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You can call your funeral director for specific directions but here is a general procedure. First, contact your physician or emergency team. If the death is unexpected you should notify the police who will in turn notify the coroner. This will also assure that medical help can be given should there be confusion as to whether the person is dead. If the death was expected notify your physician for verification of death. If you wish, contact your clergy and relatives or friends who are close to you. When all medical and legal matters are cared for contact the funeral director who will take your loved one to the funeral home and provide you with support and assistance for the next several days.

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feature

Deacon, at 91, continues ministry to sick in diocese

By Rita Pesavento
Catholic News Service

ROCKFORD, Ill. — At 91, Ray Clobes is a little like the Energizer bunny.

A permanent deacon for the Rockford diocese since 1976, Clobes just keeps on going and going and going.

He may be the nation's oldest active permanent deacon. *Deacon Digest* magazine, in its May-June issue, asked to hear from older deacons, but couldn't find anyone who beat Clobes' milestone.

"I only got two other replies," said James Alt, publisher of *Deacon Digest*. "They were younger than Ray."

Clobes credits the combination of a strong spiritual base and continued good health for his ability to continue his ministry to the sick.

Although he has cut back in recent years, he still spends 25 hours a week visiting Rockford hospitals and nursing homes. All Catholics who are hospitalized at Rockford Memorial get his attention each Thursday and Sunday. Every Thursday he has a Communion service at Willows on Main nursing home; every other Friday he holds a Communion service at the P.A. Peterson Home.

"I've had as high as 111 Catholics in the hospital at one time," he said. That number is closer to 50 now that he visits just one hospital.

"I finish at 12, then go to Yorkdale Nursing Home," he says of his days at Rockford Memorial Hospital. The home is located just across the street. "There are about 20 Catholics there," he says. "About a dozen receive Communion and the others I go and say a prayer over."

Clobes was one of the first extraordinary ministers of Communion in the Rockford diocese.

Bishop Arthur J. O'Neill gave him special limited faculties which allowed him to take Communion to his wife, who was confined to a nursing home for 32 months.

After her death in 1974, he applied immediately for the diaconate program and was accepted into the diocese's second class. He was ordained in 1976.

"The bishop assigned me catechetical ministry at St. Peter's and also asked me to take care of the spiritual requirements of Catholics at Rockford Memorial," he recalls.

That was all the invitation he needed.

At the height of his ministry, Clobes visited Rockford Memorial and another hospital, two convalescent homes, three nursing homes, and an apartment building for the elderly.

To keep a balance in his life, Clobes takes time for socializing at the card table.

"When I retired 27 years ago, I wasn't worried about myself physically, because I still played golf," he said. "But I was worried about staying alert mentally."

He found his solution with a variety of card games he plays on a regular schedule. Wednesday and Saturday he enjoys gin rummy at Forest Hills Country Club. Monday afternoon the game is pinochle. He also has some friends who enjoy socializing with dinner and a game of bridge.

What is the most gratifying aspect of his ministry?

"Finding a patient in the hospital who wants to be reconciled with the church," he says. That happens every other month or so, he added.

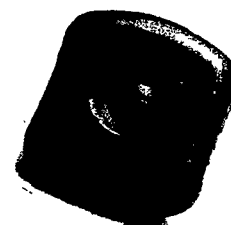
"The gratification of bringing someone back to the sacraments. Just to know about it is consoling," he concluded.

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