



Ave Maria Parish

Pastoral Care Resource

Pastoral Visitation Guide for Volunteer Ministers

17 Grove Street

Lynnfield, MA 01940

www.avemarialynnfield.org

Dear Parishioners,

As part of our Pastoral Visitation ministry, Ave Maria Parish provides pastoral care visits to parishioners who are facing serious illness, have recently returned from hospital, and who are unable to attend Mass. As a ministry of presence that is itself often quietly taking place in the life of the Parish, this booklet has been created and designed to offer you more information about our Pastoral Visitation Ministry and the pastoral care and services that we offer.

As Catholics, we are all called to live out the Gospel message by serving one another in faith and in love. There are many ways that we can respond to that call by caring for one another, particularly at times of serious illness and end of life.

Visiting parishioners who are in frail health or who are facing an illness is one way in which parishioners can bring the love that God has for each one of us out into the community. We become what we receive and so as such, we are the body of Christ - we become the hands, the feet, the heart through which God's love can be made known.

All volunteers within this ministry are trained, and are asked to make a commitment of only one hour per month. Family members may be trained specifically to bring Communion to a loved one who is homebound and unable to attend Mass on a weekly basis.

If you would like to volunteer or if you know of anyone who may benefit from a pastoral care visit, please contact:

**Kate McGrath,
Pastoral Associate at
781-598-4313, ext. 224**

“Each step of love is like a candle burning in the night. It doesn’t take the darkness away, but it guides us through the darkness.”

~Henri Nouwen~

Ministry Guidelines

For Pastoral Visitation Volunteers:

Anyone who serves within our Pastoral Visitation Ministry must complete a formal application, including a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Inquiry) form, a Parish Code of Conduct form, a confidentiality statement and a volunteer information form. All of which must be signed by the volunteer and verified by a staff member.

As part of the Archdiocese of Boston's commitment to ensure a safe environment, any volunteer who has not yet completed a *Protecting God's Children* workshop, will be required to do so. The workshop is a one-time, three-hour course required for all employees and volunteers in the Archdiocese of Boston.

What is the time commitment for Volunteer Ministers?

The time commitment for volunteers who minister to the sick and homebound is minimal. Volunteers within this ministry typically schedule, with the person they visit, the dates and times that are mutually convenient for a pastoral care visit. There are volunteers who visit individuals weekly and others who visit individuals on a monthly basis.

Who should I contact if I am interested in volunteering?

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact [Kate McGrath](#), Pastoral Associate, at the Parish Office: 781-598-4313, ext. 224.

Pastoral Care Visits to the Sick & Homebound

Preparing for a Pastoral Care Visit:

Preparation before doing any ministry is important so that we can provide the best care in service to another. This is especially so in visiting those who are sick or who are homebound.

Preparing to visit the sick and homebound includes both practical and spiritual tasks ranging from planning the date and time of the visit, reviewing the rite for distributing Communion, placing our own needs and distractions aside so that we can be fully present to another, and keeping in prayer the people we visit.

Below are helpful practices volunteer ministers can follow in preparation of a pastoral care visit. These practices include:

- * **Call** the person you will visit a day or two before to confirm the date and time of the visit.
- * **Be faithful** to the date and time that is scheduled for the pastoral care visit.
- * **Be mindful** of your visit and the time you spend with someone. Try neither to overstay your visit nor end the visit prematurely.
- * **Build relationship** with the person you visit, inviting them to share their story.
- * **Listen** to the person you visit more than you talk. Listening provides space for another to tell their story and gives room for individuals to share their feelings and memories. Your listening presence is often enough.

Bringing Communion to the Sick and Homebound:

Although pastoral care visits do not necessarily involve bringing Communion to the sick and homebound, more often than not, a pastoral care visit will include this ministry.

If you are already trained as a Eucharistic Minister, below are guidelines for bringing Communion to the sick and homebound.

If you are not trained as a Eucharistic Minister though would like to become trained as one, please contact: Kate McGrath, Pastoral Associate at 781-598-4313, ext. 224.

Guidelines for Volunteer Eucharistic Ministers:

Transporting the Eucharist

The Blessed Sacrament is carried in a small receptacle called a pyx. It is recommended that you purchase your own pyx if possible; however, if you are unable to purchase one, a pyx may be made available for volunteers at both churches of the parish.

When carrying the Blessed Sacrament, be careful to keep the pyx in a safe spot, maintaining reverence for what you are carrying. Volunteers who are bringing Communion to the sick and homebound are asked to go directly to the person(s) who will be receiving Communion. Shopping or other errands should not get in the way of or distract you from your ministry.

Obtaining the Eucharist

Eucharist for the sick and homebound is reserved in the tall ciborium in the Tabernacle. These hosts are smaller than the hosts offered at Mass, so that they may be swallowed more easily and dissolve quickly.

Many volunteers who bring Communion to the sick and homebound schedule Communion visits following a weekend or weekday Mass. During training, volunteers will be shown where the tabernacle key is kept and what ciborium is used to keep Communion hosts for the

sick and homebound. If a volunteer schedules visits during the week, though is unable to attend the weekday Mass, arrangement can be made to obtain the Eucharist by contacting the Parish Office.

Offering the Eucharist

All volunteers are provided with a copy of *Communion of the Sick* booklet from Liturgical Press. Although the Rite for offering Communion to the Sick and Homebound is provided for in the booklet, the rite generally includes:

* **Greeting and Penitential Rite**

Ministers greet the sick person and anyone else who may be present. The Minister then invites the sick person and all who are present to join in saying the Penitential Rite.

* **Liturgy of the Word**

The Word of God is proclaimed by either the volunteer or one of those present. Readings from the past weekend may be used or readings from the booklet may be used. Following a brief period of silence, the volunteer minister then continues with the Liturgy of Holy Communion.

* **Liturgy of Holy Communion**

The volunteer invites those present to pray the Lord's Prayer by using a general introduction. The volunteer distributes Communion to the sick person and to others present who may wish to receive.

* **Concluding Prayer**

Following the reception of Communion, the volunteer allows for a brief moment of silence, concluding the rite with a closing prayer and blessing.

Volunteers should follow the Rites outlined in the *Communion of the Sick* booklet, using the prayers, readings and reflections provided.

Distributing the Eucharist in a Healthcare Setting

When distributing Communion in a hospital or nursing home setting, it is important volunteers check with nursing staff to ensure a patient can receive Communion.

In some cases, individuals may be unable to receive Communion due to medical restrictions or being NPO (unable to receive food by mouth).

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Occasionally, volunteers may visit with someone who would like to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Sacrament is available for the Sick and Homebound. If someone requests this Sacrament, please contact the Parish Office at 781-598-4313 so that arrangements can be made with a priest.

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick is available to anyone who requests this Sacrament. If a request for Anointing of the Sick is made, please contact the Parish Office at 781-598-4313 so that arrangements can be made with a priest.

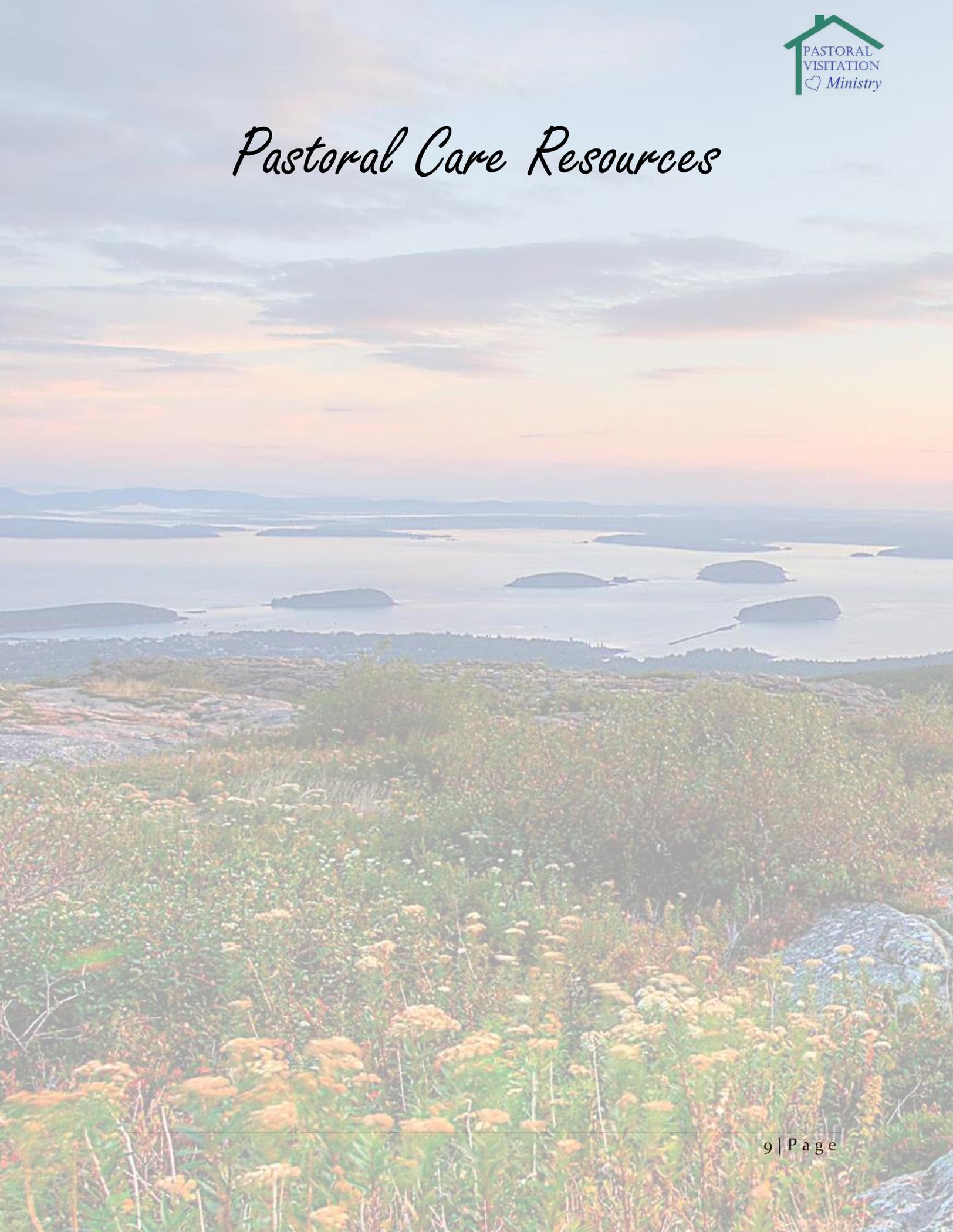
Special Occasions

As a volunteer minister to the sick and homebound, you offer an important and vital connection between the Parish and those who are sick and homebound. As a link between Ave Maria Parish and those unable to attend church on a weekly basis, being a reflection of the community and of God's love, which the community strives to live out, volunteers may find it helpful to bring weekly bulletins to use as a conversation starter (what is going on in the parish), rosary beads (to pray together), or a prayer shawl, made by volunteers from the Prayer Shawl Ministry. These items offer the person visited something tangible from the parish communities.

Safety

As volunteers who go out into the community and into the homes of those they visit, there are times when greater needs are seen that may go beyond the scope of the help volunteers can and should provide. Nevertheless, volunteers are often the eyes and ears of greater needs. In cases when volunteers know there may be a need beyond what they can provide or in cases when volunteers see signs of abuse or neglect, it is important that they contact the Parish Office immediately at 781-598-4313. Safety for the volunteer and safety for the person visited are of primary importance.

Pastoral Care Resources



Prayer for a Pastoral Care Visit

Loving and gracious God, help me to understand and believe that I can do what you call me to do.

As I go about each day, give me the strength and energy that I need. In the care that I give to others, help me be patient, open and loving.

May I, in the work and ministry that I do, rest in comfort and confidence knowing that you are with me always, and may I know that it is not my will that be done, but yours.

Through the work that I do, may my hands share your gentleness, my heart reflect your love and my being bring your peace.

Amen.

Helpful Reading

Please note that the resources noted below are available on loan.
Please contact Kate McGrath at kmcgrath@ola-smg.org
to borrow any one of the books listed below.

* **On Death, Dying, Grief and Loss**

Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry
Melissa M. Kelley, Fortress Press 2010.

Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of Life
Ira Byock, M.D., Riverhead Books 1997.

* **On Faith and Spirituality**

When Faith is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death
Jeffry R. Zurheide, Fortress Press 1997.

* **On Ministry to the Sick and Homebound**

Communion of the Sick, Liturgical Press 2012

*"Offer an open and hospitable space where strangers
can cast off their strangeness."*

~ Henri Nouwen



*Ave Maria Parish
17 Grove Street
Lynnfield, MA 01940
www.avemarialynnfield.org*