

## X. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

### Policy and Procedure for Lay Leaders:

- 1) A lay leader must be officially designated by the pastor or pastoral coordinator and appointed by Bishop Balke.
- 2) The lay leader must have gone through a training program. Continuing formation through retreats, workshops and private study will be provided by the Diocesan Office of Worship.
- 3) The lay leader must be an appointed eucharistic minister.
- 4) The lay leader will be officially commissioned in the presence of the community at a Sunday liturgy. The appointment is for a three year period, renewable for another three years.
- 5) "The person who leads the community at a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, whether a deacon or a layperson, is called the leader." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith, Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, USCC 1991, "Specific norms" #55, A)
- 6) Laypersons are to avoid all things proper to a priest or a deacon. They do not use the greeting before the Gospel ("The Lord be with you") or any of the other greetings designated for a deacon or a priest. Nor do they use the priestly or diaconal forms of blessing. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Leader's Edition provides proper forms of blessing for laypersons. When giving a blessing, a layperson does not make the sign of the cross over the people." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith #55, C)
- 7) "The chair used by a layperson must be different from the presidential chair used by a priest or a deacon, and normally it should be placed outside the presbyterium in close proximity to the assembly. The ambo is reserved for the Liturgy of the Word. The altar is used only when the eucharist is placed on it before the distribution of holy communion, if it is included in the celebration." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith #55, D)
- 8) "The readings assigned in the Lectionary for a particular Sunday, solemnity, or feast are always to be used. On occasions when there are no assigned readings or a selection is provided, the minister may choose appropriate readings. On Sundays and solemnities three readings are used, as at Mass. Whenever possible, a sung responsorial psalm should follow the first reading." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith, #55, E)
- 9) "The preaching of a homily is part of most liturgical rites and is, by its very definition, reserved to a priest or a deacon. However, the bishop may allow a layperson who is properly trained to explain the Word of God at Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest or a deacon and at other specific occasions."

The pastor may provide a text for the leader to read, or if the bishop has authorized the leader to preach, the minister preaches in his or her own words. It is essential that when the leader is to preach, the text should be prepared well in advance.

Preaching, an irreplaceable ministry for explaining the Scriptures and applying them to the here-and-now of a particular gathering, is a task to be taken seriously by those who have been duly delegated by the bishop. When one preaches in the name of the Church, the great public work of Christ is continued. For deacons, and for those lay ministers who may be delegated to preach within the Lord's Day assembly, a diligence in prayer, commitment to the study of Scripture, growth in faith, and preparation are required." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith #55, F)

(Lay leaders of the Crookston Diocese are not delegated to give a personal reflection on the Word of God at this time. When and if that becomes a necessity, proper training for this liturgical ministry will be mandated.)

- 10) Candles may be used in the entrance procession or placed near the ambo. When the distribution of holy communion follows the liturgy of the Word, candles are lighted at the altar before the sacrament is brought to it from the place of reservation. (cf. Gathered in Steadfast Faith #55, G)
- 11) **Churches without reserved Eucharist:** Before the Service of the Word begins, set the consecrated bread on the credence table and place a lighted candle next to it. When it is time for communion, a eucharistic minister is to bring the consecrated bread and someone else will bring the candle. Place both of them on the altar.
- 12) **Churches with reserved Eucharist:** When it is time for the distribution of holy communion, candles are lighted at the altar before the sacrament is brought to it from the place of reservation. A eucharistic minister will bring the consecrated bread and place it on the altar.
- 13) The eucharistic minister gives the lay presider communion first and then the lay presider gives communion to the eucharistic ministers. All then go to distribute communion to the entire assembly.
- 14) The eucharistic minister returns the unused bread to the tabernacle. (The mission church will have all the consecrated bread consumed. Try to estimate the number of hosts needed so that there will not be bread left over. If you see that you do not have enough hosts, break hosts in half as needed.)
- 15) When doing official prayer, use the official books. The official book for the readings is the Lectionary, the one for the prayers is the sacramentary, and the one with the form and greetings for Services of the Word with Holy Communion will be **Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Leader's Edition.**
- 16) "A layperson, delegated by the bishop, may impart any of the blessings given in the **Book of Blessings** that are not reserved to a bishop, a priest, or a deacon." (Gathered in Steadfast Faith, #55, H)