-care institutions to receive Holy Communion frequently is an important pastoral responsibility. The service of Extraordinary Ministers can be of significant assistance in taking the Holy Eucharist to those unable to be present for Mass.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Communion must be faithful Catholics who have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, and are at least eighteen years of age, and participate regularly in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the sacrament of the altar.

## **PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Know that the relationship with the person who is sick is a key factor. The minister brings the comfort and concern of Christ.
- Be aware of feelings that may arise when you enter a person's home or room. If you find it difficult to look at the person because of their physical condition, concentrate on their eyes.
- Take proper time for introduction and personal sharing. Listen attentively so you are aware of what the sick person desires or prefers before beginning the Communion Rite.
- If the person does not wish to share Communion at this time, ask if they would like to share in a short blessing.
- Be aware of making referrals when other services are needed (confessor, counselor, doctor, etc.) Do not try to solve problems.
- If the sick person wishes to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation, encourage the family to contact the parish priest or offer to relay the message yourself.
- Keep confidences at all times.

## **BEFORE VISITING**

- Collect information about the person who is sick and other helpful information for your visit to the home or hospital.
- Make an appointment. Even if you have a regularly scheduled time for visiting, call to confirm since the situation may change. The person may not be up for a visit because of various circumstances. You may also want to ask if additional family members or the caretaker want to receive communion.
- Spend some time in prayer if you are going to be bringing communion to the sick.
- Carry the host in a pyx. Have respect and reverence for the presence of Christ. When transporting the Eucharist to the sick, ministers should avoid any activity not in keeping with the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Don't visit if you are sick. Because of its frequency today the common cold or flu may cause serious complications for a person who is already ill. Call to cancel your appointment if you are not feeling well.
- Wear attire appropriate to the ministry.

## **AS YOU BEGIN YOUR VISIT**

- Be friendly but not too overpowering. Be careful not to let natural shyness give you the appearance of being remote or distant.
- Share greetings and introductions, give some ideas from the homily if you are taking Communion after a Liturgy. If the person is interested in the parish, share the bulletin news with them.
- You will be a better visitor if you are able to be flexible as interruptions may happen.
- Be confident and personal in your ministry of service but remember that the other person's needs are primary.
- After listening to the conditions and desires of the person who is sick, ask if the person desires communion at this time. Invite the family to receive Communion also. Choose a scripture reading suited to the person. Be aware of the need for short and comforting passages. The reading and homily should help those present to reach a deeper understanding of the mystery of human suffering in relation to the paschal mystery of Christ. PCS, 72

## PROCEDURES FOR THE COMMUNION RITE

- Knowing the conditions and desires of the person who is sick, choose a Scripture reading suited to the person. Be aware of the need for short and comforting passages. The readings and the homily should help those present to reach a deeper understanding of the mystery of human suffering in relation to the paschal mystery of Christ. *PCS, 72*
- Carry the host in a pyx. Have respect and reverence for the presence of Christ. When transporting the Eucharist to the sick, ministers should avoid any activity not in keeping with the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. Go directly from tabernacle / Mass to the pastoral visit.
- If the family suggests setting a simple table with candles and holy water, agree with this but do not insist upon it if the family is not ready or unfamiliar with the practice.
- Begin with the sign of the cross. It is a common call to prayer. Be a prayerful presence with a purpose.
- Pace the ritual with sensitivity. Be aware of the sick person's ability to follow.
- Give a small portion of the host to a person who has difficulty swallowing. Check with the nurse or doctor in cases of special feeding.
- Wait for the person to swallow the host. Offer water if necessary. Be prepared with a cloth in the event that the person has problems.
- Take time to pray reverently and to be present with the sick person and the family. Be sensitive to the proper time to depart.

## OUTLINE OF THE RITUAL

Use the ritual: *Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister* (available from the Worship Department). The outline includes: **Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, The Communion Rite and The Concluding Rite.**

## ENDING THE VISIT

- Be sensitive to the proper time to depart.
- End with appropriate verbal encouragement such as “Thank-you for allowing me to visit with you today.” “Please pray for our parish that God will be with all of our families and parish leaders.” “Please keep me in your prayers and you will be in mine.” These can be encouraging words, since it helps the person offer service back to you through prayer.

**The parish staff or trainer of communion ministers for the sick should be available to those visiting the sick in order that they might share their feelings and experiences.**

## Script: Modeling a Visit

*Penny is sitting comfortably in her living room. There is a knock at the door. She gets up slowly, using a cane, and makes her way to the door. As she walks she says to herself...*

*That must be Sister Georgia. She's right on time.*

P: Hello, Sister Georgia. Come right in.

G: Well hello, Mrs. Biwer. It's good to see you. How are your feeling today?

P: Now Sister Georgia, I told you to call me Penny. And I'm feeling pretty good today – a bit more rested than yesterday. Come in and let's sit down.

*(Both move to the chairs facing each other and take their seats. Georgia puts the container with the pyx, cloth, candle and ritual book on the end table.)*

G: Well I understand you had some company last weekend.

P: Yes, my grandsons, Carter and Sawyer, came to see me. They were home from college – they both go to Murray State University in Kentucky, you know.

G: Yes, I've heard that's a fine school. They have excellent campus ministry program there at Newman House.

P: My grandsons really love it—they attend all the Newman House activities.

G: That's wonderful. By the way, speaking of activities—I brought you a parish bulletin so you could keep up with what's going on. I noticed there's a Mass scheduled for your cousin Fr. Mathew Simonar on the occasion of his 25<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary.

P: Oh, I'm so glad to hear that. He came to see me not long ago.

G: At Stella Maris Parish we all count on your prayers, Penny. You are a very important part of our community.

P: Well, thank you. I really miss not being able to go to Mass on Sundays.

G: I'm sure that's very difficult for you.

P: But I'm so grateful that you can come so I can receive communion.

G: It's a privilege for me to be able to come to see you and pray with you. Would you like to pray together now, Penny?

P: Oh, yes.

*(Georgia prayerfully sets up the cloth, lights the candle, and puts the pyx on the cloth. She takes out the ritual book.)*

G: Penny, would you like to get a glass of water for you to drink after receiving Holy Communion?

P: No, thank you Sister.

*(Prays the ritual. After the prayer ends, Georgia leaves time for Penny to have a quiet prayer.)*

G: Penny, is there anything else I can do for you?

P: Well you know, I've been thinking—I've been kind of crabby and out of sorts lately—do you think Father could come and hear my confession?

G: I would be glad to let him know—would you like him to call you and see when would be good time?

P: That would be fine. And speaking of time—next Sunday morning some of my friends from Faithweaver's Bible Study are coming to see me. Could we set another time for visiting?

G: Of course, when would be good for you.

P: How about a week from Monday—maybe about 1:00 p.m.

G: Mondays are good for me. I'll look forward to it.

P: Well, thank you again for coming—would you mind seeing yourself out? I'm a little stiff these days.

G: I sure will—I'll see you a week from Monday. Thank you for allowing me to visit you. You pray for me now, OK?

P: Always, Bye-bye.



## Questions Most Frequently Asked about Taking Communion to the Sick and the Homebound

➤ **WHEN DO I TAKE COMMUNION TO THE SICK PERSON?**

It is best to take Holy Communion directly from the community's celebration of Eucharist in the church to the person in the home. If this is not reasonable, and no substitute is available, please take it as soon as possible, showing respect for the presence of Christ.

➤ **IF TAKING HOLY COMMUNION IS ONLY PART OF MY VISIT WITH THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND PERSON, SHOULD PRAYER AND COMMUNION BE AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF OUR TIME TOGETHER?**

There is no set rule but most people find it more comfortable to spend some time in conversation before sharing prayer and Holy Communion. The conversation could include ideas from the homily and reassurance that the parish community prayerfully supports that person. If the sick or homebound person prefers time for private devotion, it is suggested that you visit before prayer and indicate that you will leave immediately after distribution of Communion so as to allow time for quiet reflection and devotion. This respects the privacy of the person while also honoring the importance of communal prayer as part of Eucharist.



**IF OTHERS ARE PRESENT, SHOULD I INVITE THEM TO PRAY AND RECEIVE COMMUNION WITH THE SICK PERSON?**

Yes, others should be invited to join in prayer. All Catholics who are participating may be invited to receive Communion.

➤ **ARE THE SICK OR HOMEBOUND REQUIRED TO FAST AN HOUR BEFORE RECEIVING COMMUNION?**

No, they may receive Communion at any hour and need not adhere to the normal fasting regulations.

➤ **WHAT IF THE SICK PERSON IS UNABLE TO SWALLOW THE ENTIRE HOST?**

Water may be offered to the sick person receiving Communion to aid in swallowing the host. If warranted, just a small portion of the host can be offered if the person is too ill to receive the entire host. The remaining portion of that host must be consumed by someone who is participating in the prayer or by you as minister of Communion. Remember that the divine presence in the Blessed Sacrament is the same regardless of the size of the portion of the host. Consult with the family concerning the condition of the person regarding swallowing.

➤ **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE HOST IS DROPPED OR THE PERSON REMOVES IT FROM HIS/HER MOUTH?**

If the host is dropped and there are no health concerns, the host may be picked up and consumed. If the dropped host presents health concerns or the person removes the host from his/her mouth, it should be dissolved in water and the water poured into the church sacarium, not down a drain. Of course, if anyone declines or refuses to receive Communion, you would respect this wish.

➤ **WHAT DO I DO WITH THE PYX WHEN I AM NOT USING IT TO TAKE COMMUNION TO THE SICK?**

The pyx should be kept in a safe and respectful place when not in use. Take the pyx to the community's celebration of Eucharist on the day of visiting the sick. When a minister no longer needs the pyx, it is returned to the parish office or the pastor.

## Prayers of Blessing

It is most fitting to take communion to the sick from the Eucharistic Celebration at the parish church. A rite of blessing and dismissal is appropriate as the ministers of communion are sent forth to the sick or elderly. *Pastoral Care of the Sick 73 and Canon 922*

- ❖ Note: This rite of Dismissal from Mass for Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers who take Communion to the Sick will need to be adapted according to the customs of each community.
- ❖ Extraordinary Eucharistic ministers who take communion to the sick may be called forth from the assembly after communion has been distributed to the assembled community.
- ❖ With their pyx in hand, they approach the Priest or an Extraordinary Minister who then places the required number of hosts, consecrated at the Eucharist, into the pyx.
- ❖ They remain there as the Priest addresses the assembly and the ministers, with prayers of blessing and direction, using one of these or similar words:

*”As you go to the sick and the homebound, take with you, not only the sacrament we have celebrated, but also the Word of God which we have heard, as well as the affection of this parish community. Ask for the prayers of those whom you visit in return. Go, now, with God’s peace and blessing.”*

or

*“Brothers and sisters, you are sent from this assembly to bring the Word of God and the Bread of Life to the sick and homebound members of our parish family. Go to them with our love, our care and our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and gentle healer.”*

The prayers after communion follow.

- ❖ It is recommended that the extraordinary Eucharist ministers who take communion to the sick then depart immediately for their visits to the sick.

### **WHAT PRAYERS DO I SAY WHEN I TAKE COMMUNION TO THE SICK?**

It is best to use the prayers in the booklet, *Administration of Communion to the Sick and Viaticum by an Extraordinary Minister* (United States Catholic Conference, Washington, DC, 1974), the official rite of the Catholic Church. Since your focus should be on the needs of the sick or homebound person, you may adapt the prayers to fit the situation. Consider the person’s illness, pain level, tiredness, and ability to concentrate. Also be considerate of others who are responding to that person’s physical needs. If longer readings are desired, you may use the scripture reading from the day or Sunday or choose any appropriate reading from the Bible.

## Prayer of Personal Commitment

I remember with gratitude that I have been entrusted with the ministry of taking Communion to the sick and the homebound. I have accepted this responsibility of being an example of Christian living in faith and reaffirm my desire to strive for greater holiness through this sacrament of unity and love.

I remember that, though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and the one cup. I resolve as an Extraordinary Minister of Communion to the sick and homebound to serve my brothers and sisters with utmost care and reverence.

I ask God to bless me in this my ministry of care that strengthened by God's grace, I may continue to be of service to those in need.

Amen+

Commissioning Blessing **Book of Blessing** Chapter 63



## **Communion to the Sick and the Homebound**

### **Evaluation**

Response to the Training and Formation Program

**1. The most helpful part of the program was**

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**2. I wish that I had more information about**

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**3. Other comments or questions**

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**Thank you for your participation and blessings in your Ministry.**

## **Communion to the Sick and the Homebound**

### **Evaluation**

Response to the Training and Formation Program

**1. The most helpful part of the program was**

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**2. I wish that I had more information about**

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**3. Other comments or questions**

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**Thank you for your participation and blessings in your Ministry.**

# General Diocesan Guidelines for Lay Liturgical Ministers

## Diocese of Green Bay

Revised 2006

**Qualifications:** Lay Liturgical Ministers should be Catholics in good standing with the Church, practicing the faith and fully initiated through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist (with the exception of young family members, not fully initiated, but serving in the ministry of Altar Serving, Hospitality and Music).

**Age:** The age of 18 is established as the minimum age for Lay Liturgical Ministers with the exception of family ministry for Altar Serving, Hospitality and Music. Exceptions to the age requirement, outside of family ministry, require permission from the Pastor and the Vicar General/Chancellor. Besides the age factor, the question of maturity is taken into account as well as the necessary training and competencies. Consideration can be given for mature and qualified high school students to serve as lectors.

### **Selection of Lay Liturgical Ministers:**

When the pastor, parish director or pastoral team has determined a need for additional Lay Liturgical Ministers, they begin to surface qualified parishioners. A personal invitation to each is the normative procedure rather than a general call for volunteers. Selection should consider that

- ♦ Candidates selected for Lay Liturgical Ministries need to reflect the diversity of the parish community which includes individuals of various ages, abilities, social and ethnic background; male and female; married, single and widowed.
- ♦ The number of ministers is determined by need. There should not be so few as to require multiple services on any one day nor so many that each does not serve at least monthly.
- ♦ The lives of potential ministers need to reflect service to the community. The ministry is not a reward for those active in the parish or the creation of any type of elite status.
- ♦ The Christian Community, who calls forth the Lay Liturgical Ministers, needs to be instructed so that the ministry may be fully appreciated as service at the Eucharist.

**Terms of Service:** Parishes have found that it is generally desirable to commission Lay Liturgical Ministers for a three-year period with the exception of musicians and artists. After three years of service, it is helpful for ministers to evaluate their service. Each may decide to take time for renewal, serve in another ministry or be commissioned for another three-year term. It is not recommended that ministers serve more than three terms in succession, that is, nine years. Reasons: It encourages turnover in this ministry and gives many people the opportunity to serve. It also prevents the parish staff and Worship and Spiritual Life Committee from relying too heavily on a limited group and ensures that ministers will not be called upon to serve indefinitely in one form of ministry.

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**Liturgical Role:** Lay Liturgical Ministers normally assume only one liturgical role at a liturgy. In liturgical celebrations each one, priest and layperson, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)*, 28. In this way no one needs to serve in more than one area of liturgical ministry for a given year.

**Training:** All who serve as Lay Liturgical Ministers need to attend special training sessions to become aware of the theological, pastoral and procedural aspects of their service. Appropriate knowledge, a prayerful life and particular skills are essential for those who serve in the ministries. The Diocesan Worship Office provides a *Leader's Guide* and *Participant's Notes* for a training session of the Lay Liturgical Ministers.

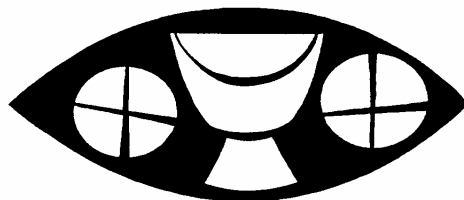
**Attire:** Attire for Lay Liturgical Ministers is the choice of the parish. It is the responsibility of the Pastor and the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee to study the nature of their celebrations and recommend the appropriate attire for ministers in their parish.

Lay Liturgical Ministers are first and foremost members of the assembly. Their attire needs to speak authentically and respectfully of their identity and of reverence for the ministry in which they are privileged to serve.

The **alb** is the robe of the Baptized Christian. There is an option for all Lay Liturgical Ministers to wear the alb since Baptism is the source of all ministry. Or the alb may be worn weekly or selectively to add festivity to the great feasts and seasons of the church year. Some parishes give a personal white alb to all who serve as ministers.

**Ordinary attire of dignity**, such as what would be worn for business or similar circumstances, is also appropriate for all Lay Liturgical Ministers.

**Commissioning:** Commissioning ministers for their role is recommended in accordance with the Rite found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63, #1871-1896. It is appropriate that those selected as liturgical ministers be formally commissioned during the weekend liturgies. In this way they will be supported by the prayer of the people they will serve. Commissioning some ministers at each liturgy gives the entire parish the opportunity to participate and becomes a means of catechizing all on the importance and meaning of this ministry. New parish members who have been Lay Liturgical Ministers in their former parishes are commissioned in the same way.



# Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the Sick and Homebound

## Bibliography

### Books

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**Communion of the Sick.** Liturgical Press, 1984

**A Ritual for Laypersons.** Liturgical Press 1993

**Pastoral Care of the Sick,** The Roman Catholic Ritual by Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1972. Available from Liturgy Training Publications, Catholic Book Publishing or Liturgical Press.

### Video

**Training Ministers to the Sick.** Caring with Faith series. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Press, 1999.

**Thank you for serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Communion  
to the Sick and the Homebound  
during a time of great need in the Church.  
You share the love of God with the stranger, the poor,  
the well and the troubled.**

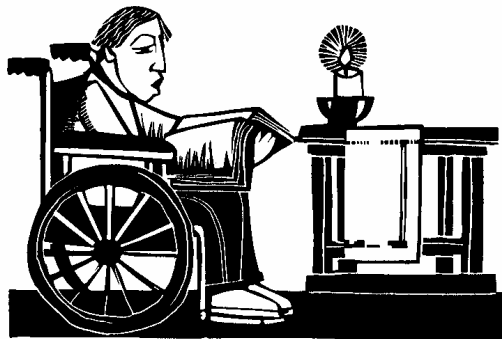
**With gratitude and blessing,  
The Department of Worship**

**.... Notes ....**

## *Acknowledgment*

**Committee that studied, designed, piloted and  
presented the Program for Extraordinary Ministers of  
Communion of Sick and Homebound:**

*Sr. Georgia Acker OP,  
Sr. Geri Hoye OP and Penny Biwer*



*“There was no needy person  
among them...  
they were distributed to each  
according to need.” Acts 4*

Program for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion  
to the Sick and the Homebound

Diocese of Green Bay, WI  
The Department of Worship  
2006