

# Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest



## The roles of those who participate in Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

- The lay leader does NOT use words, rites, gestures, and texts that are readily associated with the Mass, such as greetings and blessings proper to a priest or a deacon, i.e. “The Lord be with you” and “May Almighty God bless you.”
- The lay leader does not make the sign of the cross over people.
- The leader may use a blessing proper to a lay person from the *Book of Blessings*.
- The leader’s chair must be different than the presider’s chair and placed close to the assembly.
- The assigned readings of the Sunday Lectionary are used.
- A lay person who has been properly trained and has received authorization from the bishop or their pastor, may give a reflection on the Scripture, or a message from the pastor may be shared.
- Candles may be used in entrance procession, by the ambo, and at the altar when it is time to bring consecrated hosts from the place of reservation.

### Next week:

The forms of the rite of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*.

### Sources:

*Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, 1988.  
*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 1963.

### What is the nature of Sunday worship?

In the Sunday assembly the faithful manifest the Church through active participation and a true spirit of community. Through Word and Eucharist they are renewed spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice is carried out by the priest in the person of Christ. This makes the manifestation of the Paschal Mystery complete. When this is not possible, for extraordinary reasons, then Sunday worship would take one of the forms found in the rituals of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. These forms remain a sign of unity which may include the distribution of Holy Communion. These celebrations should increase the desire of the faithful to be present at and participate in the celebration of the Eucharist.

## What are the roles of those who participate in Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest?

By virtue of their baptism the faithful have various roles as they actively participate in Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest.

**The Assembly** — The assembly actively participates through singing, responding, listening, reflecting and praying.

**The Deacon** — A deacon leads the assembly in prayer because by the nature of his office the deacon has been given orders to proclaim and preach the Gospel. If a community does not have the service of a deacon then trained lay leaders may lead the gathered assembly.

**Lay Leaders** — Lay persons are called forth, appointed, trained and commissioned as leaders of prayer in their parish community.

**Greeters** — The greeters welcome and serve those who gather.

**Musicians** — The musicians lead the assembly in song.

**The Lector** — The lector proclaims God's Word through the Scripture readings.

**Servers** — The servers assist the leader.

**Extraordinary Ministers of Communion**— The extraordinary ministers of Communion assist if Holy Communion is included.

## What are the qualities of lay leaders?

Those who are chosen to lead this rite should exhibit the following qualities:

- a deep reverence for the Eucharist
- a living appreciation of scripture
- a strong desire and ability to foster participation in worship
- a life consistent with the Gospel
- an exemplary moral life in good standing according to the laws of the Church
- an active prayer life
- active involvement in the pastoral life of the community
- a spirit of cooperation with the members and pastoral leaders of the parish
- acceptance by members of the community
- a willingness to be trained and receive continued instruction for this ministry

Prayer leaders are properly trained, appointed for a definite period of time, and commissioned to carry out their office with sincere devotion. They should regard this role not so much as an honor but as a responsibility and as a service to the parish under the authority of the pastor.

## What are distinctive features of Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest?

In either form of the Sunday celebration without a priest, the following distinctions should be kept in mind by those responsible for planning the celebration:

- A deacon or lay person is called the “leader.”
- The leader is vested in an alb or other suitable vesture according to archdiocesan policy.
- The leader will always be assisted by other ministers (as listed on the previous page).