

2A. CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Revised March 2013

INTRODUCTION

The Christian community has an obligation to care for the sick and dying. When requested, or when the pastoral need seems appropriate, a priest should administer the sacrament of the sick.

Death is a very intense experience for family and love ones who are left to mourn. The Christian community should be present with various expressions of sympathy and the support of prayer.

The funeral mass of the deceased is generally held in the parish church. No funeral masses may be held in funeral homes or elsewhere except with permission of the bishop.

ARTICLE 1: WAKES

The usual place for a wake is in a funeral home, although a wake may take place in a private home. The period of waking may take place in a church because of unusual circumstances but this practice is not to be encouraged. If a body is waked in a parish church during the weekend, the deceased should be taken to some reserved place during the Sunday liturgy.

Sometime during the period of the wake, and preferably the evening before the funeral, a Vigil celebration should be held. It is at the Vigil that eulogies should take place rather than during the Funeral Mass. "At funeral Masses there should usually be a short Homily, but to the exclusion of a funeral eulogy of any kind." [*GIRM #382, 2010*]

ARTICLE 2: THE FUNERAL MASS

"The Mass of Christian Burial" is more appropriate for use in Funeral Bulletins than "Celebration of the Life of ..."

Funeral Masses are to be celebrated in Churches and not in funeral home chapels.

There should be only one funeral mass which follows the liturgy prescribed by the Order of Christian Funerals.

When the body is welcomed into the Church and the Pall is placed, this action replaces the penitential rite. However, when a body is waked in the Church, some form of Penitential Rite is in order.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Christian Funerals

In Canada a funeral Mass may be celebrated any day except Sundays, holy days of obligation (Christmas Day and New Year's Day), Holy Thursday, and during the Easter Triduum (from the Mass of the Lord's Supper through Easter Sunday inclusively). Rites for the reception of the body, the liturgy of the word and the final commendation may take place on these days, with a funeral Mass to be offered at a later date. (*Canadian Liturgical Calendar. Note 23f*).

The funeral Mass is neither the time nor the place for messages or eulogies.

If, out of absolute necessity, words of remembrance are to be given, these conditions apply: they must be brief (no more than two to three minutes), a copy of the text must be given to the Pastor beforehand and the remarks must be delivered before the Liturgy begins.

ARTICLE 3: CREMATION

Cremation is not prohibited by the Church unless it is chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine. (Canon 1176, no. 3). If the body is to be cremated, the Church recommends that cremation take place after the funeral liturgy.

The Paschal Candle and holy water may be used.

During the Mass or Liturgy of the Word, if the cremated remains are present, they should be treated with the same respect and dignity that would be afforded the body.

The cremated remains, in a dignified container, can either be carried in the procession at the beginning of the Liturgy or placed beforehand on a small table provided in the place normally reserved for the casket.

The placement of pictures of the deceased near the cremated remains is to be discouraged.

During Mass, secular songs are not permitted, nor are eulogies allowed.

Burial or entombment of cremated remains:

(from 'Catholics and Cremation.' Some answers to questions regarding cremation and funerals; National Liturgy Office of the CCCB. Revised 2006)

The great respect the Church has for the bodies of its deceased should also be evident in the way the cremated remains are treated after cremation. This means that they should be put into a worthy container and all who handle them should treat these remains with care and reverence in the way they are transported and where they are placed. The Church asks that, in keeping with a spirit of

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Christian Funerals

reverence, the cremated remains be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or a columbarium (a place for the entombment of cremated remains), that is, in a place especially designated for this purpose and reserved as such. In addition, a specific place for a person's remains helps focus the remembering and prayer for the deceased person by the family and friends, and by the Church in general. Also, such a place will make it easier to memorialize the deceased, for example with plaques which record names and dates.

Scattering cremated remains on the sea, in the air, on the ground, or keeping them in the homes of relatives does not display appropriate reverence and the Church does not offer a prayer service when that kind of [disposition] has been chosen. Scattering the remains in a location that was once the place where the individual spent time may seem emotionally satisfying at the height of mourners' grief, but one should ask this question: Does the desire to scatter the remains on a favourite spot display a tendency to look backward at a life that has passed rather than to look forward to a new dimension to our life with God and to the resurrection of the body? Our belief in the resurrection of Jesus and in life after death suggests a more permanent resting place for a Christian's remains.

Families are encouraged to approach their pastor or a pastoral minister regarding arrangements for funeral services before they make plans with the funeral home. This is even more necessary when cremation is chosen. Funeral liturgies are for the living and are a vital part of the grieving and healing process. They give families and friends a formal way of remembering and saying goodbye. No one should omit having at least some type of funeral service.

ARTICLE 4: FEES FOR FUNERALS

The fee for funerals is governed by the diocesan policy on cemeteries. This fee covers heating of the church, cemetery upkeep, etc., but does not include a stipend for the celebrant, organist, servers, etc.

If the wake takes place in the church, an additional fee of \$100.00 per day will be charged.

No person will be denied a funeral and/or burial because of an inability to pay the fees.

ARTICLE 5: DEATH REGISTER

A death register must be kept in each parish. This register shall include the name of the deceased, the date of death, and the date and place of burial. Other information such as next of kin, whether or not the person has received the Sacrament of the Sick or Viaticum, etc. may also be entered in the register.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Christian Funerals

ARTICLE 6: BEREAVEMENT TEAM

It is fitting that each parish have a Bereavement Team that would meet with members of the family shortly after the death of a parishioner.

Members of the Bereavement Team should have the skills to provide understanding and compassion to a family who has experienced a loss.

Members of the Bereavement Team should have a knowledge of what is appropriate regarding the acceptable criterion regarding wakes and funerals.

The Bereavement Team would assist the family by providing them with access to the resources of the parish in planning the wake and the funeral liturgy.

ARTICLE 7: OTHER ISSUES

If families wish to memorialize a departed loved one by funding a purchase for the church, they should approach their pastor and begin discussions about what is needed. The use of plaques is preferred to putting a nameplate on the donated item.

2B. ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS AND ECUMENICAL SHARING

INTRODUCTION: GUIDELINES FOR INTERCOMMUNION

Intercommunion has only become an issue in the Roman Catholic Church in recent years. Prior to Vatican II the very idea of Roman Catholics sharing the Eucharist with Christians from other denominations was practically anathema.

With the "Decree on Ecumenism", however, came new understandings of old problems. Problems such as the nature of the Eucharist, the nature of the ministry, and the relationship between Eucharist and the Church were discussed by both Roman Catholics and Protestants. These discussions opened doors so that this subject of "intercommunion" could be openly debated by Roman Catholics. Indeed, today, we have some cases where "intercommunion" is permitted by the Church. These incidents are pastoral in nature and often occur at special times such as first communion, funerals, graduation, confirmation, marriage, etc.

This topic includes three main issues as reflected in canon 844, namely:

1. the basic principle
2. Catholic reception of Eucharist from non-Catholics
3. Catholic admission of non-Catholics to the Eucharist

BASIC PRINCIPLE

The basic principle is that Catholics celebrate the sacraments with Catholics and other Christians celebrate among themselves. Note the wording of canon 844, §1: "Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments only to Catholic members of Christ's faithful, who equally may lawfully receive them only from Catholic ministers", except where canons 844, §§2-4 and 861, §2 provide. Here the term "Christ's faithful" (*christifideles*) clearly means all of the baptized and not only Catholics.

CATHOLIC RECEPTION OF EUCHARIST FROM NON-CATHOLICS

The second principle concerns Catholic reception of the sacraments in other churches. The canon insists that the reception be in churches wherein "these sacraments are valid" (canon 844, §2). This terminology was deliberately chosen to prohibit reception of the sacraments from someone who is merely offering a certainly valid sacrament, for example, a former Roman Catholic priest who became an Anglican priest.

This canon does not provide for a Catholic to lawfully receive a sacrament in a protestant church.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Ecumenical Affairs and Sharing

Catholic law has been historically inflexible in this regard. Even if the Catholic rationalized such a practice by saying that they are only receiving a sacramental and not a sacrament, such action would be frowned upon by Church authority.

Churches that possess valid sacraments:

- * Orthodox
- * Philippine National Church
- * Patriotic Chinese
- * Jansenists
- * Old Catholic
- * Polish National Church
- * Lefebvre's followers
- * Liberal Catholic Church have likely lost valid orders

Does not include: Anglican, Lutheran.

The Church does not recognize Anglican orders. Could a Catholic request and receive the sacraments from an Anglican bishop or priest who is validly ordained by a validly ordained bishop? As a rule, even when the necessary conditions are verified, it is not permitted. In particular circumstances and when the necessary conditions are verified, avoiding all scandal, wonderment and danger of indifferentism, one could if there were a particular necessity.

There is no doubt that in danger of death one could receive the sacraments from a validly ordained Anglican priest (can. 976).

CATHOLIC ADMISSION OF NON-CATHOLICS TO THE EUCHARIST

The question here is when Catholics might lawfully administer the Eucharist to non-Catholics. Canon 844 sets down personal conditions in two categories. The first category is those who belong to the Orthodox Churches and those equivalent to them. These people must "spontaneously ask for the Eucharist and be properly disposed," according to §3.

A Catholic minister may confer the sacraments to members of separated Eastern Churches and churches, which in the judgement of the Holy See have preserved the substance of the Eucharist, the sacrament of orders, and apostolic succession. Moreover, the person must spontaneously ask, and be properly disposed.

The second category of Christians are those who may receive communion in the Catholic Church. According to canon 844, §4 these particular cases are:

1. danger of death (not point of death); or
2. other grave necessity according to the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference, e.g., persecution, imprisonment

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Ecumenical Affairs and Sharing

3. if they cannot approach a minister of their own community
4. if they give signs of a Catholic faith in these sacraments
5. if they spontaneously ask
6. if they are properly disposed.

Note that while for both categories of non-Catholics suitable disposition is required, one's internal disposition may only be gauged by external words and actions. The request must always be spontaneous. Note, too that a "Catholic faith" regarding communion is implicitly presumed in the Orthodox and those equivalent to them, while it must be demonstrated in the case of other Christians.

One interesting requirement of canon 844, §4 is the insistence that the non-Catholic be unable to approach a minister of their own community. This calls for a subjective judgement: sometimes this will be very obvious, e.g., a physical inability, when the nearest non-Catholic minister is hundreds of miles away, and sometimes not so clear, e.g., a moral inability, as during a nuptial mass or while confined to a hospital. This is a judgement to be made by the Catholic minister (by the way the term minister is purposely used here, since the distributor of communion might be either cleric or lay.)

A baptized protestant who no longer belonged to any church community would be considered *de facto* unable to approach his or her own minister would be given communion.

Non-Catholics, in fact, have a kind of right to the sacraments. Canon 912 says: "Any baptized person who is not forbidden by law may and must be admitted to holy communion."

Our law is not as clear as perhaps it should be in that the general prohibition of non-Catholic reception of the Eucharist is more implied doctrinally than specified legally.

Although the doctrinal differences between the Catholic Church and various churches prevent general "intercommunion", individual Protestants may have an acceptable Catholic faith in the sacraments.

There are two key principles underlying this discussion with regard to those with whom one shares the Eucharist: first, the unity of the Church in faith should be honestly expressed; and second, the Eucharist is a sharing in the means of grace. The expression of unity generally does not recommend Eucharistic sharing among members of churches which are not "in communion" with one another. However, Eucharist as a sharing in grace sometimes does recommend it.

The conditions under which intercommunion may occur are that the baptized person be unable to have recourse to a minister of his/her own church, ask for the sacrament of his/her own initiative, manifest Catholic faith in the sacrament and be properly disposed, leading a life worthy of a Christian. The local bishop is to determine the application of these guidelines in his own diocese; the following policy shall assist in the application of these guidelines in this diocese.

POLICY ON ECUMENICAL SHARING

September 2002

Policy on Cases of Serious Need in which the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick May be Administered to Anglicans and Baptised Protestant Christians

INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist is a profound mystery which is both a sign of unity and a source of grace. As a rule, Roman Catholic canon law restricts the reception of holy Communion and other sacraments to those who are full members of the Catholic Church. This rule preserves the notion of the Eucharist as a symbol of unity. On the other hand, the Catholic Church recognizes that the participation of other Christians in the sacraments under certain circumstances is permissible because it is a source of grace for all the baptized.

Accordingly, the canon law admits separated Eastern Christians and members of like churches to receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from a Catholic minister whenever they ask on their own for it and are properly disposed. Anglican and Protestant Christians may receive the same three sacraments in danger of death and in other cases of grave need as determined by the diocesan bishop or the conference of bishops in accord with canon 844, §4 of the *Code of Canon Law*. This policy specifies these cases of grave need.

- A. In accord with canon 844, § 4, Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick to Anglican and Protestant Christians in danger of death or in any of the following cases of grave need:
- In areas where they do not have access to their own minister (SPCU, Instruction *In quibus rerum circumstantiis*, June 1, 1972, no. 6).
 - In institutions where they stay day and night and do not have regular access to their own minister, including prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, orphanages, and boarding schools (SPCU, Instruction *In quibus rerum circumstantiis*, June 1, 1972, no. 6 and SPCU, Communication *Dopo la pubblicazione*, October 17, 1973, no. 6)).
 - In other cases of grave need, permission must be obtained from the diocesan bishop (or his delegate) (PCPCU, *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on*

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Ecumenical Affairs and Sharing

Ecumenism, March 25, 1993, no. 130).

- B. An Anglican or Protestant party in a mixed marriage who has a serious spiritual need for the Eucharist may receive Communion on special occasions, such as principal anniversaries, funerals of family members, on Christmas and Easter if the family attends Mass together, and other occasions of ecclesial or familial significance (PCPCU, *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, March 25, 1993, no. 160).

When, in exceptional circumstances, a mixed marriage is celebrated at the Eucharist (*Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes*, no. 32; *Pastoral Guidelines for Interchurch Marriages Between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in Canada*, no. 17), the Anglican or Protestant party to the marriage who has a serious spiritual need for the Eucharist may receive Holy Communion at the wedding Mass (PCPCU, *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, March 25, 1993, no. 159).

The Anglican or Protestant party may also receive the sacrament of penance from a Catholic minister before receiving Communion on these same occasions.

3. The Anglican or Protestant faithful who receive sacrament from a Catholic minister when they cannot approach their own minister must be validly baptised, ask for the sacrament on their own, manifest catholic faith in the sacrament, and be properly disposed.
3. Doubtful cases are to be referred to the diocesan bishop (or his delegate).

Canon 844 on Ecumenical Sharing

§1. Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments to Catholic members of the Christian faithful only and, likewise, the latter may lawfully receive the sacraments only from Catholic ministers with due regard for §§ 2, 3, and 4 of this canon, and can. 861, §2.

§2. Whenever necessity requires or genuine spiritual advantage suggests, and provided (dummodo) that the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, it is lawful for the faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, to receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose churches these sacraments are valid.

§3. Catholic ministers may licitly administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and anointing of the sick to members of the Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Ecumenical Affairs and Sharing

the Catholic Church, if they ask on their own for the sacraments and are properly disposed. This holds also for members of other churches which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition as the Eastern Churches as far as these sacraments are concerned.

§4. If the danger of death is present or other grave necessity, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or the conference of bishops, Catholic ministers may licitly administer these sacraments to other Christians who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and on their own ask for it, provided (*dummodo*) they manifest Catholic faith in these sacraments and are properly disposed.

§5. For the cases in §§ 2, 3, and 4, neither the diocesan bishop nor the conference of bishops is to enact general norms except (*nisi*) after consultation with at least the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.

2C. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of pastoral councils is a response to the desire of the Second Vatican Council. Parish pastoral councils flow from the common priesthood of all the baptized, namely their basic equality with regard to the mission of the Church, which calls for different yet complimentary services within the Church (*Decree on Apostolate of the Laity*, no. 44).

Canon 536 indicates that it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to promote the establishment of a parish pastoral council in each parish. Each parish in the diocese shall have a pastoral council. This council acts in an advisory capacity to the pastor and provides a means whereby all Christ's faithful gives assistance in fostering pastoral action in the parish.

Those on the council include lay people and religious as well as others engaged in pastoral activities on behalf of the parish. The council's ministry is to build up the parish as a living Christian community. Specifically it is their task to:

- 1) care for the life of the parish, both their own and that of the community;
- 2) share in the concerns of the universal Church;
- 3) strive to bring the gospel message to all people and places in their neighbourhood.

Although it is the responsibility of all baptized Catholics to be part of the mission of the parish, the pastoral council, by reason of its choosing and selection, endeavours to assess the needs of the parish and to search within the community for the means to respond to these needs. Generally, the council must represent the parishioners, must possess some basic qualifications such as a desire to help, an ability to listen, reflect and express themselves with care. It is their responsibility to learn about the nature and role of the council so that they and the parish may become more aware of the tasks involved. It is often helpful when there is representation from different regions of the parish, different walks of life, different social concerns, and different age groups. In this way the parish will avail of as many gifts as possible on behalf of the reign of God.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership could compose approximately ten to fifteen people. It would be to the advantage of the parish to include among its membership a youth representative.

The method of selection of the pastoral council should be decided on, and the whole parish should be involved in selecting the members. Council members should serve for not more than a two year term (renewable twice). It is important that not more than one third of the membership be replaced at a given time.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Parish Pastoral Councils

The pastor or administrator is the president of the pastoral council and calls the council together. An executive is necessary - which executive is to be selected from among and by the membership: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary. The treasurer's duties would ordinarily fall to the finance committee which would not necessarily be part of the ongoing meetings of the pastoral council.

The executive with the pastor would be responsible for planning the meetings and drawing up the agenda. Generally, meetings would take place on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNCIL

All aspects of the pastoral life of the parish fall within the responsibility of the council. This does not mean that the council must undertake everything that happens in the parish. Committees established through the council can ensure that the projects on behalf of the parish are attended to and completed.

A spirit of unity is needed to ensure a good relationship among members so that the mission of the parish and the Church is promoted. The spiritual growth of the parish pastoral council ought to have top priority; therefore ongoing formation in faith must be provided to the members; time set aside for spiritual reflection and renewal should become inserted in the council calendar. Ideally, the parish pastoral council offers itself as a model of the Church in mission.

AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL

The authority of the pastoral council resides in its mandate from the bishop of the diocese, such authority must be seen in the context of a decision-making process placing the ultimate responsibility on the pastor for decisions made. However, neither the council nor the pastor has the authority to make decisions that contradict the common good of the parish and the Church. In reality, decisions that are reached by consensus reveal a united effort to achieve unity of mind and heart for the good of the Church and for the reign of God.

It is important that the pastoral council be concerned with the welfare of the entire diocese and with the Church at large. Council members therefore have an obligation to acquaint themselves with correspondence/publications of the bishop, the diocese, and the Church at large.

2D. COLLECTIVE MASS INTENTIONS

November 8, 1995

Revised March 7, 2013

1. The ordinary practice regarding mass intentions remains that enshrined in canon 948, i.e., "separate masses are to be applied for the intentions for which an individual offering, even if small, has been made and accepted." The priest who accepts the offering for a mass for a particular intention is bound in justice to satisfy personally the obligation assumed, or to entrust its fulfilment to another priest.

On occasion, and when the number of mass intentions in a parish has accumulated to the point where it would be unreasonable to expect to have them celebrated within a year, the extra mass intentions (with the stipends included) should be sent to the Chancery. Parishioners are to be informed of this decision.

2. The Congregation for the Clergy in a decree on February 22, 1991 permitted mass to be celebrated for collective intentions. This is considered an exception to the ordinary practice regarding mass intentions. By this decree, a single mass may be celebrated according to a **collective intention** if the following conditions are met:
 - a) people making the offering are **explicitly informed** about combining their offerings for a single celebration;
 - b) these same people have **freely consented** to the combining of their offerings for a single celebration;
 - c) masses for collective intentions should not be celebrated more than twice a week in a parish;
 - d) these masses should be clearly publicized;
 - e) *in the Diocese of Grand Falls, collective mass intentions may not be offered in a parish more than twice a week.*
3. The priest who celebrates a mass for a collective intention may keep the amount of the offering established by the diocese, i.e., five dollars.
4. Any amount exceeding the amount established by the diocese is to be sent to the chancery office for the Priests' Pension Fund.
5. Before a particular parish begins this practice of collective mass intentions, the priest is to instruct the faithful through a specific catechesis, whose main points include:
 - a) the importance of praying for the deceased;
 - b) the infinite merits of the one sacrifice of the cross, the mass being the sacrament of that one sacrifice which Christ entrusted to the Church;
 - c) the fruits of the sacrifice can be attributed to various purposes;
 - d) the ascetical importance of almsgiving in the Christian life, especially in the offering for the celebration of masses;
 - e) those who make offerings for masses are participating in the Church's life through a way of "sharing" their resources.
6. For further information, please read the commentary on the decree by Gilberto Agustoni.

2E. OFFERINGS ON THE OCCASIONS OF SACRAMENTS

September 14, 2001, (Revised March 7, 2013)

Effective January 1, 2014

PREAMBLE

For many years in this diocese, the faithful have had tradition of making offerings on the occasion of some parochial liturgical ministry such as the celebration of a baptism, marriage, funeral, or the blessing of homes. In many ways these offerings often supplemented the "salary" of priests. These offerings used to be called "stole fees," and they differ from "stipends" or offerings given for a particular intention at Mass and they differ from "voluntary offerings" intended for the person of the minister.

Historically the parish was considered a benefice and the pastor was entitled to the revenue from the benefice for his support. Thus offerings received from baptisms, marriages and funerals and the blessings of homes were, according to the 1917 code, to support the pastor (cann. 462 and 463). The pastor could not demand a greater amount (1917 CIC can. 463, §1) and could not refuse his ministry gratis to the poor (1917 CIC can. 463, §4; can. 1235, §2).

However, in recent years, the tradition of making offerings on the occasion of sacraments has declined. At the same time, parishes have begun to experience financial difficulties especially regarding the upkeep of parish buildings as well as the support of pastoral programs. As a result, some parishes have begun to set fees for certain liturgical celebrations as a way to contribute to the upkeep of buildings. Within the diocese, a discrepancy concerning fees often exists among various parishes and many parishes have sought information concerning a diocesan policy on the issue. This policy attempts to provide some consistency throughout the diocese regarding offerings on the occasion of the celebration of some of the sacraments.

ARTICLE 1: PRINCIPLES

1. Vatican Council II ordered abandoning or at least reforming the "benefice system" especially regarding the right to the revenues attached to the endowment of the office (*Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 20). The *Instruction for the Proper Implementing of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* set down the general principle that, in liturgical services, "any suggestion of moneymaking is [to be] avoided" (*Inter Oecumenici*, no. 35).
2. The 1983 code describes the celebrations of some functions as "especially entrusted to the pastor" (can. 530), mandates that stole fees belong to the parish treasury, and authorizes the diocesan bishop to determine the purpose for which stole fees are to be used (can. 531). Thus the code attempted to implement the vision of Vatican II in adopting a new discipline relative to stole fees.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Offerings on the Occasions of Sacraments

3. While the code does not mandate that a parochial function must have an offering or stole fee attached, it does direct the provincial bishops to determine for the province what offering will be made on the occasion of sacraments and sacramentals (can. 1264, 2°) and funerals (can. 1181). The code also states that the minister of the sacraments is not to ask for anything more than the offering approved by competent authority (can. 848). Moreover the minister must not deprive the needy of the help of the sacraments because of their poverty (can. 848) nor are the poor to be deprived of suitable funeral rites (can. 1181).
4. If the provincial bishops have not established fees on the occasion of the celebration of some sacraments, analogy with canon 952, §2 would require that the custom existing in the diocese be observed. The bishops of our ecclesiastical province, in fact, have not determined what the offering will be.
5. Clearly the faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church and the support of its ministers (can. 222, §1), and the diocesan bishop has the obligation to call that to the attention of the faithful (can. 1261, §2).
6. The most profound change in the 1983 code regarding stole fees is the statement of canon 531, assigning ownership of the stole fees to the parish rather than to the person of the pastor. Thus the parish is entitled to the stole fee. The Church's minister who receives an offering on the occasion of performing some parochial function, even if he be a cleric not assigned to that parish, is directed to give it to that parish's treasury. If the minister of that parochial function is the pastor himself, he is the administrator of the public juridic person, which is the parish (can. 531) and the offering or stole fee belongs to that parish's treasury in virtue of canon 1267, §1. There is no contrary provision in law to the norm of canon 1267, §1 with regard to stole fees. So, they go to the parish, not to the pastor.
7. The diocesan bishop is to decide, after consultation with the presbyteral council, how stole fees are to be used and how those ministers who carry out the parochial functions are to be remunerated (can. 531).

ARTICLE 2: REGULATIONS

1. All stole fees belong to the parish — those the pastor receives, in light of canon 1267, §1; those which others receive, e.g., parochial vicar, pastor emeritus, visiting priest, are to be given to the parish in virtue of canon 531.
2. All priests deserve a remuneration consistent with their responsibilities (can. 281, §1) as they dedicate themselves to sacred ministry. All active priests receive the same salary, which properly takes into account compensation for their ministry.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Offerings on the Occasions of Sacraments

3. The bishop can determine that the offering on the occasion of sacraments could be disposed of in a specific manner, e.g., mass stipends for bination and trination are sent to the clergy fund. Therefore, any offerings received on the occasion of the celebration of sacraments or sacramentals shall be channeled into the operating account of the parish or into another fund decided by the pastor in consultation with the finance committee.
4. When the donor clearly intends the offering for the person of the minister, that portion in excess of the “approved amount” belongs to the person of the minister. If the donor’s intention is doubtful, that portion given in excess of the “approved amount” belongs to the parish treasury. Such is in keeping with the fundamental principles of canon law that offerings made are presumed to belong to the juridic person (can. 1267, §1) and that the intention of the donor must be carefully respected (can. 1267, §1). Canon 531 authorizes the diocesan bishop to determine the purpose of the “approved offering,” not of the excess amount when it is clear that the donor intended the excess for the minister.
5. The "stole fees" for our diocese shall be:
 - a. \$25 on the occasion of baptisms.
 - b. *\$200 on the occasion of marriages; if the marriage is witnessed by a person who is not receiving a regular diocesan salary, that person will receive \$50 from the parish.*
6. **Parishes may not ask for anything over these approved offerings. If parishioners give more than these offerings, then the extra amount also belongs to the parish, unless the intention is that the extra amount would go to the priest who provided the ministry.**
7. Each parish is asked to consider ways of educating parishioners on these regulations so that the faithful may be aware of their responsibility of providing financial support for the parish and its pastoral activity. Some ways might include highlighting the amount of stole fees on regular parish financial statements, incorporating the fees into policy statements at marriage and baptism preparation courses, etc.
8. Since sacraments are celebrations of faith, they may never be used or perceived to be used for the financial gain of parishes. The financial support of parishes should be clearly differentiated from making an offering on the occasion of the celebration of sacraments.

Canons Connected With This Policy:

Canon 222, §1: Christ's Faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, so that the Church has available to it those things which are necessary for divine worship, for apostolic and charitable work and for the worthy support of its ministers.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Offerings on the Occasions of Sacraments

Canon 530: The functions especially entrusted to the parish priest are as follows:

- 1° the administration of baptism;
- 2° the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those in danger of death, in accordance with can. 883, n. 3;
- 3° the administration of Viaticum and of the anointing of the sick, [...];
- 4° the assistance at marriages and the nuptial blessing;
- 5° the conducting of funerals;
- 6° the blessing of the baptismal font at paschal time, [...];
- 7° the more solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

Canon 531: Even though another person has performed some parochial function, he is to give the offering he receives from the faithful on that occasion to the parish fund unless, in respect of voluntary offerings, there is a clear contrary intention on the donor's part; it is for the diocesan bishop, after consulting the council of priests, to prescribe regulations concerning the destination of these offerings and to provide for the remuneration of clerics who fulfill such a parochial function.

Canon 848: For the administration of the sacraments the minister may not ask for anything beyond the offerings which are determined by the competent authority, and he must always ensure that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments by reason of poverty.

Canon 1181: The provisions of can 1264 are to be observed in whatever concerns the offerings made on the occasion of funerals. Moreover, care is to be taken that at funerals there is to be no preference of persons, and that the poor are not deprived of proper funeral rites.

Canon 1261, §2: The diocesan bishop is bound to remind the faithful of the obligation mentioned in can. 222, §1, and in an appropriate manner to urge it.

Canon 1264: Unless the law prescribes otherwise, it is for the provincial bishops' meeting to: [...] 2° determine the offerings on the occasion of the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals.

Canon 1267, §1: Unless the contrary is clear, offerings made to Superiors or administrators of any ecclesiastical juridical person [e.g. parish], even a private one, are presumed to have been made to the juridical person itself.

2F DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL PLAN

January, 2019

DRAFT

PREAMBLE

The catechetical plan for the diocese has emerged as a result of several factors. First, the 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC, no. 223)* from the Congregation for the Clergy called for “an articulated, coherent and global programme” (GDC, no. 223) in each diocese. Another factor is, as of September, 1998, Catholics no longer have the right to a Catholic education in public schools. A third consideration is the accessibility to updated catechetical programs that now make it possible for dioceses to make choices that best suits the needs of a particular diocese.

As a result of these and other factors, the Council of Pastoral Leaders has discussed the need for a catechetical plan so that the diocese might have an effective and coordinated approach.

ARTICLE 1: PRINCIPLES OF CATECHESIS.

The General Directory for Catechesis provides the basic principles of pastoral theology so that the ministry of the word may be fittingly directed and governed (GDC, no. 120). While this catechetical plan is based on and presumes the teachings and directions of the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the following principles are particularly significant:

1. The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ (GDC, no. 80). Ultimately, the same is achieved under the inspiration and movement of the Holy Spirit.
2. The model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate (RCIA) where formation is articulated in four stages: the pre-catechumenate (first evangelization leading to conversion), the catechumenate (integral catechesis), the period of purification and illumination (more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation) and the period of mystagogy (characterized by the experience of the sacraments and entry into the community) (GDC, nos. 59, 88, 90). This catechumenal model involves a significant shift from a doctrinal, knowledge based model of catechesis to an integral formation with a focus on the Sunday assembly and a lived response to the Good News.
3. Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. (GDC, no. 59).
4. Catechesis is essentially an ecclesial act. The church proclaims the gospel, celebrates it, lives it and transmits it in catechesis to all those who have decided to follow Jesus Christ. (GDC, no. 78).
5. The fundamental tasks of catechesis are: promotion of the knowledge of the faith; education for full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy; moral formation in the attitudes of the Master through a journey of interior transformation; and education in prayer (GDC, no. 85).
6. The catechesis for young people should give consideration to the following two issues:

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

First, the diversity of the religious situation of young people (some not having been baptized, some not having completed Christian initiation, some in grave crisis of faith, some not having much support from their families, some caught up in the present day attitude towards faith in general, ...) and,

Second, The fact that most successful catechesis is that which is given in the context of the wider pastoral care of young people (GDC, no. 184), i.e. youth ministry.

7. The proclamation of the Gospel and the Eucharist are the two pillars on which is built and around which gathers the particular church (GDC, no. 218). The encyclical *Dies Domini* reminds us that the celebration of the Christian Sunday is an indispensable element in our Christian formation.
8. The goal of the process of preparation for the various sacraments is the same as that for every other liturgy of the Church: “the full, conscious and active participation“ (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14) that the Second Vatican Council enunciated as the fundamental principle of the modern liturgical movement.
9. The most important element of sacramental preparation is the Sunday liturgy. The liturgy itself is the best teacher and guide in terms of preparation. “The liturgy is the Summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10).

ARTICLE 2: THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR CATECHESIS.

In the diocese catechesis is a unique service performed jointly by priests, religious and laity in communion with the bishop. While the entire Christian community has the responsibility for catechesis (GDC, no. 220), the various agents exercise catechesis in different ways according to their particular involvement.

1. The Bishop has the primary responsibility for catechesis in the diocese. He ensures that active and fruitful catechesis is an effective priority in the diocese; he has a profound conviction of the importance of catechesis; he ensures that catechists are adequately prepared; he establishes a program that responds to the true needs of the faithful (*GDC*, no. 223).
2. Pastors and those who have the care of Parishes foster a sense of the common responsibility for catechesis in the community and ensure that the basic orientation of catechesis is planned by giving emphasis to the active participation of catechists. They also formulate a well structured catechesis in light of the diocesan catechetical plan (*GDC*, no. 225).
3. Parents are the primary educators of their children; family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis. The Christian community must help parents assume their responsibility of educating their children in the faith. The ‘domestic church’ of the family is a vital environment in which children and young people can receive authentic catechesis. (*GDC*, no. 227).

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

4. Religious in the diocese participate in various ways in the catechetical activity associated with young people, e.g. through active involvement in the catechetical programs of parishes, through Renewal Centre Ministry, other appropriate involvement
5. Catechists serve a major role in every phase of the catechetical process. They serve in various situations: With children especially for sacramental preparation, with young people especially through youth catechesis, with adults through RCIA, other catechetical activity or on the occasion of pre-sacramental encounters (pre-baptism or pre-marriage courses) (*GDC, nos. 156 and 232*).

The catechetical ministry in the Parish and Diocese depends in large part on the adequate pastoral care of catechists. The formation of catechists is important and the Diocese programme must give absolute priority to this formation (*GDC, no 234*). The *General Directory for Catechesis* presents various issues that should be considered in the formation of catechists (*GDC, nos. 235-247*).

ARTICLE 3: PLACE OF CATECHESIS.

The family, the Parish and the Sunday assembly all contribute to the Christian community as the origin, locus and goal of catechesis.

1. The family is the place where catechesis has a unique privilege: transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values.
The family assistance in Christian initiation: by an awakening of the sense of God; by providing the first steps in prayer; by educating the moral conscience; by means of formation in the Christian sense of human love, understood as a reflection of the love of God. Its growing importance is the role of grandparents in family catechesis (*GDC, no. 255*).
2. The Parish is, without doubt, the most important locus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed (*GDC, no.257*). Within the parish, adult catechesis must be given a priority, pre-Sacramental meetings (preparation for baptism, first communion of children and marriage) are fundamental, and catechesis for children and young people is indispensable (*GDC, no. 258*). Living in and participating actively in the life of the community has significant implications in terms of faith, for 'God makes people holy and saves them not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people' (*Lumen Gentium, no. 9*).
3. The celebration of Sunday is an indispensable element in our Christian formation. The Sunday celebration of the Lord's day and the Eucharist are at the heart of the church's life. Therefore 'it is crucially important that all the faithful should be convinced that they cannot live their faith or share fully in the life of the Christian community unless they take part regularly in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly' (*Dies Domini, no. 81*).

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

ARTICLE 4. ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE DIOCESE

1. The diocese shall establish an office of Catechetics. This office will analyze the catechetical needs of the diocese and establish a plan of action to address these needs. The formation of catechists will be an important task for this office.
2. The diocese should promote the following services:
 - i. a single, coherent, process of Christian initiation for children and young people. This catechesis should be intimately connected with the sacraments of initiation. Furthermore, this catechesis should be linked with a full catechetical program that provides ongoing pastoral care;
 - ii. a catechetical program for adults, addressed to those who need to deepen their faith (*GDC*, no. 274). This could involve Bible study, liturgical formation, doctrinal catechesis, ecumenical formation, or sessions and various themes or issues of faith.

ARTICLE 5: INSTRUMENTS AND AIDS FOR CATECHETICAL ACTIVITY

The *General Directory for Catechesis* makes clear that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a resource, a point of reference and not a catechetical text book (*GDC*, nos. 121 and 124).

In our diocese, it is presupposed that the norm is home based catechetical programming, organized by and supplemented by materials prepared by the parish. This form of catechesis requires that there be coordinators in the Parish and that families register for the various levels.

The program is based on the liturgical year and follows the liturgical year.

In our form of organization parents would share faith with their children at home. Some initial and ongoing formation for parents/caregivers is necessary. Regular meetings should be held for families to support and encourage them and to provide formation for parents.

Diocesan regulations require that whenever an adult meets with children that adult must have another adult present. Any adult interacting with children in the name of the Parish must have a police record check in addition to what the diocese requires.

Some issues that must be considered include: monitoring of the programs through contact with the coordinators of catechetics; need for periodic gathering of the young people; how to deal with the question of the non-practicing or the non-evangelized homes; availability of space; Parish budget which must include catechetical texts, materials, costs associated with formation, salaries or stipends, resource library for the parish.

Some steps are needed to organize this home base program of catechesis which include:

- a. Seeking coordinators of Catechetics for the Parish;

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

- b. Seeking some people as coordinating teams who could be responsible for the various levels of Catechetics;
 - c. Setting up a system of registration for the families within the Parish;
 - d. Ordering the materials for the various families;
 - e. Supporting and encouraging families through witness, I'm going to contact and regular gatherings of families and integration into the liturgical life of the parish.
1. Parishes with children ages 5 to 12 are to use the *Finding God* catechetical programs for Grades 1 to 6. (Loyola Press, A Jesuit Ministry. Chicago). Parishes must have a catechetical program for children in this age bracket.
 2. Parishes are to use the *Finding God* catechetical programs for Grades 7 and 8.

ARTICLE 6: SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Catechesis at the Parish level will involve preparation for the various Sacraments. Priests and those who have the care of parishes need to have a common approach in dealing with some of the issues that are involved in the preparation and celebration of the sacraments of initiation and penance.

1. BAPTISM.

- a. This catechetical plan presumes that parents have had their children baptized and have undertaken their 'responsibility in raising them in the practice of the faith' (Rite of Baptism). The baptism of infants is a serious duty and is governed by two principles, i.e., the first being that Baptism is a sign and instrument of God's prevenient love which frees us from original sin and gives us a share in the divine life and the second being that assurances must be given that this gift will be able to grow through a genuine education in faith and in Christian living.
- b. As a rule, these assurances are given by the parents or relatives, although they can be supplied in various ways within the Christian community. The church can not satisfy the desires of the parents unless they give the assurance that the baptized child will later be given a Catholic upbringing, which is required by the sacrament. Likewise, the Church must have a well founded hope that the Baptism will bear fruit. If the assurances given, (e.g. the choice of godparents who will take sincere care of the child, or the support of the Christian faithful) are sufficient, Baptism takes place. (*Instruction on Infant Baptism, no. 28*).
- c. **The preparation for baptism as well as its celebration are excellent opportunities to instruct or remind the parents of their obligations as Christians and as parents. The best pastoral approach is to welcome the parents and during the course of preparation help them to realize what that baptism means and entails so that they know how and can possibly choose to be proper role models for**

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

their child. This is of particular importance when we remember that, within our diocese and province, a home based approach to catechesis will be the primary means through which faith is nurtured.

2. CONFIRMATION

The second sacrament of initiation is confirmation . While confirmation should be celebrated ‘at about the age of discretion’, i.e. about the age of seven (canons 891 and 97 §2), various dioceses have set different ages for the celebration. The minimum requirements for the reception of the sacrament include suitable instruction, proper disposition and the ability to renew one’s baptismal promises (canon 889, §2).

The *Order of Confirmation (2016)* (no. 3) highlights the importance of the role of parents. The initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually increase a spirit of faith in the children and, with the help of Catechetical instructors, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist. The role of the parents is also expressed by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments.

Catechesis for confirmation should aim to be a positive experience to build up the faith of those preparing for confirmation. Catechesis should aim to help the children to understand that confirmation is a sacrament of initiation and that it’s true meaning is to be found in relation to Christian initiation and the other sacraments of initiation. Catechesis also ought to be given on the mysteries affirmed in the baptismal promises, since the renewal of baptismal promises is part of the rite itself.

3. First Communion.

Christian initiation culminates in holy communion. Catechesis on the mass should be directed to the child’s active, conscious and authentic participation. In it they should learn not only the truths of the faith regarding the Eucharist, but also how, from first communion on, they can as full members of Christ’s Body take part actively with the people of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord’s table and the community of their brothers and sisters.

For children’s first communion, it is required that ‘they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion’ (canon 913, §1). Catechesis for children seeks to strengthen their awareness of the Father’s love, of the call to participate in Christ’s sacrifice, and of the gift of the Spirit. Children should be taught that the holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Christ and that the consecrated bread and wine are actually his living Body. Children around the age of seven tend to think concretely; they grasp concepts like ‘unity’ and ‘belonging’ from experiences, such as sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking, and celebrating. Such

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Diocesan Catechetical Plan

experiences, coupled with explanations of Eucharist and the main events of Jesus' life, help them to participate more meaningfully in the action of the mass and receive Christ's body and blood in an informed and reverent manner.

4. Penance

Parents and pastors are obliged to offer children suitable preparation for the sacrament of penance before their first communion so that the children will have a realistic opportunity to avail themselves of the sacrament of penance. However, there may be situations when a child is not ready or willing to approach the sacrament of penance at the age of seven.

Since disposition to receive Penance reflects the readiness of the child to receive First Communion, the Pastor/Administrator must, with the persons assisting with preparation, consult with parents/caregivers to determine how to proceed in the best interest of the child.

Catechesis for children must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of the individual.

It seeks first to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life;

Second, to make the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrongdoing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the church;

Third, to encourage the child to see that, in this document, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving;

Fourth, to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.

A few points that might be helpful to parents as they speak regularly to their child about sin and forgiveness:

- Sin should be spoken of in terms that a young child can relate to. E.g. failing to share or hurting another person;
- Things that are really 'sin' (against what Jesus calls us to do) should be distinguished from other things that are 'wrong' (e.g. not eating properly or crossing the street without proper care);
- Sin should only be spoken of when an action is deliberately chosen;
- Children should be invited to recognize themselves that they have sinned in a particular matter, and should not be told by another that something they did was a sin for them;
- Sin and God's willingness to forgive should always be presented together.

When there is a real recognition on the part of the child that he or she has done something against what Jesus calls us to do, there is sorrow and there is the understanding that in Penance we experience God's forgiveness. It is appropriate at this point to invite the child to celebrate the sacrament of Penance.

ARTICLE 7. PASTORAL SITUATIONS

1. Handicapped persons. Baptized persons with handicaps have a right to the sacraments of confirmation, Eucharist and penance. Catechetical formation is given to those handicapped in body or mind insofar as their condition permits.
2. Readiness for sacraments: The readiness to receive sacraments is determined by the pastor in consultation with the person. In the case of children, consultation also takes place with the parents.

ARTICLE 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the diocese consider moving in the direction of having the celebration of the sacrament of initiation in the order of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.
2. That regular participation in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly by candidates be a significant indicator of the readiness needed for the sacraments of confirmation and first communion.
3. That each Parish designate a coordinator for catechetical ministry in the parish.
4. That each parish focus on the catechesis of young people and children.
5. The parishes assist parents in their responsibility for being the 'first teachers of their children in the ways of faith' (*Ritual of Baptism*).
6. The parishes consider a coordinated approach toward the the catechesis of adults.

ARTICLE 9: OVERALL INSPIRATION

Ultimately, catechesis is not possible without the action of God working through the Holy Spirit. In catechetical activity, neither the most advanced pedagogical techniques nor the most talented catechist can ever replace the silent and unseen action of the Holy Spirit, the interior teacher, the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work (GDC, no 288).

2G CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Adopted September 18, 2012

PREAMBLE:

In the 1973 *Directory for Masses with Children (DMC)*, the Congregation for Divine Worship wrote:

In fact, even in daily life children do not always understand all their experiences with adults but rather may find them boring. It cannot therefore be expected of the liturgy that everything must always be intelligible to them. Nonetheless, we may fear spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible: recent psychological study has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood, because of the special religious receptivity proper to those years (DMC #2).

Therefore, in the Diocese of Grand Falls, certain principles are being established so that, where feasible and productive, a ‘Children’s Liturgy of the Word’ can be celebrated during Mass. The goal is to gradually lead children to a full, conscious and active participation in the Sunday liturgical assembly.

ARTICLE I: THE NAME

The term ‘**Children’s Liturgy of the Word**’ refers to the practice of children leaving the Sunday assembly during the Liturgy of the Word and gathering elsewhere to celebrate a separate Liturgy of the Word that is more appropriate to their level of understanding. A gathering of children distinct from the main body of the Church for any other purpose does not constitute a Children’s Liturgy of the Word.

ARTICLE II. HOW OFTEN TO CELEBRATE CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD

This article operates from the following premises:

- A. The warning given in the Directory, as quoted above in the Preamble: *we may fear spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible (DMC #2)* to them.
- B. The directive that is given in the Directory suggests “Sometimes” (DMC #17).
- C. It is realized that children do not, and do not need to, understand everything going on around them. In fact they are often fascinated by adult conversation and activity that is beyond their comprehension. Growing up is a gradual process of growing in understanding of the world around them.
- D. Parishes will benefit from having children present for all parts of the Mass in order to embody the unity of a church which includes children as well as adults and to lead children to an adult participation in the parish Sunday Mass. (DMC # 16)

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children's Liturgy of the Word

Therefore it is suggested that in order to offer children the experience of regularly celebrating all of Mass with the entire community and yet to allow them opportunities to celebrate by themselves, parishes might consider having a Children's Liturgy of the Word for, at least, seasonal periods.

ARTICLE III. WHO SHOULD ATTEND CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Some key principles that should be kept in mind when preparing and celebrating Children's Liturgy of the Word.

- A. **Children's Liturgy of the Word is liturgy.** It is intended to be a time of ritual prayer and is not intended to catechize or to give religious instruction.
- B. **Children's Liturgy of the Word** is not simply child minding. It's purpose is not to keep the children busy by giving them activities (colouring, etc.) so the adults can listen to the homily in peace. It is a liturgical celebration and all the principles of good liturgy (active participation, clear symbols, etc.) apply.
- C. It is liturgy of the **Word** so it is ritual centred on the proclamation and breaking open of the Scriptures. The children do what the rest of the community is doing at this point in the Mass. They listen to the Scripture proclaimed and applied to contemporary life and respond in various ways. It is an experience of prayer, of dialogue with God.

Therefore, it is recommended that children younger than three who are unable to perform operations in thought should not attend Children's Liturgy of the Word. As well, children who have received Holy Communion should remain with the assembly for the Liturgy of the Word.

ARTICLE IV. APPROVED MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Those involved in preparing Children's Liturgy of the Word should use only materials approved by the Diocese. These include:

1. Sunday Book of Readings (Christine Brusselmans, et al);
2. The Sunday Weekly Leader's Guide (Christine Brusselmans et al);
3. The Lectionary for Masses with Children;
4. The Canadian Lectionary;
5. Any NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) Bible.

(Please note: A and B above go together; there is a separate set for each liturgical year. 'Children's Bibles' are not recommended because of unapproved translations.)

ARTICLE V. PRINCIPLES FOR CELEBRATING CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

*Sometimes, moreover, if the place itself and the nature of the community permit, it will be appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word, including a **reflection**, with the children in a separate, but not too distant, room. Then, before the Eucharistic Liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own Liturgy of the Word. (DMC #17).*

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children's Liturgy of the Word

- A. It must be liturgy. While activity sheets can be useful as take home material for family follow-up, it is not appropriate that they be used during a liturgical celebration. Activity sheets are not provided to adults during Liturgy of the Word and **Children's Liturgy of the Word** must be conducted as a parallel with the Liturgy of the Word at Mass in content, structure and symbol. The main difference between the two gatherings should be the one conducting the Liturgy of the Word with children will be speaking to the children at the level of the children.
- B. The gathering of the children for **Children's Liturgy of the Word** must not be used for religious education, sacramental preparation or for completing activity sheets. They gather for an experience of the Liturgy of the Word geared to their level of understanding.
- C. The participants are usually children of primary school age. Children younger than this are generally unable to participate consciously and actively in liturgical celebrations. The role of the leaders is to facilitate the liturgy and not to take care of young children. If pre-school children are included, scripture-based activities will be more appropriate for them. As explained in A and B above, this should not be described as a Liturgy of the Word.
- D. All Children are to be welcomed to participate in **Children's Liturgy of the Word**; special consideration may need to be made for children with special needs. This may require prior contact with the parents to ensure that the child knows that he or she is welcome and to identify any particular support required. As noted in DMC #6, a broader adaptation may sometimes be necessary.
- E. It would be advantageous for the children who participate in **Children's Liturgy of the Word** to take on ministerial roles appropriate to their age and condition (proclaiming the readings, playing music, leading the singing or prayers, etc.).
- F. The various liturgical objects used - lectionary, lectern, candle - should provide a focal point for the celebration and be treated with respect and reverence.
- G. When **Children's Liturgy of the Word** is held, the children participate in the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rites with the worshipping assembly. Only the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated separately.
- H. *In view of the nature of the liturgy as an activity of the entire person and in view of the psychology of children, participation by means of gestures and posture should be strongly encouraged.* (DMC #33). The use of other ritual elements such as processions, singing, dialogue and silence is integral to children's experience of liturgy.
- I. As to which reading(s) to use, the Directory for Masses with Children says:

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children's Liturgy of the Word

41. *Since readings taken from holy Scripture "form the main part of the liturgy of the word," [GIRM #33 or 55 (2002)] even in Masses celebrated with children biblical reading should never be omitted.*
 42. *With regard to the number of readings on Sundays and holy days, the decrees of the conferences of bishops are to be observed. If three or even two readings appointed on Sundays or weekdays can be understood by children only with difficulty, it is permissible to read two or only one of them, but the reading of the gospel should never be omitted.*
 43. *If all the readings assigned to the day seem to be unsuited to the capacity of the children, it is permissible to choose readings or a reading either from the Lectionary of the Roman Missal or directly from the Bible, but taking into account the liturgical seasons. It is recommended, moreover, that the individual conferences of bishops see to the composition of lectionaries for Masses with children.
If, because of the limited capabilities of the children, it seems necessary to omit one or other verse of biblical reading, this should be done cautiously and in such a way that the meaning of the text or the intent and, as it were, style of the Scriptures are not distorted. [Roman Missal, Lectionary for Mass, Introduction no. 57.]*
 44. *In the choice of readings the criterion to be followed is the quality rather than the quantity of the texts from the Scriptures. A shorter reading is not as such always more suited to children than a lengthy reading. Everything depends on the spiritual advantage that the reading can bring to the children.*
 45. *In the biblical texts "God is speaking to his people . . . and Christ is present to the faithful through his own word." [GIRM #33, 1973]. (2010 translation: When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel. #29). Paraphrases of Scripture should therefore be avoided. On the other hand, the use of translations that may already exist for the catechesis of children and that are accepted by the competent authority is recommended.*
 46. *Verses of psalms, carefully selected in accord with the understanding of children, or singing in the form of psalmody or the Alleluia with a simple verse should be sung between the readings. The children should always have a part in this singing, but sometimes a reflective silence may be substituted for the singing.
If only a single reading is chosen, there may be singing after the homily (**sic**).*
- J. A **reflection** to explain the reading(s), appropriate to the children's level of understanding, should be given by an adult approved by the parish priest (DMC #17, 24). The reflection may be instructional or make use of question and answer, discussion, guided reflection or silent meditation. If the Gospel reading of the day is a difficult one, the leader may choose to concentrate on one of the other readings in the reflection.

After the **reflection**, a variety of methods such as songs, mime and role-playing can be employed to further break open the scriptures and apply them to the children's lives. Prayers of the Faithful (Intercessions) should always be included in the celebration.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children’s Liturgy of the Word

If appropriate to the occasion (for example on major feast days), a simple statement of faith may be said. The Apostles' Creed or a question and answer form of the renewal of baptismal promises is recommended.

- K. During a **Children’s Liturgy of the Word** silence should be observed at appropriate times as part of the celebration. *“In their own way children are genuinely capable of reflection. The children will need some guidance in learning how to recollect themselves, meditate briefly, or pray to God in their hearts (DMC #37).”*

ARTICLE VI. THE STRUCTURE FOR CELEBRATING CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD

- A. Children stay with the assembly for the Introductory Rites (DMC #8). At the conclusion of the Opening Prayer, but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the presiding priest may formally send the children and ministers to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word. This may be done by presenting the Lectionary and/or with words of dismissal such as: *“My dear children, you will go now to hear God’s word, to praise God in song and to reflect on the wonderful things God has done for us. We will await your return so that together we may celebrate the Eucharist.”*
- B. The readings follow the same structure and cycle as the readings for Mass. However, for liturgies with children, there is the option of using one, two or three readings. Your choices are:

3 Readings		2 Readings		1 Reading
1 st reading from the Old Testament		1 st Reading		Gospel Acclamation
Responsorial Psalm	<i>or</i>	Responsorial Psalm	<i>or</i>	Gospel
2 nd Reading from the New Testament		Gospel Acclamation		
Gospel Acclamation		Gospel		
Gospel				

- C. Points to note:
 - i) The readings need to be proclaimed audibly, clearly, reverently, with faith and understanding..... by competent readers. It is recommended that, where possible, each reading be proclaimed by a different reader.

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children's Liturgy of the Word

- ii) *In the choice of readings, the criterion to be followed is the quality rather than the quantity of the texts from the scriptures. In itself a shorter reading is not always more suited to children than a lengthy one (DMC # 44).*
 - iii) *The Eucharistic liturgy requires the full use of music which is integral to the whole celebration including the proclamation of the word of God. The responsorial psalm is normally sung by a cantor with the assembly singing the refrain (Lectionary for Masses with Children LMC #51). The gospel acclamation should be sung where possible.*
 - iv) During the Lenten season, the Alleluia is not used. The gospel acclamation usually starts with words like "Glory and praise to your Lord Jesus Christ" or "Praise and honour to you Lord Jesus Christ."
 - v) Some readings are appropriate to be read by more than one voice, that is, by dividing the reading into different speaking parts.
 - vi) Sometimes SILENCE is an appropriate response.
- D. In the breaking open of the word, an explanation of the readings, appropriate to the children's level of understanding, is provided by an adult approved by the parish priest.
- E. Activities, role playing, question and answer, gospel reflection are all examples of ways that the total child can be involved because their interior life is still very much dependent upon what they experience through their senses.
- F. The Profession of Faith (The Apostles' Creed or question and answer) is optional.
- G. Prayers of the Faithful are simple petitions which allow the children to name the needs of the Church, the world, those in need and the local community and bring those to God in prayer.
- H. A simple procession leads the children back to rejoin the community for the Preparation of the Gifts. Some (or one) of the children may join in the procession of the gifts if the children have an offering to make, the other children rejoin their families. The presiding priest may welcome the return of the children.
- I. A recommended format for **Children's Liturgy of the Word**:
- 1. A calling forth from the assembly by the presider after the Opening Prayer.
 - Blessing by the presider;
 - Procession to the place where Children's Liturgy is to be celebrated.
 - 2. Gathering in the presence of the Word.
 - A candle and Lectionary should be prominently displayed on a table covered with a cloth of the liturgical colour of the season;
 - A simple hymn may be sung.
 - 3. The Readings are proclaimed (see above);

PASTORAL POLICIES ON OTHER ISSUES: Children's Liturgy of the Word

The reflection is given;

An activity (song, mime, role-play, silence, etc.);

Activity sheets may be given but should not replace the reflection and activity which break open the Scriptures as they apply to the children's lives;

Prayers of the Faithful (Petitions);

The statement of faith (Creed).

4. Return to the assembly.