



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

POLICIES  
FOR THE  
ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE  
SACRAMENTS



---

## A Letter of Introduction from The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano Bishop of Rochester

---



My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Since I began my apostolic ministry as the ninth Bishop of Rochester, I have had the joyful experience of visiting our parishes, schools, charitable agencies and outreach ministries. I have experienced the zeal and enthusiasm that characterizes your love for the poor and the forgotten members of our society, a love steeped in faith, a faith nurtured by the Church's rich sacramental life culminating in our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

With profound gratitude, then, for our Diocese's beautiful manifestation of the Catholic faith, I present the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*. It is my hope that these *Policies* will support and assist the local communities of faith in our mutual efforts to continue the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of Christ's Sacraments in the years ahead, always conscious that we do everything possible to hand over to our children the greatest gift we possess, the gift of faith.

In presenting these *Policies*, I express my deep gratitude to the Lord for the privilege of serving as your shepherd. I also am most grateful to the many who cooperated in the formulation of the *Policies*: our Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the regional/deanery representatives, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and so many others, pastors, parochial vicars, pastoral administrators, deacons, religious, pastoral associates, and laity, faith formation directors and catechists, the many who serve in ministries throughout our Diocese.

At the same time, the publication of these *Policies* affords me the possibility joyfully to fulfill my responsibility to teach and to instruct the faithful about the mysteries of our salvation in Christ. This is truly an awesome responsibility, but one greatly aided by God's Word in Holy Scripture, the Church's Magisterium, the Conciliar documents of the Church and with special note of the Pontiffs who have guided the Church during my years of priestly and episcopal ministry: Blessed Paul VI, John Paul I, Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now our Holy Father, Pope Francis. With this accumulated wisdom, supported by the deep faith of those I have been and am privileged to serve, I now "feed the sheep in the name of the Lord" by "performing for them the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing." (*Christus Dominus*, 11).

In particular, as a diocesan family, we are seeking to renew our love and appreciation for the Sacraments of the Church in order that we all may draw closer to Jesus Christ. These *Policies* are

intended for all the faithful, not only our children preparing for the reception of the Sacraments. The adult community is called upon to support our children and young adults by our own practice and witness to the faith. Each of us is called to be a disciple and to share with others the greatest treasure that God has given to us: the gift of His Son and the Holy Spirit, personally experienced in sacramental encounter.

### *The Gift of Presence*

Over the years many people have crossed our lives. At moments of joy and sorrow, rejoicing and disappointment, certain persons come to mind who supported us and encouraged us, not necessarily by words but simply by their presence. “He who has never struggled with his fellow creatures is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind.” (Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 1767). Yes, true friends are always present to us in those times both convenient and inconvenient, when we are praised and when we are criticized, when we are welcomed and when we are scorned. Thus, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) we read:

“A faithful friend is a sure shelter, whoever finds one has found a rare treasure.  
A faithful friend is something beyond price, there is no measuring his worth.”  
(Ecclesiasticus 6:14-15).

In truth, as relational beings we need the support of others. As believers, we have the greatest support in the eternal presence of Jesus in the Sacraments, especially in the Most Holy Eucharist. Through the Sacraments, Jesus has remained faithful to His promise. “And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:20).

At Baptism, we are received into the Body of Christ and become the sons and daughters of God. A lifelong relationship with the Triune God commences and should accompany us until the day we return to the Father for all eternity.

This journey through life is not without its crosses, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments. And in our humanity, we sin. But the Good Shepherd again and again raises His hand in benediction and in forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus holds no grudges; He is not vindictive; He is forgiving! What an extraordinary encouragement and hope we find in this great Sacrament!

Life presents us with many challenges. In our world, now so very complex, we are faced with many decisions. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive those gifts that help us make the best possible decisions, life-giving decisions, decisions that reflect our dignity as the daughters and sons of God: the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and the spirit of wonder and awe in the presence of God.

In our Catholic faith, the Most Holy Eucharist is our greatest treasure. The Holy Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life. The other Sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1324).

Barely twelve hours after his election, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an address in Latin to the Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel. In that address, His Holiness asked “everyone to intensify in coming months love and devotion to the Eucharistic Jesus and to express in a courageous and

clear way the real presence of the Lord, above all through the solemnity and the correctness of the celebrations.” (J. J. Fischer, *Pope Benedict XVI, a Personal Portrait*, 2005). And so it must be because “Everything we have goes on the altar, to be made holy in Christ. The priest makes the connection explicit as he pours the water and wine into the chalices. ‘By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, Who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.’ This mingling is a rich symbol, suggesting the union of Christ’s divine and human nature, the blood and water that poured forth from His side on the cross, and the union of our gifts with the Savior’s perfect gift of Himself. That’s an offer the Father cannot refuse.” (Scott Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper*, 1999).

Among our people there is a deep desire to recapture a sense of the transcendent and awesome nature of the Sacraments and the Most Holy Eucharist. One must always remember that the liturgical prayers and rituals of the Sacraments proclaim the doctrine, the creed which is the very foundation of the Catholic faith. The Sacraments are not created by the Church; the Sacraments are Jesus’ gift to us. Jesus is the One Who instituted the Sacraments and now in time has shared this gift of Himself with us. Thus, we approach the Sacraments with the utmost reverence to render worship, adoration, thanksgiving and prayers of supplication to the One Who alone is Lord! In view of this sublime reality, we come to understand that it is an extraordinary privilege for us to participate in the Church’s sacramental life, Christ’s sacramental life, and above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, the foundation and heart of our redemption in Christ. “The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above the Sacraments as ‘the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the Sacraments tend.’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1374).

When we approach the celebration of Holy Mass or any of the Sacraments with this spirit of gratitude, it essentially changes our attitude toward the sacramental nature of the Church. Realizing that in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, Jesus comes to us, we then approach Him not asking what is in it for me, but how can I possibly thank the omnipotent God Who has chosen to come to me! We realize we do not own the Sacraments. The Sacraments, the Most Holy Eucharist, belong to God who graciously invites us to participate in His life through these personal encounters with Him. We then imitate this generosity by our loving service to our brothers and sisters in God’s family. From our encounter with Christ in the Sacraments, particularly the Most Holy Eucharist, we see the poor with new eyes; we hear the cries of the oppressed with new ears; we empathize with the suffering with a new heart; we surrender our own will to the will of Jesus Christ.

### ***An Important Moment in the Life of the Church in Rochester***

We stand at an important moment in the life of the Church in our beloved Diocese. United with all who have gone before us in the living testimony of faith, we now have been given the opportunity to recommit our parishes, parish programs and parishioners to the sacramental life of the Church. With God’s blessings, we endeavor to rekindle our love for Christ through our participation in the Sacraments and to take very seriously the implementation of all that is needed and required for the proper celebration and reception of these *outward signs, instituted by Christ, to give grace*, a definition some of us learned many years ago, but which remains so true.

Central to this celebration and reception is a renewed emphasis on catechesis, called for as the heart of the New Evangelization. Together, parishes, united in faith, must serve our people who come to us to be strengthened through the Sacraments, with charity and compassion, and to

provide those whom we serve the necessary formation to be disciples of Jesus Christ in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world.

### *The Sacraments and the “New Evangelization”*

Over the last several years there has been much discussion about the “New Evangelization,” an initiative vigorously proclaimed by John Paul II and enthusiastically taken up by his successors, Pope Benedict XVI, our Holy Father Emeritus, and our present Pontiff, Pope Francis. Yet, for many, the “New Evangelization” is a popular theme but not very easily explained. The marvelous event of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ gives us the definition of the New Evangelization. The birth of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation of the Son of God, took place on our behalf. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came to dwell among us to teach us about His Father, to share with us the love of the Triune God, to forgive our sins, and to open for us the doors of eternal life and to establish the community of faith, the Church, of which He is its cornerstone. Since the time of the Incarnation and the earthly mission of Jesus Christ, these realities have not changed. The *New Evangelization* is really a call to awaken in us a renewed appreciation for Jesus Christ present among us, continuing to live in our midst and alive in our hearts if we only open our hearts to receive Him.

The *New Evangelization* is not a program or another strategic plan; it is not another proposal; it is not something, but Someone, the very person of Jesus Christ: His life, His words, His presence, His union with us in the *Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist*. The *New Evangelization* is the Incarnation coming alive in our own age. The *New Evangelization* means accepting Jesus Christ as the Savior, the Redeemer, and unreservedly following Him. The essence of the *New Evangelization* is powerfully captured in the words of Benedict XVI: “From the moment of His birth, He belongs outside the realm of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. Yet it is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one, the one on whom ultimately everything depends. So one aspect of becoming a Christian is having to leave behind what everyone else thinks and wants, the prevailing standards, in order to enter the light of the truth of our being, and aided by that light to find the right path.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *The Infancy Narratives, Jesus of Nazareth*, 2012, p. 67).

The *New Evangelization* is not recreating a product, rather it is recreating ourselves in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Once again, the means for renewing ourselves in Christ are present and call for a rediscovery of them on our part. It is almost impossible to speak of renewal without speaking of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, a Sacrament that sadly is forgotten by many in the community of the faithful. Yet it is so very powerful in its effects as so beautifully taught by John Paul II in *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*: “It must be recalled that... this reconciliation with God leads, as it were, to other reconciliations, which repair the other breaches caused by sin. The forgiven penitent is reconciled with himself in his inmost being, where he regains his innermost truth. He is reconciled with his brethren whom he has in some way offended and wounded. He is reconciled with the Church. He is reconciled with all creation.” (31, 5).

Once we have experienced the Lord’s mercy, we have placed ourselves in more intimate communion with the Lord culminating in the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. One cannot understand or appreciate the One who is the *New Evangelization* without entering into the Mystery of the Paschal Lamb, Who forgives our sins and nourishes us with His very *body and blood*. The primary concern, the first concern of the *New Evangelization* should be welcoming back, encouraging and reaching out to our brothers and sisters who no longer attend Holy Mass.

Without this emphasis upon the importance of participation at the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the *New Evangelization* is without a subject. In his first encyclical letter, *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis writes: “The Eucharist is a precious nourishment for faith: an encounter with Christ truly present in the supreme act of His love, the life-giving gift of Himself.” (44).

This, my brothers and sisters, is the message of the *New Evangelization*! Christ’s death is real, Christ’s resurrection is real and this is the reality of the Sacraments and the very foundation for the *New Evangelization*. The birth of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation, ushered in a new moment in humanity’s history, new in every age and in every circumstance because in its transcendence it breaks the limits and boundaries of all that is human and introduces humanity to eternity!

## ***Conclusion***

How difficult it would be to try to “go it alone”– to make sense of life “on our own.” But the Christ of the Sacraments has not left us orphans; He has called us by name. Our Lord has extended the invitation: “Come to me all you who find life burdensome, and I will refresh your souls!” Recalling the motto of both Saint Francis de Sales and Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, “Cor ad cor loquitur,” “the heart speaks to the heart,” let us respond to Christ’s invitation and open our hearts to Him present in the Sacraments, Christ’s gifts eternal, the gifts of life, the supreme gift of the Most Holy Eucharist.


Throughout this renewal let us pray the prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas:

“As one infirm, I approach  
the balm of life,  
as one begrimed  
the fountain of mercy,  
as one blind  
the light of eternal splendor,  
as one poor and needy  
the Lord of heaven and earth.”

(Robert Anderson and Johann Moser, *Devoutly I Adore Thee, The Prayers and Hymns of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1993).

With an assurance of my prayers, seeking the intercession of Saint John Fisher, patron of our Diocese, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Salvatore R. Matano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester*







# Decree of Promulgation

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Noting the central role of the Sacraments in our Catholic Faith and that “the seven Sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life,” (CCC, no. 1210) it is essential that proper policies are in place to assure that our brothers and sisters in Christ are able truly to encounter Jesus Christ in the manner in which the Sacraments are celebrated and the faith is proclaimed. To this end, the attached policies for **Baptism, The Most Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, RCIA and Penance / Reconciliation** are intended to assist all our Catholic parishes and institutions to fulfill their mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ in Word and to strengthen the faithful in Sacrament.

Therefore, having consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Pastors/Administrators of the Deaneries, the College of Deans and the staff of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, who have been in dialogue with parish catechetical leaders about these policies since spring 2012, I hereby promulgate these *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, today, September 30, 2014, which become effective on November 30, 2014, the First Sunday of Advent. There are two exceptions to this effective date:

- 1) The diocesan-wide age of Confirmation will become normative for all Confirmation programs after July 1, 2015. (**See 3.3.1 Proximate Preparation**).
- 2) The training and informational data for currently missioned extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are acknowledged and need not be repeated. However, parishes are strongly encouraged to update their records for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to continue to provide ongoing formation and education to assist them in successfully fulfilling their ministry according to the norms indicated the *Policies*. (**See 2.4 The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion; Cf. ADDENDUM 1**).

As a diocesan family, we raise our voices in prayer for our brothers and sisters who come to us with a simple request: “We would like to see Jesus.” (John 12:21). May these *Policies* assist us in this privileged vocation.

Given at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Rochester on the thirtieth day of September, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and fourteen, on the *Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church*.

*+ Salvatore R. Matano*

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester*

Attested to by:

*Daniel J. Condon*

*The Reverend Father Daniel J. Condon  
Chancellor*





# Decree of Promulgation

---

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

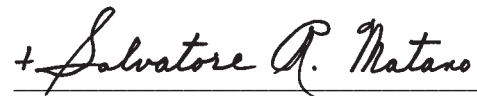
Following upon the Decree of Promulgation dated September 14, 2014, by which the policies contained in the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester* were issued for the Sacraments of Baptism, The Most Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, RCIA and Penance / Reconciliation, I now wish to incorporate among these *Policies* instructions for the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Rite of Christian Funerals**. These *Policies* are intended to assist all our Catholic parishes and institutions to fulfill their mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ in Word and to strengthen the faithful in Sacrament.

Therefore, having consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Pastors/Administrators, the College of Deans and the staff of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, I hereby promulgate these additions to the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, today, April 4, 2016, which become effective on May 29, 2016, the Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi.

The *Policies* governing the Sacrament of Marriage are in process and soon will be presented for the completion of these *Policies*.

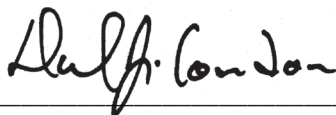
As a diocesan family, we raise our voices in prayer for our brothers and sisters who come to us with a simple request: "We would like to see Jesus." (John 12:21). May these *Policies* assist us in this privileged vocation to proclaim Jesus Christ and the Holy Gospel.

Given at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Rochester on the fourth day of April in the year of Our Lord two thousand and sixteen, on the Solemnity of *The Annunciation of the Lord*.



*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester*

Attested to by:



*The Reverend Father Daniel J. Condon  
Chancellor*





# Decree of Promulgation

---

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:


Following upon the Decree of Promulgation dated September 14, 2014, by which the policies contained in the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester* were issued for the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation and Penance, and the Decree of Promulgation dated April 4, 2016, by which the *Policies* for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the *Rite of Christian Funerals* were incorporated, I now am pleased to complete our *Policies* by incorporating the instructions for the **Sacrament of Holy Matrimony**. These *Policies* are intended to assist all our Catholic parishes and institutions in assisting those preparing for marriage, recognizing that: “The Sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The Sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since ‘their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church.’” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 72).

Therefore, having consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Pastors/Administrators, the College of Deans and the staff of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, I hereby promulgate this addition to the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, today, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which becomes effective on December 30, 2016, the Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.


On this same date, December 30, 2016, the Ritual Edition of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition*, becomes effective. (Cf. e-mail notifications of September 2, 2016, December 2, 2016, and the Minutes of the Meeting of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, September 7, 2016). The Introduction of this revised ritual for marriage provides a beautiful catechesis on the theology and nature of marriage to assist us in our vocation to bring the life of Christ to those to whom we are privileged to minister, in this instance those beginning their new life as husband and wife. In the Introduction we read: “Through this Sacrament the Holy Spirit brings it about that, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, Christian spouses also strive to nurture and foster their union in equal dignity, mutual giving, and the undivided love that flows from the divine font of charity.” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition, Introduction*, number 9).

Invoking the intercession of Our Mother Mary, Saint Joseph, her spouse, and our Patron, Saint John Fisher, I unite with you in prayer that all our ministry is guided by the supreme law of the Church, *lex suprema, salus animarum, the supreme law is the salvation of souls*. (Cf. canon 1752 of the *Code of Canon Law*).

Given at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Rochester on the eighth day of December in the year of Our Lord two thousand and sixteen, on the Solemnity of *The Immaculate Conception*.

  
The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester

Attested to by:

  
The Reverend Father Daniel J. Condon  
Chancellor

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AAS</i>	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<i>CIC</i>	Code of Canon Law
<i>GIRM</i>	General Instruction on the Roman Missal
<i>NCCB</i>	National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the USCCB)
<i>NDC</i>	National Directory for Catechesis
<i>RBC</i>	Rite of Baptism for Children
<i>RC</i>	Rite of Confirmation
<i>RCIA</i>	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
<i>RP</i>	Rite of Penance
<i>USCCB</i>	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
<i>PCS</i>	Pastoral Care of the Sick

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SACRAMENTAL POLICIES

KEY POLICY STATEMENTS..... 5  
 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION/  
 SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION/RECORD KEEPING.....7

## SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### 1. BAPTISM

1.1 CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM .....11  
 1.2 PARENTS .....12  
 1.3 PREPARATION.....13  
 1.4 SPONSORS (GODPARENTS).....13  
 1.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.....14

### 2. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST AND CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES..... 15  
 2.2 FIRST EUCHARIST ..... 16  
     2.2.1 Candidates..... 16  
     2.2.2 Parents..... 16  
     2.2.3 Preparation..... 17  
     2.2.4 Celebration of the Sacrament ..... 17  
 2.3 RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION ..... 18  
 2.4 THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION ..... 19  
     2.4.1 Requirements..... 21  
     2.4.2 Missioning..... 21  
     2.4.3 Responsibilities ..... 21  
 2.5 PREACHING ..... 22  
 2.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS ..... 23

### 3. CONFIRMATION

3.1 CANDIDATES.....25  
 3.2 PARENTS .....25  
 3.3 PREPARATION.....26  
     3.3.1 Proximate Preparation.....26  
     3.3.2 Immediate Preparation.....26  
 3.4 SPONSORS .....27  
 3.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.....28

## 4. RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

4.1 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS.....	29
4.2 INITIATION OF UNBAPTIZED ADULTS .....	29
4.3 INITIATION OF BAPTIZED/UNCATECHIZED ADULTS <i>(both Catholic and Non-Catholic)</i> .....	30
4.4 RITE OF RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANS INTO FULL COMMUNION .....	31
4.5 RCIA ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE .....	32

## SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

### 5. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

5.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	33
5.2 FIRST PENANCE OF CHILDREN.....	36
5.2.1 Candidates.....	36
5.2.2 Parents.....	36
5.2.3 Preparation.....	36
5.2.4 Celebration.....	36

### 6. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

6.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	37
6.2 CANDIDATES.....	38
6.3 PREPARATION.....	39
6.3.1 Effects of the Anointing the Sick .....	39
6.4 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.....	40
6.4.1 Ministers of the Sacrament.....	41
6.4.2 Apostolic Pardon.....	42
6.4.3 Viaticum.....	42

## SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION

### 7. MARRIAGE

7.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	43
7.2 CANDIDATES FOR MARRIAGE .....	44
7.2.1 Faith Matters.....	44
7.2.2 Marriage Licenses in the State of New York.....	45
7.3 MARRIAGE PREPARATION .....	46
7.3.1 Time.....	47



7.3.2	Initial Meetings with Priest / Deacon / Parish Staff .....	47
7.3.3	Fully Engaged Pre-Marriage Inventory .....	48
7.3.4	Pre-Cana .....	48
7.4	OBTAINING NECESSARY INFORMATION.....	48
7.4.1	Freedom to Marry.....	49
7.4.2	Impediments and Circumstances that Invalidate Consent .....	49
7.4.3	Prior Bond .....	50
7.4.4	Dispensations and Permissions.....	51
7.4.5	Delegation .....	52
7.4.6	Recording of Marriage and Notifications to Sacramental Records .....	53
7.4.7	Eastern Rite Catholics.....	54
7.4.8	Eastern Orthodox Churches.....	54
7.4.9	Convalidation of Marriage.....	54
7.5	PASTORAL GUIDANCE FOR PARTICULAR MARRIAGE SITUATIONS .....	55
7.5.1	Marriage Between Two Catholics .....	55
7.5.2	Marriage between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person .....	56
7.5.3	Marriage Between a Catholic and a Validly Baptized non-Catholic .....	56
7.5.4	Marriage Between a Catholic and an Orthodox Christian .....	57
7.5.5	Marriage Between a Latin Catholic and an Eastern Catholic.....	57
7.5.6	Those With No Domicile/Quasi-Domicile in the Diocese of Rochester but the Marriage is Being Celebrated in the Diocese of Rochester (destination marriages) ....	57
7.5.7	Those With Domicile in the Diocese of Rochester, but Who Will Marry in Another Diocese .....	57
7.6	CELEBRATION OF THE MARRIAGE.....	58
7.6.1	Exchange of Consent.....	60
7.6.2	Liturgical Music at Weddings .....	60
7.6.3	Role of a non-Catholic Minister in a Catholic church .....	61
7.6.4	Role of a Priest / Deacon in a non-Catholic church .....	62
7.6.5	The Order of Celebrating Matrimony.....	62
7.6.6	The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass.....	62
7.6.7	The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Without Mass.....	63
7.6.8	The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian .....	63
7.7	POST MARRIAGE PASTORAL CARE AND CONCERN.....	63
 <b>8. HOLY ORDERS</b> 		
8.1	GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	65
8.2	CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD AND DIACONATE .....	66
8.3	CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT .....	67

# CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

## 9. THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

9.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	70
9.2 THE VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED .....	71
9.3 THE FUNERAL LITURGY .....	72
9.3.1 Liturgical Music at Funerals .....	73
9.4 WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE.....	74
9.5 CREMATION AND CATHOLIC FUNERALS .....	74
9.5.1 Cremation Following the Funeral.....	74
9.5.2 Cremation Before the Funeral.....	75
9.5.3 Burial of Cremated Remains.....	75
9.6 THE RITE OF COMMITTAL.....	75
9.7 CONTINUED PASTORAL OUTREACH & REMEMBRANCE OF THE DECEASED.....	75

## ADDENDA

### ADDENDUM 1

Selection, Preparation, Biographical Information Form, Profession of Faith, Missioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.....	i
---	---

### ADDENDUM 2

Sign of Peace.....	v
--------------------	---

### ADDENDUM 3

References regarding Preaching Norms .....	ix
--	----

### ADDENDUM 4

Supporting documents for Extraordinary Form of the Mass.....	xiii
--	------

### ADDENDUM 5

Elements of a Confirmation Program .....	xxi
--	-----

### ADDENDUM 6

Norms for Words of Remembrance at Funeral Liturgies in the Diocese of Rochester .....	xxv
---	-----

### ADDENDUM 7

Guidelines for Preparing Words of Remembrance .....	xxvii
---	-------

### ADDENDUM 8

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Instruction <i>Ad resurgendum cum Christo</i> regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation .....	xxix
---	------

# SACRAMENTAL POLICIES

## KEY POLICY STATEMENTS

- “As actions of Christ and the Church, they (the Sacraments) are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity and thus contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion. Accordingly, in the celebration of the Sacraments the sacred ministers and the other members of the Christian faithful must use the greatest veneration and necessary diligence.” (*CIC*, c. 840).
  - o Sacraments express the mystery-filled union of Christ and the Church.
  - o Sacraments also comprise the major portion of the liturgy.
- While the Sacraments do effect individual sanctification, they always have a communal and ecclesial aspect. Baptism incorporates us into the People of God, imprints an indelible spiritual mark (character) with a sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. (*Cf. Lumen Gentium*, 31). Confirmation “strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith.” (*CIC*, c. 879). The Eucharist completes and fulfills the initiation begun at Baptism. Penance reconciles the sinner to the Church community even as it restores one personally to the life of grace. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick gives spiritual purification and strengthening of the soul to one in the face grave illness and prays that they might unite their sufferings to that of Christ for the good of the Church. “Two other Sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God. ... Those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders are consecrated in Christ’s name ‘to feed the Church by the word and grace of God.’ On their part, ‘Christian spouses are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special Sacrament.’” (*CCC*, nos. 1534-1535).
- Parishes should embrace actions which will enhance this communal aspect of the Sacraments

such as: parental involvement, adult education courses, announcements in parish bulletins for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and occasions for the communal anointing for the sick.

- All policies and procedures in this document find their origin in Universal norms and legislation and are promulgated by the Bishop for the entire Diocese of Rochester and for all clergy, religious and laity engaged in pastoral ministry in this Diocese. They are to be followed in totality.
- Previously issued Diocesan policies for the Administration of Sacraments and Christian Funerals, including preparation for First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation, are replaced by these instructions.
- Provisions of the *Code of Canon Law*, decrees and instructions of the Holy See, of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and of diocesan legislation in accordance with these policies retain their binding force.
- “In celebrating the Sacraments the liturgical books approved by competent authority are to be observed faithfully; accordingly, no one is to add, omit, or alter anything in them on one’s own authority.” (*CIC*, c. 846).
- “The minister is to celebrate the Sacraments according to the minister’s own rite.” (*CIC*, c. 846).
- Wherever permission or delegation of the Bishop is necessary, such permission or delegation must be sought and obtained in writing.
- All the faithful obtain their proper parish by means of their domicile or quasi domicile. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 102). All laity should be urged to attend their proper parish; however, with good reason they may transfer from their proper parish to another parish of their choice.
- Recorded proof of valid Baptism is required before admission to preparation for First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage.
- Because the parish unit is so important, the ordinary place for the celebration of Baptism is in one’s proper parish church. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 857, §2).
- Ultimately, the universal Church is locally evident and personally experienced in and through the parish. For every Catholic, participation in parish life is both a right and a duty.
- Ideally, participation in parish life includes a variety of actions – registration as members, contribution of time, talent and financial support of parish activities, apostolic service to the needy in the parish and its larger communities, cooperation in the religious education of all family members, regular sharing in the sacramental life and worship of the proper parish community.
- Membership in a parish is often a key factor in problems attending to the administration of the Sacraments. Much concern is expressed about the quality of membership. With reference to “practicing Catholic,” these ideal expectations cannot solely be used as the maximal criteria as a basis for celebrating or delaying Sacraments. Pastoral leadership will need to have a Christ-like understanding for people who do not always or even regularly meet these ideals, and need assistance / encouragement to strive for them.
- In some instances, however, a Sacrament will not be able to be given at the present time, either because of some obstacle such as censure, “after the imposition or declaration of the penalty” (*CIC*, c. 915), or because an individual is “obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin” (*CIC*, c. 915), or because the pastoral judgment is reached that a person or a family is not yet

sufficiently prepared for the Sacrament or committed to the faith. This critical moment can be an occasion for healing and renewal; or it can become a cause for irreparable separation. Then, the parish priest/administrator should explain that the Sacrament requested is **only deferred** until the obstacle is removed or sufficient preparation is accomplished and evidence of faith is presented.

- Persons who are developmentally disabled, who have severe learning disabilities, or who have other handicaps should be made to feel welcome in the parish programming and have their needs met. Whenever possible, they should participate in regular liturgies and activities, and they should be included in parish sacramental celebrations.
  - o No matter how disabled a person may be, he or she can and should be baptized and confirmed.
  - o Church law presumes that the disabled person who has sufficient use of reason can and should receive the Sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick.
- The model for sacramental catechesis is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. (Cf. *NDC*, chapter 5, no. 35, D).

---

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION/ SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION/RECORD KEEPING

---

- “Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesial function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the Sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction...” (*CIC*, c. 843, §2).
- As noted in the *Key Policy Statements*, in some cases, a Sacrament cannot be given at the present time, either because of some obstacle such as censure, “after the imposition or declaration of the penalty” (*CIC*, c. 915), or because an individual is “obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin” (*CIC*, c. 915), or because the pastoral judgment is reached that a person or a family is not yet sufficiently prepared for the sacrament or committed to the faith. This critical moment can be an occasion for healing and renewal; or it can become a cause for irreparable separation. Then, the parish priest/administrator should explain that the Sacrament requested is **only delayed** until the obstacle is removed or sufficient preparation is accomplished and evidence of faith is presented. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 843; c. 868, §1, 2; c. 915; c. 1007).
  - o Preparation needs to take into consideration the:
    - 1) individual needs and prior experience of the person and their family;
    - 2) degree of foundational catechesis; and
    - 3) current involvement in the faith community.
- Similar to all other religious education programs, sacramental preparation programs of Baptism, First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation are parish-based and should make use of textbooks that are listed in the USCCB *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series* as being in keeping with the teachings contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
- The *National Directory of Catechesis* states, “Dioceses and parishes should present sacramental catechesis that:
  - o is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith;
  - o is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God;

- o presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit;
  - o is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized;
  - o is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith;
  - o involves parents in the preparation of their children for the Sacraments;
  - o is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program;
  - o focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each Sacrament; and
  - o enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the Sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebration.” (NDC, 35-B).
- Parishes should take every opportunity to provide ongoing faith formation for adults by means of instructional series, bulletin inserts, Penance services with individual confession and absolution, retreat experiences, family programs for Advent and Lent, parent meetings, and all other means of helping the adults grow in faith as they lead their children into a deeper relationship with God and the Church.
  - Parishes are required to maintain registers of Baptism, Marriage, and Deaths. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 535, §1).
  - By these Policies, parishes in the Diocese of Rochester must also maintain Confirmation registers on a prospective basis.
    - o For the recording of Baptism, the *Code of Canon Law* requires:
      - name of baptized;
      - minister;
      - parent(s);
      - sponsor(s) (godparent(s));
      - witness, if any;
      - place; and
      - date of conferral of Baptism, date and place of birth. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 877).
    - o For the recording of Confirmation, the *Code of Canon Law* requires:
      - name of those confirmed;
      - minister;
      - parent(s);
      - sponsor;
      - place; and
      - date of Confirmation. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 895).
    - o For the recording of Marriage, include:
      - names of the spouses;
      - name of the priest/deacon who officiated;
      - names of the two witnesses;
      - place and date of the celebration (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1121, §1); and
      - notations about any dispensations/permission granted, fact of delegation, and any information regarding a decree of nullity or dissolution of the bond.
    - o The Death register should include at least:
      - name of the deceased;



- 
- date and place of death;
  - date and place of funeral services;
  - name of the presiding priest/deacon; and
  - date and place of burial.
- “In the baptismal register are also to be noted Confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of Marriage, ...of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a baptismal certificate.” (*CIC*, c. 535, §2).
    - o After the conferral of Confirmation and the celebration of Marriage, the pastor/ administrator must inform each parish of Baptism promptly so that the proper record may be made.
    - o Catechumens are to be recorded in the Baptism record book.
    - o For Christians received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, the fact of reception should be recorded in the Baptismal register of the parish. The original information about the valid, non-Catholic baptism is listed (name, date of birth, parents, date, place, and minister, etc.) and the following annotation is added: “Received into full communion with the Catholic Church on (*date*) by (*name of minister*).” Since this Rite often includes Confirmation, this must be recorded as well.
  - Although not required by law, parishes and institutions sometimes maintain records for the Sacraments of First Communion and the Anointing of the Sick. Priests who administer the Anointing of the Sick in hospitals and health care facilities should verify if an Anointing of the Sick registry exists on location and, if appropriate, may record such sacramental administrations accordingly.
  - Particular care should be taken to register Baptisms, Confirmations, and Marriages which take place away from the parish church or in institutions. (E.g. in a hospital, in a college chapel, etc.). The notation is usually to be made in the register of the parish in whose territory the institution is located. Regional Confirmation ceremonies are recorded at the parish of membership.
  - Before preparation begins for First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage – **verify Baptism** – obtain a copy of a recent baptismal certificate if the candidate has not been baptized in your parish; if it is not possible to locate a certificate, procure an affidavit. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 876).
  - With regard to **adopted children**, parishes must follow the procedures related to canon 877 of the *Code of Canon Law* and the complementary norms issued by the USCCB.
    - o For children baptized after their adoption is finalized, the following information shall be entered in the register:
      - the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
      - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
      - the date and place of birth;
      - the names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
      - the place and date of the Baptism;
      - the name of the minister performing the Baptism; and
      - the fact of adoption but not the names of the natural parents.
-

- o Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other Baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate.
  - o For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the Baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:
    - parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
    - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
    - the child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added; and
    - a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.
  - o Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of Baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the Sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate.
  - o For future ease in reference, and to afford what may often be the only possibility of reference after the adoption has been finalized, a Baptismal entry for the adopted child can be made in the Baptismal register of the adoptive parents' parish, citing the date and location of the original Baptismal record, and listing only the name of the adoptive parents, and the date and place of birth.
- Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted. (Approved by the NCCB Administrative Committee, September 12, 2000).



# SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Initiation into the Church is celebrated by stages in the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. Through them the recipient is incorporated into the Church and brought to a full sharing of the corporate life of the People of God.

## 1. BAPTISM

In obedience to the Savior's command to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and in fidelity to his teaching concerning the necessity of this Sacrament for salvation (cf. Mark 16:16; *CIC*, c. 849), the Church ceaselessly promotes and guards the dignity of Christian Baptism and all the rites which surround its reverent administration.

At the moment of Baptism, the new Christian is washed of the stain of original sin, marked by an indelible character, imbued with the gift of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues, received into a relationship of Divine adoption, and incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church.

Consequently, Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the whole Sacramental economy of the Church. (Cf. *CCC*, no. 1213; *CIC*, c. 849).

### 1.1 CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM

- In celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism, "The term children or infants refer to those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore cannot profess personal faith." (*RBC*, no. 1). "What is prescribed in the canons on Baptism of an adult is applicable to all who are no longer infants but have attained the use of reason." (*CIC*, c. 852, §1).
- They are baptized in the faith of the Church, a faith proclaimed for them by their parents and godparents who represent both the local Church and the whole society of saints and believers. (Cf. *RBC*, no. 2).

- As for the time of Baptism, the first consideration is the spiritual welfare of the child.
- “Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks.” (*CIC*, c. 867, §1). “An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay.” (*CIC*, c. 867, §2).
  - o Although Baptism can be celebrated on any day, it is nevertheless recommended that it be celebrated ordinarily on Sunday, or, if possible, at the Easter Vigil. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 856).
  - o As a rule, an infant is to be baptized in the parish church of the parents unless a just cause suggests otherwise. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 857, §2).
  - o The Rite may take place at a special celebration of the Eucharist or at a regularly scheduled parish Sunday Mass. It may also be celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word.
- An infant or small child whose parents intended Baptism but who dies before receiving the sacrament may be given ecclesiastical funeral rites, according to the Rite for “Funerals for Children who Died Before Baptism.” (*CIC*, c. 1183, §2).
- To fulfill the true meaning of the Sacrament, children must later be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized. Because of this, the faith of the parents is a critical pastoral concern since they are accepting the responsibility of forming their children in the practice of the faith. (Cf. *RBC*, no. 3).

## 1.2 PARENTS

---

- All Parents are to be interviewed before a child may be baptized.
  - o The purpose of this initial interview is to help parents come to an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of Baptism, the significance of this event in the faith-life of their family, and to help them celebrate it in the best possible way. It is an opportunity for evangelization and catechesis.
  - o The interview should be in a setting conducive to discussion and exchange, and not over the phone.
  - o The interview should discern in the parents at least a minimal effort to live the Christian life including:
    - a well founded belief of the parents’ intention and capacity to raise the child in the Catholic faith;
    - acceptance of the doctrine of the Creed;
    - regular participation in the worship of the Church, especially faithful, weekly attendance at Holy Mass;
    - evidence of personal prayer life;
    - a concern to show charity to others; and
    - a life-style influenced by belief in the Lord Jesus and a commitment to the way of life to which He invites us.
  - o Serious lack of the above elements would constitute legitimate reason for **delaying** the Baptism of the child. “There must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such hope is altogether lacking, the Baptism is to be delayed... after the parents have been advised about the reason.” (*CIC*, c. 868, §2). ***Baptism is to be deferred, not refused.***
  - o The purpose of the delay is to allow time for the parish priest/administrator/parish staff to assist the parents to come to a fuller understanding of their own faith-life in the Church, their responsibilities relative to the faith-life of their child, and their relationship and responsibility to the parish community.

- o It is the obligation of the parish to offer these parents opportunities for adequate development of their faith.
- o A priest/deacon will not baptize a child whose Baptism has been delayed for legitimate reasons in another parish.
- o Some consultation with the pastor/administrator who has delayed the Baptism is in order to bring the situation to a resolution. Recourse may have to be made to the Chancellor.

### 1.3 PREPARATION

- The parents of infants to be baptized "... are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it. The pastor personally or through others is to take care that the parents are properly instructed through both pastoral advice and common prayer, bringing several families together and, where possible, visiting them." (*CIC*, c. 851, §2).
  - o It is the duty of the priest, assisted by others, to prepare families for the Baptism of their children and to help them in the task of Christian formation which they have undertaken. It is the duty of the Bishop to coordinate such pastoral efforts in the Diocese with the help of priests, deacons and well-formed laity.
- Reasonable flexibility and pastoral prudence are advised in the matter of preparation programs.
  - o Parents should be provided with suitable means such as books, letters addressed to them, and catechetical materials designed for families and based upon the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Cf. *RBC*, 5§1).
  - o The parish program of preparation should be directed toward enabling parents to show a genuine commitment to the faith and to the Church on their own behalf and on behalf of the child.
  - o Parents must be informed of the options available to them in the celebration of Baptism, as indicated in the Rite. They are also to be involved in the planning of the celebration.
  - o It is better if the preparation begins before the child is born, but it may begin after.

### 1.4 SPONSORS (GODPARENTS)

- Those who are to undertake the function of sponsor (godparent) are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it, assuming all live within reasonable distances of the parish. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 851 §2).
- The sponsor (godparent), together with the parents, presents an infant for Baptism and helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with Baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 872).
- Prerequisites for Sponsors:
  - o "There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each." (*CIC*, c. 873).
  - o To take on the function of sponsor, a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function and "must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause." (*CIC*, c. 874, §1, 2°).
  - o The sponsor/godparent be a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) who leads a life of faith, is not bound by any canonical penalty, and is not the father or mother of the one to be baptized. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 3°-5°).

- o “A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness to the Baptism.” (*CIC*, c. 874, §2).
- o These norms also apply to sponsors involved in the RCIA.

## **1.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT**

---

- Whenever possible, families should be combined for the celebration of the Sacrament so that its communal, ecclesial nature is more evident.
- After Baptism it is the responsibility of the parents and sponsors (godparents) to assist the child to know God, whose adopted child he/she has become, to prepare the child to receive Confirmation and participate in the Holy Eucharist. In this duty they are to be helped by the pastor by suitable means. (*Cf. RBC*, 5.5).

## 2. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

“The most august Sacrament is the Most Holy Eucharist in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church continually 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 through the ages, is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it.” (*CIC*, c. 897).

### 2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- “The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this Sacrament most devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with the highest adoration. In explaining the doctrine about this Sacrament, pastors of souls are to teach the faithful diligently about this obligation.” (*CIC*, c. 898).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is the action of Christ himself and the Church. In it, Christ the Lord, through the ministry of the priest, offers himself, substantially present under the species of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful united with his offering.” (*CIC*, c. 899, §1).
- “In the Eucharistic gathering the people of God are called together with the Bishop or, under his authority, a presbyter presiding and acting in the person of Christ. All the faithful who are present, whether clerics or laity, unite together by participating in their own way according to the diversity of orders and liturgical functions.” (*CIC*, c. 899, §2).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is to be organized in such a way that all those participating receive from it the many fruits for which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice.” (*CIC*, c. 899, §3).
- Hierarchical roles must be acknowledged so no confusion about proper function ensues. (*Cf. Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 53).
- The conciliar Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* encourages the faithful to take part in the Eucharistic liturgy not “as strangers or silent spectators,” but as participants “in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, actively and devoutly.” (no. 156). Active participation by the laity is to be encouraged.

- At the same time, it should be noted that: “Active participation in the Eucharistic liturgy can hardly be expected if one approaches it superficially, without an examination of his or her life. This inner disposition can be fostered, for example, by recollection and silence for at least a few moments before the beginning of the liturgy, by fasting, and when necessary, by Sacramental confession. A heart reconciled to God makes genuine participation possible.” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 55).
- The Church teaches that the faithful have a serious obligation to participate in the celebration of the Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. (Cf. *CIC*, cc. 1246-1248; *CCC*, nos. 1389, 2180-2182).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise; in which case the celebration must be in a fitting place.” (*CIC*, c. 932, §1).
  - To celebrate Mass in a private chapel, outdoors or in any public place, the permission of the Bishop is required. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1228).
  - With the approval of the proper pastor, in consultation with the Vicar General or Chancellor, Mass may be celebrated in a private home for a family or small group.
- Bishops, priests, deacons, religious, catechists, teachers and parents all share a sacred responsibility of leading the faithful and themselves to a deeper awareness of the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the People of God. This responsibility includes instruction in the prayers and rubrics of the Mass; training of those who serve as acolytes, lectors, gift-bearers, ushers, musicians, etc; encouragement of Eucharistic devotion, e.g. exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, Eucharistic Benediction, Forty Hours Devotion, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Sacred Heart; and catechesis on the importance of God’s word in the liturgy. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 942-44; *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 67-68).

---

## 2.2 FIRST EUCHARIST

### 2.2.1 Candidates

- Ordinarily, candidates for First Penance and First Eucharist have participated in regular religious education or attend Catholic School for the year preceding enrollment for preparation for First Eucharist. (In other words, these children were part of a formal first grade faith formation experience.)
- Candidates for First Eucharist will have made sacramental confession before receiving this Sacrament in accordance with canon 914 of the *Code of Canon Law* which states: “It is primarily the duty of parents, and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of the pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible.” (*CIC*, c. 914; *CCC*, no. 1457).
- Candidates are to have the use of reason, which is canonically presumed at age seven. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 97, §2; c. 913).

### 2.2.2 Parents

- Parents are to be carefully instructed on the meaning and theology of the Most Holy Eucharist.

- Parents, having chosen to begin the process of Christian initiation in the lives of their children through Baptism, are the primary teachers in the preparation of the celebration of First Communion.

### **2.2.3 Preparation for the Sacrament**

- The catechesis and celebration of First Eucharist is to be separated from that of First Penance, and these Sacraments shall ordinarily take place when a child is in grade two.
- The administration of the Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the Body of Christ with faith and devotion. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 913, §1).
- In danger of death, the minimal requirements for the reception of First Eucharist are present when a child expresses the desire for the Eucharist and is able to distinguish it from ordinary bread. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 913, §2).
- An interview to help determine readiness to prepare for First Eucharist is desirable. This interview establishes a desire for the Eucharist and an understanding of the reality of the Real Presence: Jesus Christ is present body, blood, soul and divinity in the Most Holy Eucharist.
- The immediate preparation for First Eucharist is distinct, in programming and content, from the catechesis for First Penance; and separate from both Catholic schools and religious education programs.
  - The careful preparation required is more than the intellectual preparation; it includes formative experiences in faith such as are promoted by attendance at weekly Mass even before the children receive the Most Holy Eucharist.
  - Every parish has the responsibility of assisting the parents in this role by providing parish programs that include both the theological understanding of the Eucharist and the practical preparation of children to participate in the celebration of it.
  - Texts for First Eucharist must be on the USCCB *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series* to be used to assist in this preparation process.
- Immediate preparation (of four to six weeks) for full participation in the Eucharist should include:
  - Familiarity with, and opportunities to participate in, the whole Eucharistic rite as the central act of worship;
  - Instruction in the options permitted by the Church for the reverent reception of the consecrated hosts and precious blood;
  - A deepening awareness of the activity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives;
  - The gifts of Jesus in his life, death and resurrection; and
  - An understanding of the Church's faith in Christ's continued presence in the Eucharist, as well as in the Christian assembly and his Word.
- Any fee charged for preparation for First Eucharist should not exceed the cost of consumable materials and/or the cost of retreats. No person can be denied the opportunity to prepare for the Sacrament because of an inability to pay.

### **2.2.4 Celebration of the Sacrament**

- It is recommended that reception of First Eucharist take place within a family context within one of the Lord's Day celebrations of the Mass.



- The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental Confession and absolution. “Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a Priest and never outside the celebration of Mass.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 86).
- Apart from exceptional cases, it is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered on Holy Thursday of the Lord’s Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist.
- “Children who have not attained the age of reason, or those whom the parish priest has determined to be insufficiently prepared should not come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 87).
- The parish should provide continued formation in the Eucharistic mystery, and opportunities for children and families to celebrate the Eucharist often together.

### 2.3 RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

---

- “A person who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist can receive it a second time on the same day only within the Eucharistic celebration in which the person participates, without prejudice to the prescript of canon 921, §2 concerning Viaticum.” (*CIC*, c. 917).
- “A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.” (*CIC*, c. 919, §1).
  - “The elderly, the infirm and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.” (*CIC*, c. 919, §3).
- Catholics conscious of mortal sin must celebrate the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 916; *CCC*, no. 1385).
- Particular attention is to be given to **canon 844** which establishes the norms for the *communicatio in sacris*, participation in liturgical worship or in the administration of the Sacraments by persons belonging to different Christian denominations that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church. A general principal is established (§1) that considers three situations of fact (§§ 2-4) and regulates the lawful exercise of the normative activity in a particular area (§5). The canon reads as follows:
  - “§1. Catholic ministers administer the Sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone, without prejudice to the prescripts of §2, §3, and §4 of canon 844, and canon 861, §2.”
  - “§2. Whenever necessity requires it or true spiritual advantage suggests it, and provided that danger of error or of indifferentism is avoided, the Christian faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister are permitted to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these Sacraments are valid.” (*CIC*, c. 844).
  - “§3. Catholic ministers administer the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick licitly to members of Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church if they seek such on their own accord and are properly disposed. This is also valid for members of other Churches which in the judgment of the



Apostolic See are in the same condition in regard to the Sacraments as these Eastern Churches.” (CIC, c. 844).

- o “§4. If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same Sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these Sacraments and are properly disposed.” (CIC, c. 844).
- o “§5. For the cases mentioned in §2, §3, and §4, the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops is not to issue general norms except after consultation at least with the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.” (CIC, c. 844).
- Communion under both species may be permitted when there is no danger of the sacred species being profaned. However, “the chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ’s faithful where there is such a large number of communicants that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist.... The same is true wherever access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange..., or wherever there is not an adequate number of sacred ministers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion with proper formation, or where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 102).
  - o Christ’s faithful may wish to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 91).
  - o The option of receiving the Eucharist on the tongue or in the hand is the choice of the communicant, except when pastoral necessity requires that Holy Communion be given on the tongue. Also, one must be conscious of preserving the Blessed Sacrament from profanation. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 92).
  - o Consuming the Precious Blood from the chalice is also an option and must never be forced upon the people.
  - o If Holy Communion is to be administered by intinction, “...The Priest takes a host, dips it partly into the chalice, and showing it, says, *Corpus et Sanguis Christi (the Body and Blood of Christ)*. The communicant responds *Amen* and receives the Sacrament in the mouth from the priest and then withdraws.” (*GIRM*, 287). Holy Communion by intinction requires the use of a communion plate (paten). (Cf. *GIRM*, 287).
  - o “The communicant, including the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction.” (*USCCB Norms for Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the USA*, no. 50).

## 2.4 THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may be used only when pastoral necessity and insufficiency of ordained ministers require that help be obtained for distribution of Holy Communion. (Cf. CIC, c. 910, §2; c. 230, §3; ADDENDUM 1).

- “‘The only minister who can confect the Sacrament of the Eucharist *in persona Christi* is a validly ordained Priest.’ Hence, the name ‘minister of the Eucharist’ belongs properly to the Priest alone. Moreover, also by reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon, to whom it belongs therefore to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ’s faithful during the celebration of Mass. In this way their ministerial office in the Church is fully and accurately brought to light, and the sign value of the Sacrament is made complete.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 154).

- “In addition to the ordinary ministers there is the formally instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass. If, moreover, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay member of Christ’s faithful may also be delegated by the diocesan bishop, in accordance with the norm of law, for one occasion or for a specified time, and an appropriate formula of blessing may be used for the occasion. This act of appointment, however, does not necessarily take a liturgical form, nor, if it does take a liturgical form, should it resemble sacred Ordination in any way. Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 155).
- “This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not ‘special minister of Holy Communion’ nor ‘extraordinary minister of the Eucharist,’ nor ‘special minister of the Eucharist,’ by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 156).
- “If there is usually present a sufficient number of sacred ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be appointed. Indeed, in such circumstances, those who may have already been appointed to this ministry should not exercise it. The practice of those priests is reprobated who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 157).
- “Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the priest and deacon are lacking, when the priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged. This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation, considering the circumstances and culture of the place, is not at all a sufficient reason.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 158).
- “It is never allowed for the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to assign anyone else to administer the Eucharist, as for example a parent or spouse or child of the sick person who is the communicant.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 159).
- “Let the diocesan bishop give renewed consideration to the practice in recent years regarding this matter, and if circumstances call for it, let him correct it or define it more precisely. Where such extraordinary ministers are appointed in a widespread manner out of true necessity, the diocesan bishop should issue special norms by which he determines the manner in which this function is to be carried out in accordance with the law, bearing in mind the tradition of the Church.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 160).
- The need for such extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be presented to the Bishop through the Chancellor by the local pastor/administrator or by the chaplain of an institution.
  - The Bishop’s permission is to be sought to select and prepare a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. (Cf. ADDENDUM 1).
  - An excessive number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not be requested.
- The invitation to serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion must not be offered until a pastor/administrator/chaplain has received permission to invite a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

- Training for the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will consist of at least two sessions, consisting of spiritual, theological and practical preparation. (Cf. ADDENDUM 1).
- At the completion of training, candidates complete the biographical data and sign the Profession of Faith in the presence of his or her pastor/administrator. These are submitted by the pastor/administrator with a request that the candidates be officially missioned by the Bishop. (Cf. ADDENDUM 1).
- A letter is sent by the Bishop to the pastor/administrator/chaplain and accompanied by individual cards of authorization for each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
  - Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, designated for either the parish or institution are appointed for renewable terms of three years.

### **2.4.1 Requirements for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

- These men and women must:
  - have completed their sixteenth year, be fully initiated, lead a life of faith in keeping with the function to be undertaken, and if married, be validly married within the Church and not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
  - sign the *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*, (cf. ADDENDUM 1) renewing his/her belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. A copy of this *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion* is to be filed at the Chancery Office;
  - participate in training which includes a theological discussion of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as well as training on the appropriate posture and deportment of the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion during the Mass; and
  - have a letter of authorization from the Bishop.

### **2.4.2 Missioning**

- A formal recognition of this ministry may be celebrated according to the rite found in the *Book of Blessings*. This ceremony may be held in each parish after candidates complete the training.
  - Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are assigned for their own parish and are normally not to exercise this ministry outside their parish.
  - In particular and singular instances (such as on the occasion of a family wedding or funeral), when a true need exists, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may exercise their ministry at other parishes within the Diocese with the approval of the pastor/administrator. The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion should identify himself or herself to the pastor/administrator before Mass by showing the Diocesan issued card.
  - When an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion discontinues this ministry for whatever reason, the Diocesan Chancery Office is to be notified.

### **2.4.3 Responsibilities**

- The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at Mass:
  - Approaches the altar *only after* the priest receives Communion. (Cf. *GIRM*, 162).
  - First receives Communion from the celebrant, or concelebrant, or deacon and then receives the sacred vessel from the celebrant, or concelebrant, or deacon for distribution to the people.

- o Holds the host or chalice before the communicant at a level that makes eye contact between the communicant and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, if possible.
  - o Offers the Body of Christ to the communicant in the hand or on the tongue, as the communicant indicates.
  - o Says only, “*The Body of Christ*” if offering the host, or only “*The Blood of Christ*” if offering the chalice.
  - o Wipes the rim of the chalice with a purificator after each communicant and turns the chalice slightly for the next communicant.
  - o Properly consumes any remaining Precious Blood at the altar.
  - o Reverently handles and consumes any dropped hosts – spilled Precious Blood must be attended to with water which is then poured in the sacrarium.
  - o Is attentive to the presence of persons in the congregation who have special needs and adapts accordingly to give them access to Holy Communion.
  - o Returns the ciborium/chalice to the altar for purification by the priest/deacon either at the altar or credence table. The priest or deacon brings the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle.
  - o Participates in ongoing training throughout their service as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- Some extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may serve the homebound, ill or those in the hospital. (Cf. ADDENDUM 1). These extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion:
    - o Receive a pyx containing the Body of Christ for distribution to the home or hospital bound, maintaining reverence for the Blessed Sacrament which is brought to the sick without interruption or unnecessary conversation en route to the person’s residence.
    - o Makes himself or herself aware of the situation of each of the sick persons to be visited and is prepared for any special needs or circumstances.
    - o Receive a copy of *The Pastoral Care of the Sick*, an orientation for its usage, and follows the appropriate ritual depending on the circumstances of the sick person(s).
    - o Receive a theological context for the significance of this ministry.
    - o Have a period of mentoring with a minister experienced in this care.

## 2.5 PREACHING

---

- Ordinarily, the celebrant should preach the homily which immediately follows after the Gospel. (Cf. *GIRM*, 66).
  - o Particular attention and proper preparation must be given to the homily.
  - o Among the forms of preaching, the homily, which is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or deacon, is preeminent. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 767, §1).
  - o “...the homily on account of its importance and its nature is reserved to the Priest or Deacon during Mass. As regards other forms of preaching, if necessity demands it in particular circumstances, or if usefulness suggests it in special cases, lay members of Christ’s faithful may be allowed to preach in a church or in an oratory outside Mass in accordance with the norm of law. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 766, 767, §1). This may be done only on account of a scarcity of sacred ministers in certain places, in order to meet the need, and it may not be transformed from an exceptional measure into an ordinary practice, nor may it be understood as an authentic form of the advancement of the laity.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 161; Cf. ADDENDUM 3).

- o “All must remember besides that the faculty for giving such permission belongs to the local Ordinary, and this as regards individual instances; this permission is not the competence of anyone else...” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 161).
- o In Masses during which the children are dismissed for the Liturgy of the Word, a competent adult may address the children after the reading of the Gospel in a separate, but not distant room. (Cf. *Directory of Masses with Children*, CDW, no. 17).

## 2.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS

---

- The Diocese of Rochester will continue to monitor and to evaluate requests for the celebration of Holy Mass according to the *extraordinary form*, which is the rite contained in the 1962 *Roman Missal*. This evaluation will be done in full accordance with the *Apostolic Letter, Summorum Pontificum*, promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, on July 7, 2007. In this regard, please refer to ADDENDUM 4, which contains the text of *Summorum Pontificum*; and the *Accompanying Letter* of Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of the World on this subject.
- In the implementation of the *extraordinary form*, it should be noted that due to a serious shortage of priests, the first duty of the Bishop and the pastors is to make the Eucharistic Sacrifice available to as many people as possible, using the rite that is understood by the majority of the faithful in attendance. In this regard, Pope Benedict XVI notes: “It is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.” (*Accompanying Letter* of Pope Benedict XVI). When this fundamental need is met, attention can be given to significant numbers of the faithful who seek the celebration of the *extraordinary form* of the Eucharistic Liturgy.
- However, it is always permissible for parts of the Mass to be sung in Latin, such as the Gloria, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, as well as appropriate Latin hymns from the Church’s vast treasury of liturgical music and Gregorian Chant. This use of the Latin language in the Sacred Liturgy can provide an appropriate bridge between the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* forms of celebrating the Divine Mysteries of our Redemption in Christ.
- The Diocese will make known the locations of places where the *extraordinary form* of Divine Worship will be celebrated as individual parishes indicate their willingness and ability to celebrate this rite. To celebrate the *extraordinary form* of the Sacred Liturgy with the proper reverence and honor it merits, careful preparation is needed. Thus, priests able to celebrate the *extraordinary form* must be familiar with its rubrics. Also, servers must be properly trained, as well as choirs and cantors.
- Prior to scheduling any public celebrations of the Latin Mass in either the *ordinary form* or the *extraordinary form*, the Chancery Office is to be consulted. Particular attention must be given when the Latin Mass will be celebrated at a normally scheduled Lord’s Day Mass.





## 3. CONFIRMATION

In Baptism, people are incorporated into Christ and become part of God's people. This first Sacrament makes us a "new creation through water and the Holy Spirit." (*Christian Initiation*, Introduction, no. 2). By the signing at Confirmation they are strengthened in the image of the Lord and are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This renewed gift of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation endows the candidates "with special strength" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11) to speak the Gospel and bear witness for Christ in the world. This coming of the Holy Spirit "conforms believers more fully to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of His Body in faith and love." (*Rite of Confirmation*, no. 2).

Confirmation brings to fullness that life in the Holy Spirit into which God's sons and daughters were first initiated at Baptism.

### 3.1 CANDIDATES

- To celebrate Confirmation, baptized candidates, if they have the use of reason, must be in a state of grace, properly instructed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (Cf. *RC*, 12, 13).
- Candidates who are in some way developmentally disabled should have catechesis appropriate to their capacity and then celebrate Confirmation with the support of their family and faith community.
- Adults who wish to be confirmed must receive adequate preparation for the reception of the Sacrament. This preparation is the responsibility of the pastor/administrator or those who cooperate with them in providing sacramental preparation.
- "If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage." (*CIC*, c. 1065, §1).
- Catholic school students should be referred to their proper parish.
- No one should be forced to celebrate the Sacrament. However, parents by word, example and participation in the life of the Church are a true support and encouragement to their children.

### 3.2 PARENTS

- The faithful are obliged to receive this Sacrament at the proper time. Parents and shepherds of souls, especially pastors, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the Sacrament and approach the Sacrament at the appropriate time. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 890).
- Parents are to be carefully instructed throughout the year(s) on the meaning and theology of the Sacrament.

## 3.3 PREPARATION

---

### 3.3.1 Proximate Preparation

- Preparation for reception of the Sacrament is the shared responsibility of the faith community. Therefore, the community is intimately involved in the preparation for Confirmation through serving as sponsors, catechists, prayer partners, and assuring that adequate opportunities for on-going formation in faith development and the exercise of apostolic life exist in the faith community. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 9).
- Proximate preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process beginning in the fall of the eighth grade. Each year should include 25 hours of classroom instructions, as well as opportunities for retreat and service.
  - Proximate preparation should parallel the period of the catechumenate of the RCIA including opportunities for candidates to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel message, an integral and systematic catechesis; for deepening their relationship with the Christian community; for exercising the Christian apostolate; and for participating in the prayer life of the community. (Based on *NDC*, 35.D; *RCIA* no. 75).
- Content and Process for Proximate Preparation for Confirmation should include the following:
  - The Catechetical Topics (Cf. *ADDENDUM 5*);
  - Liturgy, Scripture, and one day retreats;
  - Attendance at Holy Mass should be considered as the heart of all programs and the source and summit to and from which programs acquire their relevance and importance;
  - Components of Christian Service experiences of reasonable hours directed and evaluated by a parish staff member (Cf. *ADDENDUM 5*);
  - Regular meetings of all candidates throughout the year;
  - Information on the requirements for and role of sponsors in the process;
  - Formation of the parents throughout the year(s) on the meaning and theology of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and offered opportunities to grow in their own faith; and
  - The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be an integral part of the program.
- Texts for Confirmation must be on the *USCCB Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series*. Other approved supplemental texts bearing an imprimatur may be used with permission.
- If any fee needs to be charged for Confirmation preparation, it should not exceed the cost of consumable materials and/or the cost of retreats. No person can be denied the opportunity to prepare for the Sacrament because of an inability to provide the fee.

### 3.3.2 Immediate Preparation

- At the end of the process of proximate preparation, evaluations for readiness to celebrate Confirmation should attend to all proximate preparation components and the candidate's own personal development. Readiness for Confirmation shall not be judged solely on the basis of only one program component. (e.g. the service project, the retreat). However, regular attendance at Holy Mass must be an essential component of the program.
- Near the completion of the second year, as part of the 25 hours of classroom instruction referenced above, candidates begin immediate preparation for Confirmation only after a careful, personal screening of their faith understanding, life values, and parish-life participation.



- Candidates cooperate in interviews with parish clergy and faith formation staff. These help all parties to know each other personally and reflect upon the candidates' self-understanding of their faith and their desire to seek Confirmation.
  - o Regular participation in the faith community, willingness to participate in the mission of the community in an age appropriate way, and the intention to continue to be formed in the faith are all part of determining readiness.
  - o Candidates are asked why they wish to be confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, and how they have responded to the call to discipleship, and the challenge of the Gospel.
- No unnecessary obstacles should interfere with the candidate's reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. All programs should strive to support the candidates in nurturing their faith centered in the Most Holy Eucharist.
- Immediate Preparation for Confirmation should include:
  - o The primary context for the period of immediate preparation (4-6 weeks before Confirmation) is prayer and reflection, and parallels the period of Purification and Enlightenment. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 138).
  - o Immediate preparation is concerned with providing candidates with the opportunity to reflect on the presence and power of God in their lives and the difference that has made for them, prayerful reflection on the challenges of life and the gift of the Holy Spirit that strengthens candidates throughout their lives in Christ.
  - o Immediate preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament, preceded by adequate foundational catechesis, is distinct from regular ongoing catechetical formation (i.e. Catholic school or religious education).
- Content & Process for Immediate Preparation should include:
  - o Understanding of Confirmation;
  - o Understanding the Role of the Holy Spirit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit;
  - o Understanding of Prayer;
  - o Understanding of Christian Lifestyles, and the life of a Disciple on Mission; and
  - o A day of reflection/retreat (5 hours).

### 3.4 SPONSORS

- Prior to the actual selection of a sponsor, both candidates and parents should be instructed on the role and responsibility of a sponsor. This catechesis should occur early in the two-year parish program for sacramental preparation.
  - o It is desirable that the sponsor (godparent) at Baptism be chosen as sponsor for Confirmation, if they still meet the qualifications. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 893, §2; *RC*, no. 5).
  - o Sponsors who are not members of the parish should provide a letter from their pastor attesting to their suitability to serve as sponsor.
- Prerequisites for Sponsors:
  - o To take on the function of sponsor, a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function and must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 2°).
  - o The sponsor/godparent should be a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) who leads a life of faith, is not bound by any canonical penalty, and is not the father or mother of the one to be confirmed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 3°-5°).

### 3.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

---

- Confirmation ceremonies are celebrated in the fall and the spring each year throughout the Diocese of Rochester.
- The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, in collaboration with the Office of the Bishop, will schedule the dates for the Confirmation ceremonies. Additionally, each year the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis will provide *Directives for the Confirmation Masses in the Diocese of Rochester*, detailing the necessary preparation for the ceremony and a form which must be completed and returned to the Office prior to the ceremony.
- Following the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, ongoing catechesis (mystagogia) should be offered to the newly confirmed in an effort to assist their continued practice of the faith and to encourage their ongoing participation in the parish.
- Notification of the Sacrament of Confirmation must be made in a timely manner to the confirmed's church of Baptism. (**See *General Principles for Catechetical Instruction / Sacramental Preparation / Record Keeping.***)

## 4. RCIA

“The Rite of Christian Initiation presented here is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God’s help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the Sacrament fruitfully.” (RCIA, no. 1).

“This Rite includes not simply the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, but also the rites belonging to the catechumenate...” (RCIA, no. 2).

“The celebration of Baptism must be prepared properly; consequently: an adult who intends to receive Baptism is to be admitted to the catechumenate and is to be led insofar as possible, through the various stages to Sacramental initiation, according to the order of initiation...” (CIC, c. 851, 1°).

### 4.1 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

- Adults who seek the Sacraments of Initiation are to be nurtured in their faith journey through the process described in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The Rite should be implemented in every parish through an adaptation that takes into account:
  - o the flexibility of the document;
  - o the unique needs of each candidate;
  - o the need of recognizing each step in the process and celebrating the rite of each stage with the parish community;
  - o the essential role of the sponsor and the whole faith community; and
  - o the responsibility of the community to support the newly-baptized (neophytes) and aid them in the process of continued integration into the community.

### 4.2 INITIATION OF UNBAPTIZED ADULTS

- In accordance with the RCIA, each period in the process is to be recognized and each candidate must be given ample time to freely determine his/her readiness to celebrate the rite of each stage. (Cf. RCIA, no. 4-7, 20).
- Before and during the implementation of the RCIA, the community must be made aware of their call to be evangelizers and of the implications of the restored Rite to their own faith and place in the community. Likewise they should pray for, and offer personal support to, the catechumens in their journey of faith. (Cf. RCIA, no. 41, 80).
- A sponsor is chosen to accompany the candidate on the journey. Sponsors should be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church who desire to share their faith. They should

participate in the formation sessions and all liturgical celebrations, and be available to the candidate for personal prayer, support and faith sharing. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 42-43).

o Sponsors must meet the criteria for Sponsors of Baptism. (Cf. *CIC*, cc. 873-874;

**See 1.4 Sponsors (Godparents).**

- The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, whereby the candidates are presented to and welcomed by the community, initiates a period of pastoral formation. From this time on, catechumens are joined to the Church. They may marry in the Church, using the appropriate rite; and one who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 47).
- The catechumenate is an extended period of time during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance... (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 75).
- The Rite of Election will be celebrated by the Diocesan Bishop at designated locations at the beginning of Lent each year. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 126).
- The Sacraments of Initiation conclude and climax this period. They are ordinarily celebrated at the Easter Vigil. Only for extraordinary reasons are they to be celebrated at another time. (The priest who baptizes continues the Sacraments by confirming as well.)
- The period after Easter, Mystagogia, formally concludes at the Pentecost celebration. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 244-251).

### **4.3 INITIATION OF BAPTIZED/UNCATECHIZED ADULTS BOTH CATHOLIC AND NON-CATHOLIC**

---

- Adults baptized as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community who did not receive further catechetical formation, or consequently, the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, are nourished through this process of initiation. Having already become members of the Church through Baptism, their circumstances differ from the catechumens since their conversion is based on the Baptism already received. However, they may be supported through the process with the catechumens. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 400).
- The period of preparation is made holy by means of liturgical celebrations. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 405).
  - o The framework of this process of initiation includes the same elements as that of the catechumens:
    - a sponsor to accompany the candidate;
    - presentation before and support by the whole community;
    - a period of pastoral formation which recognizes the unique needs of the candidate;
    - a prayerful, reflective Lenten period of immediate preparation;
    - communal celebration at Easter or during the Easter season; and
    - the continued support and nourishment of those fully initiated by helping them enter more fully into the life of the community.
- In the final phase of preparation during Lent, the adults should be prepared for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 408).
- Baptized Catholics who have not received Confirmation and Eucharist are to be fully initiated at the Easter Vigil. The priest presider must request delegation from the Diocesan Bishop in

writing. Delegation cannot be transferred to another priest unless required due to incapacity, in which case it may be sub-delegated.

- Both Baptized Catholic and Christian candidates must provide proof of valid Baptism. The celebration of Baptism may not be repeated and Conditional Baptism ordinarily is not celebrated. If however there is doubt about the fact or validity of the candidate's Baptism, Conditional Baptism must be celebrated, even privately if pastorally suitable.

#### **4.4 RITE OF RECEPTION OF BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS INTO FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

- “Those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are brought into certain, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church ... all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have the right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as sisters and brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic church.” (*Conciliar Decree on Ecumenism*, no. 3).
- No greater burden than necessary should be demanded for reception into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- With respect to the validity of Baptisms in other denominations, questions should be referred to the Chancery.
- Eastern Christians need only make a simple Profession of Faith in the Roman Catholic Church.
- “The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, according to individual pastoral requirements, for his/her reception into full communion with the Catholic Church...” (*RCIA*, no. 477).
- During the period of preparation, the candidate shares in the worship according to the norms of the Directory on Ecumenism.
- Any confusion between catechumens and candidates for reception into communion should be absolutely avoided.
- Although it belongs to “the office of the bishop to receive baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church,” priests may conduct this Rite after having received the permission of the Bishop. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 481).
- “If the profession of faith and reception take place within Mass, the candidate ... should make a confession of sins beforehand, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may hear the candidate's confession.” (*RCIA*, no. 482).
- The “Rite of Reception of baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church” should normally be celebrated within the Sunday celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. On Sundays and solemnities, the Mass of the Day is used. If celebrated on a weekday, the Mass of Christian Unity may be used. During the Lenten season, the Lenten texts must be used.
- Candidates who are received into the Roman Catholic Church also celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and receive First Eucharist, accompanied by a sponsor. The priest who receives the baptized Christian into full communion should confirm the candidate during the rite unless the candidate has already been validly confirmed. The priest receiving the candidate

into the Roman Catholic Church enjoys the faculty to confirm in accordance with canon 883, °2 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

- If it is not possible to receive the candidates during the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist, the “Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church” should be celebrated during the Liturgy of the Word. A candidate in this situation, however, should be encouraged to attend Mass as soon as possible in order to fully participate in the Church’s Sacramental life.
- The actual reception takes place after the homily, which should speak of the significance of reception into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- The candidate should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to reception. The candidate may approach any confessor who is lawfully approved, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 482).
- The names of those received into full communion should be reported in the baptismal record of the parish of reception, including the original information about the valid, non-Catholic baptism (date of birth, parents, date of baptism, place, and minister, etc.) with the following annotation added: Received into full Communion with the Roman Catholic Church on (*date*) by (*name of minister*). Confirmation and First Eucharist should also be recorded as usual.

#### **4.5 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE**

---

- The adult process is adapted to meet the unique needs of unbaptized children of catechetical age (7+) who present themselves for initiation into the community. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 852, §1; *RCIA*, no. 252).
- Parents or guardians, sponsors and parishioners play an indispensable role in the faith journey of these children. Parents or guardians must give their permission and be willing to support their children in the process.
- The period of instruction must be adapted to include the pedagogical and spiritual needs of the candidates.
- The rites celebrated are integral to the process, but should be adapted to provide a celebration meaningful to the candidates.
- The Sacraments of Initiation should be celebrated within the community at the Easter Vigil. Confirmation is always celebrated by the same priest who conferred Baptism. (Cf. *Roman Missal*: The Easter Vigil, 53).
- The post-Baptismal period includes opportunities for continued catechesis and participation in the life of the community. Godparents, in particular, should support the newly baptized at this time.

# SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

“The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that the Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two Sacraments of healing: the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.” (CCC, no. 1421).

## 5. PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

Before his Ascension, Our Lord entrusted to the Church the power to forgive sins in his name: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:21), and so from apostolic times the Church has always exercised this essential aspect of her Divine constitution as the instrument of salvation in the world.

The Sacrament of Penance is the ordinary means by which the faithful are restored to sanctifying grace after having fallen into post-baptismal grave sin. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 960). It is also a channel of particular graces which assists the faithful in avoiding sin in the future, overcoming habits of sin, and growing in the life of supernatural grace and virtue.

“Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from the mercy of God for the offence committed against him and are at the same time reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins...” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11).

### 5.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- With the assistance of the confessor, the penitent makes an integral and contrite confession of at least all unconfessed, post-baptismal grave sins of which he or she is conscious. He or she



then accepts a salutary penance and receives absolution. “Only physical or moral impossibility excuses from confession of this type; in such a case, reconciliation can be obtained by other means.” (*CIC*, c. 960).

- o What is crucial for the implementation of the Rite of Penance is solid catechesis on the mystery of Reconciliation, the meaning of sin, and the rites themselves, as well as a deep formation in prayer, the study of Scriptures, and a concern for right moral development. These are not simple tasks accomplished in a short period of time. Ongoing care for catechists and faith formation is essential for all age levels of the Christian people.
  - o In particular, such formation should enable each person to approach the Sacrament with proper dispositions: sincerity of heart, sorrow for sins, desire for Reconciliation, firm purpose of amendment and sensitivity for the integrity of the Sacrament. This will enable a renewed appreciation of Penance in the penitent’s life.
  - o Also, because of his office and ministry within the reconciling community, the priest is called to a fuller appreciation of the scriptural and theological dimensions of this powerful expression of God’s reconciling love. Hence, a constant updating in the theology of sin, reconciliation, Sacraments in general, the dynamics of the spiritual life, and the power of the Word of God is the moral responsibility of the confessor. This will correct any tendency towards routine, hurried or mechanical confessions; it can open the way for a fuller, more beneficial reconciling ministry in the Church.
- “After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year.” (*CIC*, c. 989).
  - Every parish shall provide suitable, visible places in the Church or oratory for the celebration of the Sacrament, containing at least a fixed grate for the anonymity of the penitent, should he or she desire. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 964, §2). The confessional may also provide the option of face-to-face confession, although outside of a case of necessity, priests retain the right to hear confessions always from behind the fixed grate. (Cf. *AAS*, 90 [1998], 711).
  - “Confessions are not to be heard outside the confessional without a just cause.” (*CIC*, c. 964, §3).
  - The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should not be united to the Mass in such a way that it becomes a single liturgical celebration. “This does not exclude, however, that priests other than those concelebrating the Mass might hear confessions of the faithful, for genuine pastoral necessity.” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 76).
  - A specified and regular time for weekly confessions of individual penitents is required. The time for confessions should be chosen with generous sensitivity to the needs of the people.
  - Great care should be taken on the part of the confessor so that a peaceful atmosphere is provided for the penitent. This care should include a sensitivity of privacy needed for the proper celebration of the Sacrament.
  - Sufficient time should be allowed for each penitent. Describing sinful actions or personal growth cannot be done quickly or glibly. The penitent needs to be offered guidance and reassurance, and concerns of conscience should be treated seriously and compassionately.
  - The reading of God’s Word should place both penitent and priest in an unhurried, reflective and prayerful environment. When Scripture is used, its place and value in the Sacrament ought to be briefly explained by the priest. Either the penitent or the priest may select the scripture passage.



- In accord with the spirit of the Rite of Penance, each parish should plan regular communal Penance services each year where a number of priests are brought in to assist in the celebration of the Sacrament and to provide for individual, private confessions and absolution.
- Parishes must ensure that catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance is a regular part of family and adult education.
- Priests should make themselves available to the faithful whenever they reasonably request the Sacrament.
- During particular liturgical seasons, i.e. Advent and Lent, parishes are encouraged to plan regular celebrations of the Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.
  - o The celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation in communal forms emphasizes reconciliation with both a forgiving Father and a forgiving community. When penitents gather specifically as a sinful but faith-filled community, confident of the Father's mercy, participants sense that the Sacrament is a public act of worship and celebration in the community. It is fitting that the penitents be prepared for the Sacrament by a celebration of the Word of God. (Cf. *RP*, 22).
  - o All parts of the celebration are to be well-planned. This would include providing an adequate number of confessors and making provision for active participation in song and prayer, readings and examination of conscience.
  - o The length of such celebrations must be reasonable. A sense of reverence and prayer can be lost because of boredom or tiredness.
  - o It may be better to plan several smaller celebrations than one large one.
  - o Careful explanation to penitents that confession in this form should be clear, concise and brief will reassure them. Respect for individual conscience and an atmosphere of reverence in the group celebration should be kept in balance. This is not a suitable time for spiritual direction or counseling.
  - o "Absolution cannot be imparted in a general manner to many penitents at once without previous individual confession unless:
    - 1) the danger of death is imminent and there is insufficient time for the priest or priests to hear the confessions of individual penitents; or
    - 2) there is a grave necessity that is, when in view of the number of penitents, there are not enough confessors available to hear the confessions of individuals properly within a suitable period of time in such a way that the penitents are forced to be deprived for a long while of sacramental grace or Holy Communion through no fault of their own. Sufficient necessity is not considered to exist when confessors cannot be present due only to the large number of penitents such as can occur on some great feast or pilgrimage." (*CIC*, c. 961, §1).
- It belongs to the Diocesan Bishop to judge whether the conditions required according to the norm of §1, 2° are present. He can determine the cases of such necessity, attentive to the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the conference of Bishops. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 961, §3).
  - o At the present time it is judged that there is no cause within the Diocese of Rochester for the use of the Rite of General Absolution.
  - o Priests are not to make use of General Absolution as part of parish celebrations.

## 5.2 FIRST PENANCE OF CHILDREN

---

### 5.2.1 Candidates

- Children should be encouraged to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as they near the age of seven.
- Celebration of First Penance is to precede the celebration of First Eucharist. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 914; *CCC*, no. 1457).

### 5.2.2 Parents

- Parents are to be intimately involved in preparations for a child's first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
- Parents are to be clearly instructed on the meaning and theology of Reconciliation.
- The pastor will make the final decision concerning a child's readiness to receive the Sacrament. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 914).

### 5.2.3 Preparation

- Catechesis for Penance/Reconciliation is to precede the catechesis for First Eucharist and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried preparation. (Cf. *NDC*, p. 127).
  - Catechesis for children prior to their first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances. (Cf. *NDC*, Chapter 5, no. 36).
  - Catechesis of the Sacrament must include: helping children recognize the need for forgiveness, exploring the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers and scriptures of the Rite, instruction in how to celebrate the Rite, and understanding the need for confession in the case of serious sin. (Cf. *NDC*, Chapter 5, no. 36).
  - Children at an early age should learn about and receive this precious gift. Children at the age of seven are certainly capable of understanding what is right, what is kind and charitable and what is evil, incorrect, uncharitable and selfish. The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is a positive instrument in developing a genuinely Christian moral sense in a child; it helps the child to want to do good, to be kind, but also to understand that when one fails, it is not the end; we can turn to God for forgiveness, for help, for the strength to try again.

### 5.2.4 Celebration

- For the celebration of First Penance/Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution for several children celebrating together:
  - The Sacrament should be celebrated as part of a Liturgy of the Word and may include signs, symbols, music, readings and prayers suitable to the age of those participating;
  - The celebration should be planned by parish and catechetical leadership;
  - Each child should have the option of anonymous or face to face confession; and
  - Each child should be fully able to participate in the liturgical celebration as completely as possible.
- After the initial celebration, regular opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should be made available to children who have celebrated first Penance.
- Parishes must provide ongoing catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as well as ongoing opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament for these children and for their families.

## 6. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Following the example of, and by Divine mandate from Her Founder, Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church lovingly accompanies humanity at all stages of life, from the moment of conception until natural death, “going about, doing good and healing all.” (Acts of the Apostles, 10:38).

“The Church shows this solicitude not only by visiting those who are in poor health but also by raising them up through the Sacrament of Anointing and by nourishing them with the Eucharist during their illness when they are in danger of death.” (*Decree from the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship*, 1072).

“Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude.” (CCC, no. 1500). “The Church believes and confesses that among the seven Sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick...” (CCC, no. 1511).

### 6.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- In the *Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick*, the meaning of human suffering and death is explained in light of God’s salvific plan, and more specifically in light of the salvific value of the sufferings undergone by Christ, the Incarnate Word, in the mystery of His passion, death and resurrection. (Cf. *PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 1-2).
- The Anointing of the Sick is the special Sacrament for baptized persons who have reached the age of reason and are dangerously ill as a result of sickness, accident or old age. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1004).
- The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick both comforts the sick and purifies them from sin and its consequences. “Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God’s grace in this time of anxiety, lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure of temptation, perhaps weakened in their faith.” (*PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 5).
- “This reality is in fact the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose anointing takes away sins, if any still remain, and the remnants of sin; this anointing also raises up and strengthens the soul of the sick person, arousing a great confidence in the Divine mercy...” (*De Extrema Unctione*, chapter 2).
- “‘Extreme Unction,’ which may also and more properly be called ‘Anointing of the Sick,’ is not a Sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as any one of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for that person to receive this Sacrament has certainly already arrived.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 73).
- “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 to fight against it. A return to physical health may follow the reception of this Sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person's salvation." (*PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 6).

- "If the Eucharist shows how Christ's suffering and death have been transformed into love, the Anointing of the Sick, for its part, unites the sick with Christ's self-offering for the salvation of all, so that they too, within the mystery of the communion of saints, can participate in the redemption of the world." (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 22).

## 6.2 CANDIDATES

---

- "The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should be celebrated only when the Christian's health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age." (*PCS*, 99).
- The Anointing of the Sick is:
  - "administered to a member of the faithful who, having reached the use of reason, begins to be in danger due to sickness or old age" (*CIC*, c. 1004 §1);
  - "repeated if the sick person, having recovered, again becomes gravely ill or if the condition becomes more grave during the same illness (*CIC*, c. 1004 §2);
  - administered in case of doubt whether the sick person:
    - has attained the use of reason;
    - is dangerously ill; or
    - is dead. (*Cf. CIC*, c. 1005).
  - "administered to the sick who, when they were in possession of their faculties, at least implicitly requested it." (*CIC*, c. 1006).
- The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick cannot be administered after death is certain. However, "if there is any doubt as to whether the sick person has reached the age of reason, or is dangerously ill, or is dead, this Sacrament is to be administered." (*CIC*, c. 1005).
  - "When a priest has been called to attend a person who is already dead..., It is appropriate that he lead the family and friends, if they are present, in some of the prayers suggested at the end of the 'Commendation of the Dying'..." (*PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 263).
  - "Sometimes the priest may find it necessary to explain to the family of the person who has died that Sacraments are celebrated for the living, not for the dead, and that the dead are effectively helped by the prayers of the living." (*PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 263).
- Even though the Anointing of the Sick can be administered to those already unconscious, every effort should be made to administer it while they are still conscious, so that they can better prepare to receive the grace of the Sacrament.
- "The Anointing of the Sick is not to be conferred upon those who persevere obstinately in manifest grave sin." (*CIC*, c. 1007).
- To receive this Sacrament fruitfully, those receiving it should be reconciled to God and to the Church, at least in desire, and repent of their sins with the intention of confessing them in the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, if and when this becomes possible. Therefore, whenever feasible, the person should be provided the opportunity to privately receive the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation with individual absolution before being anointed.
- Those receiving the Anointing of the Sick must have at least the habitual and implicit intention to receive the Sacrament. (*Cf. CIC*, c. 1006).

- Catholic priests administer the Anointing of the Sick to Catholic members of the faithful alone. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 1). There are two particular, and extremely rare, exceptions which may occur:
  - o **for Christians of the Orthodox Churches:**  
Orthodox Christians may receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest, only when **both** of the following conditions are present:
    - he/she requests the Sacrament on his/her own initiative; and
    - he/she is properly disposed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 3).
  - o **for Christians of protestant communities:**  
Other validly baptized non-Catholics (members of protestant communities) may receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest, only if **all** of the following conditions are present:
    - he/she is in danger of death;
    - he/she cannot approach a minister of their own community;
    - he/she requests the Sacrament on their own initiative;
    - he/she manifests Catholic faith regarding the Sacrament; and
    - he/she is properly disposed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 4).

## 6.3 PREPARATION

- The faithful should be instructed about the benefits of this Sacrament. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should be part of the overall care and concern of the Church for the sick of the community.
- The faithful (particularly family members and friends) should encourage those who are ill and homebound or in healthcare facilities to call for the priest so that they can receive the Anointing of the Sick. (Cf. *CCC*, no. 1516).
- Catechesis should also encourage parishioners to pray for the ill and to visit the sick in order to express love and concern for them.
- The faithful, particularly extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and those who visit the sick and shut-ins, should be mindful of the sad tendency today of isolation for those who are sick and dying. Catholics who work in hospitals and hospices should strive to ensure that seriously ill people receive every possible assistance (particularly the Sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion) to relieve their suffering in body and soul.
- All Christians should be instructed to assist the sick and dying by providing the best care possible, by personal presence, by praying and sharing God's Word.
- Pastoral care should be exercised (and proper instruction should be given, if necessary) so that the faithful are not led to confuse non-liturgical healing ceremonies with the celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing. In order to prevent confusion between non-liturgical healing services and communal celebrations of the Sacrament of the Sick, the two must never be celebrated simultaneously, but separately.

### 6.3.1 Effects of the Anointing the Sick

- As a true and proper Sacrament of the New Law, the Anointing of the Sick offers salvific grace, the forgiveness of sins and relief to the sick person. For the person receiving it, the specific sacramental grace has the following effects:



- o a more intimate union with Christ in his redemptive Passion, for the good of the recipient and for the good of the whole Church (Cf. CCC, nos. 1521, 1522, 1532);
- o the strengthening, peace and courage to endure in a Christian manner the difficulties and sufferings of a serious illness or the frailty of old age (Cf. CCC, nos. 1520, 1532);
- o the healing of the wounds of sin and the forgiveness of all venial sins, as well as mortal sins when the person is repentant but unable to receive the Sacrament of Penance/ Reconciliation (Cf. CCC, no. 1520);
- o the recovery of physical health, if it is conducive to the salvation of the soul (Cf. *Council of Florence: DZ*, 1325; CCC, nos. 1520, 1532); and
- o preparation for the passage to eternal life. “This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death.” (CCC, no. 1520; CCC, no. 1532).

## 6.4 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

---

- The Epistle of St. James records these words: “*Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*” (James 5:14-15).
- “The Anointing of the Sick, by which the Church commends the faithful who are dangerously ill to the suffering and glorified Lord in order that he relieve and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the words prescribed in the liturgical books.” (CIC, c. 998).
- “Like all the Sacraments, the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration, whether it takes place in the family home, a hospital or church, for a single sick person or a whole group of sick persons.” (CCC, no. 1517).
- “The celebration of the Sacrament includes the following principal elements: the ‘priests of the Church’ — in silence — lay hands on the sick; they pray over them in the faith of the Church — this is the epiclesis proper to this Sacrament; they then anoint them with oil blessed, if possible, by the Bishop.” (CCC, no. 1519).
- “... If circumstances suggest it, the celebration of the Sacrament can be preceded by the Sacrament of Penance and followed by the Sacrament of the Eucharist. As the Sacrament of Christ’s Passover the Eucharist should always be the last Sacrament of the earthly journey, the ‘viaticum’ for ‘passing over’ to eternal life.” (CCC, no. 1517).
- “The communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick, for a number of the sick together, who have been appropriately prepared and are rightly disposed, may be held in accordance with the regulations of the Diocesan Bishop.” (CIC, c. 1002; Cf. PCS, 17; PCS, 108).
  - o “During communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, care must be taken that only those eligible be permitted to approach the Sacrament.” (DCD Prot. 273/89).
  - o Whether the administration of the Anointing of the Sick is in the context of Mass or a Liturgy of the Word ceremony, a proper and clear catechesis must precede the celebration to avoid any semblance of indiscriminate anointing.
    - “The practice of indiscriminately anointing numbers of people on these occasions simply because they are ill or have reached an advanced age is to be avoided.” (PCS, 108).

- o The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should be made available before the ceremony so the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is not considered a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
- “The sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.” (CCC, no. 1516).
- “The Apostolic Constitution *Sacram unktionem infirmorum*, following upon the Second Vatican Council, established that henceforth, in the Roman Rite, the following be observed:
 

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with duly blessed oil - pressed from olives (or from other plants) - saying, only once: ‘*Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*’ (CCC, no. 1513).
- The revised ritual, *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* (1983), provides a continuous Rite of Reconciliation, Anointing, and Viaticum for those who are dying.
- “Although not required by law, parishes and institutions sometimes maintain records for ... the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Priests who administer the Anointing of the Sick in hospitals and health care facilities should verify if an Anointing of the Sick registry exists on location and, if appropriate, may record such sacramental administrations accordingly.” (See *Sacramental Policies: Key Policy Statements*).

#### 6.4.1 Ministers of the Sacrament

- “Every priest and a priest alone validly administers the anointing of the sick.” (CIC, c. 1003, §1; CCC, no. 1530).
- “It must also be affirmed that the reservation of the ministry of Anointing to the priest is related to the connection of this Sacrament to the forgiveness of sin and the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist. No other person may act as ordinary or extraordinary minister of the Sacrament since such constitutes simulation of the Sacrament.” (*Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Article 9).
- “In using *sacramentals*, the non-ordained faithful should ensure that these are in no way regarded as Sacraments whose administration is proper and exclusive to the Bishop and to the priest. Since they are not priests, in no instance may [deacons and] the non-ordained perform *anointings* either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil.” (*Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Article 9).
  - o A distinction must be made between the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and a devotional blessing, avoiding all confusion and appearance that a sacramental can replace, or is an alternative to, a Sacrament.
- “All priests to whom the care of souls has been entrusted have the duty and right of administering the Anointing of the Sick for the faithful entrusted to their pastoral office. For a reasonable cause, any other priest may administer this Sacrament with at least the presumed consent of the priest mentioned above.” (CIC, c. 1003, §2).
- “Any priest is permitted to carry blessed oil with him so that he is able to administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in a case of necessity.” (CIC, c. 1003, §3).



- The matter proper for the Sacrament (*olea infirmorum*) is olive oil, blessed by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass each year. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 999).
  - In case of necessity, any priest may bless the oil of the sick, but only within the celebration of the Sacrament. (Cf. *PCS*, 21).
    - In these cases, olive oil is to be used, or, if unavailable, oil derived from plants, blessed within the celebration of the Sacrament, and burned following the anointing. (Cf. *PCS*, 20-22; *PCS*, 123; *PCS*, 140; *PCS*, 248).

### 6.4.2 Apostolic Pardon

- “Priests who minister the Sacraments to the Christian faithful who are in a life-and-death situation should not neglect to impart to them the Apostolic Blessing [Pardon], with its attached indulgence.” (*Handbook of Indulgences*, 28; *PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 265).
- The priest may give the Apostolic Pardon for the dying, using the formula: “*Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.*” (*Handbook of Indulgences*, no. 28; *PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 265).

### 6.4.3 Viaticum

- “In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as Viaticum. Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, received at this moment of ‘passing over’ to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’ The Sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the Sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father.” (*CCC*, no. 1524).
- “Viaticum, celebrated when death is close, will then be better understood as the last Sacrament of Christian life.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 175).
- “The Sacrament [Holy Eucharist] should be described as sacred food which strengthens the Catholic for the passage through death to life in sure hope of the resurrection.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 188).
- “Priests and other ministers entrusted with the spiritual care of the sick should do everything they can to ensure that those in proximate danger of death receive the Body and Blood of Christ as Viaticum.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 176).
- “Thus, just as the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called ‘the Sacraments of Christian Initiation,’ so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life ‘the Sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland’ or the Sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage.” (*CCC*, no. 1525).

# SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION

“Two Sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to other that they do so. They confer a particular mission the in the Church and serve to build up the people of God.” (CCC, no. 1534).

## 7. MARRIAGE

“Mutual self-giving in the Sacrament of Matrimony is grounded in the grace of Baptism, which establishes the foundational covenant of every person with Christ in the Church. In accepting each other, and with Christ’s grace, the engaged couple promise each other total self-giving, faithfulness and openness to new life.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 73).

“The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws.... God himself is the author of marriage.’ The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries .... ‘The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life.” (CCC, no. 1603).

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a Sacrament.” (CIC, c. 1055, §1).

### 7.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Couples who marry understand and accept that a valid marriage is the faithful, indissoluble, life-long partnership that is ordered to the welfare of the spouses and the procreation and formation of children. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*: Second Typical Edition, ©2016, 1-3). This understanding of marriage is foundational since it has been established by God the Creator,

“the Author of Marriage, who ordained it to be endowed with its own goods and ends.”  
(*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 4).

- “Through this union, [husband and wife] experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of the children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 48).
- Sacramental matrimony is the union of a baptized man and baptized woman who freely contract a life of love with each other in Christ. The Church recognizes this covenant as permanent and exclusive. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1055 – 1057; *CCC*, no. 1638).
- When one party/both parties in a marriage is/are Catholic, the couple follow the norms and laws of the Catholic Church governing Christian marriage.

## 7.2 CANDIDATES FOR MARRIAGE

---

- “Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the Sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by the competent authority.” (*CIC*, c. 843).
  - The ability to exercise one’s right to a Sacrament is moderated by three conditions: the Sacrament is requested at an appropriate time, the parties are properly disposed, and they are not prohibited by law. (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 37; *CIC*, c. 843).
- “The right to marry, *ius connubii*, ... is not a subjective claim that pastors must fulfill through a merely formal recognition independent of the effective content of the union. The right to contract marriage presupposes that the person can and intends to celebrate it truly, that is, in the truth of its essence as the Church teaches it. No one can claim the right to a nuptial ceremony. Indeed the *ius connubii* refers to the right to celebrate an authentic marriage.” (*Address to the Roman Rota*, Pope Benedict XVI, 2011).
- Persons must possess freedom, the minimal psychological capacity to establish and nurture an intimate partnership of life, sufficient knowledge of the nature of this partnership, and the intention to undertake it.
- Complementarity: Marriage is a unique union, a relationship different from all others. It is the permanent bond between one man and one woman, as revealed by God at birth, whose two-in-one-flesh communion of persons is an indispensable good at the heart of every family and every society... Male-female complementarity is intrinsic to marriage. It is naturally ordered toward authentic union and the generation of new life. (Cf. *Amoris Laetitia*, 52, 56, 251; *USCCB Marriage Initiative*: [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)).

### 7.2.1 Faith Matters

- The faith of non-practicing /nominally practicing Catholic(s) seeking marriage in the Church can exist in varying degrees. “It is the primary duty of pastors to facilitate a rediscovery of this faith, nourishing it and bringing it to maturity.” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 68).
  - It is essential to differentiate between a lack of catechesis and/or non-practice of the faith from a direct rejection of the faith. Rejection of the faith means that someone sees no value in the faith, does not believe and does not wish to believe.

- o Defection from the Faith – Even if one party has defected from the Catholic faith by a formal act, he/she remains bound by canonical form. (Cf. *Omnium in Mentem*, motu proprio of Pope Benedict XVI, October 26, 2009).
- o “If every effort fails, and an engaged couple openly and expressly demonstrate that they reject what the Church intends when the Marriage of baptized persons is celebrated, the pastor of souls is not permitted to celebrate the Sacrament. Though reluctant, he must take note of the situation and convince those involved that, in these circumstances, it is not the Church, but they themselves, who prevent the celebration they are asking for.” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 21; Cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 68).
- “Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.” (*CIC*, c. 1065, §1).
  - o A Catholic who has not received all of the Sacraments of Initiation should be encouraged and assisted to do so by joining a parish-based adult Confirmation program, or through private instruction.
  - o The Sacrament of Confirmation may be administered at a regularly scheduled Confirmation ceremony with the Diocesan Bishop or by the pastor/parochial vicar after requesting, **in writing**, the faculty to confirm in a particular instance.
- Couples entering interchurch, interfaith, or interreligious marriages are urged to learn about their future spouse’s faith for greater understanding, mutual respect, and family harmony. While recognizing the complexity of the profession of faith of the Catholic party and the profession of a different faith/lack of profession of faith of the other party, the *Code of Canon Law* and liturgical rites are specific about what dispensations and rites are needed.
  - o In an interreligious marriage, the Catholic party must make a sincere promise to be faithful to the Catholic Church and raise his or her children in the Catholic faith. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 1°).
  - o The non-Catholic party is to be informed of the promise, so that he or she is aware of the promise and obligation the Catholic party has made. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 2°).

### 7.2.2 Marriage Licenses in the State of New York

- Priests and deacons are designated as civil servants of the State of New York to witness marriages. Priests and deacons of the Diocese of Rochester are not to knowingly witness a marriage of a couple without a marriage license.
- It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to obtain a New York State Marriage License. The license should be received by the priest /deacon officiating at the ceremony no later than the wedding rehearsal the day prior to the wedding. The information below is helpful to the couple:
  - o A couple who intends to be married in the Diocese of Rochester must apply in person to any town or city clerk in the state. The application for a license must be signed by both applicants in the presence of the town or city clerk.
  - o The marriage ceremony may not take place within 24 hours from the exact time that the license was issued.
  - o A license costs \$60 and is valid for 60 calendar days, beginning the day after it is issued.
  - o More information is available at: [www.health.ny.gov/publications/4210](http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4210)

### 7.3 MARRIAGE PREPARATION

---

- In accord with the prescriptions of canon 1067 of the *Code of Canon Law*, and with due regard for canon 1068, the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* decreed on December 1, 2000, the following norms for all Latin Rite dioceses:
  - “The couple should receive appropriate education and pastoral preparation through participation in a marriage preparation program approved by the diocesan bishop;
  - Parties should be questioned as to their freedom to marry;
  - Baptized Catholics should present a recently issued annotated baptismal certificate;
  - Where necessary, additional documentation (such as affidavits of parents) attesting to a Catholic party’s freedom to marry should be presented;
  - Baptized non-Catholics should present satisfactory proof of baptism and freedom to marry;
  - Unbaptized persons should present satisfactory proof of freedom to marry;
  - Preparation for marriage should be in conformity with the prescriptions of canon 1063 (regarding what must precede marriage) and canons 1064, 1071, 1072, 1086, §2, and 1125, which entrust certain situations to the special care of local ordinaries; and
  - Preparation for marriage should be in compliance with appropriate civil laws.”
- “So that the ‘I do’ of the spouses may be a free and responsible act, and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance.” (*CCC*, no. 1632).
- Priests, deacons and those assisting in marriage preparation “need to help young people discover the dignity and beauty of marriage.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 205).
- “Marriage preparation should be a kind of ‘initiation’ to the Sacrament of Matrimony, providing couples with the help they need to receive the Sacrament worthily and to make a solid beginning of life as a family.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 207).
  - “Married couples are grateful that their pastors uphold the high ideal of a love that is strong, solid, enduring and capable of sustaining them through whatever trials they may have to face.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 209).
- Couples should be given helpful resources, including the website, [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org) which is an initiative of the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* (USCCB), as well as other resources offered through the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, which are continually being reviewed and enriched.
- There are many societal and family factors (both positive and negative) that influence and informally prepare a person for marriage. The priest/deacon or pastoral staff member is responsible for entering into a dialogue with the couple on the fundamental principles of Christian marriage, including Freedom of Consent, Unity, Indissolubility, Fidelity, Covenant, the Good of the Spouses, and Welcoming/Educating Children).
  - Given the high rates of divorce and premarital cohabitation in society, as well as the need for young people to better understand marriage as a Sacrament that is permanent, exclusive and open to the gift of children, pastoral care to engaged couples is of special concern to priests, deacons, parish staff/religious educators. “The safeguarding of the Lord’s gift in the Sacrament of Matrimony is a concern not only of individual families but of the entire Christian community.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 87).

- Regardless of the location of the wedding ceremony, a couple is bound to the marriage preparation policy of the diocese where the Catholic party(ies) live(s), since that is where they have domicile.
  - o In addition to the fulfillment of the marriage preparation, this also provides the couple with the opportunity to be properly welcomed and incorporated into a parish where they are living.
  - o Residents of the Diocese of Rochester getting married in another diocese must complete the marriage preparation of the Diocese of Rochester.
  - o The prenuptial file is sent to the Office of the Chancellor of the Diocese of Rochester for transfer to the offices of the diocese where the wedding will occur.
    - The Chancery should receive the prenuptial file at least **6 weeks** prior to the wedding.
    - Marriage files should never be sent directly from parish to parish.
  - o Should both parties be Catholic and they live in different dioceses, they fulfill the requirements of either diocese for their marriage preparation and must meet that same diocese's corresponding requirements.
- “Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful.” (CCC, no. 1622). It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, “which allows them to bring their sins and past mistakes, and their relationship itself, before God, and to receive in turn his merciful forgiveness and healing strength.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 211).

### 7.3.1 Time

- A minimum of six months preparation is necessary to properly ensure the pastoral care of the couple, to prepare spiritually for matrimony and to help them to understand and accept the blessings and demands of married life.

### 7.3.2 Initial Meetings with Priest /Deacon/ Parish Staff

- While many practical plans need to be addressed, a welcoming and understanding pastoral presence provides a suitable opportunity for evangelization, and creates a positive attitude toward the Church.
  - o The initial session should include a preliminary assessment of the couple's readiness for marriage and the determination of any special circumstances in this particular situation. **No date for the wedding should be set until the conclusion of this first meeting.**
- Initial Session(s) with the priest / deacon and others concerned for couple's preparation provides understanding and appreciation for the Sacrament, in which freedom and readiness to marry is ascertained. (**See 7.4 Obtaining Necessary Information**). This must be done prior to establishing the date of the wedding, which shall be confirmed only after the assessment has been made.
  - o If this involves a couple with other circumstances (i.e., one or both having a previous marriage, senior couples, couples that have been married civilly for some time, etc.), the elements of the preparation include sessions with a priest or pastoral minister, as well as an instrument and event that seems best suited to the needs of the couple.



- o If in a particular circumstance participation in the above prescribed marriage preparation program is impossible or extremely inconvenient (e.g., military service, academic study, or different locales), the couple, in cooperation with the priest or deacon who will witness the marriage, may take part in any marriage preparation program approved for use. In such a case, the couple is to present to the priest or deacon verification of their participation in the preparation program. However, it is the responsibility of the priest or deacon witnessing the marriage to ascertain that each party is prepared to marry.
- o If language is an obstacle, this preparation can be assisted through trained laity in other appropriate ways. Contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for assistance.

### **7.3.3 Fully Engaged Pre-Marriage Inventory**

- Administration of *Fully Engaged*, a premarital inventory, is a required component for marriage preparation taking place in the Diocese of Rochester. The priest/deacon or trained pastoral staff member administers the *Fully Engaged* inventory tool and schedules further sessions with the engaged couple for interpretation.
- Subsequent follow-up meetings with the couple to review the answers provide the priest / administrator, and others who assist in the ministry, the opportunity to teach, encourage, and draw the couple closer to Jesus Christ and the Church.
  - o For guidance on working with inventories, marriage preparation ministers should consult with the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.
- It is important for parishes to have qualified staff/volunteers trained and available to assist the couples when they approach the parish seeking marriage.

### **7.3.4 Pre-Cana**

- Successful attendance at and completion of Pre-Cana is required. The certificate is to be included in the marriage file.

## **7.4 OBTAINING NECESSARY INFORMATION (completion of the documentary procedures)**

---

- Each pastor/administrator has the obligation to prepare, with the assistance of others, if needed, the engaged couple according to teachings of the Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester's *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments*.
  - o Pre-nuptial investigation forms and marriage dispensation forms are obtained from the Office of the Chancellor. These forms should be completed and current baptismal certificates received well before the celebration of the Sacrament.
    - The pre-nuptial investigation is the vehicle to determine that "Before marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration." (CIC, c. 1066).
  - o If a parishioner is marrying in another parish, the pastor / administrator of the Catholic party grants permission, in writing, for the parishioner to marry in another parish.



### 7.4.1 Freedom to Marry

- Before a date is set for the wedding, it is essential to determine if either party has any prior bonds. If a prior bond exists, do not start marriage preparation. By starting marriage preparation prematurely, false hope may be given about the couple's future freedom to marry, since a declaration of nullity cannot be presumed. (**See 7.4.3 Prior Bond**).
- If either (or both) party is not well-known to the priest/deacon or pastoral leader, an *affidavit of freedom to marry* should be requested.
  - If deemed suitable by the pastor / administrator, the banns of marriage for two Catholics may be posted.
    - In the case of a Mixed Marriage, the pastor /administrator of the Catholic party may post the banns of marriage, but does so without indicating the religion / non-religion of the non-Catholic party.
- If the bride or groom has previously received a *Declaration of Nullity*, she/he must provide a copy of the decree which is to be placed in the pre-nuptial file.
- If a party's previous spouse is deceased, a certified death certificate is obtained and added to the prenuptial file.

### 7.4.2 Impediments and Circumstances that Invalidate Consent

- Specific, identifiable circumstances may be present which indicate a need for further assessment and growth before the final decision is made to proceed with the marriage.
  - Some impediments are resolved simply by obtaining the proper dispensation from the Local Ordinary.
  - Other impediments can take months or years to resolve.
  - Still other impediments have their origin in Divine law or natural law and cannot be dispensed.
  - In all cases, pastoral care is warranted. For clarification on how to proceed with the preparation for marriage of couples presenting unusual or complicated circumstances/ impediments, contact the Office of the Chancellor.
- Those who are prohibited by ecclesiastical law from marriage are those with an impediment to marry. Some impediments to marriage **can be dispensed**:
  - Insufficient age. Prior to 16 for men, prior to 14 for women (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1083);
  - Disparity of Cult: one Catholic and one unbaptized party (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1086; c. 1125; c. 1126);
  - Holy Orders: Diaconate or Sacred Priesthood (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1087);
  - Public Perpetual Vow of Chastity in a Religious Institute (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1087);
  - Abduction (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1089);
  - Crime: when a person conspires to kill his/her spouse in order to be free to marry again (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1090);
  - Affinity: the couple is too closely related by another's marriage (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1092);
  - Public Propriety (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1093); and
  - Adoption: the couple is too closely related due to an adoption (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1094).
- Those who are prohibited by ecclesiastical law from marriage are those with an impediment to marry. The following impediments to marriage **cannot be dispensed** since they originate in Divine law or natural law:

- o Impotence: In order to enter validly into marriage, both parties to the marriage must be able to complete the marriage act. (*Note*: this is NOT sterility.) Impotence is the incapacity of a spouse to perform the conjugal act. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1084). In such cases, pastoral counselling is essential and the Office of the Chancellor should be consulted.
- o Prior Bond/*Ligamen*: A party who has already contracted marriage with another person (even if they have obtained a civil divorce), the person must have his/her matrimonial situation investigated through the annulment process before setting a date for a new marriage or starting marriage preparation. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1085). (**See 7.4.3 Prior Bond**).
- o Consanguinity: the couple is too closely related by blood (i.e. first cousins). Marriage is never permitted in the direct line (among direct ancestors and descendants); in the collateral line within the fourth degree. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1078, c. 1091).
- Valid consent requires the harmonious interaction of the person's faculties. Since consent is an act of the will, all defects of consent ultimately invalidate a marriage because of their impact on the will. The following are circumstances which invalidate consent:
  - o consensual incapacity (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1095);
  - o ignorance (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1096);
  - o error about the person (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1097);
  - o fraud (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1098);
  - o error of law: unity, indissolubility or sacramentality (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1099);
  - o simulation of consent (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1101);
  - o future condition (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1102); and
  - o force and fear. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1103).
- Practical knowledge of these issues can assist the couple in their discernment process and their preparation for marriage.
  - o In some instances, however, a Sacrament will not be able to be received at the present time, either because of some obstacle such as a *Vetitum*, *Monitum* or a *Delay* which may accompany a Declaration of Nullity; a censure after the imposition or declaration of the penalty, or because an individual is obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin; or because the pastoral judgment is reached that a person or a family is not yet sufficiently prepared for the new bond. "This critical moment can be an occasion for healing and renewal; or it can become a cause for irreparable separation. Then, the parish priest should explain that the Sacrament requested is **only deferred** until the obstacle is removed or sufficient preparation is accomplished and evidence of faith is presented." (**See *Sacramental Policies: Key Policy Statements***).

### 7.4.3 Prior Bond

- If one party has exchanged marital consent before, in any setting or by any rite, religious or secular, and now wishes to marry in the Catholic Church, **no date for the wedding may be set until this process is complete**:
  - o Obtain a copy of the *Declaration of Nullity*, which must be placed in the prenuptial file;
  - o If the spouse is deceased, a death certificate must be added to the prenuptial file; and
  - o If the party, or prior spouse was Catholic and was not married observing the canonical form of marriage, a declaration for lack of form or defect is placed in the prenuptial file.
- When the nullity of all previous exchanges of vows has been established through the Diocesan Tribunal, the couple should attend the marriage preparation process offered by the Diocese for those with prior bonds. Information is available through the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

### 7.4.4 Dispensations and Permissions

- Once a couple's freedom to marry has been established, determine if any dispensations (affecting validity) or permissions (affecting licity) will be needed.
  - In requesting a dispensation or permission:
    - the proper form(s) from the Office of the Chancellor must be completed;
    - the Catholic party is identified; and
    - the specific dispensation or permission the Catholic party is seeking, and-the reason(s) the Catholic party is seeking it.
- The following are the possible dispensations and permissions that can be granted:
  - *Dispensation for Disparity of Cult*: This is required when a Catholic marries an unbaptized person and is necessary for the validity of the marriage. This dispensation is also required for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic party of an ecclesial community that does not perform baptisms recognized as valid by the Catholic Church, the most common being:
    - Jehovah's Witnesses;
    - Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons);
    - Pentecostals \*(note: a very few may be valid);
    - Quakers;
    - Salvation Army;
    - Unitarians; and
    - Christian Scientists.

**N.B.** Contact the Chancery / Tribunal with questions about the validity of a Baptism.
  - *Dispensation for Disparity of Cult ad catelam*: This is requested when the validity of a Baptism cannot be proven through documentation.
  - *Dispensation from Canonical Form*: "Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses." (*CIC*, c. 1108, §1). This requirement applies whenever there is at least one Catholic in the marriage.
    - If there is a good reason for a couple not to be married according to the Canonical Form of marriage, the Catholic party may request a *Dispensation from Canonical Form*. This dispensation for two Catholics is reserved to the Holy See. (Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, Response 8, January, 1985).
 

**N.B.** Even if an individual no longer considers himself/herself a Catholic, if he/she was baptized or received into the Catholic Church, he/she is bound by Canonical Form. (**See 7.2.1 Faith Matters**).
    - If a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* is granted, the marriage takes place outside a Catholic church.
 

**N.B.** The principle to be followed is that the proper ecclesial minister of the church in which the marriage is celebrated is the officiant.
    - If a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* is granted, a Catholic cleric may **attend** the marriage ceremony and, if requested, offer a prayer reflecting the Catholic faith. The cleric's presence assures the Catholic faithful that the marriage is being celebrated in accordance with the consent of the Church. (**See 7.6.4 Role of a Priest / Deacon in a non-Catholic church**).

- The Office of the Chancellor is to be notified that the marriage has taken place; the marriage is recorded in the parish register of the Catholic party and the marriage file is retained there. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1121, 1122, §2).
- o “It is forbidden to have another religious celebration of the same marriage to give or renew matrimonial consent before or after the canonical celebration. Likewise, there is not to be a religious celebration in which the Catholic who is assisting and a non-Catholic minister together, using their own rites, ask for the consent of the parties.” (*CIC*, c. 1127, §3).
- o *Permission for Mixed Religion*: Required when a Catholic intends to marry a baptized non-Catholic.
  - “Because of problems concerning Eucharistic sharing which may arise from the presence of non-Catholic witnesses and guests, a mixed marriage celebrated according to the Catholic form ordinarily takes place outside the Eucharistic liturgy.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 159).
  - Only for a just cause may the Diocesan Bishop permit the marriage to take place during the celebration of Mass and such permission is requested and granted in writing. (Cf. *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 159).
- o *Permission for Marriage Outside a Sacred Place*: “A marriage between Catholics, or between a Catholic party and a baptized non-Catholic, is to be celebrated in the parish church.” (*CIC*, c. 1118, §1).
  - A marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, or between a Catholic and an unbaptized party, may be celebrated in a church or in another suitable place with permission. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1118).
  - The Diocesan Bishop determines “suitable places” for weddings to occur and which require his permission. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1118, §2).
  - For a pastoral reason, permission may be granted to a Catholic wishing to marry a non-Catholic in a non-Catholic church or sacred place with a properly delegated Catholic priest or deacon officiating (no *Dispensation from Canonical Form* would also be required).
  - With regard to the use of university or college chapels for the celebration of a wedding, priests and deacons are requested to contact the Office of the Chancellor.
- o Deans (Vicars Forane) do not possess the faculty to grant permissions or dispensations.
- When all is prepared and the priest/deacon has failed to obtain a dispensation or permission, contact the Judicial Vicar, the Vicar General, the Chancellor or the Diocesan Bishop.

### 7.4.5 Delegation

- A cleric acquires the faculty to witness marriages by his assignment, by mandate of the Diocesan Bishop, or by delegation. A priest or deacon who has the faculty to witness marriages exercises that faculty only within the territorial boundaries of the parish to which he is assigned.
  - o Clergy who have the faculty to witness marriages by office are pastors/ administrators in the Diocese of Rochester, parochial vicars, deacons assigned to the parish where the wedding will take place.

- o Information about a priest's or deacon's faculty to celebrate weddings can be found in the Diocesan *Pagella* (faculty handbook) and the priest's or deacon's individual appointment letter.
- o If there is a visiting priest or deacon from outside the parish presiding at a wedding, he must receive delegation, in writing, on the Prenuptial Investigation form, from the pastor or parochial vicar of that parish, or from the Diocesan Bishop, Vicar General or Chancellor of the Diocese. N.B. To officiate at a wedding without the proper delegation results in an invalid marriage.
  - A recently issued *Affidavit of Suitability* from the cleric's proper bishop or religious superior must be sent directly to the Office of the Chancellor and copied to the parish.

#### 7.4.6 Recording of Marriage and Notifications to Sacramental Records

- The obligation of keeping the marriage records is that of the pastor/administrator.
  - o After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor/administrator of the place of celebration, even if he has not assisted at the marriage, should as soon as possible note the following in the marriage register: the names of the spouses, the person who assisted and the witnesses, the place and date of the marriage celebration. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1121, §1).
    - Even though the recording of marriages may be done by the parochial vicar, the deacon or some other person, the pastor/administrator must ensure that the proper recording is being done and is verified for accuracy. The record is an authentic ecclesiastical document about the matters to which it attests; therefore, it must be accurate in every respect.
    - All records are to be kept in the place of celebration, that is, in the archives of the parish church within whose territorial boundaries the marriage took place. The only exception concerns marriages celebrated outside the territorial boundaries of the parish of the Catholic party with a *Dispensation from Canonical Form*. (See 7.4.4 *Dispensations and Permissions*).
- “The contracted marriage is to be noted also in the baptismal registers in which the baptism of the spouses has been recorded. If a spouse did not contract marriage in the parish in which the person was baptized, the pastor of the place of the celebration is to send notice of the marriage which has been entered into as soon as possible to the pastor of the place of the conferral of baptism.” (*CIC*, c. 1122, §1, §2).
- If a Mixed Marriage is celebrated with a *Dispensation from Canonical Form*, it is the responsibility of the priest/deacon who obtained the *Dispensation from Canonical Form* to do the recording and notifications. The recording and notifications of the marriage are to be made in the following manner:
  - o The pre-nuptial documents are to be filed at the Catholic's parish church and the marriage is recorded in the sacramental register of the Catholic parish of the Catholic party;
  - o Notice of the marriage is sent to the church of Baptism of the Catholic party;
  - o The Office of the Chancellor which granted the dispensation is to be notified; and
  - o The couple should be made aware of the parish where the records are being kept. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1121, §3).



### 7.4.7 Eastern Rite Catholics

- There are Churches *sui iuris* in the Catholic Church; the largest of these is the Latin Church. The other are Eastern Catholic Churches, which are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church and the Supreme Pontiff; all of their Sacraments are valid and licit. The Diocese of Rochester is a Latin Catholic Diocese and does not have jurisdiction over the other Eastern Churches *sui iuris*.
  - o A Latin Catholic may marry an Eastern Catholic in that Catholic's Eastern Church, and vice versa without a dispensation or permission. All parties are Catholic and as long as the person marrying them belongs to the Church *sui iuris* of at least one of the parties, the marriage is valid.
  - o If an Eastern Catholic couple approaches a Latin priest for marriage and neither of the parties is of the Latin Church, the Latin priest does not have the faculty to witness their marriage, without the faculty granted by the Diocesan Bishop. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1116, §3). Permission is necessary for an Eastern Catholic to be married using the Latin Rite. Please contact the Office of the Chancellor in this situation.

### 7.4.8 Eastern Orthodox Churches

- The Orthodox Churches are not in union with the Catholic Church, however, their Sacraments are considered to be valid.
- If a Catholic seeks to licitly marry an Orthodox Christian in the Orthodox Church, they must petition for a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* and *Permission for Mixed Marriage*.
- If a Catholic wishes to marry an Orthodox Christian in the Catholic Church, only *Permission for a Mixed Marriage* is necessary.
- To be married in an Eastern Catholic Church or Orthodox Church, the consent of the couple must be received by a priest for the validity of the marriage. Deacons cannot witness a marriage in the Eastern Churches due to the form requirement of the priestly blessing, which is required for validity. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1108, §3; c. 1127, §1; *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, c. 828).
- "In addition to the provisions established in §1, nos. 1 and 2, the local ordinary can confer to any Catholic priest the faculty to bless the marriage of the faithful Christians of the Eastern Churches who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church if they request it spontaneously, and provided there is nothing to preclude the valid and licit celebration of the marriage. The same priest, however, with the necessary prudence, shall inform the competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church of the case." (*CIC*, c. 1116, §3).

### 7.4.9 Convalidation of Marriage

- A Convalidation occurs in instances in which an invalid marriage is made valid in accordance with the norms of the Church. Invalidity often occurs when one or both of the couple is/are Catholic, and attempted marriage contrary to the Church's canonical laws without a dispensation.
- To convalidate a marriage which is invalid, it is required that the impediment which rendered it invalid ceases or is dispensed.

- A Convalidation requires all elements of Canonical Form; namely a new exchange of the marriage vows before a priest or deacon, according the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*.
  - o A Convalidation is not a “blessing,” nor a “recognition” of a previous exchange of vows (which were invalid), but, through the new exchange of vows, creates of a valid marriage through a new exchange of consent. The couple must provide proof of a valid civil marriage.
  - o The couple is to be instructed that a Convalidation is their valid marriage in the Church.
  - o Convalidations require the same marriage preparation process as offered for all couples, including ascertaining their freedom and readiness to marry. In rare circumstances, where the pastor decides to dispense them from portions of the preparation when evaluating the couple’s readiness for marriage, prudential judgement is to be used regarding Pre-Cana, Fully Engaged, etc.
  - o A Convalidation is only possible when at least one of the parties was Catholic at the time of a civil ceremony.
    - When neither party was Catholic at the time of consent, they do not need a Convalidation if they later enter the Catholic Church, as their previous exchange of vows is presumed valid. Contact the Office of the Chancellor with any questions.
    - In cases of marriage convalidations and marriages that follow a *Declaration of Nullity* of a previous marriage of one or both spouses, more simple celebrations of Marriage are encouraged.
- Due to an extraordinary situation (**in very rare cases**), an essential element is identified as missing which affects the validity of the Sacrament and it is not possible for the couple to again exchange their vows, a Radical Sanation (*sanatio in radice*) may be sought from the Diocesan Bishop that retroactively renders valid a marriage that was invalid from its origin without the renewal of consent by either party, provided that both the man and woman were free to marry at that time and that their mutual consent continues from the invalid wedding ceremony. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1161-1165).
  - o Priests and deacons should contact the Office of the Chancellor for additional guidance.
  - o N.B. Sanations should only be sought in extraordinary circumstances, and never anticipated when ministering to a couple.

## 7.5 PASTORAL GUIDANCE FOR PARTICULAR MARRIAGE SITUATIONS

- Recognizing the pastoral realities of Catholic marriages today, several pastoral situations present themselves with regularity, each having particular requirements of the couple and the priest / deacon and others assisting them in marriage preparation.

### 7.5.1 Marriage Between Two Catholics

- Marriages are to be celebrated in a parish church where either of the parties reside, or has quasi-domicile, or month long residence or, if it concerns transients, in the parish where they actually reside. With the permission of the proper pastor, marriages can be celebrated in another church. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1115).
  - o Parish registration is not a pre-requisite for marriage in the Catholic Church, but can be an effective invitation to participate more fully in parochial life.



- o If either party is not well known to the priest/deacon or pastoral leader, an *affidavit of freedom to marry* should be requested.
- o Weddings between two Catholics take place in a Catholic church.
  - Weddings may also take place in designated locations approved by the Diocesan Bishop such as college/university chapels. In this case, *Permission for Marriage Outside a Sacred Place* is needed. (See 7.4.4 *Dispensations and Permissions*).

### **7.5.2 Marriage between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person**

- Before entering a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, this circumstance REQUIRES:
  - o A dispensation from *Disparity of Cult* granted and recorded at the Catholic parish;
  - o Receiving the promise of the Catholic party to live their faith in the Catholic Church and to do all in his/her power to give the children the Catholic faith, including Baptism (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 1°);
  - o Informing the non-Catholic party of the Catholic's responsibility for the faith formation of the children (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 2°); and
  - o "Unbaptized persons should present satisfactory proof of freedom to marry." (*USCCB Complimentary Norms for all Latin Rite Dioceses*, 2000).

### **7.5.3 Marriage Between a Catholic and a Validly Baptized non-Catholic**

- Before entering a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, this circumstance REQUIRES:
  - o *Permission for Mixed Religion* to be granted and recorded at the Catholic parish;
  - o Receiving the promise of the Catholic party to live their faith in the Catholic Church and to do all in his/her power to give the children the Catholic faith, including Baptism (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 1°);
  - o Informing the non-Catholic party of the Catholic's responsibility for the faith formation of the children (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 2°); and
  - o "Baptized non-Catholics should present satisfactory proof of Baptism and freedom to marry." (*USCCB Complimentary Norms for all Latin Rite Dioceses*, 2000).
- In a Mixed Marriage, if a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* has not been granted, the marriage will ordinarily take place in the parish church of the Catholic party. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1118).
  - o Upon written request, a priest or deacon may be granted permission to perform a Mixed Marriage in a non-Catholic church provided:
    - express, written delegation is obtained;
    - the priest or deacon will be the sole official to ask for and receive the consent of the couple;
    - the priest or deacon will sign the civil license as the officiant; and
    - the celebration of Matrimony occurs outside of Mass when the marriage takes place in a non-Catholic church, using the Celebration of Matrimony Without Mass. (See 7.6.7 *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Without Mass*).
- Only the local Ordinary of the Catholic party has the right to dispense from the Canonical Form in individual cases (received in writing), thereby allowing the Mixed Marriage to take place before a non-Catholic clergyman and two witnesses or, in rare instances, before a civil official and two witnesses. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1127, §2).

### 7.5.4 Marriage Between a Catholic and an Orthodox Christian

- Before entering a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, this circumstance REQUIRES:
  - *Permission for Mixed Religion* to be granted and recorded at the Catholic parish;
  - receiving the promise of the Catholic party to live their faith in the Catholic Church and to do all in his/her power to give the children the Catholic faith, including Baptism (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 1°);
  - informing the non-Catholic party of the Catholic's responsibility for the faith formation of the children (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1125, 2°); and
  - if the ceremony is to take place in the church of the Orthodox Christian, a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* must be obtained.
- The Eastern non-Catholic Churches require the presence of a priest whom they consider to be the minister of the Sacrament.
  - If a Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic of an oriental rite, the canonical form of the celebration is to be observed only for liceity; for validity, however, the presence of the sacred minister (priest) is required along with the observance of the other requirements of law." (*CIC*, c. 1127, §1).

### 7.5.5 Marriage Between a Latin Catholic and an Eastern Catholic

- Before entering a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, this circumstance REQUIRES:
  - The priest/deacon or pastoral leader to contact the Office of the Chancellor as soon as possible; and
  - A priest must be the official witness. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1108, §3, 1127, §1; *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, c. 828).

### 7.5.6 Those With No Domicile/Quasi-Domicile in the Diocese of Rochester but the Marriage is Being Celebrated in the Diocese of Rochester (destination marriages)

- Marriage preparation is carried out in the diocese(s) in which the party resides.
  - Once completed, the pre marriage inventory file and original paperwork is forwarded by the party's priest/deacon or pastoral leader where they reside to their own Chancery Office, who grants the *visum est* ("to look at carefully"), and then forwards the file to the Diocese of Rochester's Chancery, who, after granting the *nihil obstat* ("nothing stands in the way"), forwards the file to the parish where the marriage will be held.
  - The name and address of the parish where the marriage will be celebrated, the name of the celebrant, and the date of marriage are to be clearly indicated.
  - Marriage files should only be sent from parish to chancery; chancery to chancery; and then from chancery to parish; **files should never be sent directly from parish to parish.**
    - If a marriage file arrives directly from another parish, contact the Office of the Chancellor to ensure all dispensations/permissions have been granted.

### 7.5.7 Those With Domicile in the Diocese of Rochester, but Who Will Marry in Another Diocese

- Marriage preparation is carried out in the parish in which the party resides, fulfilling the requirements of the Diocese of Rochester.

- o The pre-marriage inventory and all other necessary paperwork, in original form, are completed by the party's priest/deacon or pastoral leader and then sent to the Diocese of Rochester's Chancery Office, who, after granting the *visum est*, forwards the file to the Chancery Office of the Diocese where the wedding will take place. After granting any necessary permissions and/or dispensations, the *nihil obstat* is given and the Chancery Office forwards the entire file to the parish where the marriage will take place.
  - When a marriage takes place in another diocese, the Ordinary of that diocese should be consulted before a dispensation from the Canonical Form is granted. The Diocese of Rochester's Office of the Chancellor will make this consultation. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1127, §2).
- It is necessary that the Chancery receive prenuptial files for weddings outside the Diocese at least **6 weeks** in advance of the scheduled wedding date.

## 7.6 CELEBRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

---

- “Before a marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration.” (*CIC*, c. 1066).
- “Since Matrimony establishes spouses in a public state of life in the Church, its liturgical celebration is public, taking place in the presence of a priest [or a deacon] and other witnesses.” (*Compendium of the CCC*, no. 343).
  - o In addition to the priest or deacon who serves as an authorized witness, at least two additional witnesses are essential for a valid celebration of marriage. (*CIC*, c. 1108, §1).
- “The festive character of the celebration of Marriage should be suitably expressed even in the manner of decorating the church... no favoritism [should be] shown to private persons or classes of persons.” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 31).
  - o “Here let me say a word to fiancés. Have the courage to be different. Don't let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances... You are capable of opting for a more modest and simple celebration in which love takes precedence over everything else.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 211).
- Every wedding occurs within the Church's liturgical year. Before planning the wedding liturgy, the liturgical season of the Church must be considered, observing the unique character of the season and the corresponding rubrics.
  - o When a marriage is celebrated during Advent or Lent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these times. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 32).
  - o If the marriage is celebrated on a Sunday or a Solemnity, the Mass of the Day is used with the nuptial blessing and, where appropriate, the special final blessing. The Liturgy of the Word is extremely helpful in emphasizing the meaning of the Sacrament and the obligations of marriage. When the wedding Mass may not be used, one of the readings in nos. 67-105 should be chosen, except from Holy Thursday to Easter and on the feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and other holydays of obligation. On the Sundays of the Christmas season and throughout the year, in Masses which are not parish Masses, the wedding Mass may be used without change. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, nos. 34, 54).
  - o Scriptural readings, with the approved translations, are never to be replaced by readings from other texts.

- o “On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the Diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial Community to take on the task of reader.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133). While maintaining that a Catholic in good standing serve as a reader at a wedding according to Catholic form, permission is granted in exceptional circumstances for a non-Catholic, whose life witnesses to the Word of God, to read with the consent of the pastor/administrator.
- Eucharistic sharing is not permitted. Therefore, Mixed Marriages are celebrated outside of Mass or, when a *Dispensation from Canonical Form* is granted, outside an ecclesial community’s communion service.
- “The rites prescribed in the liturgical books approved by the Church or received by legitimate custom are to be observed in the celebration of a marriage.” (*CIC*, c. 1119).
  - o Effective December 30, 2016, the use of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony: Second Typical Edition*, ©2016, is mandated and obligatory.
    - Older versions of the marriage rite (those dated 1969, 1970 or 1991), are no longer permitted to be used and should be properly discarded to avoid confusion.
- The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony: Second Typical Edition*, ©2016, includes the rubrics and texts for incorporating the *option* of the arras (coins) and/or the Blessing and Placing of the Lazo (wedding garland) or the Veil, and should be used as described in the Rite, as applicable.
  - o The exchange of arras, or coins, in the Catholic communities of the Philippines and various Hispanic countries, expresses mutual sharing and the couple’s pledge to be good stewards in the new household.
  - o A lazo is generally a double looped rosary that rests on the shoulders of the couple as a sign of the unity in the vows they have professed.
  - o The veil or shawl placed completely over the bride and over the shoulders of the groom to symbolize that the bride is the center of the new home the couple is about to establish.
  - o The use of a “unity candle” or “unity sand” are not contained in the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, and are not components of Catholic liturgy. If the couple wishes to incorporate the unity candle/unity sand into the wedding day, it is most suitable to incorporate it as part of the “Grace Before Meals” at the reception.
  - o Praying for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and/or the Holy Family are important traditions in the Church. While prayer and presenting flowers to the statue or shrine of a church is a time-honored practice, it is not specifically part of the elements included in the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. However, this pious practice, if desired by the bride and groom, certainly may take place once the official Rite of Marriage is completed, specifically following the Prayer After Communion and before the Final Blessing during The Celebration of Matrimony within Mass; or following the Nuptial Blessing and before the Final Blessing during The Celebration of Matrimony Without Mass. A hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary (e.g., *Ave Maria*) may be sung at this time.
- Photographers and videographers should follow the instructions of the church where the wedding takes place, always being mindful that the church is a sacred place and the wedding is a sacred ceremony.
  - o Photographers and videographers are not to obstruct or interfere with the wedding liturgy or intrude upon the solemnity of what is taking place.

- o Photo and video related concerns must be discussed well in advance of the ceremony with the priest or deacon who will preside over the ceremony.
- An offering to the parish for weddings is customary according to the current approved Diocesan scale for such offerings. A wedding should never be denied because of an inability to make an offering. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1181).

### 7.6.1 Exchange of Consent

- “In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ’s grace, mutually confer upon each other the Sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church.” (*CCC*, no. 1623).
- “Matrimonial consent is given when a man and a woman manifest the will to give themselves to each other irrevocably in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love. Since consent constitutes Matrimony, it is indispensable and irreplaceable. For a valid marriage the consent must have as its object true Matrimony, and be a human act which is conscious and free and not determined by duress or coercion.” (*Compendium of the CCC*, no. 344).
- The exchange of consent is the essential element in the marriage bond.
  - o The form of the exchange of consent must be chosen from the four approved options provided in the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 63, 97, 128).
  - o This part of the marriage rite is essential to the Sacrament and there can be no deviation since it is the approved text which provides the form for marriage. Therefore, it is not permissible to alter the prescribed form in any way, substitute other forms, or for the couple to compose their own version of the exchange of consent.
- Marriage is a Sacrament of the living, and is therefore to be received while in the state of grace. “To receive the Sacrament of Marriage fruitfully, spouses are urged especially to approach the Sacraments of Penance and of the Most Holy Eucharist.” (*CIC*, c. 1065, §2; *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 18).
- The rehearsal offers another opportunity for evangelization for both the wedding party and the families of the couple to be married. Adequate time should be scheduled so that those unfamiliar with the Mass or Liturgy of the Word will be able to participate fully at the celebration. Additionally, pastoral care should be exercised with the opportunity for those at the rehearsal to receive the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
- Two witnesses are necessary, who have the use of reason and the capacity to reasonably perceive the marriage. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1108).
- The priest/deacon witnessing the exchange of consent has the responsibility to ensure that the marriage license has been obtained prior to the wedding rehearsal and is completed and mailed as soon as possible following the ceremony. (See 7.2.2 *Marriage Licenses in the State of New York*). Failure to do so is subject to civil penalty.
  - o The license should be handed to the priest or deacon before the wedding rehearsal begins, or even earlier to avoid any confusion.

### 7.6.2 Liturgical Music at Weddings

- “The chants to be sung during the Rite of Marriage should be appropriate and should express the faith of the Church, with attention paid to the importance of the Responsorial Psalm within the Liturgy of the Word. What is said concerning the chants applies also to the selection of other musical works.” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 30).



- The music which is chosen for the celebration of these rites can play a powerful role in teaching the faithful about the reality of marriage and may provide a catechesis about the Sacrament itself.
- Even when popular/secular music has special meaning to the couple, or those in attendance, such works are inappropriate for use in liturgical celebrations.
  - Music which appeals to the couple personally, and which is of a nonreligious nature, may best be incorporated into another part of the day. (e.g., the wedding reception).
- The use of pre-recorded music “lacks the authenticity provided by the living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sing to the Lord*, 93) and should not be used within the Church’s liturgies.
- Appropriate music brings a sense of unity and a quality of solemn joy. Therefore, liturgical music must be chosen carefully and all music (both sung and instrumental) must be sacred in nature and purpose. The couple should meet with the parish music director (organist) well in advance of the wedding date and *before* choosing music for the wedding to understand what is appropriate and possible from the rich patrimony of sacred music for the occasion.
- The words should accurately articulate the Catholic faith and express the Sacrament of Marriage’s participation in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.
  - Any music associated with situations and activities that contradict Christian values is not permitted because it would offend the Christian community gathered around the couple in faith.
    - Songs of secular origin are always inappropriate for liturgy, and include those from Broadway musicals, movies, or television shows whose associations are secular rather than sacred (i.e. “The Bridal Chorus”, or any pieces that were composed for secular rather than liturgical purposes).
  - Any music that refers only to the secular nature of love and bears no reference to the Christian concept of love and/or marriage is to be avoided.
- If a wedding program is to be printed and includes the hymns, all reprint permissions must be secured and the proper copyright information must be included in the program. All copyright fees must be paid. It is a serious legal and moral infringement to reproduce copyrighted material without proper permission. Parishes should offer assistance regarding copyright information.
- Music ministers are to receive remuneration according to the current approved diocesan scale for such services, posted and available on Lotus notes. However, the marriage rites should not be diminished because of the inability of the couple to make an offering. In charity, the parish should make adequate provision for music if genuine need is present.

### **7.6.3 Role of a non-Catholic Minister in a Catholic church**

- Upon the request of the couple, a minister of the non-Catholic party may be invited to attend the wedding ceremony.
  - “In a Catholic liturgical celebration, ministers of other churches and ecclesial communities may have the place and liturgical honors proper to their rank and role, if this is judged desirable.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, no. 119).

- o With written permission from the Diocesan Bishop, a non-Catholic minister may participate in this ceremony by reading scripture, preaching, and blessing the couple, but in a manner which respects the canonical form which is the competency of the priest or deacon. (Cf. *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, no. 158).

#### **7.6.4 Role of a Priest / Deacon in a non-Catholic church**

- With the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, and if invited to do so, a priest or deacon may attend or participate in some way in the celebration of mixed marriage situations where the *Dispensation from Canonical Form* has been granted.
  - o In this case, there may be only one ceremony in which the presiding minister receives the marriage vows from both parties.
    - At the invitation of the minister, the priest or deacon may offer other appropriate prayers or read from Sacred Scripture, always witnessing to the Catholic faith.

#### **7.6.5 The Order of Celebrating Matrimony**

- The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* provides three forms for celebrating marriage in the Roman Catholic Church and is decided in consultation with the priest/deacon overseeing the couple's preparation. The options are: The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass, The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Without Mass, or The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Between a Catholic and a Catechumenor or a Non-Christian.

#### **7.6.6 The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Within Mass**

- Since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11), and “by which, above all, [the couple’s] charity is nurtured and they are raised up to communion with the Lord and with their neighbor” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 35), it is the norm when two Catholics marry to exchange vows in the context of Holy Mass.
  - o “There, at the Eucharistic supper (Revelation 3:20), spouses can always seal anew the paschal covenant which united them and which ought to reflect the covenant which God sealed with mankind in the cross. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of the new covenant, where Christ’s redemptive work is carried out. (Luke 22:20). The close bond between married life and the Eucharist thus becomes all the more clear. For the food of the Eucharist offers the spouses the strength and incentive needed to live the marriage covenant each day as a ‘domestic church.’” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 318).
- Since the Most Holy Eucharist is “the wonderful Sacrament... by which the unity of the Church is both signified and brought about,” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2.), “Eucharistic communion is inseparably linked to full ecclesial communion and its visible expression.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 129; **(See 2.3 Reception of Holy Communion)**).
  - o Noting that sad divisions do exist, parishes nonetheless welcome to the Wedding Mass non-practicing Catholics, people of all faiths, or no faith, to come to pray and to rejoice with the couple. Those who may attend Catholic liturgies who are not familiar with Catholic worship and teaching benefit greatly from honest and charitable *guidance* regarding the sharing of Eucharistic Communion.



- o “Although pastors are ministers of Christ’s Gospel for all, they should, nonetheless, direct special attention to those, whether Catholics or non-Catholics, who never or rarely take part in the celebration of Marriage or the Eucharist...” (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 37).
  - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s 1996 statement, *Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion* is to be followed. The statement is available at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion.cfm>
- The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* presumes that the priest who is the Main Celebrant at the celebration of Matrimony within Mass is also the cleric who asks for and receives the consent (vows) of the couple.
  - o “One and the same Priest must always exercise the presidential function in all of its parts, except for those parts which are proper to a Mass at which the Bishop is present.” (*GIRM*, 108).

### 7.6.7 The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Without Mass

- Used when a Catholic marries a validly baptized person from another Christian church or ecclesial community. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 79).

### 7.6.8 The Order of Celebrating Matrimony Between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian

- Used when a Catholic marries a Catechumen or a Non-Christian. (Cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 118).
- This is the proper rite in all Matrimony celebrations involving a Catechumen. “The marriages of Catechumens, whether with other Catechumens or with baptized Christians or even non-Christians, should be celebrated at a Liturgy of the Word and never at the Eucharistic liturgy.” (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate for the United States*).

## 7.7 POST MARRIAGE PASTORAL CARE AND CONCERN

- “Pastors of souls are obliged to take care that the ecclesial community offers assistance... to those already married so that, while faithfully maintaining and protecting the conjugal covenant, they may day by day come to lead holier and fuller lives in their families.” (*CIC*, c. 1063, §4).
- Bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and the whole people of God must make a concerted effort to work ardently and incessantly for the safeguarding and the holiness of marriage, as created by God, so that it may always be lived in its entire human and Christian fullness.
- “In this sense every local Church and, in more particular terms, every parochial community, must become more vividly aware of the grace and responsibility that it receives from the Lord in order that it may promote the pastoral care of the family. No plan for organized pastoral work, at any level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family.” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 70).

- Ritual celebrations of the engagement or of significant anniversaries can strengthen the couple in their commitment to each other. These celebrations are also occasions to proclaim the Christian values of marriage. Appropriate prayers and the *Order of Blessing a Married Couple within Mass on the Anniversary of Marriage* is included in the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony: Second Typical Edition*, ©2016.

## 8. HOLY ORDERS

“By divine institution, the Sacrament of Orders establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers through an indelible character which marks them. They are consecrated and designated, each according to his grade, to nourish the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ the Head the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing.” (*CIC*, c. 1008).

“Holy Orders is the Sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time; thus, it is the Sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate.” (*CCC*, no. 1536; *CIC*, c. 1009 §1).

Each of these three degrees of Holy Orders are “conferred by the imposition of hands and the consecratory prayer which the liturgical books prescribe for the individual grades.” (*CIC*, c. 1009 §2).

### 8.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- “Episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying, also the offices of teaching and ruling. . . . In fact . . . by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such ways that bishops, in an eminent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representative (*in Eius persona agant*). ‘By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors.’” (*CCC*, no. 1558).
- “The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college and its support and instrument, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique sacerdotal college (*presbyterium*) dedicated, it is true, to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful they represent, in a certain sense, the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them.’ Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in return owe him love and obedience.” (*CCC*, no. 1567).
- Through the Rite of Ordination, a priest is given a share in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ. The “ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own Sacrament, the Sacrament of Holy Orders.” (*CCC*, no. 1547).

- “Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist.” (*Lumen Gentium*, 10).
- “Priests ‘as ministers of the sacred, especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, represent the person of Christ in a particular way. Because of... (this) sign value, it is therefore right that they take part in the Eucharist by exercising the order proper to them, that is, by celebrating or concelebrating the Mass.’” (*Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 43).
- “The Church teaches that priestly ordination is the indispensable condition for the valid celebration of the Eucharist. Indeed, ‘in the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, High Priest of the redemptive sacrifice.’ Certainly the ordained minister also acts ‘in the name of the whole Church, when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice.’ As a result, priests should be conscious of the fact that in their ministry they must never put themselves or their personal opinions in first place, but Jesus Christ. Any attempt to make themselves the centre of the liturgical action contradicts their very identity as priests. The priest is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord’s hands. This is seen particularly in his humility in leading the liturgical assembly, in obedience to the rite, uniting himself to it in mind and heart, and avoiding anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality ... The priesthood, as Saint Augustine said, is *amoris officium*, it is the office of the Good Shepherd, who offers his life for his sheep (John 10:14-15).” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 23).
- “Through the Rite of Ordination, a deacon is ordered ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry. For, strengthened by sacramental grace, they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity.’” (*Lumen Gentium*, 29).
- Every parish should pray frequently for the sanctity of all vocations, and, in particular, to offer prayers for vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Diocese of Rochester, creating a culture of priestly vocations in their parishes.

## 8.2 CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD AND DIACONATE

---

- “The diocesan bishop or the competent superior is to take care that before candidates are promoted to any Order, they are instructed properly about those things which belong to the Order and its obligations.” (*CIC*, c. 1028).
- Admission requirements used by the Diocese of Rochester’s Office of Vocations are governed by the Fifth Edition (or always the most recent edition) of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*, promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Similarly, the norms found in the *PPF* oversee the spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and human formation program for accredited seminaries used by the Diocese of Rochester.

- Admission requirements used by the Diocese of Rochester's Office of the Permanent Diaconate is governed by the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, First Edition (or always the most recent edition), promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

### **8.3 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT**

---

- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood are celebrations of great importance for the whole Church. The rites and ceremonies provide a thorough catechesis on the unity of the priesthood and the salvific ministry of those who are called, as well as the life of ordained service of a deacon.
- "Each person is to be ordained to the presbyterate or the diaconate by his proper bishop or with legitimate dimissorial letters from him." (*CIC*, c. 1015 §1).
- Concelebration by the priests of the Diocese at Ordination Masses with their Bishop is to be held in particularly high regard. Concelebrated Masses, on solemn days of the liturgical year, or any other occasion, are the norm whenever priests gather together with their own Bishop. (*Cf. GIRM*, 203).
- In the Diocese of Rochester, it is customary to renew priestly promises at the annual Chrism Mass celebrated during Holy Week.



# CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

“The Christian who dies in Christ reaches at the end of his earthly existence the fulfillment of that new life, which was begun in Baptism, strengthened in Confirmation, and nourished in the Eucharist, the foretaste of the heavenly banquet.... The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus goes “away from the body to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8). (*Compendium of the CCC*, no. 354).

“The Church offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope the seed of the body that will rise in glory. This offering is fully celebrated in the Eucharistic sacrifice; the blessings before and after Mass are sacramentals.” (*CCC*, no. 1683).

## 9. THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Central to the Catholic faith is the paschal mystery: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “Christ achieved His task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5).

The Funeral rites are an integral part of the pastoral care of the Church, who prays for the repose of the soul of the deceased while accompanying the family members and friends of the deceased from the moment of death to the time of burial. “At the Funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of the saints.” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 6).

While the death of a family member or a loved one causes sorrow, the Church brings hope in eternal life and consolation to the living by proclaiming our faith in Jesus Christ who conquered sin and death.



## 9.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

---

- Catholic belief in death as the entrance into eternity, hope in the resurrection, recognition of the value of prayer for the deceased, reverence for the body which remains and the sense of mystery and sacredness which surround the end of earthly life are all reflected in the Church's care for the deceased and the family and community of faith that survives them. Private prayer, united with the liturgical rites of the Church, help us to share in the Lord's paschal mystery and to hope for eternal union with God.
- "The Church's liturgical and sacramental life and proclamation of the Gospel make [the Paschal] mystery present in the life of the faithful." (*OCF*, 2).
- "The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins." (*OCF*, 6).
- A funeral is not a celebration of the life of the deceased, but, as with all of the Church's rites, a proclamation of the mysteries of Jesus Christ as they embrace the human experience and the deceased person.
- The time of death can be a time of evangelization and reconciliation for those who knew and loved the deceased. Priests, deacons and all members of the pastoral staff are to be ever-ready to minister to the bereaved.
- Family members or someone designated by the family should be invited into and involved in the planning and celebration of the funeral rites according to the liturgical norms of the Church and these diocesan policies.
- These rites, like all rites, do not belong to individuals, but are entrusted to the Church. All funeral rites must be coordinated through the parish with the knowledge of the pastor/administrator.
- "The funeral of any deceased member of the faithful should normally be celebrated in the church of that person's proper parish." (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 1).
- "However, any member of the faithful, or those in charge of the deceased person's funeral, may choose another church; this requires the consent of the proper pastor and a notification to the proper parish priest of the deceased." (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 2). This notification is made by the pastor/administrator hosting the funeral to the pastor/administrator of the deceased.
- "When death has occurred outside the person's proper parish, and the body is not returned there, and another church has not been chosen, the funeral rites are to be celebrated in the church of the parish where the death occurred, unless another church has been designated by particular law." (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 3).
- Parishes should be aware of the importance of hospitality for the bereaved family as well as the many visitors that may be present at a funeral liturgy. It is fitting for pastors/administrators and parish staff to assist members of the community in forming volunteer bereavement committees to provide hospitality at the time of the funeral and giving support to the family before and after the funeral.
- The *Order of Christian Funerals* (1989), with the accompanying "Appendix on Cremation" (1997), is to be used in the celebration of the funeral rites.
- Special sensitivity to ethnic/cultural diversity is important in the preparation of funeral rites,

but always with due regard to the norms set forth in the *Order of Christian Funerals*.

- Mindful of the importance of a Christian funeral, the Church prescribes that “deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law.” (*CIC*, c. 1176 § 1).
- Children, whose parents intended to have them baptized, but who died before Baptism have a right to a funeral. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1183 § 2).
- Catechumens are counted among Christ’s faithful, and as such, have a right to a Catholic funeral. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1183 § 1).
- “In the prudent judgment of the local ordinary, ecclesiastical funerals can be granted to baptized persons who are enrolled in a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community unless their intention is evidently to the contrary and provided that their own minister is not available.” (*CIC*, c. 1183 § 3).
- “Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals:
  - o notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics;
  - o those who chose the cremation of their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith; and
  - o other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful.
 If any doubt occurs, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment must be followed.” (*CIC*, c. 1184).
- People who find themselves alienated from God, the Church, family members or others often are moved by the experience of death and wish to become reconciled to God, the Church and others. Priests should be generous in extending that opportunity through the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, hearing Confessions as time permits on the day of or evening before the Funeral Liturgy.
- An offering to the parish for funeral services is customary according to the current approved diocesan scale for such offerings. A funeral is never to be denied because of an inability to make an offering. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1181).
- The Funeral rites are comprised of three principal parts: the Vigil for the Deceased; the Funeral Liturgy (the Mass, the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral); and the Rite of Committal.

## 9.2 THE VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

- The Vigil for the Deceased, commonly known as The Wake, allows the family members and friends to remember the deceased in the context of faithful trust and prayerful thanksgiving.
- The Vigil for the Deceased, the Office of the Dead, and other prayer services help express the Church’s faith in the paschal mystery and to console and strengthen the mourners with Sacred Scripture and the prayers of the Church.
- The Vigil for the Deceased provides an excellent opportunity to recall the memories and events that have been a part of the deceased’s life.

- Effective catechesis stresses the value of this time of Vigil, and of calling hours. Pastors/administrators, parish staff and funeral directors can work together with the family to insure the benefits of this time.
- “The Vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place.” (*OCF*, 55). With the pastor’s/administrator’s permission, it may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy. (Cf. *OCF*, 55). It is advisable to schedule the Vigil at a specific time.
- Forms of devotional prayer, such as the Rosary, are also appropriate during the course of the Vigil, but should not take the place of the official prayer of the Church, the Vigil for the Deceased. Participation of those present is to be encouraged.
- Care should be taken that these rites are celebrated with reverence and respect for their religious nature.

### 9.3 THE FUNERAL LITURGY

---

- “When one of its members dies, the Church encourages the celebration of the Mass.” (*OCF*, 154).
- “The Funeral Liturgy (a Funeral Mass or, in rare circumstances, the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass) is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased.” (*OCF*, 128).
- “Among the Masses for the Dead, the Funeral Mass holds first place. It may be celebrated on any day except for Solemnities that are Holydays of Obligation, Thursday of Holy Week (Holy Thursday), the Paschal Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law.” (*GIRM*, 380).
- Since the proper setting for Mass is a sacred place, Mass is celebrated in a church and not in a funeral home or similar facility. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 932 §1; c. 1228; **See 2.1 General Principles**).
- “The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow. In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the Dead.” (*OCF*, 39).
- “The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church [the Catholic Church].” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133). Readers are fully initiated, practicing Catholics, who are “truly suited to carrying out this function” (*GIRM*, 101), and whose lives witness to the Word of God which they proclaim. Proper training is necessary.
  - o “On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the Diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial Community to take on the task of reader.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133). While maintaining that a Catholic in good standing serve as a reader at a funeral Mass, permission is granted in exceptional circumstances for a non-Catholic Christian, whose life witnesses to the Word of God, to read with the consent of the pastor/administrator.
- At the Funeral Masses, there is a brief Homily by the priest or deacon, “but to the exclusion of a funeral eulogy of any kind.” (*GIRM*, 382). Carefully selected illustrations from the deceased person’s life may be used, if appropriate.

- o “A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the Gospel reading ... but there is never to be a eulogy.” (*OCF*, 27; Cf. *GIRM*, 382).
- o The homily relates Christian death to the paschal mystery of our Lord’s death and resurrection. Attentive to the grief of those present, the homily properly includes an expression of praise and gratitude to God for the gift of a Christian life and such virtues or strengths apparent in the deceased’s life.
- Since the Most Holy Eucharist is “the wonderful Sacrament ... by which the unity of the Church is both signified and brought about,” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2), “Eucharistic communion is inseparably linked to full ecclesial communion and its visible expression.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 129; **See 2.3 Reception of Holy Communion**).
  - o Noting that sad divisions do exist, parishes nonetheless welcome to the Funeral Mass non-practicing Catholics, people of all faiths, or no faith, to come to pray and mourn a deceased family member or friend. Those who may attend Catholic liturgies who are not familiar with Catholic worship and teaching benefit greatly from honest and charitable guidance regarding the norms governing the reception of Eucharistic Communion.
  - o The United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s 1996 statement, *Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion*, is to be followed. The statement is available at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion.cfm>

### 9.3.1 Liturgical Music at Funerals

- “Music is integral to the funeral rites ... The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord’s suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (*OCF*, 30).
- The music which is chosen for the celebration of these rites can play a powerful role in supporting, consoling, and uplifting the participants, helping “to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory.” (*OCF*, 31).
- “Music should never be used to memorialize the deceased, but rather to give praise to the Lord, whose Paschal Sacrifice has freed us from the bonds of death.” (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 248).
- Even when popular/secular music has special meaning to the deceased or the mourners, such works are inappropriate for use in liturgical celebrations.
- The use of pre-recorded music “lacks the authenticity provided by the living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sing to the Lord*, 93) and should not be used within the Church’s funeral rites.
- Music ministers are to receive remuneration according to the current approved diocesan scale for such services, posted and available on Lotus notes. However, the funeral rites should not be diminished because of the inability of the deceased family to make an offering. In charity, the parish should make adequate provision for music.

## 9.4 WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

---

- Words of Remembrance are not required, but if permitted by the pastor/administrator, take place in this order of preference:
  1. at the conclusion of the Vigil for the Deceased, after the Concluding Prayer, before the Blessing and Dismissal;
  2. at a reception following the Funeral Mass;
  3. at the conclusion of the Rite of Committal at the cemetery;
  4. at the Funeral Liturgy:
    - o at a Funeral Mass, after the Prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation. (Cf. *OCF*, 170). For pastoral reasons, Words of Remembrance may instead be given prior to the beginning of the Funeral Mass, before the Collect is prayed;
    - o at Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass, after the Lord's Prayer and before the Final Commendation.
- The Diocesan Policy for Words of Remembrance at a Funeral Liturgy, ADDENDUM 6, are to be followed in all circumstances.
- Should a family member or friend be designated to offer Words of Remembrance, ADDENDUM 7, should be given to the person as soon as possible to guide his/her preparation.
- The pastor/administrator may legitimately establish a parish policy of not permitting Words of Remembrance at a Funeral liturgy.

## 9.5 CREMATION AND CATHOLIC FUNERALS

---

- "The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching." (*CIC*, c. 1176).
- "Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites." (*OCF*, 413).
- "The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition." (*OCF*, 416).
- In this regard, please refer to ADDENDUM 8, which contains the text of *Ad resurgendum cum Christo*, regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation.

### 9.5.1 Cremation Following the Funeral

- When the body of the deceased is to be cremated, this is ordinarily done following the Funeral Liturgy. In this case, the Vigil for the Deceased and the Funeral Liturgy itself are celebrated as normal, with the body present. Following the Funeral Liturgy, the body is cremated, and the

remains of the individual are then buried or entombed using a form of the Rite of Committal. This permits the presence of the body at the Funeral Liturgy serving as a Christian expression of the sanctity of the body of the deceased and the hope of the resurrection.

### 9.5.2 Cremation Before the Funeral

- This option may be chosen “when extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice.” (*OCF*, 415). In this case, Appendix 2 of the *Order of Christian Funerals* is used.

### 9.5.3 Burial of Cremated Remains

- Since the human body has an eternal destiny, the Church requires that cremated remains of a body be buried or entombed immediately after the Funeral in the same timely manner as a body.
  - “The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium.” (*OCF*, 416).
  - “The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.” (*OCF*, 416).
  - “Whenever possible, appropriate means for recording with dignity the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased.” (*OCF*, 415).
  - It is not appropriate for cremated remains to be divided among family members or to be included in jewelry, which render impossible proper burial.

## 9.6 THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

- The Rite of Committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, entrusts the body to its resting place with the Church’s expression of hope, awaiting the resurrection of the body.
- Catholic Cemeteries exist for a prayerful resting place memorializing the existence of deceased men and women who now await the resurrection of the body in Christ. “If this cannot be achieved, however, then individual graves are to be properly blessed.” (*CIC*, c. 1240 §2).

## 9.7 CONTINUED PASTORAL OUTREACH AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE DECEASED

- The weeks and months following a death in the family may be difficult. Prayer and participation in the life of the Church provide comfort and a way of continuing the relationship with the deceased family member in the communion of the saints. Visits to the cemetery also provide comfort and an ongoing assurance of the Church’s hope in the resurrection of the dead.
- Preeminent among these remembrances is the request for Masses to be offered for the deceased, perhaps on the anniversary of his/her birth, death, etc.
  - “For us who profess the Catholic faith, there is no better way to cherish the memory of our beloved dead than to have Holy Mass offered for them. The Mass also renews our



belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the eternal life wrought by His rising from the dead.” (*Bishop Matano’s Pastoral Letter on Christian Funerals and the Month of All Souls, November, 2014*). <http://catholiccourier.com/commentary/bishops-column/renewing-faith-cherishing-the-dead/>

- o “From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.” (CCC, no. 1032).
- o Additionally, the month of November is dedicated to the commemoration of All Souls, and parish remembrances are encouraged with designated Masses for parishioners who have died.



# ADDENDUM 1

## THE SELECTION, PREPARATION AND MISSIONING OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- Step 1:** The Bishop's permission is to be sought by the pastor/administrator to select and prepare a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. *Selection should not precede this step.* An excessive number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not be requested. The number should be in proportion to the number of communicants. When ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (priests, deacons) and/or instituted acolytes (seminarians) are available, they should distribute Holy Communion. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 160).
- Step 2:** Parishes are strongly encouraged to actively select individuals who are particularly well qualified to serve in this capacity, not simply asking for volunteers. The faithful who become extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion "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." (*Immensae Caritatis*, 1, IV, 1973). They must be sixteen years of age and, if married, must be validly married within the Church. Daily communicants usually are excellent candidates.
- Step 3:** The preparation of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is to consist of at least two sessions dealing with the Church's teaching on the Eucharist and dealing also with the practical applications in the parish, institution, or residence for the homebound. (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition*; *Sacramentum Caritatis*; *Redemptionis Sacramentum*; *USCCB Liturgy Guide: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass*; *USCCB Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*.)
- Step 4:** At the completion of the training sessions, the candidates are to complete the *biographical data* requested by the Diocese and all candidates for extraordinary minister of Holy Communion are required to sign the *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. These are submitted by the pastor/administrator/chaplain with a request that the candidates be officially approved by the Bishop.
- Step 5:** A letter of appointment is sent by the Bishop to the pastor/administrator and is accompanied by individual identification cards for each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- Step 6:** A formal missioning ceremony may be held in the parish, according to the Rite found in the *Book of Blessings*.

**Final Notations:**

- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are missioned for a three-year term which may be renewed at the discretion of the pastor/administrator/chaplain.
- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are missioned for their parish only and are not to exercise this ministry outside of their parish.
- When an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion discontinues this ministry, for whatever purpose, the Diocesan Chancery Office is to be notified.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

---

The love and care with which the Most Holy Eucharist is handled helps to bring together the faithful so we can truly know “It is the Lord.” (John 21:7). The privilege of distributing Holy Communion, whether the Sacred Host or the Precious Blood, is not simply a ministry among many others, as important as others may be – distributing Holy Communion is a great service to the Church and our brothers and sisters in the family of God. For this reason, since participation in this ministry is a privilege and not a right, prayer and preparation are required, and the selection process is a bit more intentional and thorough. The questions asked below, similar to those asked on parish registration forms, help the Diocese know better those to whom this privilege is extended.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must fulfill requirements listed in the *Code of Canon Law* for sacramental sponsors. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874 §1, nn. 2-4). Additionally, they must have completed their sixteenth year; be a Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be undertaken; not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; be reverential, respectful of his or her Catholic faith and the Most Blessed Sacrament; and of good moral character.

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Parish or Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

5. E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Year joined present parish: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Education:

Schools attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Marital Status (If married, it must be a valid marriage according to the Catholic Church:

Please indicate place, church and date): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Contributions of service to:

a) Parish Community: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Civic Community: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Other helpful information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All candidates for service as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion are required to sign a *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. A copy is to be filed at the Chancery Office.

# PROFESSION OF FAITH FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

This *Profession of Faith for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion* is a privileged opportunity to witness to our brothers and sisters of our belief in the Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Our belief in the Real Presence is expressed in the following teaching taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

“The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as “the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.” In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*’ “This presence is called ‘real’ - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.” (no. 1374).

“The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: ‘Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.’” (no. 1376).

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby renew my belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist taught and proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Moreover, as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion I rejoice in my belief in Christ’s Real Presence in this Sacrament, and under the direction and supervision of the pastor/administrator, exercise my ministry with reverence and devotion.

Also, “I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.” (*RCIA Profession of Faith*, 491).

---

Signature of Pastor/Administrator

---

Signature of Candidate

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

# ADDENDUM 2

## *Circular Letter*

### THE RITUAL EXPRESSION OF THE GIFT OF PEACE AT MASS

1. “Peace I leave you; my peace I give you”<sup>1</sup> As they gathered in the cenacle, these are the words with which Jesus promises the gift of peace to his disciples before going to face his passion, in order to implant in them the joyful certainty of his steadfast presence. After his resurrection, the Lord fulfills his promise by appearing among them in the place where they had gathered for fear of the Jews saying, “Peace be with you!”<sup>2</sup> Christ’s peace is the fruit of the redemption that he brought into the world by his death and resurrection — the gift that the Risen Lord continues to give even today to his Church as she gathers for the celebration of the Eucharist in order to bear witness to this in everyday life.
2. In the Roman liturgical tradition, the exchange of peace is placed before Holy Communion with its own specific theological significance. Its point of reference is found in the Eucharistic contemplation of the Paschal mystery as the “Paschal kiss” of the Risen Christ present on the altar<sup>3</sup> as in contradistinction to that done by other liturgical traditions which are inspired by the Gospel passage from St. Matthew (Matthew 5:23). The rites which prepare for Communion constitute a well expressed unity in which each ritual element has its own significance and which contributes to the overall ritual sequence of sacramental participation in the mystery being celebrated. The sign of peace, therefore, is placed between the Lord’s Prayer, to which is joined the embolism which prepares for the gesture of peace, and the breaking of the bread, in the course of which the Lamb of God is implored to give us his peace. With this gesture, whose “function is to manifest peace, communion and charity,”<sup>4</sup> the Church “implores peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament,”<sup>5</sup> that is, the Body of Christ the Lord.
3. In the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI entrusted to this Congregation the competence of considering questions about the exchange of peace,<sup>6</sup> in order to safeguard the sacred sense of the Eucharistic celebration and the sense of mystery at the moment of receiving Holy Communion: “By its nature the Eucharist is the sacrament of peace. At Mass this dimension of the Eucharistic mystery finds specific expression in the sign of peace. Certainly this sign has great value (John 14:27). In our times, fraught with fear and conflict, this gesture has become particularly eloquent, as the Church has become increasingly conscious of her responsibility to pray insistently for the gift of peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family. [ ... ] We can thus understand the emotion so often felt during the sign of peace at a liturgical celebration. Even so, during the Synod of Bishops there was discussion about the appropriateness of greater restraint in this gesture, which can be exaggerated and cause a certain distraction in the assembly just before the reception of Communion. It should be kept in mind that nothing is lost when the sign of peace is marked by a sobriety which preserves the proper spirit of the celebration, as, for example, when it is restricted to one’s immediate neighbours.”<sup>7</sup>
4. Pope Benedict XVI, further than shedding light on the true sense of the rite and of the exchange of peace, emphasized its great significance as a contribution of Christians, with their prayer and witness to allay the most profound and disturbing anxieties of contemporary

humanity. In light of all this he renewed his call that this rite be protected and that this liturgical gesture be done with religious sensibility and sobriety.

5. This Dicastery, at the request of Pope Benedict XVI, had already approached the Conferences of Bishops in May of 2008 to seek their opinion about whether to maintain the exchange of peace before Communion, where it is presently found, or whether to move it to another place, with a view to improving the understanding and carrying out of this gesture. After further reflection, it was considered appropriate to retain the rite of peace in its traditional place in the Roman liturgy and not to introduce structural changes in the Roman Missal. Some practical guidelines are offered below to better explain the content of the exchange of peace and to moderate excessive expressions that give rise to disarray in the liturgical assembly before Communion.
6. Consideration of this theme is important. If the faithful through their ritual gestures do not appreciate and do not show themselves to be living the authentic meaning of the rite of peace, the Christian concept of peace is weakened and their fruitful participation at the Eucharist is impaired. Therefore, along with the previous reflections that could form the basis for a suitable catechesis by providing some guidelines, some practical suggestions are offered to the Conferences of Bishops for their prudent consideration:
  - a) It should be made clear once and for all that the rite of peace already has its own profound meaning of prayer and offering of peace in the context of the Eucharist. An exchange of peace appropriately carried out among the participants at Mass enriches the meaning of the rite itself and gives fuller expression to it. It is entirely correct, therefore, to say that this does not involve inviting the faithful to exchange the sign of peace “mechanically”. If it is foreseen that it will not take place properly due to specific circumstances or if it is not considered pedagogically wise to carry it out on certain occasions, it can be omitted, and sometimes ought to be omitted. It is worth recalling that the rubric from the Missal states: “*Then, if appropriate, the Deacon or the Priest, adds: “Let us offer each other the sign of peace”* (emphasis added).<sup>8</sup>
  - b) On the basis of these observations, it may be advisable that, on the occasion of the publication of the translation of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal in their own country, or when new editions of the same Missal are undertaken in the future, Conferences of Bishops should consider whether it might not be fitting to change the manner of giving peace which had been established earlier. For example, following these years of experience, in those places where familiar and profane gestures of greeting were previously chosen, they could be replaced with other more appropriate gestures.
  - c) In any case, it will be necessary, at the time of the exchange of peace, to definitively avoid abuses such as:
    - the introduction of a “song for peace”, which is non-existent in the Roman Rite.<sup>9</sup>
    - the movement of the faithful from their places to exchange the sign of peace amongst themselves..
    - the departure of the priest from the altar in order to give the sign of peace to some of the faithful.
    - that in certain circumstances, such as at the Solemnity of Easter or of Christmas, or during ritual celebrations such as Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, Sacred Ordinations, Religious Professions, and Funerals, the exchange of peace being the occasion for expressing congratulations, best wishes or condolences among those present.<sup>10</sup>



- d) Conferences of Bishops are likewise invited to prepare liturgical catecheses on the meaning of the rite of peace in the Roman liturgy and its proper realization in the celebration of the Holy Mass. In this regard, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments attaches to this Circular Letter, some helpful guidelines.
7. The intimate relationship between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi* must obviously be extended to the *lex vivendi*. Today, a serious obligation for Catholics in building a more just and peaceful world is accompanied by a deeper understanding of the Christian meaning of peace and this depends largely on the seriousness with which our particular Churches welcome and invoke the gift of peace and express it in the liturgical celebration. Productive steps forward on this matter must be insisted upon and urged because the quality of our Eucharistic participation depends upon it, as well as the efficacy of our being joined with those who are ambassadors and builders of peace, as expressed in the Beatitudes.<sup>11</sup>
8. In conclusion, the Bishops and, under their guidance, the priests are urged, therefore, to give careful consideration to these observations and to deepen the spiritual significance of the rite of peace in the celebration of the Holy Mass, in their spiritual and liturgical formation and in appropriate catechesis for the faithful. Christ is our peace,<sup>12</sup> that divine peace, announced by the prophets and by the angels, and which he brought to the world by means of his paschal mystery. This peace of the Risen Lord is invoked, preached and spread in the celebration, even by means of a human gesture, lifted up to the realm of the sacred.

*The Holy Father Pope Francis, on 7 June, 2014 approved and confirmed the contents of which is contained in this Circular Letter, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and ordered its publication.*

*From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome, 8 June, 2014, the Solemnity of Pentecost.*

Antonio Card. CANIZARES LLOVERS

<sup>1</sup> *Jn* 14, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Jn* 20, 19-23.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM *ex decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini restitutum summorum pontificum cura recognitum, Editio typica*, 1962, *Ritus servandlls*, X, 3.

<sup>4</sup> CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Istr., *Redemptionis sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, n. 71: AAS 96 (2004) 571.

<sup>5</sup> MISSALE ROMANUM, *ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum, Ioannis Pauli Pp. II cura recognitum*, editio typica tertia, diei 20 aprilis 2000, Typis Vaticanis, reimpressio emendata 2008, General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 82. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-synod. Apost. Exhort., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49 : AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Esort. Apost., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49, footnote n. 150: AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>7</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Esort. Apost., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49: AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>8</sup> MISSALE ROMANUM, *Orda Missae*, n. 128.

<sup>9</sup> In the Roman Rite, a song for peace is not foreseen by tradition because only the briefest of time is envisaged for the exchange of peace to those who are nearest. The chant for peace presumes, however, a much longer time for the exchange of peace.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. General Instruction on the Roman Missal, n. 82: "It is appropriate that each person, in a sober manner, offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest"; n. 154: "The priest may give the Sign of Peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so that the celebration is not disrupted. He may do the same if, for a reasonable cause, he wishes to offer the Sign of Peace to a small number of the faithful"; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Istr., *Redemptianis sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, n. 72: AAS 96 (2004) 572. 3

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Mt* 5: 9f.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Eph* 2: 14.





# ADDENDUM 3

## CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT

### INSTRUCTION

### *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

*On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided  
regarding the Most Holy Eucharist*

- [63.] “Within the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, the reading of the Gospel, which is the “high point of the Liturgy of the Word”, [139] is reserved by the Church’s tradition to an ordained minister. [140] Thus it is not permitted for a layperson, even a religious, to proclaim the Gospel reading in the celebration of Holy Mass, nor in other cases in which the norms do not explicitly permit it. [141]
- [64.] The homily, which is given in the course of the celebration of Holy Mass and is a part of the Liturgy itself, [142] “should ordinarily be given by the Priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating Priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to a Deacon, but never to a layperson. [143] In particular cases and for a just cause, the homily may even be given by a Bishop or Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate”. [144]
- [65.] It should be borne in mind that any previous norm that may have admitted non-ordained faithful to give the homily during the Eucharistic celebration is to be considered abrogated by the norm of canon 767 §1. [145] This practice is reprobated, so that it cannot be permitted to attain the force of custom.
- [66.] The prohibition of the admission of laypersons to preach within Mass applies also to seminarians, students of theological disciplines, and those who have assumed the function of those known as “pastoral assistants”; nor is there to be any expectation for any other kind of layperson, or group, or community, or association. [146]
- [67.] Particular care is to be taken so that the homily is firmly based upon the mysteries of salvation, expounding the mysteries of the Faith and the norms of Christian life from the biblical readings and liturgical texts throughout the course of the liturgical year and providing commentary on the texts of the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass, or of some other rite of the Church. [147] It is clear that all interpretations of Sacred Scripture are to be referred back to Christ himself as the one upon whom the entire economy of salvation hinges, though this should be done in light of the specific context of the liturgical celebration. In the homily to be given, care is to be taken so that the light of Christ may shine upon life’s events. Even

so, this is to be done so as not to obscure the true and unadulterated word of God: for instance, treating only of politics or profane subjects, or drawing upon notions derived from contemporary pseudo-religious currents as a source. [148]

[68.] The diocesan Bishop must diligently oversee the preaching of the homily, [149] also publishing norms and distributing guidelines and auxiliary tools to the sacred ministers, and promoting meetings and other projects for this purpose so that they may have the opportunity to consider the nature of the homily more precisely and find help in its preparation.

---

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

This instruction, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was approved by the same Pontiff on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, 19 March 2004, and he ordered it to be published and to be observed immediately by all concerned.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, 25 March 2004.

**Francis Card. Arinze**  
*Prefect*

**Domenico Sorrentino**  
*Archbishop Secretary*

[139] *Missale Romanum*, General Instruction, n. 60.

[140] Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 59-60.

[141] Cf., e.g., *Rituale Romanum, ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II renovatum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI editum Ioannis Pauli Pp. II cura recognitum*: *Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, 19 March 1990, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1991, n. 125; *Roman Ritual, renewed by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI: Order for Anointing of the Sick and for their Pastoral Care, editio typica*, 7 December 1972, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1972, n. 72.

[142] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 §1.

[143] Cf. *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6, §1, 2; also can. 767 §1, regarding which other noteworthy prescriptions may be found in Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

[144] *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 §1.

[145] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 §1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6 §1, 2; Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, *Response to dubium*, 20 June 1987: AAS 79 (1987) p. 1249.

[146] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 864-865.

[147] Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, 17 September 1562, on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapter 8: DS 1749; *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 65.

[148] Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Allocution to a number of Bishops from the United States of America who had come to Rome for a visit "ad Limina Apostolorum"*, 28 May 1993, n. 2: AAS 86 (1994) p. 330.

[149] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 386 §1.

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

## CANON 766 - LAY PREACHING

On November 14, 2001, the Latin Church members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved complementary legislation for canon 766 of the *Code of Canon Law* for the dioceses of the Latin Church of the United States.

The action was granted recognitio by the Congregation for Bishops in accord with article 82 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* and issued by decree of the Congregation for Bishops signed by His Eminence Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect, and His Excellency Most Reverend Franciscus Monterisi, Secretary, and dated November 27, 2001.

**Complementary Norm:** Preaching the Word of God is among the principal duties of those who have received the sacrament of orders (cc. 762-764). The lay faithful can be called to cooperate in the exercise of the Ministry of the Word (c. 759). In accord with canon 766 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops hereby decrees that the lay faithful may be permitted to exercise this ministry in churches and oratories, with due regard for the following provisions:

If necessity requires it in certain circumstances or it seems useful in particular cases, the diocesan bishop can admit lay faithful to preach, to offer spiritual conferences or give instructions in churches, oratories or other sacred places within his diocese, when he judges it to be to the spiritual advantage of the faithful.

In order to assist the diocesan bishop in making an appropriate pastoral decision (Interdicasterial Instruction, *Ecclesiae de Mystero*, Article 2 §3), the following circumstances and cases are illustrative: the absence or shortage of clergy, particular language requirements, or the demonstrated expertise or experience of the lay faithful concerned.

The lay faithful who are to be admitted to preach in a church or oratory must be orthodox in faith, and well-qualified, both by the witness of their lives as Christians and by a preparation for preaching appropriate to the circumstances.

The diocesan bishop will determine the appropriate situations in accord with canon 772, §1. In providing for preaching by the lay faithful the diocesan bishop may never dispense from the norm which reserves the homily to the sacred ministers (c. 767, §1; cfr. Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, 26 May 1987, in AAS 79 [1987], 1249). Preaching by the lay faithful may not take place within the Celebration of the Eucharist at the moment reserved for the homily.

As President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby decree that the effective date of this decree for all the dioceses of the Latin Church in the United States will be January 15, 2002.

Given at the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on December 13, 2001.

Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory  
Bishop of Belleville  
President, USCCB

Reverend Monsignor William P. Fay  
General Secretary



# ADDENDUM 4

## APOSTOLIC LETTER IN THE FORM OF *“Motu Proprio”* SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM

### BENEDICT XVI

---

*The following unofficial translation has been prepared by the USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy.  
Only the Latin original of the Apostolic Letter may be considered the official text.*

It has always been the care of the Supreme Pontiffs until the present time, that the Church of Christ offer worthy worship to the Divine Majesty “for the praise and glory of his name” and “for the good of all his Holy Church.”

As from time immemorial so in the future the principle shall be respected “according to which each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also as to the usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition. These are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also so that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church’s rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*).”<sup>1</sup>

Among Pontiffs who have displayed such care there excels the name of Saint Gregory the Great, who saw to the transmission to the new peoples of Europe both of the Catholic faith and of the treasures of worship and culture accumulated by the Romans in preceding centuries. He gave instructions for the form of the Sacred Liturgy of both the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the Divine Office as was celebrated in the City. He made the greatest efforts to foster monks and nuns, who militating under the Rule of St. Benedict, in every place along with the proclamation of the Gospel by their life likewise exemplified that most salutary expression of the Rule “let nothing be given precedence over the work of God” (ch. 43). In this way the sacred liturgy according to the Roman manner made fertile not only the faith and piety but also the culture of many peoples. Moreover it is evident that the Latin Liturgy in its various forms has stimulated in the spiritual life very many Saints in every century of the Christian age and strengthened in the virtue of religion so many peoples and made fertile their piety.

However, in order that the Sacred Liturgy might more efficaciously absolve its task, several others among the Roman Pontiffs in the course of the centuries have brought to bear particular concern, among whom Saint Pius V is eminent, who with great pastoral zeal, at the exhortation of the Council of Trent, renewed the worship of the whole Church, ensuring the publishing of liturgical books amended and “restored according to the norm of the Fathers” and put them into use in the Latin Church.

It is clear that among the liturgical books of the Roman Rite the *Roman Missal* is eminent. It grew in the city of Rome and gradually down through the centuries took on forms which are very similar to those in vigor in recent generations.

“It was this same goal that as time passed the Roman Pontiffs pursued, adapting or establishing liturgical rites and books to new ages and then at the start of the present century undertaking a more ample restoration.”<sup>2</sup> It was in this manner that our Predecessors Clement VIII, Urban VIII, St. Pius X,<sup>3</sup> Benedict XV, Pius XII and the Blessed John XXIII acted.

In more recent time, however, the Second Vatican Council expressed the desire that with due respect and reverence for divine worship it be restored and adapted to the needs of our age. Prompted by this desire, our Predecessor the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970 approved for the Latin Church liturgical books restored and partly renewed, and that throughout the world translated into many vernacular languages, have been welcomed by the Bishops and by the priests and faithful. John Paul II revised the third typical edition of the Roman Missal. Thus the Roman Pontiffs have acted so that “this liturgical edifice, so to speak,...might once again appear splendid in its dignity and harmony.”<sup>4</sup>

However in some regions not a small number of the faithful have been and remain attached with such great love and affection to the previous liturgical forms, which had profoundly imbued their culture and spirit, that the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, prompted by pastoral concern for these faithful, in 1984 by means of a special Indult *Quattuor abhinc annos*, drawn up by the Congregation for Divine Worship, granted the faculty to use the Roman Missal published by John XXIII in 1962; while in 1988 John Paul II once again, by means of the *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei*, exhorted the Bishops to make wide and generous use of this faculty in favor of all the faithful requesting it.

Having pondered at length the pressing requests of these faithful to our Predecessor John Paul II, having also heard the Fathers of the Consistory of Cardinals held on 23 March 2006, having pondered all things, invoked the Holy Spirit and placed our confidence in the help of God, by this present Apostolic Letter we DECREE the following.

Art. 1. The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is to be regarded as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Catholic Church of Latin Rite, while the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V and published again by Blessed John XXIII as the extraordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) and on account of its venerable and ancient use let it enjoy due honor. These two expressions of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church in no way lead to a division in the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church, for they are two uses of the one Roman Rite.

Hence it is licit to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass in accordance with the typical edition of the Roman Missal promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962 and never abrogated, as the extraordinary form of the Liturgy of the Church. The conditions laid down by the previous documents *Quattuor abhinc annos* and *Ecclesia Dei* for the use of this Missal are replaced by what follows:

Art. 2. In Masses celebrated without the people, any priest of Latin rite, whether secular or religious, can use the Roman Missal published by Pope Blessed John XXIII in 1962 or the Roman Missal promulgated by the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970, on any day in the Sacred Triduum. For celebration in accordance with one or the other Missal, a priest does not require any permission, neither from the Apostolic See nor his own Ordinary.

Art. 3. If Communities or Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life of either pontifical or diocesan rite desire to have a celebration of Holy Mass in accordance with the edition of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1962 in the conventual or



community celebration in their own oratories, this is allowed. If an individual community or the entire Institute or Society wants to have such celebrations often or habitually or permanently, the matter is to be decided by the Major Superiors according to the norm of law and the particular laws and statutes.

Art. 4. With due observance of law, even Christ's faithful who spontaneously request it, may be admitted to celebrations of Holy Mass mentioned in art. 2 above.

Art. 5. 1. In parishes where a group of faithful attached to the previous liturgical tradition exists stably, let the pastor willingly accede to their requests for the celebration of the Holy Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962. Let him see to it that the good of these faithful be harmoniously reconciled with ordinary pastoral care of the parish, under the governance of the Bishop according to canon 392, avoiding discord and fostering the unity of the whole Church.

2. Celebration according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII can take place on weekdays, while on Sundays and on feast days there may be one such celebration.

3. Let the pastor permit celebrations in this extraordinary form for faithful or priests who request it, even in particular circumstances such as weddings, funerals or occasional celebrations, for example pilgrimages.

4. Priests using the Missal of Blessed John XXIII must be worthy and not impeded by law.

5. In churches, which are neither parochial nor conventual, it is the Rector of the church who grants the above-mentioned permission.

Art. 6. In Masses celebrated with the people according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII, the Readings can be proclaimed even in the vernacular, using editions that have received the recognitio of the Apostolic See.

Art. 7. Where some group of lay faithful, mentioned in art. 5 no. 1 does not obtain what it requests from the pastor, it should inform the diocesan Bishop of the fact. The Bishop is earnestly requested to grant their desire. If he cannot provide for this kind of celebration, let the matter be referred to the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei.

Art. 8. A Bishop who desires to make provision for requests for lay faithful of this kind, but is for various reasons prevented from doing so, may refer the matter to the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei, which should give him advice and help.

Art. 9 1. Likewise a pastor may, all things duly considered, grant permission to use the older ritual in administering the Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, as the good of souls may suggest.

2. Ordinaries are granted the faculty to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation using the former Roman Pontifical, as the good of souls may suggest.

3. It is lawful for clerics in holy orders to use even the Roman Breviary promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962.

Art 10. It is lawful for the local Ordinary, if he judges it opportune, to erect a personal parish according to the norm of canon 518 for celebrations according to the older form of the Roman rite or appoint a rector or chaplain, with due observance of the requirements of law.

Art. 11. The Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, erected in 1988 by John Paul II, continues to carry out its function. This Commission is to have the form, duties and norm for action that the Roman Pontiff may wish to assign to it.

Art. 12. The same Commission, in addition to the faculties it already enjoys, will exercise the authority of the Holy See by maintaining vigilance over the observance and application of these dispositions.

Whatever is decreed by Us by means of this *Motu Proprio*, we order to be firm and ratified and to be observed as of 14 September this year, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on 7 July in the Year of Our Lord 2007, the Third of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICT XVI

---

<sup>1</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, third edition, 2002*, n.397

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, Ap. Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n.3: AAS 81 (1989) p.899.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Pope St. Pius X, *Motu Proprio A bhinc duos annos*, 23 October 1913: AAS 5 (1913) 449-450; cf. Pope John Paul II, Ap. Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, 11.3: AAS 81 (1989) p.899.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Motu proprio Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, 2 July 1988, n.6: AAS 80 (1988) p. 1498.

# LETTER OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

## *Accompanying the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum*

My dear Brother Bishops,

With great trust and hope, I am consigning to you as Pastors the text of a new Apostolic Letter “*Motu Proprio data*” on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970. The document is the fruit of much reflection, numerous consultations and prayer.

News reports and judgments made without sufficient information have created no little confusion. There have been very divergent reactions ranging from joyful acceptance to harsh opposition, about a plan whose contents were in reality unknown.

This document was most directly opposed on account of two fears, which I would like to address somewhat more closely in this letter.

In the first place, there is the fear that the document detracts from the authority of the Second Vatican Council, one of whose essential decisions — the liturgical reform — is being called into question.

This fear is unfounded. In this regard, it must first be said that the Missal published by Paul VI and then republished in two subsequent editions by John Paul II, obviously is and continues to be the normal Form — the *Forma ordinaria* — of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council, which was published with the authority of Pope John XXIII in 1962 and used during the Council, will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were “two Rites” Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.

As for the use of the 1962 Missale as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgy of the Mass, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this Missal was never juridically abrogated and, consequently, in principle, was always permitted. At the time of the introduction of the new Missal, it did not seem necessary to issue specific norms for the possible use of the earlier Missal. Probably it was thought that it would be a matter of a few individual cases which would be resolved, case by case, on the local level. Afterwards, however, it soon became apparent that a good number of people remained strongly attached to this usage of the Roman Rite, which had been familiar to them from childhood. This was especially the case in countries where the liturgical movement had provided many people with a notable liturgical formation and a deep, personal familiarity with the earlier Form of the liturgical celebration. We all know that, in the movement led by Archbishop Lefebvre, fidelity to the old Missal became an external mark of identity; the reasons for the break, which arose over this, however, were at a deeper level. Many people who clearly accepted the binding character of the Second Vatican Council, and were faithful to the Pope and the Bishops, nonetheless also desired to recover the form of the sacred liturgy that was dear to them. This occurred above all because in many places celebrations were not faithful to the prescriptions of the new Missal, but the latter actually was understood as authorizing or even requiring creativity, which frequently led to deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.

Pope John Paul II thus felt obliged to provide, in his *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei* (2 July 1988), guidelines for the use of the 1962 Missal; that document, however, did not contain detailed

prescriptions but appealed in a general way to the generous response of Bishops towards the “legitimate aspirations” of those members of the faithful who requested this usage of the Roman Rite. At the time, the Pope primarily wanted to assist the Society of Saint Pius X to recover full unity with the Successor of Peter, and sought to heal a wound experienced ever more painfully. Unfortunately this reconciliation has not yet come about. Nonetheless, a number of communities have gratefully made use of the possibilities provided by the *Motu Proprio*. On the other hand, difficulties remain concerning the use of the 1962 Missal outside of these groups, because of the lack of precise juridical norms, particularly because Bishops, in such cases, frequently feared that the authority of the Council would be called into question. Immediately after the Second Vatican Council it was presumed that requests for the use of the 1962 Missal would be limited to the older generation which had grown up with it, but in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them. Thus the need has arisen for a clearer juridical regulation which had not been foreseen at the time of the 1988 *Motu Proprio*. The present Norms are also meant to free Bishops from constantly having to evaluate anew how they are to respond to various situations.

In the second place, the fear was expressed in discussions about the awaited *Motu Proprio*, that the possibility of a wider use of the 1962 Missal would lead to disarray or even divisions within parish communities. This fear also strikes me as quite unfounded. The use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often. Already from these concrete presuppositions, it is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.

It is true that there have been exaggerations and at times social aspects unduly linked to the attitude of the faithful attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition. Your charity and pastoral prudence will be an incentive and guide for improving these. For that matter, the two Forms of the usage of the Roman Rite can be mutually enriching; new Saints and some of the new Prefaces can and should be inserted in the old Missal. The “*Ecclesia Dei*” Commission, in contact with various bodies devoted to the *usus antiquior*, will study the practical possibilities in this regard. The celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of Paul VI will be able to demonstrate, more powerfully than has been the case hitherto, the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage. The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives. This will bring out the spiritual richness and the theological depth of this Missal.

I now come to the positive reason which motivated my decision to issue this *Motu Proprio* updating that of 1988. It is a matter of coming to an interior reconciliation in the heart of the Church. Looking back over the past, to the divisions which in the course of the centuries have rent the Body of Christ, one continually has the impression that, at critical moments when divisions were coming about, not enough was done by the Church’s leaders to maintain or regain reconciliation and unity. One has the impression that omissions on the part of the Church have had their share of blame for the fact that these divisions were able to harden. This glance at the past imposes an obligation on us today: to make every effort to make it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew. I think of a sentence in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, where Paul writes: “Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return ...widen your hearts also!”(2 Cor 6:11-13). Paul was certainly speaking in another context, but

his exhortation can and must touch us too, precisely on this subject. Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows.

There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal. In the history of the liturgy there is growth and progress, but no rupture. What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place. Needless to say, in order to experience full communion, also the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.

In conclusion, dear Brothers, I very much wish to stress that these new norms do not in any way lessen your own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of your faithful. Each Bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own Diocese (*cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22: "Sacrae Liturgiae moderatio ab Ecclesiae auctoritate unice pendet quae quidem est apud Apostolicam Sedem et, ad normam iuris, apud Episcopum"*).

Nothing is taken away, then, from the authority of the Bishop, whose role remains that of being watchful that all is done in peace and serenity. Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the *Motu Proprio*.

Furthermore, I invite you, dear Brothers, to send to the Holy See an account of your experiences, three years after this *Motu Proprio* has taken effect. If truly serious difficulties come to light, ways to remedy them can be sought.

Dear Brothers, with gratitude and trust, I entrust to your hearts as Pastors these pages and the norms of the *Motu Proprio*. Let us always be mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul addressed to the presbyters of Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the Church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28).

I entrust these norms to the powerful intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, dear Brothers, to the parish priests of your dioceses, and to all the priests, your co-workers, as well as to all your faithful

Given at Saint Peter's, 7 July 2007.

BENEDICT XVI



# ADDENDUM 5

## ELEMENTS OF A CONFIRMATION PREPARATION PROGRAM

### I. DEVELOPING FAITH/HEARING THE MESSAGE:

This is a two-year formation program that is intended to be taught to young people in eighth and ninth grades.

It is important that candidates for Confirmation understand the basic teachings of the Catholic Church as well as their own level of faith development. Instructional content for Confirmation preparation should focus directly on Confirmation and should include:

- **an understanding of Confirmation as a Sacrament of initiation with special connections to Baptism and First Eucharist.**

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of baptism in which the candidates receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are strengthened in their resolve to follow Christ. In the Eucharist their initiation is completed as they join the community of faithful in receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord.

- **an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and of the Church.**

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord) are divine sources of strength and sustenance in the Christian life. The candidate needs to learn ways of remaining open to the power of the Holy Spirit, growing in relationship with God through prayer.

- **a greater awareness of the person of Jesus and his teachings as found in Scripture.**

The Church teaches that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Through Him we approach the Father. The candidate needs to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, knowing Him as a friend with whom one journeys throughout life. Jesus models for us the virtues of love, forgiveness, justice, and compassion.

- **an understanding of the importance of social justice.**

We are called to live out our faith. St. Paul tells us that faith without works is dead. Using Jesus as our model, we are called to help those in need both locally and globally. Providing the theory of social justice as well as opportunities for service will help the candidate find ways to contribute to the world.

- **an understanding of the Catholic Church: its Divine origin, Sacraments, doctrines, history, and hierarchical structure.**

An understanding of the seven Sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony) is essential to knowledge of the Church. The doctrine of the Church, as found in the Nicene Creed, provide the candidate with a



working knowledge of the beliefs of the Church. A summarized history, as well as knowledge of the Church's organization highlights the basic movements of the Church over time. In order for one to understand the present Church, one needs to know the Church's history beginning in apostolic times.

- **an understanding of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church including the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.**

The Church offers a way of life based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholics understand the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes as God's revealed norms and guides for Christian living. The Church has a body of moral teachings, especially concerning sexuality, medical ethics, and justice which help form the candidate's conscience in living an upright life. Specific issues including the virtue of chastity need to be taught. Life needs to be respected from conception until natural death. Sin needs to be taught as alienation from God and forgiveness of sin is offered through the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.

- **an understanding of the structure of the Mass and the manner for participating in it.**

Attendance at Sunday Mass is essential to the life of the Catholic. It is the way in which we participate in the life of Christ. Therefore, much time should be devoted to the structure of the Eucharist, the liturgical year, and ways in which one can take part in the Eucharist through various ministries. The Real Presence of Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity, is found in the Eucharist.

- **an understanding of prayer and its importance in our lives.**

Developing a relationship with God goes to the core of any religious education program. Helping the candidates in this regard should be done through examples of people of prayer as well as various modes of prayer. The Sunday Eucharist is to be shown as the center of their Catholic Christian lives. It is important to help the candidates realize that God is in their lives even when things may appear otherwise.

- **a working knowledge of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*.**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has been written as the normative guide of Catholic teaching. It is a guide for all people who have questions about their faith. Due to this fact, it should be presented as a resource that the candidates can use throughout their lives. Also, the *Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* is to be recommended to the students as a resource for on-going faith formation.

- **an understanding of Christian vocations.**

The Students need to discern his or her gifts and find ways to contribute positively to society. The students should be encouraged to discern whether God is calling them to a priestly or religious vocation. A special emphasis on marriage and its permanence needs to be presented as well. A one-day retreat experience is strongly recommended as part of the preparation program. The retreat team should include those from the peer group as well as adults and catechists from the parish community.

---

## II. BUILDING COMMUNITY / BELONGING TO THE CHURCH:

---

While preparing for Confirmation, it is necessary for the parish to develop and foster a sense of belonging for young people in the faith community. The parish community plays a vital role in this initiation process by committing itself to sustain, encourage, and nurture the total personal and spiritual lives of its young people. Active membership and involvement by adult members of the community is important in the formation of these young people. At the same time, they should be called to regular, active participation in the liturgy, most especially at Sunday mass.

---

## III. SERVING GOD’S KINGDOM /WITNESSING JUSTICE AND LOVE IN ACTION:

---

The parish community should provide opportunities which help to form its young people to lead an active Christian lifestyle recognizing that full initiation as a Catholic challenges all of us to service as a way of life. Opportunities for the development and sharing of individual gifts and talents are important to the Confirmation process. Such opportunities should be provided both within the context of parish ministries, i.e. lector, musician, catechist, as well as in the service to the poor, elderly, and disadvantaged.

In order for service projects to be viewed as more than simple requirements to earn a stated number of hours, they need to be well planned. Time should be given in preparation and dialogue beforehand as well as in discussing the outcomes and implications after the projects occur.

---

## IV. AFFIRMING ADOLESCENCE / NURTURING YOUNG PEOPLE:

---

Many young people will come forth with questions and doubts about their faith and prior religious experiences. Others will enter with well-developed convictions and much enthusiasm. All young people need to feel positive affirmation for their current level of development, and parish programs must be developed to meet them where they are in this process.

Information about appropriate materials and resources may be obtained by contacting the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis.

---

## ROLES OF THOSE INVOLVED WITH CONFIRMATION

### *The candidate’s role:*

- To be willing, and have a desire, to enter into the process.
- To keep an open mind, always seeking the Truth.
- To recognize that he/she has the choice to stop at any point within the process if he/she is unable to make the commitment necessary to be confirmed and that he/she may return when ready to continue.

### *The parents’ role:*

- To encourage, support, and affirm their child’s involvement in the Confirmation process.

- To attend any orientation sessions, liturgical rites, and practices associated with the Confirmation process.
- To advise their child regarding the choice of a sponsor.

***The sponsor's role: (as identified by the Code of Canon Law)***

- The sponsor has the same roles as the parent plus this person should be at least sixteen years of age and be a fully initiated Catholic who has celebrated Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation and be someone who practices his/her faith.
- This person must also be able to receive the Holy Eucharist at the Confirmation ceremony.
- A parent may not be a sponsor.

***The community's role:***

- To support youth before, during, and after Confirmation.
- To integrate youth into the life of the whole Church.
- To have a mission statement for youth ministry and to communicate it clearly to all in the parish.

***The role of the pastor/administrator:***

- To encourage parents, sponsors, and the community to take an active part in the process, as well as in the process of growing in their own understanding of their faith.
- To be a real presence in the lives of the young people of the parish in as many ways as possible, i.e. visiting group meetings, coming to retreats, supporting youth at liturgies.
- To conduct a personal interview with each candidate in which he can acknowledge the young person's participation in the process and share thoughts on ways he/she might participate in the life of the parish after the reception of Confirmation.

## DELAYING CONFIRMATION

If there is a question about a candidate's readiness for Confirmation, the decision to delay should not be made hastily or arbitrarily. Consequently, the Confirmation interviews should be scheduled in such a way as to permit adequate time for decision making before the celebration of the Sacrament. This interview should help the candidate articulate their personal desire for the Sacrament and manifest their readiness to receive this Sacrament.

The pastor/administrator, in consultation with the candidate, parents, and catechetical staff, will ultimately make the decision regarding the delay. This should be done with sensitivity and the aim of eliciting greater openness to the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and with a conscious awareness that this Sacrament, like all the Sacraments, is an unmerited gift of God.

# ADDENDUM 6:

## NORMS FOR WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE AT FUNERAL LITURGIES IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

The inclusion of Words of Remembrance in the 1989 *Order of Christian Funerals* is permitted, but not required, and is at the discretion of the pastor/administrator. These Words of Remembrance may occur at the Vigil of the Deceased (Cf. *OCF*, 62, 80), at a reception following the Funeral Liturgy, at the conclusion of the Rite of Committal at the cemetery, or at the Funeral Liturgy. (Cf. *OCF*, 170).

The provision that “a member or a friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased” (*OCF*, 80, 170, 197) has often led to a confusion between these Words of Remembrance and a eulogy. A eulogy recounts some or all of the significant events in the life of the deceased. Biographical in nature, a eulogy tends to be lengthy and similar to a curriculum vitae. However, Words of Remembrance provide briefly some insight into the Catholic faith and values of the deceased as seen through the lens of one or two examples from his/her life. In some instances, the inclusion of Words of Remembrance in the Funeral Liturgy has become problematic, such that:

- o The flow and dignity of the Sacred Liturgy is disrupted by the multiplication of speakers (scheduled or not).
- o An inappropriate and embarrassing choice of stories about and characterizations of the deceased are not infrequently made.
- o The need of those in the assembly to return to work and other responsibilities, and the schedules of the parish, cemetery workers and military honor guards are not respected when the Funeral Liturgy is overly extended by Words of Remembrance.

The following norms are meant to assist pastors/administrators, pastoral staff and funeral directors to develop appropriate and clear practices in guiding those who speak in remembrance of the dead:

- 1) One person only speaks in the name of all when the Words of Remembrance occur at the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass.
- 2) These Words of Remembrance should be brief, no more than 5 minutes (one typed page, approximately 450 words). The speaker should be reminded that these words are within the good flow and dignity of the liturgy, and need to take into consideration the schedules of those who are part of this event.
- 3) The Words of Remembrance should be prepared beforehand, and ideally reviewed with the priest beforehand, to avoid undue length or embarrassing situations.
- 4) The proper time for the representative to speak at the Funeral Liturgy is:
  - o at a Funeral Mass: after the Prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation (Cf. *OCF*, 170); (For pastoral reasons, the priest may instead ask you to offer the Words of Remembrance prior to the beginning of the Funeral Mass, before the Collect is prayed);
  - o at Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass: after the Lord’s Prayer and before the Final Commendation.



# ADDENDUM 7:

## GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

---

Thank you for accepting the responsibility of speaking Words of Remembrance on behalf of the family and friends of the deceased. Here are some points to guide you in the preparation of what you will say. Out of respect for the Church's prudential wisdom and teaching in this regard, please read and observe these guidelines carefully.

1. **You have been asked to offer "Words of Remembrance," not a eulogy.** A eulogy tends to tell the story of a person's whole life and accomplishments, and can become lengthy. Words of Remembrance provide briefly **some insight into the faith and Christian values of the deceased** as seen in one or two representative example from his/her life. The Words of Remembrance, then, become words of encouragement and comfort to those who are present.

2. Since they occur within the Church's worship of God and of prayer for the deceased and those who mourn his/her loss, the Words of Remembrance should be **no more than 5 minutes (a single type-written page, approximately 450 words)**. Keeping your remarks brief and to-the-point recognizes not only the integrity of the liturgy, but also the fact that people have often made a sacrifice to be present. Brevity is the kindest and most appreciated consideration you can give them.

3. There may be some in the congregation who did not know the deceased, but have come in support of the family. Therefore, **"inside" stories about the deceased may not be understood**. Save such remembrances for the more personal moments with the family, especially during the painful days and weeks after the funeral. The time for the Words of Remembrance is not a time for lengthy story-telling. Your comments should show respect and sensitivity for the deceased and those who are present to pray.

4. Before you begin to compose the Words of Remembrance **seek help from God by starting in prayer**, that you will be enabled to speak in a way worthy of the occasion. Ask suggestions from friends and family.

5. **Write out your remarks in full.** Writing out the complete text will insure that you stay within the time limitation. The priest, deacon or a member of the parish staff may be available to preview your remarks and make helpful suggestions. Rely on their judgment and experience.

6. **Rehearse your Words of Remembrance before a friend or family member.** If there are deep emotions that need to be dealt with, rehearsal is the time to express them. While a public display of emotion is understandable and sometimes laudable, copious tears and uncontrollable sobbing before the congregation will not be beneficial. The use of a written text is helpful.

7. Before the Funeral Liturgy begins, ask the priest, deacon or a member of the parish staff to show you exactly **where you are to speak**. Familiarize yourself with the location and, if possible, listen to yourself say a few words into the microphone.

8. The priest or deacon will introduce you at the proper time, so that you will know exactly when you are to come forward. **Approach the podium or lectern with great confidence.** To begin with expressions like "I'm not used to this sort of thing," or "I hope I can get through this," defeats you before you ever begin.





# ADDENDUM 8

## CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

**Instruction *Ad resurgendum cum Christo*  
regarding the burial of the deceased and the  
conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation**

---

1. To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must “be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). With the Instruction *Piam et Constantem* of 5 July 1963, the then Holy Office established that “all necessary measures must be taken to preserve the practice of reverently burying the faithful departed”, adding however that cremation is not “opposed per se to the Christian religion” and that no longer should the Sacraments and funeral rites be denied to those who have asked that they be cremated, under the condition that this choice has not been made through “a denial of Christian dogmas, the animosity of a secret society, or hatred of the Catholic religion and the Church”.<sup>[1]</sup> Later this change in ecclesiastical discipline was incorporated into the *Code of Canon Law* (1983) and the *Code of Canons of Oriental Churches* (1990).

During the intervening years, the practice of cremation has notably increased in many countries, but simultaneously new ideas contrary to the Church’s faith have also become widespread. Having consulted the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and numerous Episcopal Conferences and Synods of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has deemed opportune the publication of a new Instruction, with the intention of underlining the doctrinal and pastoral reasons for the preference of the burial of the remains of the faithful and to set out norms pertaining to the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation.

2. The resurrection of Jesus is the culminating truth of the Christian faith, preached as an essential part of the Paschal Mystery from the very beginnings of Christianity: “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve” (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

Through his death and resurrection, Christ freed us from sin and gave us access to a new life, “so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Furthermore, the risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection: “Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep [...] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

It is true that Christ will raise us up on the last day; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. In Baptism, actually, we are immersed in the death and resurrection of Christ and sacramentally assimilated to him: “You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (*Colossians* 2:12). United with Christ by Baptism, we already truly participate in the life of the risen Christ (*Ephesians* 2:6). Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning. The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church: “Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven”.<sup>[2]</sup> By death the soul is separated from the body, but in the resurrection God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul. In our own day also, the Church is called to proclaim her faith in the resurrection: “The confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead; believing this we live”.<sup>[3]</sup>

3. Following the most ancient Christian tradition, the Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places.<sup>[4]</sup>

In memory of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of death,[5] burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.[6]

The Church who, as Mother, has accompanied the Christian during his earthly pilgrimage, offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of her grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.[7]

By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body,[8] and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity.[9] She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with Mother Nature or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the “prison” of the body.

Furthermore, burial in a cemetery or another sacred place adequately corresponds to the piety and respect owed to the bodies of the faithful departed who through Baptism have become temples of the Holy Spirit and in which “as instruments and vessels the Spirit has carried out so many good works”.[10]

Tobias, the just, was praised for the merits he acquired in the sight of God for having buried the dead,[11] and the Church considers the burial of dead one of the corporal works of mercy.[12]

Finally, the burial of the faithful departed in cemeteries or other sacred places encourages family members and the whole Christian community to pray for and remember the dead, while at the same time fostering the veneration of martyrs and saints. Through the practice of burying the dead in cemeteries, in churches or their environs, Christian tradition has upheld the relationship between the living and the dead and has opposed any tendency to minimize, or relegate to the purely private sphere, the event of death and the meaning it has for Christians.

4. In circumstances when cremation is chosen because of sanitary, economic or social considerations, this choice must never violate the explicitly-stated or the reasonably inferable wishes of the deceased faithful. The Church raises no doctrinal objections to this practice, since cremation of the deceased’s body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God, in his omnipotence, from raising up the deceased body to new life. Thus cremation, in and of itself, objectively negates neither the Christian doctrine of the soul’s immortality nor that of the resurrection of the body.[13]

The Church continues to prefer the practice of burying the bodies of the deceased, because this shows a greater esteem towards the deceased. Nevertheless, cremation is not prohibited, “unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine”.[14]

In the absence of motives contrary to Christian doctrine, the Church, after the celebration of the funeral rite, accompanies the choice of cremation, providing the relevant liturgical and pastoral directives, and taking particular care to avoid every form of scandal or the appearance of religious indifferentism.

5. When, for legitimate motives, cremation of the body has been chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or, in certain cases, in a church or an area, which has been set aside for this purpose, and so dedicated by the competent ecclesial authority.

From the earliest times, Christians have desired that the faithful departed become the objects of the Christian community’s prayers and remembrance. Their tombs have become places of prayer, remembrance and reflection. The faithful departed remain part of the Church who believes “in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church”.[15]

The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect, which eventuality is possible, most especially once the immediately subsequent generation has too passed away. Also it prevents any unfitting or superstitious practices.

6. For the reasons given above, the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence is not permitted. Only in grave and exceptional cases dependent on cultural conditions of a localized nature, may the Ordinary, in agreement with the Episcopal Conference or the Synod of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, concede permission for the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence. Nonetheless, the ashes may not be divided among various family members and due respect must be maintained regarding the circumstances of such a conservation.

7. In order that every appearance of pantheism, naturalism or nihilism be avoided, it is not permitted to scatter the ashes of the faithful departed in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way, nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects. These courses of action cannot be legitimized by an appeal to the sanitary, social, or economic motives that may have occasioned the choice of cremation.

8. When the deceased notoriously has requested cremation and the scattering of their ashes for reasons contrary to the Christian faith, a Christian funeral must be denied to that person according to the norms of the law.<sup>[16]</sup>

*The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect on 18 March 2016, approved the present Instruction, adopted in the Ordinary Session of this Congregation on 2 March 2016, and ordered its publication.*

*Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 15 August 2016, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

**Gerhard Card. Müller**

*Prefect*

**+ Luis F. Ladaria, S.I.**

*Titular Archbishop of Thibica*

*Secretary*

[1] AAS 56 (1964), 822-823.

[2] Roman Missal, *Preface I for the Dead*.

[3] Tertullian, *De Resurrectione carnis*, 1,1: CCL 2, 921.

[4] Cf. *CIC*, c. 1176, § 3, can. 1205; *CCEO*, c. 876, § 3; c. 868.

[5] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1681.

[6] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2300.

[7] Cf. *1 Cor* 15:42-44; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1683.

[8] Cf. St. Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, 3, 5; CSEL 41, 628:

[9] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 14.

[10] St. Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, 3, 5: CSEL 41, 627.

[11] Cf. *Tobit* 2:9; 12:12.

[12] Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2300.

[13] Cf. Holy Office, Instruction *Piam et constantem*, 5 July 1963: AAS 56 (1964) 822.

[14] *CIC*, c. 1176 § 3; cf. *CCEC*, c. 876 § 3.

[15] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 962.]

[16] *CIC*, c. 1184; *CCEO*, c.876, § 3.

