

Resumption of Home Care/Eucharistic Ministry by Laity

In response to lower positivity rates, lower daily positive cases and the markedly lower hospitalizations, the Archdiocese will begin permitting additional individuals to participate in the Home Care and Eucharistic Ministry for the home bound. Effective immediately, the laity, in addition to those previously permitted to minister through the home care ministries, may resume making home visits.

Prior to resuming home visits, the laity must be provided a training session, preferable virtually, that addresses the necessary health, safety and sacramental considerations for this ministry. This orientation must include at a minimum instructions for the participants on the following: use of personal protection equipment by the lay ministry, use of personal protection equipment by the members of the household, standards of social distancing, hand sanitization, and other health and safety precautions designed to protect the members of the ministry as well as the individual and other family members of the home being visited. Ideally this orientation should be led by a member of the clergy, a deacon or other individual who is already involved home ministry who has first-hand familiarity with the health, safety and sacramental practices.

Other recommendations to ensure the safety of all in operating this ministry safely include the following:

- Complete a health screening with the household prior to the visit via telephone. Ensure that no one in the household is positive with COVID, has symptoms of COVID or has been in close contact with someone who has been tested positive with COVID.
- Laity should be limited to conducting no more than one visit daily.
- Laity should limit the in-person visit to no more than 15 minutes. Laity are encouraged to reach out to the household by telephone to provide additional companionship or support.
- Laity are to be familiar with the process for distributing communion on the tongue, including all prescribed hygiene practices.
- Laity with underlying health concerns or other concerns that make them vulnerable to the virus should not participate in this ministry.

In addition, parishes are reminded that parishioners can request to be given Communion following Mass to take home to family members who are home bound and unable to attend Mass. This is not intended to be a broad practice, but rather should be done at the discretion of the pastor and only with the assurance that the family member has been properly trained to administer the sacrament reverently and safely.