

POLICY 2.5.2 Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

As Roman Catholics, we are a liturgical people. Our faith is expressed and built up by rituals and celebrations focused on the sacraments, in particular on the Holy Eucharist. The document *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the first to be promulgated at the Second Vatican Council, speaks of the weekly celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our life as a believing community.

The norm and standard for Catholic parish life is the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. By following the rhythm of Mass on a regular basis, and being instructed by the scriptural texts in the lectionary along with a well-prepared homily, the community expresses the best of its fellowship at the table of the Lord.

In the present reality of our Archdiocese, with a shortage of priests, it is not possible to have a Sunday liturgy in all of our communities every weekend. This is a source of pain for our people where the celebration of Mass every weekend is not possible. In those places where this is the case, the following statements provide some guidelines for the Sunday Celebration of the Word in the absence of a priest.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has promulgated a similar ritual book for use throughout Canada, *Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours*. Only this ritual book may be used for Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest.

The Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, found in the front of this ritual book, provides the rubrics and directives to be followed in such celebrations. It provides the rationale for the order of service, along with highlighting how such a service is distinct from the celebration of Mass, and how there should be no confusion between these services and a Sunday Mass.

Please contact the Vicar General of the Archdiocese for further guidance and assistance in these situations.

Amended by the College of Consultors on 16 February 2011