

Compassionate Companions Ministry

Parish Coordinator Guidelines

presented by,

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PRAYER



A NEW GRIEF

A funeral and burial is a part of the grieving process that provides mourners an opportunity to outwardly express feelings and emotions about their loved one.

In addition to the ordinary grief mourners experience at a time of loss, the newly imposed requirements to modify or delay funerals due to the coronavirus crisis introduces a new trauma and increased pain to the grieving process.

EXPANDED GRIEF MINISTRY

Compassionate Companions Ministry was created to assure the suffering of the love and compassion of the parish, that their feelings and pain are real and they are not alone.

The ministry will continue to evolve in order to serve the needs of the suffering which are changing rapidly during this challenging time.

PARISH COORDINATOR

The parish coordinator is someone with experience in grief support and pastoral care. This person serves as a liaison with the parish leaders and the companions. The coordinator will receive names and contact information of those who have suffered the loss of a loved one or anyone in need of support from the parish leader or staff and will assign a companion to this person(s). The coordinator will assist the companion with resources in their ministry.

COMPANION

A companion has pastoral care training and/or experience that will allow them to walk (via phone, text and online video chats) with the assigned person(s) on their journey of grief. The companion will provide love, support and assurance that the person is not alone by creating a confidential, trusting relationship of a listening presence.

DIOCESAN COORDINATOR

The ministry is coordinated through the Office of Respect Life along with collaboration of other offices and ministries throughout the diocese. The coordinator will assist the parish coordinator with training, resources and support. The diocesan coordinator will provide regular evaluations of the ministry and will process referrals from funeral homes, cemetery staff and community agencies to parishes for those in need of support.

PARISH COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

- Contact Parish Leader
- Establish process for receiving referrals
- Request a list of those suffering the loss of a loved one within the last 4-6 weeks
- Discuss recommendations for Companions
- List of potential companions to contact

BUILDING THE COMPANION TEAM

People with skills/experience:

- Lay Ministers
- Pastoral Care Visitors with training (PC101) and/or experience
- Befrienders
- Grief Facilitators

BUILDING THE COMPANION TEAM

- Pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance
- Contact potential Companions by phone
- Offer the invitation
- Share links to training videos and resources
- Schedule team meeting – online or conference call

BUILDING THE COMPANION TEAM

Establish Ground Rules

- Confidentiality
- Respectful of their time
- Honor the person
- Be consistent
- Avoid judgment
- Not fixing or solving
- Representing the parish
- Others.....

Companion Support

Schedule regular check in calls:

- How are you doing?
- Do you feel you're making a difference?
- How can I support you?
- What, if any, concerns you have?
- Where have you seen God in your visits?

RECORD KEEPING

- List of Companion Assignments
 - Date assigned
 - Specific concerns
 - Action taken
- Companion check in notes
- Keeping records confidential

Technology Resources

Here are free technology resources to assist in connecting with those grieving when personal contact is not possible. Visit the links below to access these on your computer and/or cellphone (Android or I-Phone) Contact Stephanie Flynn at 989.797.6635 or sflynn@dioceseofsaginaw.org for technology assistance.

Facebook Messenger

messenger.com

Face-Time

support.apple.com

Goto Meeting

gotomeeting.com

Webex

webex.com

Zoom

zoom.us

Microsoft Teams

teams.microsoft.com

Google Hangouts

hangouts.google.com

Skype

skype.com

WhatsApp

Whatsapp.com

Resource Listing

Available Resources and Materials

Training Videos

Grief Materials

Local Agency Contacts

Catholic Teaching and Guidelines

Technology websites and links

And, more

THE NEXT STEPS.....

- View the next videos
 - Parish Companion Guidelines
 - Funeral – Order of Christian Burial
 - Ars Moriendi (The Art of Dying)
- Arrange for companions to view training videos
- Schedule meeting for discussion/questions
- Begin assignments