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**B3.6 Holy Communion by Extension – Supplementary Guidelines**

Holy Communion by Extension can be a valuable addition to the sacramental life of a parish, strengthening the bonds between the sending and receiving congregations, especially when they remember each other in prayer in the context of the shared sacrament. However, Holy Communion by Extension is not for routine use and may not be used except with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop. Permission must be sought from the Bishop’s office by the incumbent, or in the case of a vacancy by the Area Dean.

The provisions set out in the House of Bishops’ Guidelines cover the circumstances governing Holy Communion by Extension. The Bishops’ Guidelines principally concern the needs of a single benefice with a number of authorised places of worship, which is struggling provide regular Eucharistic worship across the benefice. The Diocese of Rochester simply does not have these large multi-parish benefices. Therefore in this Diocese, Holy Communion by Extension is chiefly used on an occasional basis where there is a temporary reduction in the number of clergy in a benefice or chaplaincy due to vacancy, sickness or holiday. Permission given for Public Worship by Communion with Extension is always specific to the period of time, the place and to the person/people authorised to administer it.

Holy Communion by Extension should not be confused with Holy Communion taken to the housebound, which is a private ministry rather than a public act of worship. Neither should it be regarded as a means of introducing a sacramental element into the life of house groups, or other parish groups, whether on occasional or regular basis.

It should be noted that while canon B14 requires the celebration of Holy Communion ‘at least on all Sundays’, the same canon also requires the celebration of Holy Communion on all principal feast days. Moreover canon B11, similarly, requires that Morning and Evening Prayer should be said in every parish ‘at least on all Sundays’. Both canons allow a parish to seek the Bishop’s permission not to hold this full range of services every Sunday.

Therefore, the Bishop expects a parish to consider which service best suits the needs of the congregation, in the context of a reduced number of clergy, and to apply for permission accordingly. This may well not be for Holy Communion by Extension but for permission for non-sacramental worship instead. In the event of the latter, a simple email making the request is sufficient.

In the event that permission for Holy Communion by Extension is sought, the Bishop will seek assurance that:

* there is minimum possible time between the celebration of Holy Communion in one licensed place of worship and a service of Holy Communion by Extension in another;
* the provision of Holy Communion by Extension should primarily be on Sundays and principal Holy Days;
* the consecrated elements are treated in a dignified and seemly manner, both liturgically and in their transportation and storage. Any not required for the purpose of communion must be consumed either during or immediately after the service;
* the nature of the service is explained to the congregation;
* the form of service is approved for use in this Diocese;
* the service is led by a licensed minister authorised by canon to take such services (namely a Deacon, Licensed Lay Minister, Reader or Lay Worker);
* the rite of Holy Communion by Extension is regarded as both exceptional and provisional.

(It should not *routinely* be used as a means of providing for Holy Communion during a pastoral vacancy.)

**Bishop’s Permission for Holy Communion by Extension**

**Application Form**

Application made by Area Dean/Incumbent/Chaplain

(please delete as appropriate)

Parish/Chaplaincy of

Deanery of

1) What are the specific reasons prompting this request?

2) Is this a one off? If so, where and when? If not where and with what frequency is it proposed to use the form of service?

3) For what reason is a non-Eucharistic provision insufficient?

4) How will the nature of the service be explained to the congregation?

5) Who will be leading the worship? Are they a Deacon, Licensed Lay Minister, Reader or Lay Worker?

6) From which service at which parish is the Sacrament being brought?

7) Where will the sacrament be kept?

8) Please confirm that the Diocesan order of service (attached) will be used, or attach the proposed order of service.

Please return this form to the Bishop’s Chaplain.