




DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

MEMO

To: Pastors/Parochial Administrators/Parish Stewards
From: Most Rev. William K. Weigand 
Subject: Conclusion of Year of the Eucharist
Date: October 20, 2005

At the conclusion of the Year of the Eucharist, I would like to commend you and thank you for your fine pastoral initiatives regarding the Eucharist. With the World Synod of Bishops' deliberations on this same topic (with an expected Apostolic Exhortation to follow), and with the momentum in this regard from our own Diocesan Synod, we will have ongoing motivation to keep all aspects of the Eucharist front and center in our teaching and pastoral life. The reopening of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament next month will give yet additional impetus.

In response to a number of inquiries or situations that have arisen, please allow me to make the following clarifications:

- **Sunday Communion Services** are not permitted in the Diocese of Sacramento except in rare circumstances and only after recourse to the Bishop, who dispenses the parish community from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass. In cases of a priest becoming ill on a weekend or holy day, the Vicar for Priests and the Dean will assist in providing coverage. For summer vacation coverage, pastors need to exercise foresight and creativity, consulting with the Vicar for Priests and others, as appropriate. During the summer season, it may be appropriate, in some cases, to modify Mass schedules, taking care, however, to observe fairness. (It would generally not be acceptable, for example, to alter the schedule of Spanish Masses and not the English Masses.)
- **Communion Services during the week** also require the permission of the Diocesan Bishop (cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 166) and are generally not recommended. (The reforms of the Second Vatican Council clarified that giving Communion outside of Mass, except to the sick, is generally not appropriate.) For a priest's day off, neighboring parishes should strive to coordinate Masses (and perhaps days off) so that on a given day, people know to attend Mass at the neighboring parish. It is essential that the faithful not become accustomed to perceiving a Communion service as if it were the equivalent of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; rather, in those situations where the celebration of the Eucharist is not available, it would be quite acceptable to offer a simple Liturgy of the Word (without the distribution of Holy Communion), the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, or some other prayer service before the Blessed Sacrament.

- **In convents, chapels and other oratories** where, with the Bishop’s permission, the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, “insofar as possible, a priest is to celebrate Mass there at least twice a month.” (*Code of Canon Law*, can. 934 §2) (It is clear that the Church insists on the connection of the reserved Sacrament with the Eucharistic Sacrifice.)
- **Mission Churches** that have reservation of the Blessed Sacrament with permission of the Diocesan Bishop are required to have someone who lives nearby accept responsibility for the care of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition, the faithful are to be organized so that at least one person visits the Blessed Sacrament and inspects the church each day. (cf *Code of Canon Law*, can. 934 §2) Where these measures are not possible, Reservation should not be continued.
- **Parish Churches are to remain open** at least for some hours of the day to facilitate the prayer of the faithful before the Blessed Sacrament. (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 937) Where advisable for security purposes, you are urged to have surveillance cameras installed or to organize a corps of volunteers to guard the Blessed Sacrament and to monitor activity in the church.
- **Church Redecoration or Renovation** projects in the Diocese of Sacramento are to be reviewed by the Office of Worship well in advance of work being started. When appropriate, such a project may also need to be reviewed by the Diocesan Building Committee and the Diocesan Finance Council, with formal approval being given in writing by the Diocesan Bishop.
- **Kneelers are required** in all churches, chapels and oratories in the Diocese of Sacramento so as to facilitate the prayer of the faithful in general, and to accommodate observance of the Church’s liturgical norms regarding posture.
- **All of us Priests** are reminded “that in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice the work of redemption is exercised continually, priests are to celebrate frequently; **indeed, daily celebration is recommended earnestly** since, even if the faithful cannot be present, it is the act of Christ and the Church in which priests fulfill their principal function.” Thus, even on our day off, we should celebrate Mass. (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 904 and numerous other Church documents.) At priests’ gatherings, when Eucharist is celebrated, I exhort priests to vest and concelebrate.
- **Prayer for Vocations** before the Blessed Sacrament and in all our worship services needs to be continually emphasized.

Again, as we conclude the special Year of the Eucharist, I want to commend and thank you for your dedication to making the Eucharist the very center of life for you and your people. I believe that we do, indeed, live up to our special calling as the Diocese of the Sacramento.