

July 1, 2020
Updated November 19, 2020
Updated February 1, 2021
Updated March 23, 2021

Dear Pastoral Leaders and Staff,

During this time of COVID-19, we are committed to the physical health, mental health, and safety of parishioners and the greater community. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and cooperation as we continually navigate through the ever-changing COVID policies of our state.

Many of you have submitted questions and feedback concerning homebound visits, recognizing that our brothers and sisters bound to their homes – whether by disability, age, illness, etc. – are feeling overcome with loneliness, anxiety, and grief. We recognize your faith-filled desire to offer ministry to this vulnerable population and want to implement a safe way to proceed. Given the continued presence of the coronavirus, now is the time to increase our virtual and telephonic visits to homebound parishioners and neighbors, and we urge parishes to consider creative ways to do that during this time.

This guidance for Homebound Ministry will highlight important control, mitigation and exposure activities:

CONTROL

- All clergy, parish staff, and volunteers must watch the COVID training webinar and sign the Appendix B-3 form.
- All ministers must self-screen and conduct a phone screen of the homebound individual(s) they visit for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at the location.
 - In order to successfully pass screening, a person must be able to answer “No” to each of these 6 questions. A “Yes” to even one question is a failed screening. In the last 14 days, have you:*
 - 1.. Been exposed to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 without the correct PPE?*
 - 2. Had a temperature at least 100.4°F?*
 - 3. Had new or increased shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?*
 - 4. Had a new cough?*
 - 5. Had at least two of the following symptoms together:*
 - o Chills o Muscle pain o Headache o Sore throat o New loss of taste or smell*
- Limit two homebound ministers per visit, and five total people in the home.
- Encourage the practice of assigning a consistent minister to each homebound person.
- Lists of those visited including proof of completed screening, date and time of visit should be kept in the parish office for 14 days.

MITIGATION

- All clergy, parish staff, volunteers, and the homebound individual(s) they visit must wear a face covering during the entirety of the visit.
- The practice of strict physical distancing must continue with ministers remaining 6 feet apart from others.

- Fresh air should be brought into the space as appropriate and possible.
- The visit must be shorter in duration, approximately 10 minutes.
- A parishioner may receive Communion only in the hand. Minister and individual should wash or sanitize their hands before and after distributing Communion.
- We further ask that parishes observe the following guidelines based on your county's current reopening phase:
 - Phase 1 – Max of 5 home visits per week per minister
 - Phase 2/3 – Max of 10 home visits per week per minister

Per recent CDC guidance [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People | CDC](#)
Fully vaccinated ministers can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19

In the event a minister or homebound individual later reports testing positive for COVID-19, follow these procedures:

1. Gather information related to the date, time on site and people with whom the person had interactions.
2. Contact your local health department to determine next steps with both persons who had contact with the individual and recommendations on cleaning.
3. Contact the Archdiocese to discuss Health Department requirements and next steps for communication, building cleaning, etc.
 - a) If related to Clergy – Nick Schoen – Vicar for Clergy Chief of Staff 206-382-2060
nicholas.schoen@seattlearch.org
 - b) Ed Foster – Director of Property and Construction Services 206-382-2064 edf@seattlearch.org
disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic

EXPOSURE

Note: If unable to reach via phone, send a message via e-mail.

For your convenience, we have included a Simple Communion Visit Guide. We recommend using this resource in your homebound outreach efforts. For more information, please contact Joe Cotton at joe.cotton@seattlearch.org or Nick Schoen at nicholas.schoen@seattlearch.org

Thank you for your compassionate care and commitment to health and safety during this exceptionally difficult time. God bless!

SIMPLE COMMUNION VISIT GUIDE

Say hello! Then ask permission to wash your hands with soap and water before you begin.

Maintain social distance as you sit down.

Place the pyx in a worthy place, with a white cloth and candles, where possible.

Spend a few moments in silent prayer.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, you healed the sick:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you give us yourself to heal us and bring us strength:

Lord, have mercy.

**May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE You can substitute a different reading, especially on Sunday.

Jesus says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Pause for a moment. Then offer prayers.

Let us pray to God for healing and strength.

For (NAME OF PERSON), that God may grant healing and strength, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all (NAME'S) doctors and nurses, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all the sick, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray?

Add petitions as desired. Conclude with:

Let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father....

Take out your pyx. Take the host out and hold it up.

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Say along with the person:

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my room, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The Body of Christ.

Give them communion. Put the pyx away.

Pause for silent prayer. End with:

Let us pray.

**All-powerful and ever-living God,
may the Body of Christ your Son
be for (NAME OF PATIENT)
a lasting remedy for body and soul.**

Through Christ our Lord.

Make the sign of the Cross as you say,

**May the almighty and merciful God
bless and protect us,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

Amen.