

**DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE**

**PERMISSIONS AND DELEGATIONS**  
**FOR**  
**PASTORAL COORDINATORS**

**PREACHING**

Canon 766 permits lay people to preach if necessary in certain circumstances or useful in particular cases. However, the preeminent form of preaching, the homily within the Eucharist celebration, is reserved to a priest or deacon. Therefore, as a pastoral coordinator, you have permission to preach at non-Eucharist liturgies, such as the Liturgy of the Hours or a Liturgy of the Word in the absence of a priest or deacon. The law also foresees other exceptional circumstances, such as the moral or physical inability of the ordained minister to preach, such as the lack of skills of communication with children for children's Masses (Directory for Masses With Children, No. 24), or with the vernacular language. These circumstances would justify a lay person preaching during the celebration of a Eucharistic Sacrifice or reading a prepared homily.

This permission presumes proper preparation and instruction in interpretation of the Sacred Scripture and preaching skills. You would do well to consult the various homiletic aids and Scripture commentaries in preparation for preaching.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

In the matter of the Sacrament of Baptism, the law of the Church expresses the importance of this sacrament and her concern that no one ready for baptism should be deprived of its saving effects and incorporation in the Church. Therefore, in the absence of an ordained minister, catechists and lay persons can be deputed for conferring baptism licitly just as any person with the right intention can baptize in the case of necessity. Please refer to Canon 861, article 2. Therefore, as a pastoral coordinator, you are hereby deputed to confer the Sacrament of Baptism in the usual circumstance when the ordinary minister is absent or impeded.

This should not be confused with "emergency baptism," about which we were instructed in catechism as children. Rather, you would use the full rites of the Church provided for such occasions, namely, "Rite of Baptism for Children Administered by a Catechist When No Priest or Deacon is Available." If you have never used the rite, you should arrange for your supervising pastor to instruct you in the celebration of this Rite of Baptism.

**FUNERALS**

The Order of Christian Funerals already allows a lay person to conduct the vigil for the deceased, the related rites, and the Rite of Committal when a priest or deacon is not available (OCF 14). The Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass, that is the funeral proper, however, may be celebrated only by a deacon or a priest. Conference of Bishops may ask permission of the Apostolic See to allow lay persons to preside (OCF 151). The NCCB in our country has not done so.

You will note in The Order of Christian Funerals that the vigil services and related rites may be celebrated at the home, elsewhere, or in the church. There are already a number of instances in the diocese where the viewing of the body occurs in the church and the vigil then is celebrated there.

The Rite of Committal may be celebrated at the graveside, cemetery chapel, mausoleum or at the crematorium (OCF 204). It is not to be celebrated in the church vestibule immediately following the funeral liturgy. For pastoral reasons the Commendation, which usually concludes the funeral liturgy, may be celebrated as a part of the Rite of Committal instead (OCF 244).

The Order of Christian Funerals strongly urges that the body be brought to the church for the funeral. This is true even when it is a Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass (OCF 179). We encourage the practice of bringing the body to the church for the funeral because of the importance of worship and support of the community and because the church is where the deceased received the sacraments of baptism and Holy Eucharist. This has some urgency in our day when there is a growing tendency for funeral rites to be conducted only in the funeral home or even restricted to a simple burial service at the cemetery. It is the desire of the Church and the United States Bishops that the funeral liturgy be the funeral Mass whenever possible. Even when the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass is used, still a Mass for the deceased should be celebrated after the funeral at a convenient time (OCF 128).

## **MARRIAGE**

The diocese does not have permission of the Holy See to permit lay persons to witness marriages in the absence of a priest or deacon. To the best of my knowledge, this has not become a need or a problem in the Diocese of Marquette.

## **SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest unfortunately are a growing need in the diocese. Two documents govern these celebrations: Congregation of Divine Worship, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (DSC), and NCCB, Gathered in Steadfast Faith (GSF). When your sacramental minister cannot be present to preside over the community's celebration of the Eucharist, you, as an appointed pastoral coordinator or your pastoral associate, have my permission to conduct one of the Sunday celebrations now provided for in the absence of a priest (DSC 30). These celebrations are either a Liturgy of the Word or Morning or Evening Prayer. The communion service may be appended to any of these services (GSF 6, 18; cf., 53, 54). The proper ritual for these celebrations has been published and should be followed. It is, Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Leaders' Edition. The "Specific Norms" given in GSF 55, regarding the presidential chair not being used, the altar being approached only when the Eucharist is placed on it, etc., are to be followed.

Such a Sunday celebration with communion distributed cannot be held if Mass has been or is to be celebrated in that same church on that same day, including the anticipated Mass on Saturday evening (DSC 21). If the size of the congregation and/or church make it impossible for the people to gather at one Sunday service, permission is needed from the chancery for scheduling several services or a Mass and a service.

Our diocesan policy about vesture is that the leader should ordinarily wear a well designed alb (GSF 55B). Only deacons can wear a stole or dalmatic.

There are further guidelines in our Diocesan Policy Manual, pages D3.4 - D3.6. They remain in force insofar as they do not conflict with the DSC and the GSF. They will soon be revised and brought up-to-date in accord with the above documents. Those guidelines now prohibit more than one communion service in a parish on any given Sunday. The impression should not be given that parishioners are being offered a choice between Mass or some other service.

### **SACRAMENTALS**

Some sacramentals can be administered by lay persons in accord with the norms of the Book of Blessings and other liturgical books. Some examples would be the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday and the Prayer Blessing by an extraordinary distributor of Holy Communion.

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Most Reverend James H. Garland  
Bishop of Marquette

December 15, 1994  
Date