

Lay Administration of Holy Communion

The following recommendations were made by the House of Bishops and adopted as policy for the Diocese of Toronto.

That authority may be given by the area bishop to a lay person to assist in the administration of the paten and/or chalice at the holy communion, provided that:

1. The person authorized is a communicant in good standing who is generally acceptable to the incumbent and the congregation.
2. The request is made in writing to the area bishop by the incumbent and churchwardens.
3. The authority is granted either for a service or services on a specified date or for a specified period and a specified parish.
4. The announcement of such permission is clearly made to the congregation either orally or in writing.

Within the foregoing general provisions, the area bishop may make such other regulations as he/she may deem desirable and necessary in the exercise of lay ministry in administration of the holy communion.

Guidelines:

In giving consideration to the necessity and desirability of having laypersons assist in the administration of holy communion, the feelings of the congregation must be considered. There are no doubt some congregations where, at the present time, it would not be advisable and this is why 1. and 2. are important and must be enforced.

The lay administrator of holy communion should be chosen by the incumbent with due consideration to their responsibilities and membership in the church. Lay administrators may wear street clothes as they perform their duties, since this will be a powerful symbol of the ministry of the laity.

Permission may be granted either for special occasions, such as Christmas or Easter, or for regular major celebrations, but in no case shall the permission exceed three years in duration. After this period has expired the situation will be reviewed and application for renewal of permission again made in writing. It must also be understood that such permission is terminated by the departure of the incumbent from the parish.

