

(There are two requests in this letter - please read the whole letter! And no, I'm not asking for money!)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last week, in a hurry to get to my next appointment, I dashed into a store to make a quick, small purchase. I was glad to see that there was only person at the check-out. He was an elderly man in conversation with the store clerk. He was buying a battery for a hearing aid and wasn't sure which size he needed to purchase. The old battery he had in hand was very small and neither he nor the clerk were able to read the number on it. The clerk was being very helpful, kind and patient. As the minutes ticked by, I was becoming more and more deficient in those three categories. I was about to put my item back on the shelf and leave when I looked again at the elderly man and thought, "How many more years will it be before I have a hearing aid and need a battery but not know which one to get? How long until I'll be very grateful that a friendly, patient store clerk was taking the time to help me with something I couldn't do on my own?" Those questions gave me pause, slowed me down and put things in perspective. The day will come, if God grants me long enough a life, when I'll be the elderly man at the counter and others will be waiting for me to move on for the next in line.

I'm so grateful for that man and the clerk who, without knowing it, taught me an important lesson - one which I hope I don't forget the next time I'm in a hurry and standing in line!

I tell you that story because I also want to tell you about some people in our parish, some elderly and some confined to their homes by illness, people who desire and need the patient assistance of others (at least a little younger or more able bodied). The assistance needed by the folks I'm thinking of is the help of someone to bring them Communion on Sunday morning.

Several "teams" of folks bring Communion to homebound parishioners each Sunday morning. Each of these folks is assigned just once a month to make a few such visits. The people waiting for Communion would love to be able to join us in church for Mass but age or illness no longer allows for them to come. Our Communion ministers bring not only the peace and grace of the Sacrament but also the joy of a visit - sometimes to folks who have very few visitors indeed.

You see, one day you and I might be in just the same circumstances and now is the time to offer our help to those who need it. It's a good example of paying forward with a precious gift to offer: the grace of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

At the moment we are in need of volunteers to join one of our Sunday morning teams to make a few visits, just once a month, and bring the Eucharist to parishioners unable to get to Mass.

We are also in need (request number 2) of more Ministers of the Eucharist to distribute Communion at our weekend Masses. Who are we looking for? We seek parishioners who worship with us faithfully at Holy Family (when they are in Concord and not away for business or other travel). We seek parishioners who desire to serve God and their neighbor and are willing to offer their time to do so. And for those who bring Communion to the homebound, we seek parishioners who want to serve those who are elderly or infirm.

Training for both ministries will be offered. While an individual may offer to serve both at church and in visiting the homebound, you can also choose just one or the other of the two ministries.

If you are interested or have questions, please be in touch with me - be sure of this: the parish needs you, our people need you and the Lord needs you.

For those interested in serving as a Minister of the Eucharist at church, a training session will be held on Tuesday night, October 29 at 7:00 in the church. If you'd like to come, please be in touch with me so I will know how many to expect. Coming to the training session will not obligate you! You can come just to listen and learn and then make a decision afterwards about serving in this way.

If you're interested in bringing Communion to the homebound, please be in touch with me or with Barb Ewen who presently coordinates this ministry for the parish. Barb's number is:

I'm thinking of a song we often sing at mass:

*Here I am, Lord... Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart.*

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming