

Public Worship

with

Communion by Extension

Guidelines issued by the House of Bishops

- 1** In making authorized provision for Communion by Extension, the House of Bishops has principally in mind the needs of a single cure with a number of authorized places of worship, or a group or team ministry. In such circumstances worshippers gathered in one of the places where Holy Communion has not been celebrated may receive communion by extension from a church where Holy Communion is celebrated, with a minimal interval of time between the services. The provision is intended primarily for Sundays and Principal Holy Days, but may be appropriate on other occasions. A particular congregation should not come to rely mainly upon this means of eucharistic participation, and care should be taken to ensure that a celebration of Holy Communion takes place regularly in each church concerned.
- 2** The practice of Communion by Extension as envisaged by the authorized service has some affinities with the communion of the sick, from elements which have been consecrated at a celebration in church. The main differences concern the public nature of Communion by Extension, and the consequent need for careful attention to the overall shape and content of the service. For this reason it is required that the service should be led only by a person who has been specifically authorized for this purpose by the bishop. Such a person will normally be a deacon, Reader or lay worker licensed under Canon E 7, and must wear the appropriate vesture. The choice of readings is governed by an authorized lectionary provision followed either by a sermon or a suitable devotional reading. Those who have been given permission (under the provisions of Canon B 12) to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion may assist in that way, but the minister who leads the service must have a more specific authority from the bishop, and be appropriately trained.
- 3** Communion by Extension should not be regarded as a means of introducing a sacramental element into the life of home groups, or other parish groups, whether on an occasional or a regular basis. The House of Bishops recognizes the value of an occasional celebration of Holy

Communion in such circumstances, when a priest must preside.

- 4** The service of Communion by Extension has been drawn up to make clear that it is not in itself a celebration of Holy Communion, and yet enables a worshipping community to participate in Holy Communion 'by extension'. When it is introduced to a congregation care should be taken to explain the close relationship between the two services; there is but one celebration of Holy Communion, from which the consecrated elements are brought.
- 5** The notes which accompany the service make clear that explicit permission must be obtained from the bishop for the use of this rite, and that such permission should relate to specific pastoral circumstances. Such permission will normally be in writing, and will be either for a particular occasion or for a limited duration. The bishop should regularly review the use of this rite in parishes where it is used. Communion by Extension must always be regarded as exceptional and provisional, looking to circumstances when a priest will be available to preside at a celebration of Holy Communion.
- 6** Communion by Extension will require that special care is given to the conduct of the service, and especially that the consecrated elements are treated in a seemly and dignified manner. Those responsible for a service should ensure that the consecrated elements are adequate to meet the needs of the congregation, and that any consecrated bread and wine which is not required for the purposes of communion is consumed either during or immediately after the service.
- 7** These Guidelines should be read closely with, and be regarded as subordinate to, the notes and rubrics which accompany the authorized rite, which must be observed with care. They are intended to supplement and interpret the notes and rubrics in the service, and the House of Bishops will revise and reissue these guidelines from time to time.

These Guidelines are approved by the House of Bishops from October 2000 until any further resolution of that House.