

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)

Mon 11th September 7:00pm - Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and opening prayer
2. Standardising procedures at mass
3. Ministering Holy Communion to the sick and housebound
4. Services of the Word and Holy Communion
5. Questions/concerns
6. Closing prayer

Discussion points:

1. Standardising procedures at mass
 - a. Approaching the Sanctuary, removing the Ciborium from the tabernacle and where to stand:
 - It was agreed that the EMHC should approach the Sanctuary at the end of the Our Father, wearing their scapular if possible, and stand on the opposite side to Deacon Don. If there are 2 EMHC, one should stand on either side. (There are spare scapulars in the windowsills on the sanctuary and in the Sacristy.)
 - Share the Sign of Peace with Fr Gerry.
 - Open the Tabernacle, genuflect, remove the Blessed Sacrament and place on the altar.
 - Sanitise hands after you have received Holy Communion.
 - b. Distributing the Host and Chalice (including giving a blessing):
 - Distributing the Chalice – raise the chalice and say – ‘The Blood of Christ’. Hand the chalice to the communicant so they can take a sip and then hand it back to you. Wipe the rim of the chalice and turn the chalice before handing it to the next person. Rotate the purificator also.
 - People receiving Holy Communion by Intinction was discussed. This is common amongst Indian Catholics. It was agreed that we will let this continue for the time being.
 - Giving a blessing – you can place your hand lightly on the person’s arm or shoulder and use a suitable form of words e.g. May the love of God be in your heart always...
May God grant you what you are looking for...
May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you...
...or similar words of your own.
 - It is important to make eye contact and smile, especially with children.
2. Ministering Holy Communion to the sick and housebound

If a host is dropped, usually it is easier for the EMHC to pick it up straightaway. It can then be held until it can be returned to the altar or the minister can consume it directly.

If the chalice is dropped, then a purificator/s should be placed over any spilt consecrated wine to soak it up. Leave until the end of mass when it can be dealt with appropriately.

c. After Holy Communion:

- Replace the Blessed Sacrament, genuflect and lock the Tabernacle.
- Return to your seat

There are a few parishioners/Catholics who are currently visited in their home, in hospital or in nursing homes by EMHC and Fr Gerry.

Those Ministers who currently take Holy Communion to the sick and housebound discussed how rewarding it is and are happy to be shadowed if there are other ministers who would like to also do this. It was felt that the personal contact and relationship with the person being taken Holy Communion was extremely important.

Viaticum - Anointing of the Sick is done by Fr Gerry.

An up to date Parish Census was discussed and it was felt that this might be useful in identifying parishioners who are no longer able to church and would like to receive Holy Communion. This needs to be done in liaison with the Visiting Group (FrG/MS/IT/JC)

3. Services of the Word and Holy Communion

Have been very successful during the summer and again it was noted how rewarding it is to be able to lead a SOWHC. There are usually between 7-12 people at a service. It was felt that using the meeting room was very successful and helped to create an intimate and spiritual atmosphere. However, the use of the church was also discussed and the problem with people spreading themselves out down the church. It was suggested that chairs could be used at the front of the Sanctuary and people invited to the front to create a more intimate atmosphere.

It was discussed that in the future there will need to be more lay-led services as the number of priests decline and they take on more duties.

The use of a simplified leaflet for SOWHC was raised and it was agreed that this should be done. (FrG/JC/RA/MS)

4. Questions/concerns

Training for EMHC was discussed:

- location and timing is prohibitive for those EMHC who need Diocesan training
- could it be online
- could the training be shortened i.e. does it need to be 2 days? (JC to contact DN)

John contacted Damian Norton with the questions and this is his reply:

'The course is no longer residential, it's just two full days, and this year we have had a huge number of applications - almost 100 will have been trained by October. Demand has never been so high.

It is true that there has not been any "Derbyshire" courses for a while as demand has been a bit lower than elsewhere, but I do intend to try and put a Derbyshire course back on next year again as we have been inundated this year from all areas of the Diocese.

I will raise at the next Commission meeting but I honestly doubt that the course can be much shorter to be honest - I have already made it two days rather than Friday -> Sunday, but when the team looked at it a couple of years ago, there is very little left that can be cut out - though any ideas welcome of course'.