

Taking Communion to the Homebound

In recent years, it has become increasingly common for laypersons to be deputed to bring Communion to those who are not able to attend Mass. To assist with the appropriate reverence and Church discipline with regard to this ministry, the following norms are to be followed:

- 1) Communion is normally taken to the sick and homebound by ordained ministers or those commissioned as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. If you are interested in commissioning for this ministry, contact your parish pastor. Communion can be taken by others on an *ad hoc* basis with the pastor's permission. This ministry is not to be taken on by an individual on personal initiative, but only in consultation with the pastor – this is in part out of reverence for the Church's care for the Eucharist and in part so that other pastoral needs of the sick and homebound can be assessed and appropriate care offered.
- 2) Communion is always to be transported in a pyx specifically designated for this purpose. Other containers, cloths, tissues, etc. are not to be used.
- 3) If you intend to take a Host for this purpose for the first time, or when visiting another church, please inform the celebrant before Mass begins if at all possible.
- 4) Communion can be taken in the pyx when you come to Communion in the regular procession (indicate by voice or by holding up finger(s) to indicate how many Hosts you require) or after Mass is complete. Do not approach the Tabernacle to take Hosts without prior permission.
- 5) When transporting the Eucharist, go immediately to the person(s) who will receive the Hosts. Do not run other errands, go to breakfast, etc. first.
- 6) When administering the Eucharist, begin with the Sign of the Cross; a reading from Scripture is encouraged; the Lord's Prayer is to be recited; and Communion given. A time of silent thanksgiving, a closing prayer, and the Sign of the Cross concludes the rite.
- 7) After using the pyx, always purify it by adding a small amount of water and consuming it, and then wipe the pyx dry with a clean cloth. The purified pyx is to be kept in a worthy place; if used in church, it is to be returned to the sacristy.
- 8) It is absolutely forbidden by the Church to reserve the Blessed Sacrament personally for prayer and adoration – for any period of time, long or brief – without the express permission of the Bishop.
- 9) If you have extra Hosts that cannot be taken to those intended on that occasion, they are to be returned to the church or reverently consumed.
- 10) Communion is to be taken only to those genuinely in need because they cannot attend Mass, and never as a simple convenience, an alternative to attending Mass, or an act of personal devotion.
- 11) If you have borrowed a pyx from the church and no longer exercise this ministry, please return the purified pyx to the church so it may be used by others.