

Diocese of Scranton

Provision for Sunday Celebrations in Time of Emergency

(Based on *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*)

OVERVIEW

Prompted by the current health crisis, the provisional use of the rite *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* should be considered as a “backup” plan for when a priest is faced with an unexpected personal health crisis or some other unplanned situation and someone other than the priest would need to facilitate the Sunday Celebration.

This celebration on Sunday would normally be led by a deacon or parish life coordinator, but if not available, the service would be led by a layperson prepared beforehand by the pastor or parish life coordinator for such emergencies. Pastors or parish life coordinators are to notify the regional Episcopal Vicars each time that this rite will be used (or has been used) in their parishes. The readings used for a Sunday service with a Liturgy of the Word would be taken from the *Lectionary for Mass* following the liturgical calendar.

If a weekday Liturgy of the Word with Communion Service is deemed necessary and appropriate, a different Rite is to be used: “Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass” as found in the ritual book, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*. This simpler Rite omits specific elements of the Sunday celebration and is to be only used in exceptional circumstances in a parish setting. Where the priest’s absence can be anticipated – due to illness or vacation, for example – parishioners should be encouraged to participate in another parish for weekday Mass. This Rite, most often utilized in hospitals, nursing homes or prison, would only be engaged in the parish on a weekday when the assembly has already gathered and a last minute need arises.

REQUIREMENTS

- An explanation, which includes the pastor’s authorization of the person leading the service, should be shared by the Deacon or Leader with those assembled as the introduction to the service on the day of the emergency need. Please see below the prescribed text for this purpose.
- Careful discernment is required on the part of the pastor or parish life coordinator in choosing a layperson to lead these celebrations. The layperson would be a currently serving extraordinary minister of Holy Communion who lives a life consistent with the Gospel and who has been properly trained to serve in this ministry as needed. Training resources will be provided by the Diocesan Office for Parish Life.
- Every parish should purchase its own copy of the ritual book, *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (a bilingual edition published by the USCCB--store.usccb.org, \$44.95) to reference in preparations for and to utilize during the celebration of the rites.
- When using the ritual book, *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, great care should be taken to observe the specific rubrics pertaining to a lay leaders.
- All of the diocesan liturgical directives during the COVID-19 pandemic are to be carefully observed during this service.

OUTLINE OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD AND COMMUNION RITE

Please note that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sign of Peace is omitted. The Collection of Monetary Offerings is omitted from this rite as offerings are to be collected when people enter or leave church by using a secure and stationary basket or lock box.

- Introductory Rite
 - Introduction
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Greeting
 - Collect
- Liturgy of the Word
 - First Reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Second Reading
 - Gospel Acclamation
 - Gospel
 - Homily (*deacons only; laypersons may offer a period of silence after the readings*)
 - Profession of Faith
 - Universal Prayer
- Communion Rite
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Invitation to Communion
 - Communion Procession
 - Act of Thanksgiving
- Concluding Rite
 - Announcements
 - Invitation to Pray for Vocations
 - Blessing

WEEKDAY CELEBRATIONS – OUTLINE OF THE WORD AND COMMUNION RITE

(As found in the ritual book, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, section on “Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside Mass”)

- Introductory Rites
 - Greeting
 - Penitential Rite
- Celebration of the Word of God – texts are chosen from the Mass of the day or from the votive Masses of the Holy Eucharist or Masses for particular needs. There may be one or more readings.
 - Reading(s)
 - Psalm, Song or Silence
 - Universal Prayer (General Intercessions)
- Holy Communion
 - Lord’s Prayer
 - Sign of Peace
 - Invitation to Communion
 - Communion
 - Communion Song
 - Silence, Psalm or Song of Praise
 - Concluding Prayer
- Concluding Rite
 - Blessing
 - Dismissal

INTRODUCTION TO THE CELEBRATION

(adapted from Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest)

Deacon/

Lay Leader:

**We gather here to celebrate the Lord's Day.
Sunday has been called the Lord's Day
because it was on this day
that Jesus conquered sin and death
and rose to new life.
Unfortunately,
we are not able to celebrate the Mass today
because we do not have a priest.**

If the person leading the service is not the deacon or the parish life coordinator, the following section is said:

**My name is _____,
and I have been delegated
by the pastor/parish life coordinator
to lead this Liturgy of the Word
with the Reception of Holy Communion.**

Deacon/

Lay Leader:

**Let us be united in the spirit of Christ
with the Church around the world
and celebrate our redemption
in Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.**