

HOSPITALITY TO

The Sick and Homebound

The sick and the homebound share in the sufferings of Christ. The accompaniment of the Church makes Christ Jesus more present to them as well as to the Church community.

One of the foundations for living a life of holiness is charity, particularly the Corporal Works of Mercy which our Lord Jesus commands us to focus on as we live a life of service to others. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus specifically tells His disciples "I was ... ill and you cared for me." (Mt. 25.36). A sad consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic was the isolation of our elderly parishioners as the churches closed and they sheltered in place for their protection.



REFLECT

So with old age is wisdom, and with length of days understanding. [Job 12:12](#)

Do not cast me aside in my old age; as my strength fails, do not forsake me. [Psalms 71:9](#)

How the faith community relates to its older members—recognizing their presence, encouraging their contributions, responding to their needs, and providing appropriate opportunities for spiritual growth—is a sign of the community's spiritual health and maturity. [USCCB, The Blessings of Age](#)

We advocate a proactive stand that anticipates and meets older persons' needs as they arise and identifies ways of sharing the treasures of goodness, faith, and wisdom that older persons have to offer to enrich our faith communities. [USCCB, The Blessings of Age](#)

Spiritual health affects and is affected by the individual's physical, emotional, mental, and social health. While the faith community is especially concerned about meeting spiritual needs, it cannot ignore these other realities. [USCCB, The Blessings of Age](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What services and resources does the parish currently devote to the elderly and homebound?
2. How does the parish identify elderly parishioners who need a pastoral visit or help from our parish community? Do we publicly ask parishioners to notify parish ministers or staff as they become aware that an elderly parishioner would like to be contacted?
3. How can the parish integrate and increase involvement of seniors within the active life of the community? Some seniors have learned to participate in meetings via Zoom or other similar platforms during the pandemic on their own or with the assistance of caregivers. Can the parish combine face-to-face programs with virtual options so that persons who are homebound can participate?
4. How can the parish assist the elderly and homebound with other challenges that they may face? Has the parish considered soliciting working or retired nurses to serve as parish nurses? Parish nurses can take on many of the health-related tasks that previously fell to pastors and parish staff, such as handling requests for assistance, recruiting and training volunteers to visit shut-ins, and helping older parishioners when they are discharged from hospitals.