



MINISTERING TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

When Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are sent from a parish to the home of the sick or a health care institution, the following procedures should be followed:

- ◆ The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should be provided by the parish or institution with a pyx in which to carry the Eucharist, as well as a copy of the Rite of Communion of the Sick.
- ◆ *The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should proceed directly to the home or healthcare facility, without any extraneous stops to run errands, etc. The journey from the church to the sick should be considered a time of prayer. If the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion travels by car, it is appropriate to refrain from listening to the radio and unnecessary telephone conversations while carrying the Eucharist.*
- ◆ Those who are with the sick should be asked to prepare a suitable table, covered with a cloth. Candles are also to be provided, except in cases where an open flame is prohibited. A vessel of holy water may also be prepared. (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 74).
- ◆ After arriving at the location, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should greet the sick person and any friends or family members in a warm and friendly manner. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should be knowledgeable as to when the Ordinary Rite of Communion to the Sick is appropriate (e.g., in communal celebrations in healthcare facilities; in private homes; where possible with individual patients in hospitals or nursing homes), and when the shorter Rite of Communion in a Hospital or Institution should be used (e.g., when the person receiving the Eucharist would find it difficult to participate in a prolonged rite or when the number of individuals to be visited is many).
- ◆ At the conclusion of the Rite, the Extraordinary Minister should assure the sick person and those also gathered of the prayers of the community. After taking leave of the sick person, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should immediately return any hosts, which remain to the church or institution from which the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion was sent. If this is not possible, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should consume the remaining hosts. The pyx should be purified, either by an Ordinary or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 62).