



**From the Bishop's Chaplain  
The Revd Canon Anne Hollinghurst**

2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009

### **Eucharistic / Communion Assistants**

I am writing to let you know that there have been changes agreed to the procedure for requesting the Bishop's authorisation for those nominated to be Lay Eucharistic / Communion Assistants. The changes are intended both to simplify the process, as well as to distinguish between two different roles and the requirements involved for each. The attached sheet provides the details of the new procedures, which are valid as of now. Further information about the role of Eucharistic / Communion Assistant will be available on the Diocesan web-site.

Essentially, we are recognising that those who take Holy Communion out to others have a level of responsibility and accountability significantly different from those who assist the clergy in the administration of the sacrament at a parish Eucharist. If you have Eucharistic Assistants who are not currently authorised, you must please now make sure that they are.

First and foremost people must be fit spiritually for the task. There are also issues of conduct, including hygiene matters, when visiting the frail and sick, which must be recognised by people engaged in this wider ministry. Those who take the Sacrament to people in their homes must be seen as trustworthy. Along with other dioceses, we are recognising that such people need to have been CRB – screened, similarly to those who work with children. So you will need to put in place the screening process for those already involved in taking extended Communion to people's homes.

The Church has a responsibility to ensure that all those who go into the homes of the elderly and frail in the name of the Church are 'safe' and accountable. **The Bishop wishes all who currently exercise this ministry to be checked and cleared by the end of the current year (31<sup>st</sup> December 2009). This means you will need to be completing CRB forms etc. by mid October.**

If there are any queries relating to the above, or to the accompanying procedures, please do get in touch with either myself, or the Revd Peter Reiss, Director of Ministry Training, for clarification.

Many thanks.

*The Revd Canon Anne Hollinghurst  
Chaplain to the Bishop of Manchester*

## **Eucharistic / Communion Assistants - New Procedures for Nomination and Appointing**

### ***Nominating those to assist with the Sacrament at main Services where a priest is present***

- The Incumbent / Priest-in Charge, with the support of the PCC, will nominate and confirm names of those who are to be Eucharistic Assistants in the parish / benefice.
- Those nominated should be on the Electoral Roll of the parish and regular communicant members of the church, people who are seen of good standing in the church.
- Training in the practice of the parish and in the significance of the Eucharist and of this ministry should be provided. Resources are available for this from the diocesan web-site, but will need adapting according to local practice.
- The names of those nominated should be held by the parish and a copy sent to Mrs Judith Giles, confirming they have been supported by the PCC and giving the date of the PCC Meeting. The Bishop will then send a letter to the parish authorising the named people in their role. The list of names for each parish is held by Judith, and she will organise the four-yearly review Her contact details are:

Mrs Judith Giles  
5 Russell Street  
Bolton  
Lancs. BL1 4BE  
Email [giles2@ntlworld.com](mailto:giles2@ntlworld.com)

- Every four years the parish should re-nominate and reconfirm the names of the Eucharistic / Communion Assistants in the parish. There will be a reminder sent out about this.
- Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry will also include a question confirming that Eucharistic Assistants are properly accredited in the parish.
- Whilst it will be primarily the responsibility of the incumbent / priest-in-charge to ensure that proper preparation is given, regular training sessions will be put on for all new Eucharistic Assistants as well as the annual evenings by Archdeaconry.
- Those currently authorised remain authorised until the next Archdeaconry review.

*Please note there are no "forms" for individuals to fill in nor are interviews with Reader Chaplains necessary.*

### ***Nominating those to take extended Communion when a priest is not present***

- In some parishes Eucharistic / Communion Assistants also take extended Communion to parishioners in their homes, at the request of the incumbent. This includes the frail and the housebound and in some cases small groups in residential complexes. The incumbent and PCC should agree those Eucharistic Assistants to be considered and ensure they know what is going to be asked of them.
- These people should be cleared through the CRB and other safeguarding procedures. Application forms relating to Safeguarding procedures can be obtained from Church House, and the completed forms need to be returned to Church

House (CRB Section), marked Private and Confidential. The parish's Safe-Guarding Officer should be able to help in the completion of the forms.

- An outline of the training required and also a basic training package will be available from the diocesan website or from Helen Fallone at Church House (0161 8281411). The outline services from Pastoral Services are also available on the website.
- Names of those who have been trained should be sent to Helen Fallone at Church House who will forward the names to the Bishop who will then send out individual letters of authorisation. The names of these people will also be held at Church House.
- In general, those **taking services** at Residential Homes, Sheltered Housing etc should be Readers / OLMs.
- It is primarily the responsibility of the incumbent / priest-in-charge to ensure that proper training is given, but appropriate training resources will be available and training evenings will be laid on. Training includes liturgical and practical components (not least hygiene) as well as issues of a pastoral nature & professional conduct, and a theological rationale for the ministry.
- ***It is the responsibility of the parish to ensure that those engaged in this ministry are properly trained and have been screened appropriately.***