



Ministry Position: Lay Pastoral Visitor

Date Last Reviewed: July 2019

◆ **Position Overview**

The Lay Pastoral Visitor makes regularly scheduled visits to assigned homebound and/or institutionalized parishioners, providing them pastoral visits and/or bring Holy Communion. . Lay Pastoral Visitors who bring Communion to the sick must be commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who have participated in the Lay Pastoral Visitors Training Program and are mandated by their Pastor.

◆ **Activities/Responsibilities**

- Visit assigned parishioners at the request of the Pastor and/or Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator
- Contact the parishioners to arrange a convenient time and date for the visit
- Actively seek information from the Coordinator regarding new homebound and institutionalized parishioners and their special needs
- Check the schedules and be sure to notify the Coordinator in case of scheduling conflict
- Always work in pairs for home visitations. This is also recommended for visitations to institutions (hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facility)
- For Pastoral Visitors visiting institutions exceptions can be made in cases where it is not possible to work in pairs due to lack of volunteer availability; however, they are required to have the permission of their Pastor and be registered with the institution. They are expected to keep their Pastor and/or Coordinator informed of the visit, follow the institutions protocols, checking in at the Nursing Station, keeping the room door open, and not touching the individual
- Prayerfully meditate in preparation for a meaningful visit
- Have necessary transportation to homebound and institutionalized parishioners
- All pastoral visitors must exercise good judgement with a respect for safety, privacy and confidentiality
- Available to listen to the concerns of the sick/homebound, supporting them through empathetic listening and prayer but not giving advice
- Serve as an important link between the community of faith and the sick/homebound, reassuring them that the parish community cares about them and prays for them giving them a sense of belonging and community
- Ensure all is well with the person before departing
- Keep a record of all visits (including dates and times) to be given to Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator



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- Bring to the attention of the Coordinator any matters related to changes in health and/or spiritual needs of the person(s) being visited
- Never accept monies or other forms of remuneration for their service

Activities/ Responsibilities specific to Lay Pastoral Visitors who bring Communion to the Sick/Homebound:

- Prepare all necessary items such as prayer cards, pyx, etc. prior to the visit.
- Ensure adequate amount of Holy Eucharist is received in the pyx during liturgy and/or from the tabernacle
- Goes immediately to the home or institution of the sick or elderly parishioner
- Conduct a brief prayer service with each parishioner and distribute Holy Eucharist to them, based on the parishioner’s level of comfort
- Return the pyx and other supplies to the allocated place at the parish. Any Communion remaining after visiting the sick should be immediately returned to the Tabernacle. If this is not possible, remaining hosts may be consumed at the end of your visit but may never be left alone in the sacristy or other place or never be reserved in the home

The Activities/Responsibilities listed above may not completely reflect the ministry performed at this parish. Please refer to the ‘Other Specifics’ box for duties that are specific to this parish.

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| Other specifics: |
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◆ Skills, Experience and Qualifications

- Fully initiated member of the Catholic Church in full communion with the Church
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Recognized within the parish community as a person of good reputation and love for the Eucharist
- Demonstrates good listening and empathy skills
- Has an ability to relate and communicate effectively with others
- Flexible and open-minded in response to each situation
- Understands the issues relevant to the sick, homebound, and elderly
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the non-judgemental role of the Lay Pastoral Visitor



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- Regularly attends and participates in the Mass at the parish
- In cases of emergency, knows contacts and/or procedures

Skills, Experience and Qualifications specific to Lay Pastoral Visitors who bring Communion to the Sick/Homebound:

- Has participated in a training process that reflects on the Eucharist and Liturgy including directives regarding distribution of the Eucharist outside of Mass
- Must be commissioned as Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion if bringing communion to the sick or homebound

◆ **Personal Traits and Qualities**

- Desires to serve the community and to commit time and talents to this ministry
- Non-judgmental attitude toward homebound and institutionalized parishioners
- Honest, dependable and can maintain strict confidentiality
- Respects the privacy and dignity of the homebound and institutionalized parishioners
- Resilience and ability to deal with emotional situations
- Comfortable dealing with elderly, infirm, or persons with a disability
- People oriented and skilled in building rapport
- Friendly, patient and has good relational skills
- Comfortable with being accountable and is sensitive to the observance of proper boundaries
- Demonstrates a spirit of generosity
- Understands the sacredness of the Eucharistic encounter
- A caring presence
- Committed to prayer, gospel values and spiritual growth

◆ **Screening Requirements**

This is a High Risk/Position of Trust.

Before volunteering begins:

- Complete a Volunteer Application Form
- Attend interview and have personal references checked
- Complete a Police Information Check
- Complete appropriate training and orientation

After volunteering begins:



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- There will be supervision and periodic evaluations
- An annual Offence Declaration and a new Police Information Check every 5 years
- Participant follow-ups may be conducted

◆ **Orientation and Training**

Standard parish orientation program, including AODA training. Participation in a Lay Pastoral Visitors Training Program offered by the Office of Formation for Discipleship, as well as on-site training with more experienced Lay Pastoral Visitors or the Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator.

◆ **Participant Group**

Parishioners who are homebound and/or institutionalized.

◆ **Support, Supervision and Evaluation**

The Pastor is the first level of support, supervision and evaluation and the Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator may be consulted in the event the Pastor is unavailable.

◆ **Length of Ministry Appointment**

One (1) year term with the ability to renew.

◆ **Benefits and Working Conditions**

- Opportunity to contribute directly to the spiritual well-being of the parish community
- Opportunity to impact the spiritual well being of the homebound and/or institutionalized, while deepening your own spiritual growth
- Will further develop pastoral care and relational skills
- Opportunity to perform community service and gain experience for the purpose of school or career advancement
- Will be required to visit private homes, local hospitals and nursing homes and must adhere to the requirements of those institutions
- Complete initial orientation session and training program
- Committed to ongoing training and formation including attending ministry reflection sessions
- This is a volunteer position requiring a time commitment of _____ hours per week/ _____ hours per month.

In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Archdiocese of Toronto provides reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities. Prospective and current volunteers are encouraged to discuss potential accommodations with their Pastor.



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This Ministry Position Description accurately reflects the ministry of **Lay Pastoral Visitor** currently practised at, _____ Parish.

Pastor's Signature

PASTOR NAME

**Parish Volunteer Screening
Coordinator's Signature**

COORDINATOR NAME

Date

Prepared by: Archdiocese of Toronto, Volunteer Screening Department