

# St. Michael Church

## Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist ~ Guidelines for Hospital Visits ~

*Revised 01/11/16*

### **General Information:**

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EM's) must be Catholics in good standing and must be commissioned to work in the ministry. EM's are expected to attend training workshops.

EM's should show reverence for the Eucharist. That reverence is reflected in their demeanor at Mass (full, active and conscious participation), their attire, and the manner in which they handle the Blessed Sacrament. Emphasis should be placed on their neat and reverential appearance and attire. The minister's attire should not detract from the Eucharist or the ministry.

Due to the nature of the ministry done at the hospital, it is important to follow good health practices to prevent the spread of sickness to others and to one's self.

Remember, we are guests of the hospital. There are priorities that exist in the hospital:

- 1st Priority: Medical Care (Doctors, Nurses, Medical Tests and Treatment Etc.)
- 2nd Priority: Personal Care (Nursing, Food, Housekeeping Etc.)
- 3rd Priority: Spiritual Care (Clergy, Ministers Etc.)

It is because of these priorities that we must follow all procedures and policies set by the hospital. Working together, we will help the patient to have a better experience and assist in the healing process.

Communication and cooperation is a key element in the hospital ministry. Work with staff and Chaplain services to make it a better experience for the patients, the families and yourself.

## Standard Procedures:

- Sanitize before and after visiting a patient in a room using the hand sanitizer or soap and water. Disinfectant dispensers are located in each room near the sink.
- No cologne, aftershave or perfume should be worn due to the sensitive environment of the hospital.
- **DO NOT visit patients in the 1800's, 2600's or 3600's. These areas are restricted to requested visits only. If you have a request for one of these rooms, make sure to see the nurse before entering.**
- **DO NOT go into Isolation rooms.**
- Never give food or drink to the patient, even if asked by the patient. Use the most valuable phrase: *"I'll ask the Nurse."* In this case, inform a Hospital Staff member about the request.
- **Never give Medical Advice or Service, even if you are asked by the patient or the family of the patient.** Again, your most valuable phrase in this situation is *"I'll ask the Nurse."*
- **Abide by all HIPPA laws and regulations. Protect all patient information. Guard the room list given to you and do not allow anyone to see it, especially in high traffic areas. If you sit in the cafeteria to sort out the list, please sit by the windows rather than by the high traffic areas so that no one sees any patient information.**
- **Make sure to turn in the room list before you leave the hospital. You are not allowed to take the room list off hospital grounds. This would constitute a HIPPA violation.**
- Follow all polices, practices, rules and procedures of the hospital.

When you are transporting our Lord in the pyx from the church to the hospital, you should go directly to and from each destination. Do not stop anywhere. Avoid stopping to chat for a long period of time before going to the intended communicant(s). If your visit must be delayed, please make arrangements with the parish office or the sacristan to pick up the Eucharist later that day.

## **Hospital Procedures:**

1. You must acquire an ID badge from the Hospital. Once on Hospital grounds, always display your ID badge.
2. Park where requested if space is available. These spaces are clearly marked “*Clergy*” and “*Eucharistic Ministers.*”
3. Make sure to sign in and out at the front desk.
4. Observe visiting hours whenever possible.
5. Observe Infection Control Standards.
6. If a room is marked “*Isolation,*” do not enter.
7. Be patient with staff, patients and family members. Always be compassionate.
8. We should always keep in mind we are there to help in the process by bringing Christ in the Eucharist with his healing ministry of mercy and love to the patients.
9. Communication is important when dealing with patients. Talk to the nursing staff if any kind of question should arise.

## **Common Procedures When Visiting Patients:**

- Always knock before entering the room.
- Always sanitize/wash your hands before and after the visit.
- **DO NOT** wake up patients.
- Always identify yourself and state that you are from “*St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church.*”
- Once you identify yourself, only ask if they would like to receive communion. **DO NOT** ask if they have received/need confession. Allow them to tell you if they need to see a priest.

## **Holy Communion Guidelines:**

The standard method for distribution of communion at the hospital is:

- After greeting the patient, identify yourself and ask if they would like to receive communion. If yes, continue with these steps.

1. Recite the “*Lord’s Prayer*” at the patient’s pace.
  2. Take the host out of the pyx after the Our Father.
  3. Hold the Host above the pyx at eye level.
  4. Give the Host to the patient in either hand or mouth.
  5. If the patient cannot receive a whole Host, break the host above the pyx so crumbs do not fall on the floor.
  6. Try to say a closing prayer before the patient starts a conversation.
- On rare occasions a patient will spit out the Host. The EM should place the host in a tissue or handkerchief, and return it to the church. If this is not possible, the Host can be taken home, dissolved in water and poured into the soil where there is no foot traffic. A flower bed is an ideal location.
  - We do not give the Eucharist to Non-Catholics.
  - If you find that there is activity when you get to a room (Doctors, Nurses or Techs), do not wait outside of the room. Return later if possible.
  - Do not enter any room marked “*Isolation.*” Just say a prayer and move on to the next room.
  - Sometimes a patient has a negative attitude toward the visit. They may not want to receive communion or pray. Respect their privacy. In this instance, leave quickly, respectfully and quietly.
  - If a patient requests to see a priest, make sure to leave a message in the Clergy Register book: “*Patient in room # would like to see a priest.*” It would be an invasion of the patient’s privacy to write: “*Patient in room # would like to go to confession.*” Do not put any identifying information in the book such as their name.