



The Catholic Diocese of Lancaster

## NORMS ON 'EUCHARISTIC SERVICES'

I need to repeat the 2014 norms with regards to the Celebration of the Word with the Distribution of Holy Communion (commonly known as: "Eucharistic Services") on Sundays and Feastdays – services meant for those missionary areas of the Church where the absence of a priest makes the celebration of Sunday Mass a rare occurrence.

*Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004) ##164, 165 and 166 reminds me - and all of us in our own Diocese - that it is the role of the Bishop (and not individual Parish Priests et al) to consider the pastoral circumstances in giving or not his expressed permission for such celebrations of the Word with the possibility of Holy Communion. Such deliberate and particular permissions from the Bishop would, in any case, be for a Sunday only and in altogether extraordinary conditions i.e. sudden illness of the priest, great distances to travel. To date, I have never given any such permissions. Besides, as we safeguard and promote the centrality of the Mass in Catholic life and practice, and with the above points in mind, it seems worth recalling that:

- The priests' weekly day-off seems the principal reason for providing such services on a weekday (*ad experimentum* - in our local context) in the past. Taking such legitimate time-off means coming to terms with the reality that there will be parishes where Mass is not celebrated every weekday. It is worth remembering here that for a long time in the history of the Church attending daily Mass was not the custom for the people.
- In urban areas with other parishes nearby with daily Mass or in recently-merged parishes where there is more than one church or chapel but always a daily celebration of Mass – this celebration certainly precludes the need for "Eucharistic Services" in another church or chapel of the one parish.
- Parish Priests should please publish in their bulletins the times of weekday Masses in neighbouring parishes so that the faithful who wish to participate in daily Mass may do so.
- Those parishioners who have led "Eucharistic Services" will continue to have an opportunity whenever the Parish Priest invites them to lead celebrations of the Word (without Holy Communion) such as at Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

Finally, I do hope that if there are to be fewer weekday Masses than there were in the past, that with sound adult catechesis our parishioners could be encouraged - by us their priests - to eagerly gather daily to pray (for priestly vocations) the Liturgy of the Hours, which is the official prayer of the Church and the preferred liturgy to be prayed when Mass is not available during the week.

**N.B.** A form of this notice will appear on the diocesan website on a regular basis for our people - so all can know the diocesan norms on this subject.

+Michael G Campbell OSA  
Bishop of Lancaster

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