



Office of the Bishop

Decree Celebrating Sunday Policy

Following biblical principles, Christians have always dedicated Sunday to divine worship and renewal of self and family. Jesus said, “*For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart*” (Mt 6:21). This policy intends to assist in the right alignment of hearts. Specifically, school-sponsored practices, competitions, events, and meetings are not to be scheduled on Sundays so that families may celebrate the Lord’s Day well.

The purpose of this policy is not to discourage support for enriching activities and sports with its values including skill and team building; rather it is to free families to have one day each week when they are not busy with activity so that, “through Sunday rest, daily concerns and tasks can find their proper perspective.” (*Dies Domini*, 67)

Sunday has always been accorded a special place in the life of the Church. It is the weekly Easter in which we celebrate Christ’s victory over sin and death and also participate in a foreshadowing of the eternal life of heaven. In addition to the celebration of Sunday Eucharist, the faithful are strongly encouraged to make it a day of rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives. (CCC 2184-2185)

Allowable Activities:

1. There are practices and activities offered by parishes and other institutions that would not violate this policy. In addition to worshipping God through the Sunday Eucharist and providing space for cultivating family life, the Church recognizes that this is a day that can also foster cultural, social and religious life. As long as activities are *celebratory, communal and occasional*, they would be in accord with the way we are called to live out our Sundays.
2. Activities like parish festivals are participatory, involve the entire community and are occasional events. Graduation ceremonies would also meet these requirements (celebratory, communal and occasional). Meetings like Parent-Teacher conferences would not because they are not celebratory and do not involve the entire community.
3. The Church also recognizes the participatory performance of arts and music as part of the cultural formation of the community and individuals. Therefore, musical and artistic performances, even though they require the work of performers and support staff, would also be suitable for Sundays.

4. Catechetical activities (Confirmation classes, School of Religion, RCIA, etc.) are also fitting for parish communities. For, as Saint Pope John Paul II wrote, “Even in lay life, when possible, why not make provision for . . . *moments of catechesis*, which on the eve of Sunday or on Sunday afternoon might prepare for or complete the gift of the Eucharist in people's hearts?” (DD 52)

Exceptions: Sports activities that fall into any of the following criteria can be allowed under this policy.

1. High School State Competitions: Practices can be held on Sunday, if it immediately proceeds a high school state level competition that falls on a Monday.
2. Weather related sports competitions: Elementary or high school competitions can be re-scheduled for Sundays only when weather does not allow and no other reasonable option is available, e.g., rained out elementary track meet.

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and effective July 1, 2020



+ James V. Johnston, Jr.

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