



## Policies of the Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

### Policy # 130.2

#### Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Approved By: Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland, D.D.

Approved: September 10, 2001

Effective: September 10, 2001

Revised:

On occasion, it may be necessary for a parish community or mission to gather on the Lord's Day (1) or on a Holyday of obligation without a priest. The community is to be led in prayer following one of the rites offered in the ritual book *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*.(2) The usual presider for this rite would be the deacon (if one is assigned to the parish) or a lay parishioner who has completed diocesan formation as a Lay Leader of Prayer. A deacon who presides at this rite vests in alb and stole (and dalmatic); a layperson who presides wears an alb.(3) The directions offered in the Introduction and the rubrics of the rite are to be observed.

There are two circumstances which may require the use of a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest:

- his sudden, unexpected absence because of illness or another emergency;
- his scheduled absence due to vacation or sabbatical during which a priest may not be available for all the Sundays of the planned absence.

#### **I. Sudden or Unexpected Absences**

The regular parish schedule for the Lord's Day may be observed, since there would not be time to notify parishioners of the situation.

As parishioners gather, they are to be told of the reason for the alternative celebration, given the Mass times for nearby parishes 4 (if time permits the possibility of safe travel there for Mass.)5 , and a brief explanation of the rite to be celebrated should be given, especially the first few times the rite is used.

#### **II. Scheduled Absences**

A Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest may be scheduled after a diligent (albeit unsuccessful) effort has been made to locate a priest to celebrate Mass with the community on the Lord's Day.

When one of these rites is scheduled:

The parishioners are to be given advance notice by way of announcement and the parish bulletin, including Mass times in neighboring locations.

Parishioners are to be given instruction during a homily on one of the preceding weeks about the primacy of the celebration of the Eucharist on the Lord's Day, and the difference in nature between Mass and a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest.(6)

The regular parish schedule for the Lord's Day may not be followed. Only one Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest may be scheduled for each parish or mission. A Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest may never be scheduled in a parish or mission where Eucharist will have been celebrated at another time on the Lord's Day.(7)

Sample Parish Bulletin And Pulpit Announcement:

After many phone calls, we are unable to find a priest to celebrate Masses with us on the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_. Listed below are the Mass times for other parishes in the area. For the sake of those unable to travel to these locations without hardship, \_\_\_\_\_ will lead a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest (Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion) in church at \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Bibliography

Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988.

Gathered in Steadfast Faith - Statement on Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest. Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, USCCB 1991.

The Dilemma of Priestless Sundays. Liturgy Training Publications, Archdiocese of Chicago, 1994. (Resource for preaching and catechesis).

1 Catholic Book Publishing, 1994 - Bilingual resource (Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988; USCCB, 1994).

2 Paragraph 24, Introduction to Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest.

3 This list should be prepared in advance, updated regularly, and be ready for quick reproduction and distribution at time of need.

4 Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988 , #18. 5 Ibid. #21

6 Ibid #21.

7 Ibid #21.