GUIDELINES FOR THE TELLER COUNTY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) who take Communion to the sick and homebound have a role in sharing the Church’s total ministry to the sick after the manner of Jesus. In bringing Communion to the sick and homebound, the EMHC represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of the whole community toward those who cannot be present at Sunday Mass. This ministry is a sign of support and concern shown by the community for its members.

Pastoral visits are an opportunity to make God’s presence immediate and real to the homebound person through prayer and the reception of Communion. The early Christian community began the practice of bringing Communion to those who were unable to gather with the community. Today this practice is still an important ministry in the Church. The worshiping assembly embraces and prays for those unable to be present and commissions some of its members to go forth and bring the Body of Christ to its absent members.

Praying with another person can be a very powerful means of sharing our relationship with God and bringing His real presence to the homebound. Patients who are in the hospital find it a comfort and source of healing to have Holy Communion brought to them as often as possible.

It is beneficial for visits to the sick and homebound to occur after Sunday Mass, so that the link between the parish liturgical celebration and the parishioner is maintained. EMHCs do not replace the ministry of the priest to the people, but rather extend and expand it so that all will have more regular contact with Christ in Holy Communion.

EMHCs who minister to the sick and homebound should:
- be empathic and compassionate.
- be sensitive to the sick and homebound person’s needs, including the spiritual, emotional, and material.
- maintain the confidentiality and dignity of the individual.

They should keep in contact with the pastor and/or pastoral associate and inform them if the person is in need of sacramental anointing, the sacrament of reconciliation, or a pastoral visit. And bring to the attention of the pastor or pastoral associate, any particular physical or social need of a homebound person.

Mandatory Requirements:
1. All EMHCs to the sick and homebound must have Safe Environment training, to include a volunteer application, background check, and the Diocese of Colorado Springs Safe Environment Training DVD training initially, and then the Safe Environment update training which is yearly thereafter.
2. All EMHCs must be mandated to serve communion by the Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado Springs.
3. All EMHCs must attend any EMHC and homebound ministry trainings.
Diocese of Colorado Springs requirements:

- EMHCs should express in their lives a sincere striving after the truth and holiness that characterizes the Church of God.
- EMHCs must be persons of good moral character with a full and manifest commitment to all those teachings and disciplines that the Church presents for our assent of faith. In a very special way EMHC must hold to the truth of the real and substantial presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. At the very least, EMHC must never deny or speak against any teaching of the Catholic Church.
- EMHCs must be faithful and practicing Catholics, with nothing permanently impeding them from receiving Holy Communion themselves (e.g., a canonically irregular marital union).
- EMHCs should manifest a love and reverence for and devotion to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
- EMHCs should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly and should never exercise their ministry if in the state of mortal sin.
- EMHCs who bring the Eucharist to the sick should receive their Host(s) for distribution to the homebound or hospitalized following the distribution of Holy Communion to all the faithful at Mass or at the end of Mass (Sunday or weekday). A pyx should not be presented from the Communion line to the minister distributing Holy Communion at Mass.
- When taking Holy Communion to the homebound or those in hospitals, the minister must go immediately from the Church to the place(s) where Holy Communion is to be distributed. There may be no other activities undertaken while the Eucharist is in the possession of the minister. While the Eucharist is in the possession of the minister care should be taken that respect is shown. There should be no unnecessary conversation, no playing of the radio in the car, etc.
- If, when taking Holy Communion to the sick, it is anticipated that there will be Hosts remaining after the final recipient has received, the minister may ask the final recipient to consume the remaining Hosts. The minister may not consume the remaining Hosts himself/herself.
- The Eucharist may NEVER be kept in the home, automobile or any other place for future use or for adoration. It may be kept only on the person of the minister for the time that the sick are visited.
**Do:**

1. Make an appointment to visit. Ask how the person is feeling and if there will be others present.
2. EMHCs should dress in appropriate attire when bringing Communion to the sick or homebound, as you are representing the church.
3. EMHCs who are taking Holy Communion to the sick, homebound or to those in hospitals are to present the host in a prayerful manner.
4. EMHCs should use the ritual “Communion of the Sick” (Chapter 3) from *Pastoral Care of the Sick* and bring a Bible to read the scripture readings. If the sick/homebound person is well enough to participate in the full ritual, “Communion Under Ordinary Circumstances”, use that ritual. If the person is not very well, use the shorter ritual “Communion in a Hospital or Institution”.
5. Begin informally. Introduce yourself to those who are present and briefly explain what you have come to do. Pay attention to how the sick/homebound person is feeling.
6. Invite those who are present to participate in the prayers. If they feel comfortable, enlist the help of family or friends to do the readings.
7. Based on the person’s strength/attentiveness, share with them the day’s homily.
8. Have a cup of water ready if the person has difficulty swallowing. (You may bring a small amount of consecrated wine if the person cannot swallow the host.)
9. EMHCs serving in hospitals or institutions should always be sure that they are giving Holy Communion to the correct person. If there are Catholic family members or Catholic staff present, the EMHC should ask them if they would like to receive Holy Communion as well.
10. Create links to the parish, e.g., bring a parish bulletin, share news from the parish, ask if there is anything the parish can do for them.
11. Thank the person for the opportunity to pray with them and for their hospitality.
12. Return any unconsumed hosts to the tabernacle at your parish immediately after your visit.

**Don’t:**

1. Don’t visit a sick person if you are not feeling well yourself.
2. Don’t stay too long or take the role of a counselor or confidant.
3. Don’t compete with a television or radio. Politely ask if these can be turned off during the service.
4. Don’t carry the consecrated host in a plastic bag or other unsuitable container. Instead, use a pyx to carry the consecrated host.
5. Don’t leave the pyx in your car or home.
6. Don’t leave the consecrated host if the person cannot receive it. Instead, return at a later date to see the sick person.
7. Don’t make judgments regarding the suitability of the person to receive the Holy Communion; such concerns are to be referred to the pastor.

Dated 10/1/11
Affirmation

I, as a Minister to the Sick and Homebound, representing Teller County Catholic Community, will abide by all of the above guidelines.

[Printed Name]

[Signature]

[Date]

Please turn this affirmation sheet into the TCCC administration offices. Thank you.