

Appendix 20: Norms for Distribution of Communion Outside of Mass

There are essentially three scenarios that merit distribution of Holy Communion outside the context of Mass. One of the following three ritual forms must be used depending on the scenario in question.

(1)“Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest” (© 2012, USCCB)

(2)“Holy Communion Outside of Mass (© 2013, Office of Worship, Diocese of Bismarck)

(3)“Pastoral Care of the Sick; Communion of the Sick” (© 1983, Catholic Book Pub. Corp.)

(1)“Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest”

Our Catholic tradition is that the Christian faithful assemble for the liturgical worship each Sunday in the celebration of the Eucharist, thus showing forth the death and resurrection of the Lord in the hope of His glorious coming. In our day, however, there are occasions when a pastor or parochial administrator cannot be present to celebrate the Eucharist on weekends. As encouraged in Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (intro., n. 18) and for the sake of clarity in such situations in our diocese, I am instituting the following policy:

1. The Diocese recognizes the right of and the importance for every priest to utilize each year his allotted time for vacation, retreat, and conferences as indicated in the Code of Canon Law (cc. 283, §2; 533, §2) and diocesan policy (“Vacations of Pastors and Parochial Vicars, Annual Retreat of Priests, and Spiritual Pilgrimages,” Feb. 12, 2010).
2. I urge the faithful to make all reasonable efforts to observe the following in order of preference:
 - a. Attendance of the Sunday Eucharist scheduled in another parish or cluster.
 - b. Attendance of the Sunday celebration in absence of a priest scheduled at their own parish or within their own cluster, presuming the requisite permission for the celebration has been granted by the Diocesan Bishop. Provided a member of the faithful truly attends a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, I dispense that person from the obligation to worship at the Eucharist for that particular Sunday.
3. Prior to such absences the pastor must provide catechesis to assure that his parishioners understand the reason for this policy, the options available to them (cf. #3 above), and the important difference between the Sunday Eucharist and Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest (Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, intro., no. 16-17, 21).
4. If at all possible, I ask that a deacon lead Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest (Sunday Celebrations in Absence of a Priest, intro., no. 23-25). The deacon may be assigned to the parish in need or he may come from a neighboring parish or

cluster. When this is not possible, vowed religious and other faithful who have been commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (cc. 230, §3, 910, §2) may lead Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest provided they have received appropriate preparation by the pastor or his delegate (Sunday Celebrations in Absence of a Priest, intro., no. 26-30). Only deacons may preach; when a vowed religious or lay person leads, the homily is to be replaced by a short period of silent reflection.

5. In all situations where a Sunday celebration in the absence of priest is allowed the 2007 revised ritual edition of the Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (United States Conference of Catholic Bishop, 2007) is to be the normative text.

(2)“Holy Communion Outside of Mass” (© 2013, Office of Worship, Diocese of Bismarck)

This ritual text is to be used for weekday distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful outside the context of Mass within a parish church. It may also be used (on a weekday or a Sunday) in a health care facility (group setting) as determined by the pastor in charge of pastoral care at the health care facility in question.

There are two forms to this ritual text; “Holy Communion Outside of Mass, Deacon; Presider” and “Holy Communion Outside of Mass, Layperson; Presider”. Both forms may be obtained from the Office of Worship, Diocese of Bismarck.

(3)“Pastoral Care of the Sick; Communion of the Sick” (© 1983, Catholic Book Pub. Corp.)

This ritual text is to be used when Holy Communion is distributed to a homebound individual or to a sick person residing in a health care facility. There are two forms to the rite; Communion in Ordinary Circumstances and Communion in a Hospital or Institution. The particular form used is at the discretion of the minister.

Ordinary and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be particularly aware of paragraphs 71-74 (Introduction) of “Pastoral Care of the Sick”.