



*Welcome
to the Catholic Parish
of the Wairarapa*



**'A community living and sharing the Good News of
Jesus Christ.'**

GUIDELINES FOR VISITATION MINISTRY

THE MINISTRY

The Visitation Ministry, also known as the ministry of visiting the sick and homebound, has its roots in the early Christian community, which emphasised service and care for one another.

The Gospel recounts Jesus visiting the sick (e.g. Luke 4:40) and He instructs His disciples to do the same (Matthew 25:36).

In the early Church, this ministry was often carried out by deacons or other appointed members of the community, who delivered the Eucharist to the sick and those unable to attend Mass.

As time progressed, particularly in the Middle Ages, the practice developed, especially with the establishment of religious orders that were dedicated to service, such as the Franciscans and the Daughters of Charity, who visited the ill and poor.

Canon law recognises the importance of this ministry, emphasising the duty of all baptised Christians to care for others, especially the sick and marginalised (Code of Canon Law, 203).

In the 20th century, with the renewal of the liturgy that followed the Second Vatican Council, the ministry was further revitalised as parishes began organising lay people to take on this important role.

The development of formal ministries such as "Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion" has made it possible for the faithful to bring Communion to those confined to home or in hospitals, creating a tangible link to the larger community of faith.

This ministry not only provides spiritual sustenance through the Eucharist but also fosters personal connection, compassion, and support, demonstrating the Church's commitment to Christ's call to love and serve our neighbours (James 2:14-17).

To be a Visitation Minister is a great privilege. People invite you into their homes. Your relationship with the housebound person can be ongoing even lasting several to many years. You often become a close and trusted friend. You are the connection between them and the church family.

“Seeing their joy when you arrive is something to behold.”

VISITATION KIT

Your “Visitation Kit” will contain:

- A crucifix.
- A white cloth to place the Crucifix on.
- “*You Visited Me*” book – become familiar with this book, it is your companion and a source of comfort to the person you are visiting. Refer especially to:
 - pages 31–91 *Prayers and Images*.
 - pages 92–107 *Words of Hope and Healing*.
- A note book for recording relevant information about those visited.
- A bottle of hand sanitiser.
- A bottle of holy water.
- A face mask.
- Plus a *Ministers’ Manual* containing:
 - Ministers’ Guide;
 - your roster;
 - a list of other ministers and their contact details; and
 - other appropriate information.
- Also take with you a supply of current newsletters.

VISITATION MINISTERS GUIDE

PHONE MINISTRY

The initial phone call is essential for relaxing the client. It is possible that they may want only “Phone Ministry” instead of a visit.

Before calling be aware of any information that will assist you in your ministry.

- Introduce yourself and make friendly conversation.
- Check if there is anything they need.
- Ask if they would like a visit:
 - If so, arrange a date and time.

- If not, say that you will call again and check their availability.

Record in the Comments column any information that will assist ministering. Pass this information on to the coordinator, if visitation is requested.

BEFORE A VISIT

For your first visit:

- record the client's details on your roster;
- record also any information which may assist your ministry; and
- discuss the up coming visit with your mentor and ask them to accompany you if you feel the need.

For subsequent visits:

- refresh your memory of the person's situation and how it affects your ministry;
- phone the person, have a friendly conversation and make a day and time for your visit.

THE VISIT

- Arrive on time – do not disappoint.
- Come as a friend. Be yourself. Remember you are a guest.
- If this is your first visit, introduce yourself in a relaxed, friendly way.
- Progress slowly. Listen to the person's needs and concerns.
- Let the person know that whatever they tell you is in total confidence, unless they give you permission to share it for example with the priest, but not with all and sundry.
- Be a listener. Do not dominate the conversation. Allow it to develop naturally and include all those present.
- When the person feels comfortable with you (it may not be on the first visit).
- Ask them if they would like communion brought to them.
- If they indicate that they would like to say a prayer, keep it simple. The Lord's Prayer or Hail Mary before you leave would be ideal.

- If they later indicate a deeper interest in prayer then your book is a great resource. Also, your kit contains a crucifix and a cloth to stand it on if the person would like.
- Ask if there is anything else you can do to help.
- Give a newsletter to all who would like one.
- Don't overstay your welcome. Leave while they still want you to stay.
- If you feel unsafe, make an excuse to leave and advise your coordinator immediately.

AFTER THE VISIT

- Record in your notebook any change in the person's status affecting your ministry.
- Update your roster with this information.

NOTE: If the information is particularly personal you may need to obtain the person's permission.

- Contact your mentor and discuss anything that may be concerning you.
- Contact your coordinator immediately if you and your mentor consider the matter to be serious.
- Advise your coordinator if:
 - the person would like communion brought to them; and/or.
 - they have any new needs.