

# PASTORAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

In the celebration of the sacraments the presence of the grace of Christ is realized, the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested, and a sign of the Church is expressed. It is with a consciousness of the essential importance of the sacraments in the life of the Church that these pastoral guidelines are offered. Three notes might set these sacramental guidelines in perspective.

## SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are visible signs. Through these visible signs the Christian faithful come to experience Church. The words, the physical gestures, the body language, the musical melodies, the visual setting, all these contribute to the celebration of sacraments. The Second Vatican Council states that liturgical services are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity'." (**Sacrosanctum Concilium**, par. 26)

These guidelines are intended to enhance that unifying dimension of Church so that all who celebrate the sacraments may do so with certain common understandings and expectations regarding the celebrations. To establish such guidelines for the manner of celebrations is not to deny the need for individual creativity on the part of the minister and the local community in the way they celebrate the sacraments. Through prayer, with steady disciplined attention to ritual arts, and in dialogue with the people, ministers, working within these guidelines, are to help the people achieve new levels of understanding and participation in the sacraments.

The nature of a sacrament as belonging to the Church, expressive of the Church and in service to all the Church, indicates that there is a need for basic discipline and common understanding about both the celebration of the sacraments and the preparation for these celebrations. These guidelines are intended to promote that end in this Archdiocese. Therefore, these guidelines serve as normative instructions for carrying out the universal discipline of the Church regarding

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the preparation for, and the celebration of, the sacraments in the Archdiocese of Boston. (cf. *Statutes*, book IV, 2)

## GUIDELINES

The guidelines presume an understanding and acceptance of the introductions to each of the sacramental rituals, the pertinent canons of *The Code of Canon Law*, the Synodal Statutes of the Archdiocese, and all other liturgical and canonical legislation concerning sacraments. It is important to recall that other Archdiocesan guidelines have also been published regarding particular issues concerning the mentally and developmentally disabled and their access to the sacraments.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate a worthy celebration of the sacraments. To this same end the several offices of the Archdiocese which deal with these matters, especially the Office for Worship and the Office of Religious Education, will continue to provide assistance and guidance.

## PASTORAL

The final word to be addressed in these introductory reflections is that the guidelines are intended to be pastoral. There is clearly an understanding in these guidelines that sacraments are not to be celebrated indiscriminately. However, the burden of that statement does not require the recipient to prove worthiness, but rather charges the minister to instruct, to elicit openness to the Church's faith, and to enact the sacraments faithfully, that is, allowing the signs to signify clearly. Sacraments are celebrations which invite deeper participation and commitment by believers. As representations of God's gratuitous love the truly fundamental requirement for the reception of the sacraments is openness in faith on the part of the recipient.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

- I. These guidelines are to be read in the light of the following documents:
  - A. **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 1987**  
**The Rite of Baptism of Children, 1973**
  - B. **Instruction on Infant Baptism, 1980**
  - C. **The Code of Canon Law, Canons 849-878**
  - D. **The Statutes of the Archdiocese of Boston, Book IV**
  
- II. "Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God." (**The Rite of Christian Initiation**, General Introduction, par. 2)

Baptism is primary and preliminary to the other sacraments, and, like all the sacraments, is the free gift of God's grace and the expression of our response to that grace in the Church. These two aspects of the Sacrament of Baptism are highlighted by the different ways it is celebrated for adults and infants. The Baptism of adults highlights the response of faith given to God's free offer of grace through Christ in the Church. The Baptism of infants highlights God's free offer of grace through Christ in the Church, which in turn, engenders faith.

### III. THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

- A. The Baptism of adults should be done in the context of the parish, and apart from it only in the case of an emergency or as permitted by the Archbishop, since the parish is the immediate community of grace and faith. People should be baptized in their own parish, unless a just cause suggests otherwise. The Baptism of adults does not need to be referred to the Archbishop.
  
- B. The Baptism of adults sacramentally expresses and effects conversion, which has been taking place gradually by grace,

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inquiry and the catechumenal formation in the parish.

- C. The Baptism of adults is the first sacramental event in the integral rite of Christian initiation, which of its very nature includes Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, for adults, Baptism should not be celebrated as a discrete and separate rite, except in the danger of death. (cf. **The Pastoral Care of the Sick**, Chapter 8) This integral rite of initiation should be celebrated during the Easter Vigil, and apart from it only for sufficient pastoral reasons.
- D. The catechumenate, and its liturgical rites, emerge from and give concrete form to the process of conversion. The guiding principle of this process should be the sound development and integration of the Christian Faith in the context of the community rather than a mere exposition of the doctrines and rites of the Church in isolation from the community.
- E. During the process of the catechumenate, the catechumen should have a sponsor or godparent. The norms stated in canons 872-874 are to be followed in choosing such a sponsor. (cf. section VII, below) In the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a distinction can be made between a sponsor and a godparent. This distinction can, perhaps, be understood in this way: the godparent represents the community's interests as well as the interests of the catechumen, while the sponsor represents the catechumen to the community. (cf. **The Rite of Christian Initiation**, Introduction, par. 10 and 11.)
- F. Besides unbaptized adults who desire Christian initiation, parishes will continue to encounter and attract baptized non-Catholic Christians who desire full communion with the Church. These individuals are already members of the Body of Christ, but wish to join us in professing the fullness of the Catholic faith. These individuals are candidates for the other sacraments and must not be regarded as catechumens, since to do so would denigrate the singular importance of Baptism. While they may benefit from certain elements of the catechumenal process, their spiritual and doctrinal formation must be adapted individually, taking account of their genuinely

Christian experience, while, at the same time, providing the necessary catechesis which full communion both implies and requires. Similarly, if these baptized men and women are to participate in the liturgical rites proper to catechumens, the "Combined Rites" are always to be used. (**The Rite of Christian Initiation, Part II, Rites for Particular Circumstances, Appendix I.**) Conditional Baptism is not to be conferred unless the requirements listed in Canon 869, par. 2 are strictly fulfilled. Further information regarding reception into full communion with the Catholic Church will be found in the chapters which deal with the sacraments of Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist and Penance.

- G. When any individual requests admission to the Catholic Church, inquiry must be made regarding that person's marital status, and whether that marriage is recognized in the Church. If the marriage is irregular, the irregularity must be resolved before further progress is made regarding admission to the Church. Any question in this regard should be referred to the Archdiocesan Tribunal as soon as possible.

#### IV. THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

- A. The Baptism of infants should not be done in isolation from the parish, except in an emergency, since the parish is both the immediate manifestation of the Church, in whose faith the child is being baptized, as well as the community which will, ordinarily, assist the whole family in the on-going development of their faith. Infants should, therefore, be baptized in the proper parish of their parents, unless a just cause suggests otherwise.
- B. The Baptism of infants sacramentally expresses and effects God's free and unmerited gift of new life in Christ, which is ministered through the Church. This theological truth, which touches both the mystery of salvation and the mystery of the Church, helps to form the doctrinal foundation for the necessity of Baptism and the Church's insistence on baptizing infants soon after birth. Clearly, these truths permeate our understanding and practice of infant Baptism, and should

be recalled to the attention of the faithful by all those engaged in pastoral ministry. In this form of the sacrament, the relationship between God's grace and the personal profession of faith is expressed and effected through subsequent catechesis and full initiation.

- C. Parents should make provision for the celebration of this sacrament, and for their own catechetical formation for it, either before the birth of their child, or within weeks of the birth itself. To insure appropriate catechetical formation, parishes may require at least a month's notice before the celebration of the sacrament.
- D. When parents request Baptism for their children, an assessment regarding the well-founded hope of subsequent Christian upbringing must be made. (cf. subsection G, below) This assessment is made through pastoral visitation and dialogue. This visit will also provide an occasion to initiate or deepen the pastoral relationship with the family. During this visit, the parents are to be informed of the canonical requirements for the baptismal sponsors. (cf. section VII, below) This visitation may also reveal additional possibilities for needed ministry (e.g. renewed parish involvement, the regularizing of marriages, visitation to the sick, etc.).
- E. After the pastoral visitation has taken place and the assessment regarding Christian upbringing has been made, the catechetical formation for the celebration of the Sacrament takes place. This formation is crucial for the parents of those who will be baptized as infants, since it affords parents the opportunity to enrich their own appreciation of the Sacrament, their membership in the Church and their responsibilities as the primary educators of their children in the faith. Catechetical formation for infant Baptism must include these two elements:

- Pre-baptismal catechesis
- Post-baptismal reflection

The first element, pre-baptismal catechesis, will most often take place in a group setting with both parents and godparents.

Ideally, not only the minister, but also other Christian parents will be involved in this catechesis. These parents, experienced in the methods of Christian parenting, will be able to share with the (new) parents some of their practical insights as well as good example.

The catechetical element of the baptismal formation provides the theological and liturgical catechesis necessary for the responsible celebration of this form of the sacrament. The theological catechesis should include an explanation of Baptism:

- as the sacrament through which individuals are incorporated into Christ and His Church,
- by which the person is freed from Original Sin and given a share in the life of grace, thus orienting the person to the worship of God and to the service of neighbor,
- which destines the individual for eternal life,
- which, when celebrated during infancy, carries with it inherent responsibilities for the parents, the godparents and the Church regarding religious upbringing, good example and later Christian formation, so that the effects of the sacrament can grow and flourish.

The liturgical catechesis should include an explanation of the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism:

- as the primary passage from death (sin) to life (grace) with Christ in the consecrated waters of rebirth, which will later be sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, deepened by the Eucharist and expressed through Christian life,
- as a gift from God, which the formulae for the water bath and the post-baptismal anointing with Chrism clearly indicate,



- as a gift from the Church, which the introductory questions and the renewal of baptismal promises signify,
- as an event of personal and communal transformation, exemplified by the explanatory post-baptismal rites.

The second element, the post-baptismal reflection, is analogous to the mystagogia of the adult form of this sacrament. This element may be offered in a number of ways:

- meeting(s) with parents of the recently baptized to help them deepen their appreciation of, and participation in, the life and faith of the Church, as well as to enrich their understanding of the responsibilities of Christian parenthood,
- pastoral visitation of these parents with the purpose of both expressing the concern of the parish for them and encouraging them in their parental responsibilities as believers,
- subsequent sacramental preparation and catechetical formation.

Regardless of the method chosen, the meaning of Baptism as constitutive of the Christian life and as fundamental for Christian worship must be the object of on-going personal, familial and communal reflection so that the new life of Christ wrought by the waters of Baptism can be expressed in daily life.

Finally, parents who have received this catechetical formation before the Baptism of one child need not be required to receive it prior to the Baptism of subsequent children.

- F. In some areas of the Archdiocese, where parish membership and personnel are limited, it may be reasonable, or even desirable, for a number of parishes to offer the pre-baptismal catechesis together. This joint effort should address the theological and liturgical elements of the formation, leaving the pastoral visitation and assessment, the actual celebration of the sacrament and the post-baptismal reflection to take place in the proper parish. Thus, communal worship and parochial

ministry are maintained, while educational personnel and resources are shared.

G. The Church requires that there be a well-founded hope regarding the Christian education of those who are baptized as infants. In fact, the conferral of the sacrament is related to this hope. In this regard, good faith on the part of the parents is presumed, and preference is given to the benefit of baptizing the infant rather than to delaying it. However, three issues would seem to mitigate these presumptions and preferences:

- The request for Baptism which emerges only from social or familial convention, rather than from the actual parental interest in the Baptism of their child(ren).
- Clear hostility toward the Faith, as opposed to seeming or mere indifference. Indifference is a genuine pastoral opportunity for on-going catechesis and reform. In the case of indifference, the careful celebration of Baptism, preceded and followed with sensitive formation may be helpful to the whole family.
- A situation, perhaps only possible in marriages between people of two different religious backgrounds, where parallel religious initiation and education is evidently going to take place.

In all three of these cases, and apart from the danger of death, Baptism should be postponed until the problem is resolved through pastoral care. When the decision to postpone is made, it should not be presented as punitive, but rather as an opportunity for the parents to reconsider what is really in the best interest of their child(ren) and their whole family. This approach leaves open the possibility of change and improvement. Similarly, if the desired change does not take place, the decision not to baptize should be clearly shared by the parents and the Church. If it is not a shared decision, the individuals have a right to recourse regarding the decision not to baptize. Ordinarily, recourse is to the vicar of the area.

- H. Regarding sponsors or godparents for infant baptism, the norms stated in canons 872-874 are to be followed. (cf. section VII, below)

## V. THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

Canon 852 understands the attainment of the use of reason as the age of adulthood with regard to the sacraments of initiation. Therefore, priests are to insure that the integral rites of initiation for children of catechetical age are used for children who have attained the use of reason. This presumes that there is a functioning Catechumenate in the parish which can provide appropriate catechesis for these children. Ordinarily, this catechumenal process will last for a considerable period of time. (cf. **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**, Part II, Rites for Particular Circumstances, Chapter 1, Christian Initiation of Children who have reached Catechetical Age.) Issues of secondary importance (e.g. later possible confusion as to why Confirmation is not being received at the "normal" age) should not obscure this theologically and liturgically appropriate method of initiation.

## VI. BAPTISM IN EMERGENCIES

- A. Canon 865, par. 2 indicates that an adult, in danger of death, may be baptized if there is some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, and some desire for Baptism has been shown, along with the intention of remaining a Christian.
- B. Canon 867, par. 2 indicates that an infant, in danger of death, is to be baptized without delay.
- C. Confirmation and the Eucharist are to be given in the case of an adult, if this is possible. In the case of an infant, Confirmation is to be given, if this is possible, and the Eucharist as well, if the child is able to distinguish this sacrament from regular food. (Canon 913, par. 2)
- D. For an individual in danger of death, the minister of Baptism is anyone with the proper intention, ordained or non-ordained,

Christian or non-Christian. The faithful are to be reminded of the necessity of Baptism, and, therefore, of the importance of baptizing when an emergency arises.

- E. When Baptism is administered in danger of death, the minister of the sacrament should use the proper rite, where this is possible. (**The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**, Part II, Rites for Particular Circumstances, Chapter 3, or **The Rite of Baptism of Children**, Chapter 5)
- F. Similarly, when Baptism is administered in danger of death, there should be a witness to the Baptism besides the minister. (Canon 875)

## VII. SPONSORS FOR BAPTISM

- A. The role and qualifications for baptismal sponsors and godparents are defined in canons 872-874. These qualifications include that the sponsor or godparent be:
  - a confirmed Catholic, who is living a life befitting the role of sponsor,
  - and who is not under a canonical penalty,
  - and who is not a parent of the person being baptized,
  - and who is, ordinarily, sixteen years of age. These qualifications are to be explained to the catechumens, or to the parents of those to be baptized as infants, early in the formation for this sacrament, so that they can choose suitable sponsors or godparents. When this is done, there is no need for Testimonial Letters, except when a doubt arises regarding suitability.
- B. It is worth noting that only one sponsor is required for Baptism, who, of necessity, must fulfill all of the canonical requirements for this role. Also, there can be no more than two sponsors, one of each sex. When circumstances warrant it, one of these sponsors may be replaced by a baptized non-Catholic Christian as a witness of the Baptism.

## VIII. THE RECORDS OF BAPTISM

- A. Records of initiation, in any of its forms and at all of its stages, are to be carefully kept in the parish where the sacraments are celebrated.
- B. The Register of Baptism is crucially important. The individual notation is to include: the name of the baptized person, the minister and godparents, the date and place of birth and the date and place of Baptism. Furthermore, (later) notations regarding the sacrament of Confirmation, as well as notations of Marriage, religious profession or ordination, are to be made, as these apply.
- C. Because the Register of Baptism is a document of record, the requirements of Canon 877, par. 2 and 3 are to be strictly observed.
- D. The Register of Catechumens is to be kept. This record is made when someone is admitted to the catechumenate, but it does not replace the need for a baptismal record, once Baptism has been conferred. The individual notation would include: the name of the person admitted to the catechumenate, the names of the minister and the sponsor and the date and place of admission to the catechumenate.

## CHAPTER 3 THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

I. The guidelines are to be read in the light of the following documents:

- A. **Sacramentary**, 1985 edition, including the **General Instruction on the Roman Missal (G.I.R.M.)** with the **Appendix** for the United States.
- B. **Lectionary**
- C. **Directory For Masses With Children**
- D. **The Roman Calendar**
- E. **Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass**
- F. **The Code of Canon Law**, Canons 899-933
- G. **Statues of The Archdiocese of Boston**, Book IV

N.B. In the celebration of liturgy in other vernacular languages, the texts approved by the appropriate conferences of bishops are to be used.

II. “The Most Holy Eucharist is the most august sacrament, in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and source of all Christian worship and life; it signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and achieves the building up of the Body of Christ. The other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely related to the Holy Eucharist and are directed to it.” (Canon 897)

### III. LANGUAGE

- A. As a general rule, the Eucharist is to be celebrated in the vernacular language. Specific questions concerning bilingual and multilingual celebrations should be referred to the Archdiocesan Office for Worship.
- B. Inclusive language is to be used when the determination of language may be made at the local level (e.g. invitational state-

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ments, homilies, general intercessions, commentaries and hymnody).

#### IV. RITE

In accord with the **Directives of the Congregation for Divine Worship** (October 3, 1984) and the Apostolic Letter **Ecclesia Dei** (July 2, 1988), use of the **Missale Romanum** (1962) in Latin may be permitted in some circumstances. Arrangements and requests for such permission are made through the Office of the Vicar for Administration.

#### V. TIME

A. The **Roman Calendar** is to be observed.

B. Sunday Eucharist is at the heart of parish life and all parish activity should be directed to this end. All the faithful are to gather to celebrate the Paschal Mystery on the Lord's Day and on Holydays of Obligation.

C. In the United States the Holydays of Obligation are:

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception — December 8

Solemnity of Christmas — December 25

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God — January 1

Solemnity of the Ascension — Fortieth Day of Easter

Solemnity of the Assumption — August 15

Solemnity of All Saints — November 1

D. Following the Archdiocesan policy established in the fall of 1987, Sunday Mass is to be scheduled with consideration for the needs of the people and the desire to have a full assembly and a full complement of ministries, including music ministry. To assure sufficient time for the celebration of Mass there is to be an interval of 90 minutes between the start of successive Masses.

E. On the Vigil of Sunday one Mass may be celebrated in each parish unless serious pastoral reasons require additional vigil

Masses. The scheduling of Sunday Masses and vigil Masses is to be reviewed annually.

- F. On all holydays the same principles are to be observed as on Sundays. On the Vigil of Christmas another Mass may be scheduled for the midnight hour.
- G. In the Sacred Triduum the regulations of the rituals are to be observed. In this regard it is to be noted that the Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening with the full participation of the whole local community. If necessary, a second Mass may be celebrated in the evening. Only in genuine necessity may Mass be celebrated in the morning, and this exclusively for those who in no way are able to take part in the evening Mass. On Saturday, no Mass is to be celebrated prior to the one Easter Vigil which shall be scheduled to begin at, or after, nightfall.

During the Sacred Triduum, funerals are to be celebrated in the church, without Mass, following the directives of the Rite of Funerals.

- H. When a holyday occurs on Saturday or Monday, in the scheduling of Sunday and Holyday Masses, Mass in the evening hours of the first day would be presumed to be the vigil Mass of the next day. In announcing schedules this is to be clearly explained.

## VI. PLACE

- A. Mass is to be celebrated in a sacred place. In a particular case necessity may demand that Mass be celebrated elsewhere. (Canon 932) On Sundays such Masses should not be scheduled so that they distract from the principal gathering of the faithful for Mass in the parish church.
- B. If Mass is to be celebrated in a sacred edifice of a church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church, explicit permission of the local ordinary is required. (Canon 933)



## VII. MINISTRIES

- A. The laity, properly deputed, may function as lectors and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Pastors shall keep a register of all so deputed. In individual cases others may be deputed to exercise these ministries in accord with liturgical law. (Canon 230, par. 3) No one is to be canonically installed in either of these ministries without the permission of the Archbishop. (Canon 230, par. 1)
- B. It should be noted that when ordinary ministers (bishops, priests, deacons) are present during a eucharistic celebration, whether they are participating in it or not, and are not prevented from doing so, they are to assist in the distribution of Communion. Accordingly, if the ordinary ministers are in sufficient number, extraordinary eucharistic ministers are not allowed to distribute Communion at that celebration.
- C. In addition to these ministries pastors are also encouraged to foster the involvement of the laity in the celebration of the Eucharist in other ways. This should include servers, ushers, greeters, ministers of music, and sacristans.
- D. Both men and women are to be called to all liturgical ministries unless restricted by law. The instructions, **Liturgicae instaurationes** (1970) and **Inaestimabile donum** (1980), greatly expanded the opportunity for women to serve in non-ordained liturgical ministries, but continued the prohibition of women as altar servers.

## VIII. COMMUNION

- A. As noted in the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal**, "It is most desirable that the faithful receive the Lord's body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they share in the chalice." (par. 56)
- B. The nature of the sign demands that the material for the eucharistic celebration appear as actual food. The Eucharistic bread, even though unleavened and traditional in form,

should therefore be made in such a way that the priest can break it and distribute the parts to at least some of the faithful. When the number of communicants is large or other pastoral needs require it, small hosts may be used. (**G.I.R.M.** par. 283)

- C. As approved by the Congregation of Sacraments and Divine Worship (June 17, 1977), the optional practice of Communion in the hand is permitted.
- D. In accord with the decree of the N.C.C.B. (October 13, 1984), confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship, and earlier decrees, Communion may be given to the faithful under both kinds at all Masses in an orderly and reverent manner with regular proper catechesis. Normally, Communion received directly from the chalice is to be preferred. (**G.I.R.M.** par. 244)
- E. One who is to receive the Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception of water or medicine, for at least one hour before Communion. Those who are advanced in age or who suffer from any infirmity, as well as those who take care of them may receive the Eucharist even if they have taken something to eat or drink during the previous hour. (Canon 919)
- F. While recognizing the call and encouragement to frequent Communion, it is to be noted that the obligation of the faithful to receive Communion at least once a year is to be observed in the period from the first Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday, unless, for a just cause, it is observed at some other time during the year. (Canon 920)

## IX. GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has published guidelines (November 8, 1986) concerning the reception of Communion by Catholics and non-Catholics which are to be observed. Those who are not in full communion with the Church are not to be invited to receive the Eucharist. These guidelines can be found in any published worship aid and should be made known to the Christian faithful in parishes and other places of worship.

## X. FIRST EUCHARIST

- A. Children, baptized as infants, are to be invited to receive First Eucharist at the age of reason, following adequate catechesis. Children are to receive First Eucharist in their proper parish, unless a just cause suggests otherwise. The catechesis for the First Eucharist is to involve the parents who are to be instructed concerning their own responsibility, as well as their children's, to celebrate Eucharist on Sunday.
- B. Parishes are to provide catechesis and celebration of First Penance prior to and independent of the program of First Eucharist.
- C. Children, unbaptized as infants, who have reached the use of reason and are able to be taught, on being received into the Church, are to be baptized, confirmed and given First Eucharist in the one ceremony as directed in the **Rite of Initiation for Children of the Catechetical Age**.
- D. Adults who have not yet received First Eucharist are to be given it in accord with the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** or the **Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church**.
- E. A register of those who have received First Eucharist should be kept in every parish with the date of the celebration and the date and place of Baptism.

## XI. COMMUNION TO THE SICK

- A. Priests and deacons are to bring Communion to the sick of the parish on a regular basis.
- B. In addition to the services of the priests and deacons, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are to be trained and designated for the bringing of Communion to the sick.
- C. The practice of sending extraordinary eucharistic ministers to the sick from the Sunday Mass is to be encouraged.

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- D. In the administration of Holy Communion to the Sick, the minister is to use the appropriate rite. (Ch. 3 **Pastoral Care of the Sick**)

## XII. DAILY MASS

- A. Daily celebration of Mass is to be scheduled in all parishes.
- B. When legitimate demands on the priest(s) of a parish prevent a daily Mass each day of the week, schedules of neighboring parishes are to be arranged in such a way that daily Mass is available in the area. The vicar should be notified so that he can coordinate this scheduling.
- C. When Mass cannot be scheduled on a particular day, the laity may be encouraged to participate in Mass in a neighboring parish. If a deacon or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist is available, the pastor may also schedule a Communion service. Opportunity can also be provided for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- D. When additional priests are present in a church or chapel for the celebration of Eucharist, opportunity for concelebration should be provided. (Canon 902) The Eucharist should not be celebrated without the presence of some member of the faithful except for a just and reasonable cause. (Canon 906) It is to be celebrated, wherever possible, with the presence and active participation of the Christian faithful.

## XIII. INTENTION OF THE MASS

- A. The diocesan bishop and pastors are obligated to celebrate Mass for the intention of the people on Sundays and holydays according to Canons 388 and 534. This may be done in the manner of an announced intention in the cathedral or parish church when possible.
- B. In the scheduling of Mass intentions only one intention is to be scheduled for each Mass; only one offering is to be accepted for that intention and multiple offerings are to be applied to additional Masses.

- C. In the acceptance of offerings for Mass to be applied for specific intentions, Canons 945 and following are to be strictly observed. The offering is to be understood as a contribution to the good of the Church and a support of its ministers and works (Canon 946), and not as purchase of a spiritual fruit or grace for the person. Any appearance of commerce is to be avoided. (Canon 947)

#### XIV. EUCHARISTIC DEVOTION

- A. Eucharistic devotion is an important part of Catholic spirituality. As such it should be encouraged as a valuable form of prayer. All scheduling of such devotion, however, ought to foster the primary focus on the actual celebration of Eucharist at Mass.
- B. The Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in the tabernacle and devotion to the reserved sacrament in the manner of regular visits and brief or extended times of prayer should be encouraged.
- C. The former ritual of "Benediction" has been replaced by the ritual of "Exposition." Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is to take place within the context of prayer and not in the former briefer structure of simply hymn, incensation and blessing. This is done either with ciborium or with monstrance. Directives for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are to be found in **Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass**.

The structure of the celebration is as follows:

Exposition  
Adoration  
    Readings from scripture  
    Prayers and songs  
    Homily or brief exhortation  
    Period(s) of religious silence  
Benediction (if the minister is a priest or deacon)  
Reposition

The ordinary minister of exposition and benediction is a priest or deacon. In their absence, an acolyte or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, with the permission of the local ordinary, may publicly expose and then repose the Holy Eucharist for the faithful, but may not impart the blessing. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is to be observed only when a number of the faithful will be present.

- D. The former ritual of "Forty Hours" is no longer in use. However, it is recommended that an annual solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament be held during a suitable period of time. This kind of exposition is to be held only if a suitable gathering of the faithful is foreseen and the established norms are observed. (Canon 942) Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for shorter periods may also be done at different times of the year in churches or oratories where the Eucharist is permitted to be reserved. (Canon (941)
- E. Perpetual Exposition is not permitted in parish churches. As noted in **Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass** (pars. 82-100), perpetual exposition is permitted only in the case of those religious communities and other pious societies of men and women who, according to the constitutions and regulations of their institute, have the general practice of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration or adoration over extended periods of time.

## XV. OFFERINGS AT MASS

The collection of money at Mass is to be done at the time of the preparation of the gifts. (**G.I.R.M.**, par. 49) The Prayer over the Gifts is not to be prayed until this collection of money is completed. It is also fitting that the monies collected be brought forward in the procession with the other gifts. When a designated second collection is scheduled, this may be arranged by separate envelopes distributed in advance, all collected in the one passing of the basket; two immediately successive passings of the basket; or by another appropriate means. A second collection at any other point in the Mass (e.g. after Communion) is inappropriate.

## CHAPTER 4 THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

- I. These guidelines are to be read in the light of the following documents:
  - A. **The Rite of Penance**, 1973
  - B. **The Code of Canon Law**, Canons 959-991
  - C. **The Statutes of the Archdiocese of Boston**, Book IV
  
- II. “The Father has shown forth his mercy by reconciling the world to himself in Christ and by making peace for all things on earth and in heaven by the blood of Christ on the Cross. The Son of God made man lived among men in order to free them from the slavery of sin and to call them out of darkness into his wonderful light. He therefore began his work on earth by preaching repentance and saying: ‘Turn away from sin and believe the good news’ (Mark 1:15). This invitation to repentance, which had often been sounded by the prophets, prepared the hearts of men for the coming of the Kingdom of God through the voice of John the Baptist who came ‘preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mark 1:4) . . . Furthermore our Savior Jesus Christ, when he gave to his apostles and their successors power to forgive sins, instituted in his Church the Sacrament of Penance. Thus the faithful who fall into sin after Baptism may be reconciled with God and renewed in grace. The Church “possesses both water and tears: the water of baptism, and the tears of penance.” (**The Rite of Penance**, General Introduction, par. 1 and 2)
  
- III. In his Apostolic Exhortation, **Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**, Pope John Paul II comments on the three forms of the sacrament of Penance. These comments, and the parenthetical outlines for the first and second forms of the sacrament, will enhance our understanding of Penance.
  - A. “The first form - reconciliation of individual penitents - is the only normal and ordinary way of celebrating the Sacrament, and it cannot and must not be allowed to fall into disuse or to be neglected.” (**Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**, par. 32) The first form of the sacrament includes the following:

- Reception of the Penitent
- Reading of the Word of God (optional)
- Confession of Sins and Acceptance of Satisfaction
- Prayer of the Penitent and Absolution
- Proclamation of Praise and Dismissal.

B. "The second form - reconciliation of a number of penitents with individual confession and absolution - even though in the preparatory acts it helps to give greater emphasis to the community aspects of the Sacrament, is the same as the first form in the culminating sacramental act, namely, individual confession and individual absolution of sins. It can thus be regarded as equal to the first form as regards the normality of the rite." (**Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**, par. 32)

The second form of the sacrament includes the following:

- Introductory Rites
- Celebration of the Word of God
- Examination of Conscience
- Rite of Reconciliation
  - Individual Confession and Acceptance of Satisfaction
  - Individual Absolution
- Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy
- Concluding Rites.

C. "The third form, however, - reconciliation of a number of penitents with general confession and absolution - is exceptional in character. It is, therefore, not left to free choice but is regulated by a special discipline." (**Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**, par. 32) With regard to General Absolution, (Rite III), the



conditions determined by the general law of the Church are not presently fulfilled in the Archdiocese. (Canon 961, par. 1, #2) Therefore, Rite III, the Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution, may not be used unless the Archbishop determines that the canonical conditions are fulfilled. (Canon 961, par. 2)

- IV. In the light of the teaching of this Apostolic Exhortation, and **The Rite of Penance** itself, pastors, and those who collaborate with them in the pastoral care of the faithful, are to observe the following with regard to the celebration of the sacrament of Penance.
- A. Frequent celebration of this sacrament is to be encouraged in homilies, adult education programs and other forms of catechesis. This catechesis should stress the mystery of sin, with its personal and social dimensions, the ever abundant mercy of God offered through Christ by the Holy Spirit in the Church, the inherent need for on-going conversion and the virtue of penance, the nature of the sacrament of Penance and its necessary role in the Church, and the subsequent importance of frequently celebrating this sacrament in order to heal and strengthen our participation in the life of Christ and His Church.
  - B. While encouraged to celebrate this sacrament for any and all sins, the faithful are to be reminded of the obligation to confess serious sin at least once a year. (Canon 989)
  - C. The times each week when the sacrament is celebrated in church are to be stated specifically in the parish bulletin and by other appropriate means of communication. If Saturday afternoon or evening are not convenient times for the penitents, other times, judged to be more convenient, should be chosen. Also, the priest is to celebrate this sacrament for the faithful whenever they reasonably request it.
  - D. In addition to the regular weekly schedule for the sacrament of Penance, other opportunities should be provided for its celebration (Rites I and II). The Seasons of Advent and Lent

provide rich occasions for these celebrations. However, other events or experiences will also emerge in the lives of the faithful, especially as they prepare for Confirmation or Marriage, when this sacrament can be encouraged and, in fact, celebrated.

- E. The penitent should be provided with the opportunity to confess with or without a fixed grill in every church. When only one priest is available at a scheduled time, that setting should be employed which respects the freedom of the penitent in this matter.
- F. The reading of Holy Scripture is to be encouraged in the reconciliation of individual penitents, since, "through the Word of God the Christian receives the light to recognize his sins and is called to conversion and to confidence in God's mercy." (**The Rite of Penance**, General Introduction, par. 17)
- G. The understanding and celebration of the sacrament of Penance, for priests and people alike, will be deepened and enriched if we recall that, "frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise but a serious striving to perfect the grace of baptism so that, as we bear in our body the death of Jesus Christ, his life may be seen in us ever more clearly." (**The Rite of Penance**, General Introduction, par. 7b)
- H. In order that the sacrament of Penance may be fittingly celebrated both by individual members and assemblies of the faithful, the constitutive elements for Rite I and II, found in the ritual, are to be carefully observed. Furthermore, the scriptural reading(s), the use of music, silence, the furnishings and decorations of the setting for the sacrament will all enhance, and thus further encourage, the celebration of this sacrament.

## V. THE RECEPTION OF FIRST PENANCE

- A. Candidates for full Communion with the Catholic Church should have an opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of

Penance, with a confessor of their choosing, in the days prior to the Rite of Reception. Catechumens should receive catechesis on the nature of the sacrament of Penance, and the various ways it can be celebrated, during the catechumenate. In this way they will be prepared to celebrate this sacrament after their initiation is complete. However, it must be recalled that the sacrament of Penance cannot be received prior to initiation, since, except for Baptism, the sacraments are only for the baptized.

- B. Further participation in the sacramental life of the Church, through Penance and the Eucharist, should occur when children, baptized in the Catholic Church as infants, have reached the use of reason. For most children, this is about seven years of age. Structured programs of preparation for the sacrament of Penance will, ordinarily, take place at the second grade level. "Catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation. This is to be done so that the specific identity of each sacrament is apparent and so that, before receiving First Communion, the child will be familiar with the revised Rite of Penance and will be at ease with the reception of this Sacrament." (**National Catechetical Directory, #126**)

Parents, as the primary educators of their children, should have the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the preparation for the sacrament of Penance. Involvement in the instructional process, parish celebrations and liturgical services relative to the reconciliation of their children, as well as their own celebration of the sacrament, should be encouraged. There should be a cooperative spirit on the part of the parish priest, the catechists and the parents in the entire catechetical preparation process.

As a rule, a child will celebrate the sacrament of Penance at the end of the catechesis for penance and before the reception of First Eucharist. In an exceptional case, if it seems clear to those involved in the sacramental catechesis (priest, catechist and parents) that an individual child is not ready for the sacrament, then Penance should be postponed until the child is ready. This

does not mean that First Eucharist must be postponed.

Catechesis for children must respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of individuals. Catechesis for the sacrament of Penance should include concepts of good and evil, repentance and God's loving mercy, and should encourage the child to see in the sacrament of Penance that faith is expressed both by being forgiven and by being forgiving.

- Since the sacramental experience of being forgiven takes place in the internal forum, the practice of awarding certificates on the occasion of First Penance is not appropriate.

Parents should understand that their child's preparation is not once and for all, but a beginning, the foundation of further catechesis and moral development. "Because continuing, life-long conversion is part of what it means to grow in faith, catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is ongoing. Children have a right to fuller catechesis each year. Adults also have a right to continuing catechesis concerning the Sacrament." (National Catechetical Directory, #126)

After First Penance, annual opportunities for the communal celebration of the sacrament of Penance should be provided on every level of religious education. Furthermore, children should be encouraged to regularly receive the sacrament of Penance individually. The virtue of penance (ongoing conversion) should be a constantly recurring theme throughout the entire catechetical program.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- I. The guidelines are to be read in the light of the following documents:
  - A. **Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum**, 1982.
  - B. **The Code of Canon Law**, Canons 998-1007.
  - C. **The Statutes of the Archdiocese of Boston**, Book IV.
  
- II. “This Sacrament gives the grace of the Holy Spirit to those who are sick: by this grace the whole person is helped and saved, sustained by trust in God, and strengthened against the temptations of the Evil One and against anxiety over death. Thus the sick person is able not only to bear suffering bravely, but also fight against it. A return to physical health may follow the reception of the sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person’s salvation. If necessary, the sacrament also provides the sick person with the forgiveness of sins and the completion of Christian penance.” (**Pastoral Care of the Sick**, General Introduction, par. 6)
  
- III. The proper minister of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is the bishop and the priest. Others are associated with them in the pastoral care of the sick, especially in the administration of Holy Communion, as well as in the ministry of prayer and support.
  
- IV. All those involved in the ministry to the sick should pay particular attention to the General Introduction of the ritual, **Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum**, regarding the mystery of human illness and the Church’s multi-faceted ministry to those who are ill.
  
- V. In many parishes, the communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick has become an annual form of worship. While this practice is to be encouraged, care must be taken regarding those who may properly receive this sacrament. The introduction to the ritual limits the reception of this sacrament to those who are “seriously ill.” The sacrament may and should be given to anyone whose health is seriously impaired due to illness or advanced age. At the same time, the requirement of serious illness will prevent any

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misconception that this sacrament may be properly received by anyone, regardless of that person's condition of well being. Those whose health is unimpaired receive the Lord's strengthening grace in the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. (**Pastoral Care of the Sick**, General Introduction, par. 8)

- VI. In the individual celebration of the sacrament of the Anointing, the participation of family members, friends, members of the parish and health care personnel is to be strongly encouraged. This kind of participation reveals the sacrament as an action of the whole Church, while at the same time manifesting the individual's continuing place in the life and worship of the Church.
- VII. Priests, deacons, chaplains and pastoral associates are encouraged to continue, and deepen, their self-sacrificing spirit in providing care and the sacraments to the sick in hospitals, health-care facilities and private homes in moments of crisis. This kind of care tangibly manifests the ever present companionship of the Lord to those in need.
- VIII. Individuals whose illnesses are serious, as well as those who are to be hospitalized because of a serious illness or surgery, are encouraged to ask for the sacrament of Anointing in their own parishes, prior to their hospitalization. In this way the strengthening aspect of the sacrament is more clearly indicated, and a more relaxed, prayerful atmosphere for the celebration is assured.
- IX. Parish staffs are urged to provide regular catechesis concerning the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick so that the faithful have an ever deeper understanding of this sacrament and renewed confidence in requesting it.
- X. The reception of Holy Communion as "Viaticum" is a right the Christian faithful enjoy and, therefore, a duty and responsibility for the ministers of the Church. The ordinary ministers of Viaticum are the bishop and the priest. In this way, the Church's preference for celebrating Viaticum within Mass can be offered and ensured, when possible. The celebration of Viaticum is among the canonical rights and duties of those who hold pastoral office in the Church. (cf. Canons 911, par. 1; 530, par. 3; 564, par. 1)

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In the case of necessity, another priest, or when no priest is available, any minister of Holy Communion, must bring Viaticum to the dying (Canon 911, par. 2). The deacon or the extraordinary minister of the Eucharist would use the rite of **Viaticum outside Mass.** (**The Pastoral Care of the Sick**, Chap. V)

**The Commendation of the Dying** is intended to sustain by prayer the communion between the Lord and the dying person until the moment of death. If the priest or the deacon is unable to do so, other members of the faithful should offer these prayers. (**The Pastoral Care of the Sick**, Chap. VI)

- XI. Once a person has died, the Anointing of the Sick should not be done. However, the minister ought to offer the Prayers for the Dead at this time. In this way the Church continues its care of the individual and the mourners by hope-filled prayer to God. (cf. **Pastoral Care of the Sick**, Chap. 7) The sacrament should be celebrated when there is doubt whether death has occurred. (Canon 1005)
- XII. As with the other Holy Oils, the Oil of the Sick is to be carefully kept and renewed, either annually or more frequently, according to need. (Canon 847, par.2; **Pastoral Care of the Sick**, General Introduction, par. 22) It should be noted, however, that any priest may carry the holy oil with him, so that in case of necessity he can celebrate the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. (Canon 1003, par. 3) Furthermore, in case of necessity, any priest may bless the oil to be used in this sacrament, though only in the actual celebration of the sacrament. (Canon 999, par. 2)

## CHAPTER 6 THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

I. These guidelines are to be read in the light of the following documents:

- A. **The Roman Ritual- Rite of Marriage**, 1970.
- B. **Code of Canon Law**, Canons 1055 - 1165.
- C. **Statutes of the Archdiocese of Boston**, Book IV.
- D. **Christian Marriage - An Introduction: Policy on Marriage Preparation**, Archdiocese of Boston, 1981.

II. A. "Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church; they help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special gift among the people of God." (**Rite of Marriage**, par. 1)

B. Entering the covenant of Christian Marriage, a graced commitment, is a serious responsibility. The preparation for Marriage should reflect the importance of the sacrament in the life of the couple and the Church. The length of pastoral preparation should allow sufficient time for the minister to explain the Church's teaching on the sacredness of Marriage and its purposes. This preparation time also allows the minister to assist the couple in assessing their self-understanding, the depth of their commitment to one another, their understanding of the realities of a self-giving married life, and the mutuality of their respect and concern for each other and for future children.

### III. THE MINISTER IN MARRIAGE PREPARATION

A. The pastor of one of the Catholic parties is responsible for marriage preparation. This responsibility may be exercised personally or through other ministers. In addition, any parochial vicars who serve with the pastor in a parish share this same responsibility.

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- B. The pastor may also involve certified pastoral associates with himself, the parochial vicars, and the deacons in preparing couples for Marriage. All certified pastoral associates who have responsibility for any of the elements of marriage preparation must fulfill the requirements for such ministers established by the Office for Pastoral Ministries in the Archdiocese. It is also expected that they will have an adequate knowledge of the respective canons of **The Code of Canon Law** and their application. When a certified pastoral associate carries out some of the elements of marriage preparation it is still incumbent on the priest or deacon to be personally involved in preparing each couple for marriage.
- C. If a couple chooses to invite a priest or deacon who is not assigned to the parish to officiate at their wedding, the pastor and the guest celebrant should determine who will take care of the elements of marriage preparation. The fact that clergy who have a very close association with an engaged couple may find it difficult to raise the questions and issues intrinsic to marriage preparation should be taken into account in making this determination. (cf. Statute IV, M3)
- D. 1. When a couple wishes to celebrate Marriage outside one of their proper parishes, the permission of one of the pastors is necessary. The pastor receiving the couple is to be sure that the couple has been prepared for Marriage in conformity with principles established in these guidelines.
2. When two Catholics wish to be married at a university chapel where one or both of the parties are alumni, the pastor of one of the parties will determine, in collaboration with the priest chaplain at the university, who will take care of marriage preparation.
- E. When a Catholic plans to marry a non-Catholic, the pastor of the Catholic party is responsible for marriage preparation. If the Marriage is to be celebrated in a place other than the parish church, the pastor is to petition for the required dispensation or permission. In a case where such a Marriage is to be celebrated outside the Archdiocese of Boston, the dispensation

or permission is granted from Chancery only after consultation has been made with the local ordinary of the place where the Marriage is to be celebrated. The presence of a priest or deacon is strongly encouraged at such weddings. After the Marriage has been celebrated, it is to be recorded in the proper Church register. (When a dispensation from canonical form has been granted, the Marriage is registered in the proper parish of the Catholic party. If a permission for extraordinary place has been granted the Marriage is recorded in the parish within which the wedding took place.)

#### IV. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- A. The time allotted for the preparation for Marriage is to be a minimum of six months. Couples should, however, be encouraged to begin the marriage preparation process as soon as they become engaged. Exceptions may have to be made to these time periods for pastoral reasons. In order to use this time well there is to be a minimum of three meetings between the couple and the minister in addition to an engaged couples' workshop and the wedding rehearsal. The first meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible after the couple makes an initial contact with the parish. This will provide sufficient opportunity to deal with any problems in a timely fashion.
1. Since this may be the first time that a couple has formally met with a minister of the Church, the initial interview should be marked by hospitality. The minister should convey to the couple the Church's concern for them and a willingness to help them in preparing for the sacrament of Marriage. As part of this preparation the engaged couple should be encouraged to continue, or renew, their participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

Since no date for the celebration of a Marriage is to be established on the telephone, this first meeting is customarily used for establishing that date.

Before the date is scheduled the freedom of both parties to marry is to be established. This is done by completing the

preliminary interrogatory form and obtaining the baptismal records of the Catholic parties. If there is any doubt concerning the freedom of either of the parties no date should be set until the matter is resolved. (cf. IV C1 below)

The Preliminary Interrogatory issued by the Archdiocese (Form 1) provides a framework for discussion in this first meeting. It raises the appropriate questions concerning the freedom to marry. It also provides an opportunity to begin the explanation of the Church's teaching regarding permanence, marital fidelity, and the place of children in Christian Marriage.

This first meeting is also a time for assessment. Since Christian Marriage is a commitment for life, the minister should begin to assess a couple's maturity and readiness for this commitment. If the minister becomes aware of significant problems regarding the maturity or readiness of a particular couple for Marriage, the policy established in these guidelines should be used to resolve the situation. (cf. IV C3 below)

In this meeting the minister is also to describe the parish engaged couple workshop. This is also the opportunity to invite the couple to participate in the program. If the parish does not have a program, or the couple is unable to be present at the parish program, the minister helps the couple to select a program from the lists of such workshops provided by the Family Life Apostolate of the Archdiocese.

2. The second meeting between the couple and the minister should continue the discussion begun in the first meeting. This session will afford the minister the opportunity to explain the sacrament of Marriage in the Church in more depth. The notion of Marriage as covenant relationship and its permanence and indissolubility is to be addressed. The expectation of the Church that a couple entering Marriage intend fidelity and openness to children should also be further explained and discussed.

3. A third meeting should take place after the engaged couple

workshop. In this meeting reaction to the workshop can be discussed and the minister will be able to complete the assessment of their preparedness for marriage.

In this session the minister also should help the couple to plan the wedding ceremony. The choice of readings, prayers and participation in the ceremony should reflect what the couple has learned about the sacrament of Marriage and what they wish to share with their family and friends. If it has not already been done, this meeting also provides an opportunity to encourage the couple who are soon to marry to prepare themselves spiritually through the Sacrament of Penance.

4. In preparing couples for Marriage it is important to realize that each couple is unique. The minister's task is to help them realize the sacredness and the importance of their commitment. If additional sessions are seen as helpful or necessary the minister should schedule them.

#### B. The Engaged Couples' Workshop.

1. Each couple preparing for Marriage is expected to participate in an engaged couples' workshop. (This term replaces the term "Pre-Cana.") There is a wide variety of approved programs available to couples. A listing of these workshops and a description of their contents is available from the Office of the Family Life Apostolate. For a particular pastoral reason additional meetings with the minister may replace the engaged couple's workshop.
2. In an engaged couples' workshop, married couples give witness to the demands and realities of living the covenant of Marriage in our society.
  - a. The workshop is an opportunity for engaged couples to interact with married couples so as to deepen their appreciation for all the dimensions of marriage.
  - b. Presentations and exercises should acquaint couples with

the realities of married life. The workshop is an opportunity to discuss some basic elements of Christian Marriage such as self-knowledge, communication, marital adjustment, sexuality, Church teaching on family planning, living the sacrament of Marriage, and financial concerns.

- c. Wherever possible, each parish community should conduct engaged couples' workshops. In this way, the community nourishes and enriches the couples preparing to celebrate Marriage. Where this is not practical, parish communities may join together in carrying out this responsibility. Parishes may also choose to cooperate in area programs. The Office of the Family Life Apostolate is prepared to assist parishes in establishing these workshops.
- d. The leaders and personnel who conduct engaged couples' workshops should be selected carefully by the pastor and the parish staff.

### C. Pastoral Concerns in Marriage Preparation

#### 1. Freedom to Marry

The minister is to determine the freedom of each person to marry in the Church. This is ordinarily done by questioning the parties and by obtaining a baptismal record for a Catholic party. The minister should contact the place of Baptism of the Catholic party and request the record. When issuing a baptismal record for Marriage the pastor, or his delegate, copies the complete record on the approved form with all the notations included in the baptismal register. This complete record is to be sent directly to the minister involved. It is not to be given to the person who is marrying or any other person. Testimonial letters regarding an individual's freedom to marry may also be necessary in some situations.

When a Catholic is marrying a baptized non-Catholic, the minister should ask for a baptismal record for the non-Catholic. This record will establish the person's Baptism

in some other church or ecclesial community. In order to establish this person's freedom to marry the minister will also need the testimony of witnesses. This should be done through letters or the forms provided by Chancery for this purpose (Form II).

## 2. Marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics

- a. While all couples who wish to be married in the Church should be treated with hospitality, this is particularly important when one of the parties is not a Catholic.

When a Catholic wishes to marry a baptized non-Catholic, the hospitality to be offered is truly Christian, for while their relationship gives witness to the lack of unity among Christians, it will be, nonetheless, marriage in the Lord.

When a Catholic wishes to marry a person who is not baptized, the hospitality to be offered is rooted in the dignity which has been conferred on all people by the one God who created us. At the same time our hospitality is evangelical, since Christ has told us, "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." (Mt. 5:16)

- b. In addition to the hospitality offered, these couples require and deserve genuine pastoral care due to the nature of these relationships and to the problems which are often inherent in them. Therefore, there are several concerns which should be addressed in preparing for mixed Marriages. These may require additional meetings between the minister and the couple. These concerns include:
  - A consideration of the similarities and differences of the religious backgrounds and the influences of faith.
  - A clarification of the Catholic Church's teachings regarding permanence and fidelity in Marriage and openness to life, which are not to be excluded by either party.

- An explanation of the Catholic formation of children which the Church expects of the Catholic party as well as a discussion of the practical implications regarding faith practice and dealing with the sensitivities of family members.
- c. Prior to witnessing a Marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, permission is to be requested from the Archbishop. When a Catholic marries a non-baptized person a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of cult is to be obtained before the Marriage takes place. This dispensation is necessary for the validity of the Marriage. Either the permission or the dispensation should be requested through Chancery at least a month before the scheduled wedding.

Before requesting the permission or dispensation, the minister is to be sure that the required declaration concerning faith and the promise concerning the Catholic rearing of children have been made by the Catholic party. The non-Catholic party is to be informed of this requirement so that that person is aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party.

### 3. Delaying a Marriage

The minister who has significant questions regarding a couple's readiness for Marriage, e.g. inadequate understanding of Marriage, pregnancy, immaturity etc. may think that the wedding should be delayed. The minister should first discuss these questions with the couple in an effort to resolve them. The couple may also be referred to another priest, deacon or pastoral associate for further assessment regarding the significant questions which have surfaced. The couple may also be referred to Catholic Charities or Family Counseling for evaluation and/or pre-marriage counseling. The minister must take great care that consent forms are signed by all parties if personal information is to be shared with outside agencies.

If a decision is made to delay a Marriage, specific steps should be outlined to the couple to help them resolve the reasons for the delay. If the decision to delay the Marriage is not mutual, the couple has a right to recourse. Ordinarily recourse is to the vicar of the area. It should be noted that only the Archbishop has the right to impose a canonical prohibition on Christian Marriage. (Canon 1077, par. 1)

Whenever a person eighteen years of age or under seeks to enter a Marriage in the Church, the policies established in **Christian Marriage - An Introduction: Policy on Marriage Preparation** (1981) are to be followed strictly. Chronological age should not be the sole guide for determining the level of maturity of any person seeking Marriage in the Church.

#### 4. The Marriage of Catholics Who Do Not Practice the Faith

- a. The minister who prepares couples for Marriage will, at times, encounter Catholics who do not practice their religion. The minister should discuss the situation with the couple and should encourage Catholics whose faith development is weak to use the opportunity of marriage preparation as a time to strengthen their faith commitment as well as their knowledge of the faith.
- b. On occasion, the minister will encounter a Catholic who has rejected the faith by a formal act. (The formal act is presumed to be some act of officially embracing another Christian church, ecclesial community, or some other religion, or the signing of a declaration which severs one's ties with the Catholic Church.) If both parties are Catholic, and one person has rejected the faith by a formal act, the Marriage should be treated as a mixed marriage. (Canon 1071, par. 1, 4 and par. 2) Moreover, the Catholic party who has rejected the faith by a formal act should be urged to reflect on the serious nature of that decision with the hope that reconciliation with the Church may take place before Marriage.



5. Living Together Before Marriage.

When a couple who are living together present themselves for Marriage, the minister is to deal pastorally with the situation. It should be pointed out that such an arrangement is inconsistent with Christian Marriage and with a Catholic way of life. It is not Marriage nor an appropriate preparation for Marriage. The minister is to present the teaching of the Church and assist the couple in gaining an understanding of the relationship between engagement and Christian Marriage. The minister should discuss this matter with the couple, presenting the reasons why they should live apart before the wedding.

This situation should be treated as a pastoral issue. The priest or deacon cannot impose any penalty on the couple. If he finds difficulty in marrying such a couple, he should consult with the vicar of the area.

6. Second Marriages

- a. When a couple seeks to marry after at least one of them has been married before, the minister inquires as to the nature of the dissolution of the previous Marriage(s). When the previous marriage has been dissolved by the death of one of the parties, the minister ought to inquire as to whether or not the person continues to have responsibilities from that Marriage, e.g. children, financial obligations. The minister is to preserve a copy of the death certificate with the documents for the Marriage.
- b. When a couple seeks to marry after a previous Marriage of at least one of them has been declared null by an ecclesiastical tribunal, the minister is to request the documentation which establishes that the declaration of nullity has been given. The minister also ought to inquire about the nature of the previous Marriage, the reason for its dissolution, and the freedom of the person to contract Marriage in the Church. If a prohibition from entering a new Marriage has been placed on the person by the Tribunal which granted the declaration of nullity, the

minister is to direct the party to comply with the requests of the Tribunal in order to have the prohibition removed. Furthermore, the minister is also to ascertain whether or not the person is fulfilling all obligations from the previous Marriage, e.g. child support payments. In a case where these obligations are not being satisfied, the matter is to be referred to the Archbishop. (Canon 1071, par. 1, 3) Until these matters are clarified and the minister is certain that the person is able to marry, no date for a wedding is to be set.

- c. When a person has taken no action to have a previous Marriage declared null, the minister is not to proceed with marriage preparation, nor set a date for a wedding, until the competent Tribunal has issued an affirmative declaration on the nullity of the previous Marriage.

## V. CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

- A. "In the celebration of marriage (which normally should be within the Mass), certain elements should be stressed, especially the liturgy of the word, which shows the importance of Christian marriage in the history of salvation and the duties and responsibility of the couple in caring for the holiness of their children. Also of supreme importance are the consent of the contracting parties, which the priest asks and receives; the special nuptial blessing for the bride and for the marriage covenant; and finally, the reception of communion by the groom and the bride, and by all present, by which their love is nourished and all are lifted up into communion with our Lord and one another." (**Rite of Marriage**, par. 6)
- B. In the initial stages of marriage preparation the minister should inform the couple about the ways in which their Marriage can be celebrated. The couple should be encouraged to participate in the planning for the wedding by reflecting on the readings and being familiar with the other optional parts of the ceremony. They should invite family and friends to take an active part in the ceremony when that is possible.
- C. Marriages are to be celebrated in the parish where either of the

parties resides. Marriage can be celebrated in another parish with the permission of the pastor or the proper ordinary. (Canon 1115) In the Archdiocese of Boston, Marriage is to be celebrated in a church. If a Catholic is marrying a non-baptized person who has reservations about being married in a church, permission may be requested to celebrate the Marriage in another place. The proper dispensation from form or permission for extraordinary place should be requested through Chancery.

- D. A Marriage between two Catholics should normally be celebrated within a Mass. The **Rite of Marriage** prescribed in the **Roman Ritual** is to be followed. When it is appropriate, the celebration of Marriage should be related to the liturgical season or feast. If the Marriage is celebrated on a Sunday or solemnity, the liturgical norms given in paragraph 11 of the **General Introduction to Marriage** are to be followed.

The form of Marriage requires two witnesses in addition to the priest or deacon. The law does not specify any qualifications for these witnesses.

- E. Music for the wedding should be selected with an awareness of the sacred nature of the celebration. Secular music is not to be used. The Liturgical Commission of the Archdiocese has established norms for choosing the music at weddings which are to be followed.
- F. In a Marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, the **Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass** is ordinarily more appropriate. In this way sensitivity is shown to non-Catholics and their families. However, in those situations when a Catholic is marrying a baptized non-Catholic, and the Catholic party requests a Nuptial Mass, the guidelines for Eucharistic sharing are to be faithfully observed. (**Rite of Marriage**, Introduction, par. 8) It should be noted that another religious celebration in addition to the canonical one is never permitted. Likewise it is never permitted to have a religious celebration in which a Catholic and a non-Catholic minister, assisting together but following their respective rituals, ask for the consent of the parties. (Canon 1127)

- G. After the wedding has been celebrated, the one who officiates at the Marriage is to record it in the proper parish and see that all relevant documents are preserved in the prescribed fashion. He is also to notify the place of Baptism of the Catholic parties so that the required notations may be made in the baptismal register.

## VI. PASTORAL CARE AFTER MARRIAGE

- A. Support and assistance to married couples should be a priority of every parish community. A special effort should be made to welcome newly married couples to the parish. When possible the minister of the Marriage should notify the parish where the newly married couple will live in order that the pastoral staff will be able to establish a relationship with them. In addition, those parishes that offer engaged couples' workshops may periodically invite couples to return and reflect about the covenant of Marriage.
- B. In offering support and assistance to married couples the parish community should also be aware of the presence within the community of those who have lost a spouse through death. The painful experience of the loss of a spouse and the loneliness which so often accompanies it call for the supportive presence of the ecclesial community.
- C. Every parish community should also evidence a sensitivity and an awareness of the needs of separated and divorced persons within the Church. These people have experienced pain in the covenant of Marriage. They need to be reminded of the love that God and the Church have for them and of their valued place within the Christian community.



**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION  
GUIDELINES  
ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON**

**I. PURPOSE AND NEED**

In his 1973 Instruction *Immensae Caritatis*, Pope Paul VI authorized the use of Extraordinary Ministers to assist priests and deacons in the distribution of Holy Communion.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Father's concerns in authorizing this special ministry were to provide ready access to Holy Communion at every Mass and to care in a special way for the spiritual needs of the sick and those who are unable to come to Mass. Bishops, priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist. The Holy Father's intention is to provide assistance to these ordinary ministers by commissioning members of the laity as Extraordinary Ministers. Other lay liturgical ministries are exercised in virtue of baptismal participation in Church worship. This extraordinary eucharistic ministry is different in that it is exercised in virtue of the Bishop's deputation to certain members of the faithful. This special character of extraordinary eucharistic ministry should be clearly communicated to the ministers themselves and to all the faithful.

**A. Need for Extraordinary Ministers can arise in the following circumstances**

1. *When it is difficult because of distance or numbers to take communion regularly to the sick.* The custom of priests' bringing Holy Communion to the sick and frail elderly on "First Fridays" is a laudable one and is encouraged. More frequent opportunity for these faithful to receive Communion will ordinarily call for the use of Extraordinary Ministers. Pastors in the Archdiocese should ideally see that the faithful who are confined at home, in hospitals or nursing homes be offered the opportunity to receive Holy Communion at least once a week, preferably on Sundays and major feasts. Extraordinary Ministers should be called and very carefully prepared with this in mind.

Since a number of the elderly or sick faithful in parishes have previously been participants at daily Mass, a parish can show its solicitude for these members by arranging for Extraordinary

Ministers to bring Communion to them directly from the parish daily Mass.

2. *When the size of the parish congregation is large enough that the number seeking to receive Holy Communion during Mass would prolong the liturgical action unduly.* Pastors should bear in mind that the use of Extraordinary Ministers at Communion can ensure that quality music, preaching, and prayer during the rest of the Mass is done at a pace and rhythm conducive to truly effective worship. If the use of Extraordinary Ministers prevents rush or haste during Mass, their service is warranted.

### **B. Limitation on the use of Extraordinary Ministers**

In 1980, the Holy See repeated its directive that Extraordinary Ministers should distribute Holy Communion only when there is not a sufficient number of ordinary ministers in the Church. This means that priests and deacons assisting at any Mass in a liturgical role should distribute Holy Communion unless impeded by age or infirmity. In usual circumstances, it should not be necessary for a priest or deacon to leave another pastoral responsibility and enter the sanctuary only to distribute Holy Communion. Extraordinary Ministers are intended specifically to address this need.

## **II. SELECTION & TERMS OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS**

### **A. Selection**

1. Once the pastor has determined that a need for Extraordinary Ministers exists, he should invite a number of qualified persons to this ministry. It is helpful to consult other members of the pastoral staff both in ascertaining need and in seeking candidates. A personal invitation from the pastor to each prospective minister is the normative procedure. General calls for volunteers for this ministry are not to be made.
2. Extraordinary ministers must be faithful Catholics who have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, are at least eighteen years of age, and participate regularly in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. At the discretion of the

pastor, a limited number of younger parishioners, at least sixteen years of age, may also be chosen as Extraordinary Ministers, especially to assist at school Masses and parish Masses for youth.

Extraordinary Ministers “. . . must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting.”<sup>2</sup>

3. Extraordinary Ministers should be chosen to reflect the diversity of the parish community, and should include individuals of various ages, social and ethnic backgrounds; of both sexes; of the married, single, and widowed state.
4. The number of Extraordinary Ministers should be determined by need. They should not be so few as to require multiple service on any one day nor so many that each does not serve at least monthly.
5. The selection of candidates for this special ministry should not be presented as a reward for those active in a parish or institution. It should be a service which does not create an elite in the church community.

## **B. Term**

1. In parishes and institutions of the Boston Archdiocese, the term for Extraordinary Ministers is three years. Ordinarily, Extraordinary Ministers will not be re-appointed for more than three terms in succession. Terms will begin and end in every parish on a date established for the whole Archdiocese. During the term established for the Archdiocese, a parish may need to select additional ministers to meet its needs. These ministers are appointed only until the end of the term established for the whole Archdiocese.



2. Each parish shall maintain a list of Extraordinary Ministers serving with the date of their appointment. This list should be made available to the Vicar upon request and to the Bishop at the time of the parish visitation.
3. Extraordinary Ministers are designated only for service in a particular parish or institution and are not authorized to exercise their ministry outside that institution. With the consent of a sick person's pastor, a relative or close friend who is Extraordinary Minister in another parish may bring Holy Communion to that individual. The pastor should take care to see that such sick persons also receive visits from the parish pastoral team. (cf. Section V, A.)

### **III. FORMATION OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS**

#### **A. Formation**

1. It is the responsibility of the pastor to provide adequate formation and training for Extraordinary Ministers. The Archdiocesan Office for Worship will coordinate the services of qualified persons who are available to conduct this training.
2. Pastors who wish to provide their own parish training program must do so according to the syllabus authorized by the Archdiocesan Office for Worship. (Appendix I) This syllabus includes a history of the Eucharist, a basic doctrinal and theological foundation for Church teaching as well as the spiritual attitudes and ministerial skills necessary for the experience of this important ministry. Ordinarily, two sessions of two hours each will be minimally necessary to do this training adequately.
3. Parishes and Vicariates must regularly gather Extraordinary Ministers for ongoing spiritual development. This should include prayer, reflection on the Eucharist and further enrichment. Eucharistic devotions and Benediction should be an integral part of this spiritual development.

## **B. Commissioning**

1. The Extraordinary Ministers should be commissioned in the parish at the beginning of their term of service. The ritual is found in the *Book of Blessings* Chapter 63. No other ritual is authorized.
2. The pastor or another priest delegated by him may preside at the Commissioning. It is appropriate to do this at the principal parish Sunday Eucharist, though circumstances may indicate another time as preferable.
3. When the parish has commissioned Extraordinary Ministers, certificates signed by the Archbishop can be ordered from the Office for Worship to be given to each Minister.

## **IV. THE LITURGICAL PRESENCE OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS AT MASS**

1. Extraordinary Ministers must dress in a manner consonant with the dignity of the service they offer, avoiding both inappropriate informality and overly elaborate appearance. Parishes may develop specific norms for dress. In the Archdiocese, normal lay dress is preferred to special garments or gowns.
2. It is not appropriate for the Extraordinary Minister to exercise a second ministerial role in the same Eucharistic assembly, e.g. reader or leader of song.
3. Extraordinary Ministers ordinarily take part in the entrance and recessional with the priest and other ministers. Any awkward crowding of ministers in the sanctuary which would detract from the focal points of the Eucharist (altar, ambo, and presidential chair) is to be avoided. To accomplish this, Extraordinary Ministers could take their regular place in the assembly or be seated together in the assembly area.
4. Wherever they are placed, Extraordinary Ministers follow the normal postures of the assembly during the Eucharist, i.e. standing, kneeling, and sitting at the appropriate time.

5. During the singing or recital of "Lamb of God," Extraordinary Ministers come forward and take their places near the altar. After the priest receives Communion, he then gives Communion first to the deacon and then to the Extraordinary Ministers. Ordinarily Extraordinary Ministers should receive Communion under both kinds. One Extraordinary Minister may be designated to communicate the cup to the others after he or she has communicated. Self-communication from the paten or chalice is entirely inappropriate.
6. The Church's norm is that Holy Communion be given with bread and wine consecrated at the same Mass. In unusual circumstances, it may be necessary to bring hosts consecrated at a previous Mass from the tabernacle to the altar. In the absence of a concelebrating priest or a deacon, the celebrant may authorize an Extraordinary Minister to carry the paten or ciborium to the altar.
7. As soon as the "Lamb of God" has begun, the priest with the assistance of other priests or deacons breaks the eucharistic bread and, where necessary, pours the consecrated wine into additional chalices. Where priests or deacons are not available, Extraordinary Ministers may assist the celebrant to prepare the Eucharist in this way.<sup>3</sup>
8. To assure sufficient ministers and orderly distribution, one Extraordinary Minister might be designated at each Mass as "coordinator". This person should be sure that scheduled Extraordinary Ministers have arrived and know their assignments. Before each Mass the coordinator should notify the presider if additional Extraordinary Ministers need to be invited from the assembly. This individual call is not to be done as a regular procedure, but only when necessary.
9. When Holy Communion is to be given under both kinds, generally there should be two ministers of the chalice for each minister of the consecrated host. As indicated in the *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments*, normally Communion received directly from the chalice is to be preferred.<sup>4</sup>

10. In the unusual circumstances when no commissioned Extraordinary Minister is available in the assembly, the priest may authorize a person for this occasion only. He should instruct the person as thoroughly as time allows and use the "Rite of Commissioning a Special Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion" found in Appendix V of the *Sacramentary*.
11. In accordance with GIRM #120, if there are several vessels to be purified after Communion, these may be taken to a separate table which has been prepared with a corporal and they may be cleansed immediately after Communion. Extraordinary Ministers may assist in this office.

## **V. THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER AND HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK**

Providing the opportunity for the hospitalized, the home-bound and those in nursing homes and other health-care institutions to receive Holy Communion frequently is an important pastoral responsibility. The service of Extraordinary Ministers can be of significant assistance in bringing the Holy Eucharist to those unable to be present for Mass.

1. Extraordinary Ministers assist, but do not replace, the parish priests whose responsibility for the spiritual care of the sick is primary. It is opportune to recall here that pastors should regularly visit the sick and shut-ins and be available to minister the sacraments, particularly the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the sick need special preparation and training. They should know the Rite for Communion of the Sick and be capable of reading the Gospel of the day with those whom they serve. They may also be able on occasion to share points from the homily and notices from the parish bulletin.

3. Extraordinary Ministers who bring Holy Communion to the Sick should understand the loneliness and depression that can accompany sickness and old age. While showing sensitivity, the Extraordinary Minister must be clear that his or her visit is primarily spiritual and for the purpose of administering the Eucharist. The ritual of Holy Communion should be completed before time is given to informal visiting.
4. Holy Communion for the sick must always be carried in a pyx or small ciborium which is purified after the Eucharist. When transporting the Eucharist to the sick, Extraordinary Ministers should avoid any activity not in keeping with the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament.
5. In every parish the pastor is responsible for the custody of the Blessed Sacrament and for the security of the tabernacle. Only with the explicit authorization of the pastor may an Extraordinary Minister remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle and place it in the pyx for Communion of the Sick. During Mass and outside the Mass such functions belong ordinarily to a priest or deacon.
6. Extraordinary Ministers who assist at Sunday or daily Eucharist and take Holy Communion to the sick can come forward following the Prayer after Communion. During the "Lamb of God" the priest or deacon will have placed the needed number of consecrated hosts in pyxes or small ciboria. These are now given to each Extraordinary Minister. The "Rite of Dismissal for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist bringing Holy Communion to the Sick" may be used. (Appendix II) The Extraordinary Ministers stand near the altar during the blessing and dismissal and precede the priest in the recessional after Mass.
7. The Extraordinary Minister must use the rite for Holy Communion of the Sick found in *Pastoral Care of the Sick* #71-91. No other ritual is authorized. (Appendix III)

8. In cases where a long-standing bond is established between a chronically ill or elderly parishioner and an Extraordinary Minister, the pastor may authorize that minister to continue bringing Holy Communion even after the stipulated term has expired.

## VI. SPECIAL QUESTION AND INDIVIDUAL CASES

The entire ministry of a parish or other community reaches its highest point and finds its source in the Sunday Eucharist, "the heart of the parish." The service of Extraordinary Ministers is intended to provide access to Holy Communion to a greater number of the faithful. A greater bond of faith and love in the Church of Boston should be the fruit of careful implementation of this ministry and these *Guidelines*.

Special questions and cases may be referred to the Office for Worship which has the mandate to prepare and promote this special ministry in the Archdiocese.

### NOTES

1. SC for the Discipline of the Sacraments. Instruction *Immensae Caritatis* on facilitating the reception of communion in certain circumstances. 29 January 1973 AAS65 (1973) 264-271.
2. *Immensae Caritatis*, I, 6.
3. cf. *This Holy and Living Sacrifice: Directory for the Celebration and Reception of Communion under Both Kinds*. Approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship 1984. See pars. 42 and 43.
4. cf. GIRM #244 which describes the rite for Communion under both kinds. Also this *Holy and Living Sacrifice cit. supra* fn. 3. governs the catechises and liturgical conduct for Communion under both kinds.



## POLICY ON STIPENDS

November 29, 1986

Dear Father:

Over a year ago, I addressed a Pastoral Letter to the faithful of the Archdiocese, in which I re-affirmed my conviction that the liturgy is the preeminent place for the expression and nourishment of the faith. I reminded them of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that "The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is in the fount from which all her power flows." (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 10)

The same Council explained that our ministry as priests "deals principally with the Eucharist" and that it is the Eucharist which is "the source of perfecting the Church." (*Ad gentes*, n. 19) Indeed "The other Sacraments, as well as every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate are linked with the Holy Eucharist and are directed toward it." (*Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 5)

I cannot adequately emphasize the need for a profound reverence, especially on the part of priests, toward the Eucharist — for, as sacrifice, the Eucharist is the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary, and as sacrament it contains the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ Who is God and man.

It is in this context that I would like to call to your attention the subject of Mass offerings.

First of all, let me quote from a document on this matter issued a few years ago by our late Holy Father, Pope Paul VI.

"It has been a strong tradition in the church that the faithful, moved by a religious and ecclesial consciousness, should join a kind of self-sacrifice of their own to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, so as to share in the latter more effectively, and should provide in this way for needs of the Church, above all for the support of the Church's ministers."

The Pope went on to point out that by means of Mass offerings "the



faithful associate themselves more closely with Christ, Who offers Himself as Victim, and then experience more abundant effects . . . the Church considers it to be as sign of the union of the baptized person with Christ, as well as of the union of the Christian with the priest who performs his ministry for the benefit of the faithful.” (Pope Paul VI, *Firma in traditione*)

Thus, very concisely, the Pope summed up the nature and the purpose of Mass offerings.

From the early days of Christianity the faithful brought bread and wine for the Sacrifice of the Mass. Later, other gifts also were carried to the Eucharistic Liturgy for the support of the clergy and the poor. Moreover, even as far back as the fourth century there is evidence that the faithful made offerings to have Mass celebrated for their particular intentions. (Cf. P.M. Boyle in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, p. 715) Subsequently, in the course of time, the offerings for Mass took the form of money, replacing food and other gifts.

Many, if not most, of the Mass offerings given to our priests are sent to the missions in various parts of the world, where the Masses that have been requested are offered. Zealous, hard-working, and sometimes impoverished missionaries depend in large measure for their survival on Mass offerings. With radical changes in the economy and rampant inflation in many parts of the world in recent years, it has become impossible for missionaries to live on the Mass offerings heretofore provided them. As a result, many dioceses have already introduced an increase in the amount of the offering given by the faithful for the application of the Mass according to the donor's intention.

I have taken up this matter with our Presbyteral Council. I have also discussed it with the bishops of the Province, and, in accordance with the provisions of canon 952, #1, the bishops of the Province have determined that the suggested offering for one Mass will be five dollars. This change will take effect in the Archdiocese of Boston on January 1, 1987.

The Code of Canon Law (canon 945, #2) strongly recommends “that priests celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially of the needy, even if no offering has been received.” I am

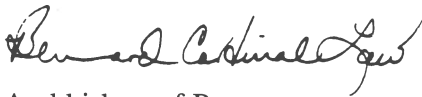
sure that this is the spirit that has pervaded our priests in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The change in the Mass offering is being introduced, mainly, because of the needs of missionaries as explained above.

I call to your attention the current legislation concerning Mass offerings which is found in the revised Code of Canon Law (cc. 945-958), and I stress the fact that observance of these norms is a matter of obligation for every priest.

Let us pray for one another to our Eucharist Lord that our appreciation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass may increase from day to day.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bernard Cardinal Law". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Archbishop of Boston

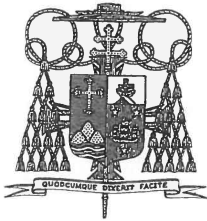
## POLICY ON STIPENDS

This past spring, the bishops of the Boston Province (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont) approved a change in the Mass offering from two to five dollars. The change will become effective in the Archdiocese of Boston on January 1, 1987.

Many, if not most, of the Mass offerings given to our priests are sent to the missions in various parts of the world, where the Masses are offered by the missionary priests. Often these offerings are the only source of support for the priests. Because of the rampant inflation of the past decade, it has become impossible for missionaries to live on the Mass offerings we have been sending them. This new plight of the missionaries is the reason for the change in the Mass offering.

The Church, of course, always encourages priests to celebrate Mass for the intentions of the faithful, even when the person who makes such a request is unable to make an offering.

November 29, 1986



CARDINAL'S OFFICE  
66 BROOKS DRIVE  
BRAintree, MASSACHUSETTS 02184-3839  
617-782-2544

August 1, 2010

Dear Monsignor/Father:

Enclosed you will find a decree which, in accord with canon 952, sets the amount for Mass offerings in our ecclesiastical province. The bishops of the province issued this decree jointly, after consultation with their respective presbyteral councils.

As you will see in the decree, the Mass offering has been changed to a uniform ten dollars (\$10.00), whether the Mass is announced or unannounced. No one may request more than this amount; however, if more is offered voluntarily by the donor, it may be accepted, provided that it is clear only one Mass is being requested. In addition, it is always permissible for a priest to accept a lesser offering for a Mass. Each priest or parish (whichever is applicable) must maintain accurate records of Mass intentions received, the date received, the amount of the offering, and the date when the Mass intention was satisfied.

Before this decree was issued, the offering for announced Masses was \$10.00, with \$5.00 being retained by the celebrant and \$5.00 going to the parish. The offering for unannounced Masses was \$5.00, with the whole sum being retained by the celebrant. Now, the uniform \$10.00 offering is retained by the celebrant.

It should be remembered that, in accord with canon 951, a priest may accept a Mass offering for every Mass he celebrates on a given day, but he may retain only one for himself, except on Christmas (when he may retain three). Moreover, the *pro populo* Mass offered by the bishop or pastor must be offered gratis; it is not permitted to superimpose another intention to be offered at the same Mass.

"Collective" Mass intentions are restricted by the law and may be accepted only under the following conditions: (a) the donors must consent to the combination of intentions in advance of the Mass; (b) the time and place of the Mass must be publicly announced; (c) this may not occur in any place of worship more than twice a week; and (d) the celebrant is entitled to only the standard \$10.00 offering.

While the enclosed decree came into force on May 1, 2010, I would ask that you begin to apply it in your place of worship on Sunday, August 15, 2010. All Masses already arranged at the earlier Mass offering rate must still be honored. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Canonical Affairs Office at the Pastoral Center.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and all those assigned to your care,

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston





*[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible due to low contrast and scan quality. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document.]*

DECREE

In the Name of God.

We, the bishops of the ecclesiastical province consisting of the Archdiocese of Boston, the Diocese of Burlington, the Diocese of Fall River, the Diocese of Manchester, the Diocese of Portland, the Diocese of Springfield, and the Diocese of Worcester, having consulted our Presbyteral Councils, hereby decree, in accord with canon 952, that the offering to be given for the celebration and application of both an announced Mass and an unannounced Mass is Ten Dollars (\$10.00).

This decree shall become effective at 12:01 AM on May 1, 2010.

Given at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Boston in Braintree, Massachusetts, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2010.

On behalf of the bishops of the Province:

+ Sean O'Meara  
Archbishop of Boston

+ Salvatore A. Matano  
Bishop of Burlington

+ George W. Coleman  
Bishop of Fall River

+ John D. McLaughlin  
Bishop of Manchester

+ Richard J. Malone  
Bishop of Portland

+ K. R. D. L.  
Bishop of Springfield

+ Robert J. McManus  
Bishop of Worcester

## OFFERINGS ON THE OCCASION OF LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

The principal and traditional manner of financial support for parishes in the United States has been the Sunday Offertory Collection. This custom is accepted and supported by people and priests, and it also receives canonical approval in the new Code of Canon Law.

There has also existed in this country the custom of making offerings on the occasion of the liturgical celebration of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. This custom, over the course of years, has taken on a certain obligatory force, and it is necessary, from time to time, to specify the limitations of the custom. Canon Law places this responsibility upon the local diocesan bishop together with the bishops of the Province.

(Cf. C. 1264.)

A fundamental principle governing these offerings is that the sacraments are never to be denied on the basis of money. The sacraments are for the glory of God and the benefit of the people, and thus the Church is always generous in the celebration of the sacraments and strongly insists that money must never stand in the way. The poor, who are always a special concern of the Church, must feel that they are welcomed to the celebration of the sacraments.

The following is the Archdiocesan policy for offerings on the occasion of the celebration of certain liturgical celebrations.

1. In accordance with the traditional custom, offerings may be accepted on the occasion of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The offerings which are given are to be placed in the parish account, except for Mass stipends. (Cf. Synodal Statute V-8, also Archdiocesan Policy Handbook, p. 2603.)
2. The schedule of customary offerings is as follows:
  - a. On the occasion of a baptism, a voluntary offering may be received, but no specific amount suggested,
  - b. On occasion of a funeral, the customary offering is \$100,



- c. On the occasion of a wedding, the customary offering may be from \$100 to \$200, depending on the custom of the parish,
  - d. On the occasion of a graveside service (i.e. one conducted by a local priest or deacon at a cemetery distant from the church of the Funeral Mass), the offering is \$25.
3. If the faithful make larger offerings on these occasions voluntarily and without suggestion, the offerings may be accepted. If a smaller or no offering is made, the faithful are not to be denied the sacrament or the service.
4. The offering on the occasion of a funeral or wedding does not include fees for organist, singer, or other support services. Fees for musicians should be established on the local level by the pastor in consultation with the musicians involved.
5. The stipend to the priest for the celebration of any requested Mass, including Funeral Mass or Nuptial Mass, is \$5. On the occasion of an announced intention Mass, the customary offering is \$10, of which \$5 is the stipend for the celebrating priest.
6. The effective date of this policy is January 1, 1998.

Revised January 1, 1998

## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE POLICY ON MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- I. These guidelines apply to anyone 18 years of age and under and to any persons showing evidence of spiritual or psychological immaturity, regardless of age.
- II. All couples must see the priest/deacon at least six months before the wedding date. No wedding should be arranged by telephone. (See Appendix A). The priest/deacon must have two preparatory sessions with the couple to evaluate their spiritual and psychological readiness for marriage.
- III. If there is no reservation of judgment by the priest/deacon,
  - a) the priest/deacon will see that the necessary canonical requirements be fulfilled,
  - b) the priest/deacon will take time to explain the different types of marriage preparation programs in which the couple is able to participate, an alternative being the couple's meeting with the priest/deacon for sessions above and beyond the three required sessions. Recognizing the pastoral concern of our Policy, it is imperative that we offer the best possible preparation for the engaged couples.
  - c) the priest/deacon will meet with the couple for a third time to discuss matters that might have arisen, and to give an opportunity to the couple to assist him in the planning of the wedding liturgy.
- IV. If there is a reservation as to the *spiritual maturity* of the couple:
  - a) The priest/deacon should refer the matter to another priest/deacon for corroboration.
  - b) If the judgment of all parties (the ones making the assessment) coincides, then the priest/deacon may request the Archbishop, through the Chancery Office, to postpone the marriage until the couple has at least reached the minimal

spirituality necessary to receive the sacrament of marriage.

V. If there is a reservation as to the *psychological maturity* of the couple:

- a) There must be an evaluation session with both sets of parents. A guideline will be provided (See Appendix B)
- b) Should the priest/deacon be convinced of a lack of psychological or emotional maturity to receive the sacrament, the matter should be referred to a competent professional person for corroboration. In such cases, the process of referral can be critical. (See Appendix C).
- c) If the judgment of all parties coincides, it is recommended that the couple be referred for counseling.
- d) At this point, the priest/deacon may request the Archbishop, through the Chancery Office, to postpone the marriage until the situation is remedied.
- e) When cases of disagreement occur, the situation is to be resolved by the priest/deacon initially approached in connection with the Chancery. (Keep in mind that only the Ordinary has the right to require the postponement of the marriage, and he only, until the obstacles have been addressed.)

VI. It is imperative to refuse to cooperate with a couple who seek to evade the Archdiocesan policy, by searching for a parish which, they hope, will not implement the Archdiocesan policy. Normally the marriage will take place where the bride-to-be resides, but for a just reason it may take place in the parish of the groom-to-be. If the couple wishes to marry in a parish where neither party has a domicile, quasi-domicile or residence of a month, the permission of the Ordinary or pastor is required unless grave necessity excuses from requesting the permission (Canon 1097).

## APPENDIX A

### SIX MONTHS NOTICE

Advance notice of six months is not to be treated as a restriction, but as an opportunity for the priest/deacon to assist the couple to prepare not only for the wedding, but for the marriage.

The time should be used for sufficient opportunities for the priest/deacon to come to know the couple.

The six months in not to be treated as a waiting period or an obstacle for the engaged couple to overcome.

In the exercise of prudent pastoral judgment, it is possible that the priest/deacon might make the decision — in an individual case and by exception to the general rule — to officiate at the marriage of a couple without waiting the full six-months' period.

## APPENDIX B

### GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION SESSION WITH PARENTS OF BOTH PARTIES

- I. The outline is based on a number of presumptions:
  - A. That the priest/deacon have a thorough understanding of the *Introduction* as stated in the document "Christian Marriage — An Introduction — Policy on Marriage Preparation."
  - B. That the priest/deacon convey to the parents that he needs their help in assessing the maturity of the couple.
  - C. That the priest/deacon convey that he needs their help from their point of view as parents.
  - D. That the priest/deacon convey that the interview is part of the overall caring process in attempting to make a determination about the maturity of the couple.

- E. That the outline is not to be used as a questionnaire during the actual interview with the parents.
- F. That the outline contains only general areas of concern and that it is open to the discretion of the priest/deacon to modify or expand it.

## II. Areas of Concern

- A. *Expectations* — How do they (parents) see the couple's expectations of themselves as husband, wife, father and mother? What are the couple's expectations regarding children, money, education and employment? Are their expectations realistic? Has the couple, to the present, been able to realize their expectations in other aspects of their lives (school — work)?
- B. *Communication* — How do they (parents) see that the couple communicate? How does the couple solve problems on the emotional level? What is the couple's usual way of solving problems? Is decision-making a shared process? Along with the decision to marry, how has the couple made other decisions?
- C. *Intimacy or Closeness* — How do they (parents) perceive the closeness or lack of it between the couple? Is the relationship mutually dependent? How has the couple handled themselves in other relationships (parents, siblings and friends)? What are the sexual attitudes of the couple? Are they able to talk about sex?
- D. *Sacramentality* — How do they (parents) perceive the couple's sacramental concept of marriage? How does the couple understand the permanency of marriage? Do they (parents) feel that the couple has the ability to assume and sustain the marriage relationship? What has been the couple's previous involvement in the sacramental life of the Church?

## APPENDIX C

### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMATURITY — REFERRAL PROCESS

- I. Couples requesting the Church officially to witness their marriage do not have to prove that they are psychologically mature. However, psychological immaturity can be present in any couple. Some indications may be their age, the length of their courtship, pregnancy (especially a combination of the above indicators), a poor employment record, alcoholism, drugs, etc.
- II. If the priest/deacon determines that there are sufficient indicators of psychological immaturity and wishes to refer the couple to a competent professional or agency, the *Referring Process* is extremely important and should be carried out carefully and sensitively:
  - A. The couple needs to be clear about the reasons for the referral —
    - 1) Is it for counseling or evaluation?
    - 2) The pastoral decision remains with the priest/deacon; the agency gives a professional opinion.
  - B. The priest/deacon should speak at least by phone with the professional.
  - C. The couple should be given the name, address and telephone number of the professional and should make the call.
  - D. There should be honest and open communication among the priest/deacon, the couple and the professional. The couple should be the Pastoral Focus; and the couple should be aware that the professional and the priest/deacon will be communicating in their interest. Also, the couple should share in the evaluation.

E. The couple should be aware that the subject of a fee will be discussed, but this should not deter them from following through.

January 1, 1981

**Note:** This policy is contained in the pamphlet: Humberto Medeiros. *Christian Marriage — An Introduction — Policy on Marriage Preparation*. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1981. Refer to the pamphlet for the background material to this policy.

## ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY ON THE PLACE OF MARRIAGE

Due to the increased number of requests for marriages to be celebrated outside of a parish church, some of which have had to be denied, it might be helpful to state again the law of the Church and the policy of the Archdiocese on this matter which is also the policy of the other Dioceses in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

Marriages between two Catholics are to be celebrated in a parish church. Marriages between a Catholic and a Baptized non-Catholic person are to be celebrated in a parish church or in a church of the non-Catholic with the granting of a dispensation from Canonical Form or a permission for Extraordinary Place along with the permission for a Mixed Marriage.

Marriages between a Catholic and a non-baptized member of another church or denomination are also to be celebrated in a parish church or in a church of the non-Catholic with the granting of a dispensation from Canonical Form or a permission for Extraordinary Place along with the dispensation from the impediment of Disparity of Cult.

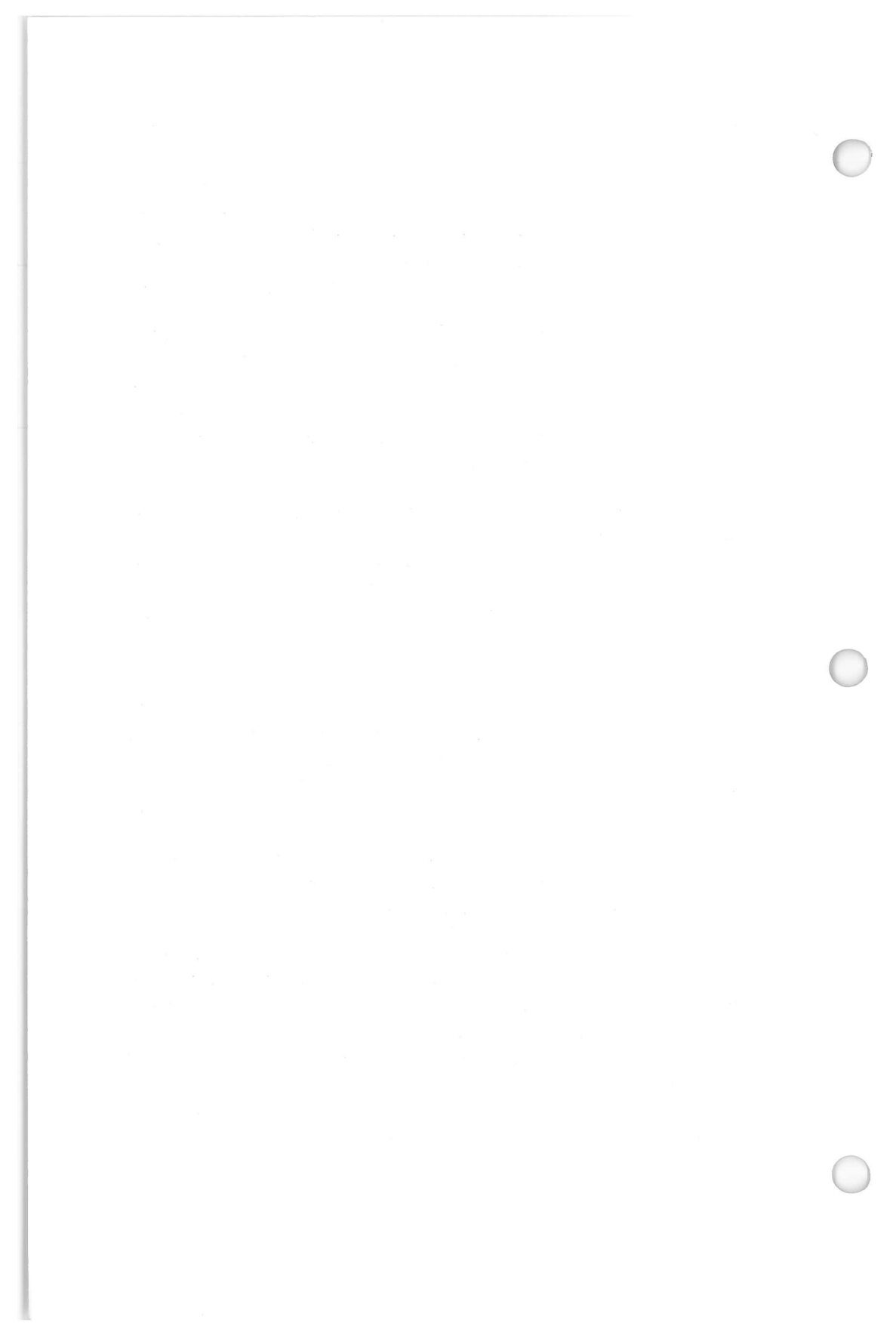
The policy of the Archdiocese allows for marriages to be celebrated at a college chapel where there is a Campus Ministry and provided that one of the persons is a student or recent graduate of that college. Marriages are not allowed to be celebrated out of doors.

When a Catholic marries a Jewish person or a person of another faith, e.g. a Muslim or Buddhist, and out of sensitivity to that person and his or her family, the marriage may be celebrated in a suitable public place when the proper dispensation or permission is granted along with the dispensation from Disparity of Cult.

It is important to check immediately with the Office of Canonical Affairs at the Chancery if the couple suggests a place that seems to be out of the ordinary so that wedding plans can proceed without any problems. It might be a helpful idea to alert your parishioners through the parish bulletin of the necessity for a couple to contact the priest first before other wedding arrangements are made to avoid disappointment and difficulty regarding the place for celebrating the ceremony of marriage.

March 3, 1989





## **POLICY CONCERNING MARTHA MARY CHAPEL**

In the Revised Code of Canon Law, Canon 1118 #1 states that "Marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic party is to be celebrated in a parish Church; with the permission of the local ordinary or the pastor, it can be celebrated in another Church or oratory."

For many years now our Archdiocesan policy has reflected this principle of the general law of the Church that the marriages of two Catholics or the marriage of a baptized Catholic to a baptized Protestant or unbaptized person take place in the parish Church. However, some exceptions have been made since mixed marriages often involve special circumstances or problems.

One such exception to this general norm was to allow mixed marriages to take place at the Martha Mary Chapel in Sudbury. The experience of the past years has indicated that there is not sufficient reason for this exception. Therefore His Eminence, Cardinal Law, has determined, after consultation, that permission should no longer be granted for mixed marriages to take place at the Martha Mary Chapel in Sudbury.

November 1, 1985



## POLICY ON TRIDENTINE MASS

December 1, 1985

Dear Father:

On October 3, 1984, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued a circular letter in which it informed the presidents of the conferences of bishops that diocesan bishops now have the faculty to concede limited use within their dioceses of the *Missale Romanum* promulgated by the Congregation of Rites in 1962.

In accord with the provisions of that letter, the following norms are to be observed in the Archdiocese of Boston in the granting of permission for the celebration of the Tridentine Mass in Latin:

- A. Those desiring the celebration of the Tridentine Mass in Latin should make this request through a priest. He will fill out with them a form whose purpose is to insure that the conditions listed in the letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship are verified.
- B. The conditions, as indicated in the Congregation's letter are as follows:
  1. The reason for requesting the Tridentine Mass in Latin must be clearly stated.
  2. There must be unequivocal evidence that the priest and people making the request have no ties with those who call into doubt the lawful force and doctrinal soundness of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.
  3. The celebration of Mass in question must take place exclusively for the benefit of those who petition it. (There should be no advertising in the public media.)
  4. *Place*: The celebration must be in a church or oratory approved by the Archbishop. Only in exceptional circumstances will the celebration be allowed in parish churches.

5. *Rite*: The celebration is to follow the Roman Missal of 1962 and must be in Latin. There is to be no intermingling of the rites of the 1962 *Missale Romanum* with those of the Missal of Pope Paul VI.
6. *Celebrant*: The celebrant of the Mass must be a priest in good standing in the Archdiocese of Boston. Similarly, he must be competent both in the language and the rite of the Tridentine Mass.

Although the renewed liturgy is deeply appreciated by all of us, there are still some in our community who have a special devotion to the rite of the immediate past, the Tridentine Rite. The letter of October 3, 1984 (mentioned above) was a gracious gesture on the part of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, to accommodate the sincere desire of some of the faithful to participate in occasional celebrations of the Tridentine Rite.

Obviously, such celebrations should not be frequent events, nor should they be scheduled on a regular basis. At the same time, requests for the Tridentine Mass should be handled with the same graciousness with which our Holy Father granted the permission.

As the above norms state, a form (petition) must be filled out and registered with the Chancery Office before permission will be granted. I am enclosing a sample form for your information. Additional copies of this form may be obtained as needed from the Chancery Office.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverent Robert J. Banks  
Vicar General

RJB:rw

## REQUEST FOR THE TRIDENTINE MASS IN LATIN

(A priest should assist the petitioner in completing this form, sign it, and mail to the Chancery. The answer will be mailed to the petitioner.)

1. Please state, in the space below, the reason for your requesting the celebration of the Tridentine Mass in Latin:

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2. On what day and date do you request the celebration of Mass?

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3. Since there must be “unequivocal, even public evidence, that the priest and people petitioning have no ties with those who call into doubt the lawful force and doctrinal soundness of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI,” do you hereby attest that you and the other petitioners hold as lawful and doctrinally sound the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970?

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4. (Since the celebration must not be in a parish church except in extraordinary circumstances, and with the permission of the Bishop . . . ) please list below the name, address and phone number of the church or oratory in which you request to have the celebration:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you obtained permission from the pastor or rector to use the above church or oratory?
6. Please name or indicate the groups or persons for whom the request is being made.
7. Please supply the following information about the priest whom you wish to celebrate the Mass:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

The person submitting this petition should supply the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Priest's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

N.B. If this petition is being made on behalf of a group, please have these people sign below.

Return this form to: Office of the Canonical Affairs  
Chancery Office  
2121 Commonwealth Avenue  
Brighton, MA 02135

Additional forms may be obtained from the same address.

## ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY FOR SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULES

The celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is the Church's most important activity each week. It is the privileged moment for priests and parishioners to join together with the Lord in one sacrifice of praise. For this reason, Sunday Mass schedules should be arranged so that, where possible, people are brought together in significant number as a community for worship rather than being separated into sparsely attended celebrations. Care must be taken that the schedule provide adequate opportunity for parishioners to fulfill their important responsibility of participating at Sunday Mass.

The proper scheduling of Masses calls attention to the even more fundamental issue of the quality of the celebration of the Liturgy, particularly the Sunday Eucharist. As each parish reviews its Sunday Mass schedule, it should also ask the question: "How could our Sunday Masses be better celebrated by priests and people?" The pastoral letter, *Sunday Liturgy: The Heart of the Parish*, can be a valuable guide in reviewing our celebration of Sunday Eucharist. Our goal is that every parish church be a place where people feel welcome and are enabled to worship together with the full participation of all.

Special attention in scheduling must be given to the Sunday Vigil. The Church, while maintaining the ancient tradition of celebrating Eucharist on the Lord's Day itself, has also out of pastoral concern permitted the anticipated celebration of Sunday Mass on Saturday afternoon and evening. This allows many of the faithful to gather for Mass when their work or personal schedules on Sunday might have otherwise precluded their participation. A needless multiplication of anticipated Masses on Saturday, however, could unnecessarily fracture the worshipping community and also lead to a loss of appreciation for Sunday, the Lord's day.

As we know from recent surveys, a relatively new problem is that significant numbers of Catholics are not fulfilling their important responsibility and obligation to participate in the celebration of Sunday Eucharist. While this problem will have to be addressed in a number of ways, especially through education, an important part of the solution will be the providing of Liturgies that nourish our people



with the Word of God and encourage them to lift their hearts and voices to the Lord. The proper scheduling of Masses can help to promote this kind of worship.

With these liturgical and pastoral considerations as a context, the following policy is set forth for the scheduling of Sunday Masses, including those of the Sunday Vigil.

1. Any scheduled Mass which fails to utilize 50% of the seating capacity is to be examined by the pastor, parochial vicar(s), and staff members to see if such a gathering might be combined with another.
2. In order to emphasize Sunday as the Lord's Day, one Vigil Mass on Saturday is normative, and a second Mass is not to be scheduled without a serious pastoral consideration.
3. In order to insure the best quality of participation in the Liturgy, at least ninety minutes are to elapse between the beginning of celebrations.
4. The pastor, parochial vicar(s), and staff members are to review the parish Mass schedule every two years in consultation with the Parish Council and Parish Liturgy Committee. The Mass schedule is to be reviewed in Pastoral Visitation by the Regional Bishop and Vicar.
5. A parish schedule should be set with a sensitivity to neighboring parishes. Any pastoral questions which arise with the implementation of the Policy are to be referred to the Regional Bishop for resolution.
6. The pastor will present the Mass schedule to the Vicar of Administration by October 15, 1987. The schedule is to be implemented by the First Sunday of Advent, November 28-29, 1987.

June 19, 1987