

HOLY COMMUNION BY EXTENSION

Guidelines for Clergy and for lay Eucharistic Ministers

The provision for Holy Communion by Extension allows people who are unable to attend the parish celebration (either Sunday or weekday), to feel part of the greater community of believers who have gathered at the Lord's Table together. The Communion should be administered only by the clergy or by authorised lay Eucharistic Ministers.

Any lay person administering the Sacrament by extension shall be authorised by the diocesan bishop to carry out this ministry and shall have undertaken training. The precise nature of the training would be decided by the diocesan bishop in conjunction with the parochial clergy, but it would need to include discussion regarding the nature and understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as the Church of Ireland has received it, without detracting from the mystery of the Sacrament and the diversity of devotional opinion which the faithful may hold. Practical training in the administration of the Sacrament would also be necessary.

In addition, the pastoral implications arising from Holy Communion which has been brought from the parish Eucharist, (as opposed to a 'private' celebration with the priest and person) will need to be addressed. Due preparation of the wider community must ensure that this ministry is understood to be an extension of worship and not a social visit.

When the Sacrament should be brought from the parish celebration

It is most appropriate that the Sacrament be administered as soon as is practically possible after the celebration of the Eucharist in the church. The time lapsed between the service in the church and the reception in the home/hospital is to be made as short as possible, so that the connection between the celebration and the administration of the Sacrament is clear. The Presiding Minister may wish to send out lay Eucharistic Ministers to administer by extension during the course of the liturgy. The most appropriate point for this would be just after the Great Silence. In such cases the communicant in the home may have a sense of sharing in the same service as the community worshipping in the church.

Arrangements shall be made with the parishioner(s) before-hand so that they may prepare themselves in advance to receive communion, preferably by reading to themselves some of the liturgy actually being read in the church. The exact time of communion by extension should, as far as possible, be consistent week by week or month by month.

Persons who should receive this ministry

- Those who are ill, at home.
- Those who are in hospital. This would include patients unable to attend a service in a hospital chapel but who would desire to receive communion in the ward immediately after such a service.
- Those who are housebound or confined to nursing or residential care.

The desire of a communicant to have a 'full' celebration of the Eucharist should always be respected

General guidelines

At the actual celebration of the Eucharist, only sufficient of the consecrated elements as is necessary for communion by extension should remain; otherwise, what is left should be consumed as normal. This will demand some planning before-hand by the Presiding Minister.

At the time of bringing the Sacrament by extension, the elements should be carried in a dignified and reverent manner, for example in a private communion set or a bread box/pyx and a small flagon which should be placed in a small cloth bag or pouch.

At the time of the communion, the elements should be placed on a corporal, on an appropriate surface (i.e. a small table). It may be appropriate also (where custom allows), to place a small cross and/or candle in view of the person(s) to receive communion.

At the conclusion of the rite, the Eucharistic Minister must consume all the remaining consecrated elements and cleanse the vessels with water.

Only the rite of Holy Communion by Extension provided by the Church of Ireland should be used.

Necessary materials / vessels for Holy Communion by Extension

- A Bible
- Prayer Book(s) or Holy Communion by Extension card(s)
- Bread box (or pyx)]
- Small flagon for consecrated wine] from a
- Small flagon for water] private communion set
- Small chalice & paten]
- Corporal & purificator
- Small Cross & candle (where appropriate)
- stole (where customary)

drafted by Revd C Woods (18 January 2006)