



With less than a month to go until Pope Francis visits Dublin for the World Meeting of Families, organizers are moving forward with spiritual preparations as well as the practical, and have called for some 4,000 Eucharistic ministers to serve at the event's closing Mass.

According to the Archdiocese of Dublin, around 500,000 people are expected for the closing Mass in Phoenix Park Aug. 26, which will be celebrated by Pope Francis, who will arrive in Dublin the previous day to close the week-long event.

To ensure all attendees have access to communion at Mass, the archdiocese sent an appeal July 17 for some 4,000 Eucharistic ministers – priests, religious, consecrated or laity – who have already been trained and assist with the distribution of communion in their home parishes.

According to the archdiocese, the ministers who sign up to volunteer at the Mass must be “trained and functioning ministers of Holy Communion,” and must also be “steady on your feet.”

Though plastic tarp will be laid out in several areas, most of the distribution for communion will take place on bumpy, grassy areas of the park, making it important that the ministers are able to stand their ground.

Even though ministers will have already been trained and approved by their parishes, they will also need to be vetted representatives of the World Meeting of Families.

The archdiocese said it could not guarantee that ministers would be able to distribute in the section where their families are, but voiced hope that this would not stop people from “generously stepping up to help with this important task,” and promised to do their best to keep parish groups together.

So far the archdiocese has prepared some 4,500 ciboria - the gold dishes used to hold the consecrated hosts in the distribution of communion at Mass.

In addition, the archdiocese said they have already received more than 500,000 hosts for the Mass, thanks to the Redemptoristine Sisters of St Alphonsus Monastery in Dublin, and the Cistercian Sisters from Glencairn, County Waterford.

Pilgrims up front will receive communion from the main sanctuary area, and teams of nine will be assigned to each of the corrals set up in the park, which will hold roughly 1,400 people apiece.

Eight people divided in pairs of two will distribute communion in each corral, with the distribution point marked with a white umbrella. There will also be a separate minister placed in the middle and marked with a red umbrella for mass-goers who require low-gluten hosts.

Quoting the Gospel of Matthew, which recounts how the disciples “took up what was left over of the broken pieces” after Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread and fish, the archdiocese said they plan to donate any extra hosts to hospitals and nursing homes, “so that those who weren’t able to be present and who followed the Mass on television can receive from this tremendous event.”