



**Policy for the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Homebound**  
**April 30, 2025**

Since the 1970s, lay ministers have been designated to bring Holy Communion to the homebound, especially from the community's celebration of the Eucharist. This is a laudable practice. The minister who serves in this way shares in the Church's total ministry to her members. These ministers become a vital link between the parish community and the member who is homebound. The purpose of this policy is to ensure this important ministry is carried out with proper catechesis, due reverence, and in a way that protects both the ministers and those to whom this ministry is directed.

**In the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth, the following norms are to be observed:**

1. The person who desires to be involved in the ministry of bringing communion to the homebound must be designated by the parish for this ministry. Even when bringing Holy Communion to a member of one's own family, one is exercising the ministry of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Thus, any individual engaged in this ministry, even for a short time, should be provided catechesis and formation, and be deputed by the parish priest for the exercise of this ministry. All those engaged in this ministry and all recipients of this ministry should be recorded by the parish.
2. Unless the person is bringing communion to a member of one's own family, the Archdiocesan Responsible Ministry protocols must be followed. The protocol requires two unrelated parishioners with up-to-date Responsible Ministry checks for home visits. Only one of them needs to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
3. Ordinarily, the ministry of bringing Holy Communion to the homebound is carried out on the Lord's Day, immediately following one of the parish Masses. This practice honours the preeminence of the Sunday liturgy and ensures that a vital link between the parish's liturgical celebration and the homebound parishioner is maintained. The minister is to go directly to the one to whom they are bringing Communion as one should never be carrying the Blessed Sacrament around with them for an extended period of time. When it is not possible to go directly to the sick following a Sunday Mass, a weekday Mass should be chosen instead. When it is not possible to go directly from any parish Mass to the one who is homebound (and only in such cases) a deputed minister, with the parish priest's permission, may take the Blessed Sacrament from the Tabernacle and go directly to the homebound.
4. The ministry is carried out as follows: The minister receives Communion at the Eucharist in the usual way, without seeking extra hosts in a pyx. Once communion has been distributed to the entire assembly, the extraordinary ministers of communion to the homebound approach the altar whereby the Priest (or the Deacon who may assist in his place), places the Eucharistic Body in pyxes and hands them to the ministers who immediately depart to carry out their ministry. While no prayer of blessing or dismissal is prescribed since it is the action of handing the Elements to the ministers that is important, the Priest or deacon may offer words of dismissal. This may be done quietly, while the Communion Chant continues, or it may be done for all to hear if the chant

has already concluded. It is preferred that the ministers depart immediately, but if necessary, they may instead return to their seat until the end of the liturgy, and then go directly to the homebound.

5. The minister uses the appropriate booklet published by the CCCB, Communion of the Sick Prayer Card, available here:

<https://cccb.stjoseph.com/Shopping/ProductView/17820-communication-of-the-sick---prayer-card>