

The Importance of Daily Mass

Any discussion of weekday liturgical worship must begin by recalling the importance and normative character of daily Mass in the life of every Catholic community. Pope Paul VI recommended that priests "worthily and devoutly offer Mass each day in order that both they and the rest of the faithful may enjoy the benefits that flow so richly from the sacrifice of the cross."¹ Pope John Paul II echoes these words in recalling that the celebration of the Eucharist be the "most important moment of the priest's day, the center of his life," and urging that "priests should be encouraged to celebrate Mass every day, even in the absence of a congregation, since it is an act of Christ and the Church (cf. *ibid.*, 13; *Code of Canon Law*, c. 904)."²

Elsewhere, the Holy Father encourages seminarians to "take part every day in the eucharistic celebration, in such a way that afterwards they will take up as a rule of their priestly life this daily celebration"³ Quoting the Cure of Ars the Holy Father also exhorts, "How well a priest does, therefore, to offer himself to God in sacrifice every morning!"⁴

In the Diocese of Oakland:

1. Whenever possible, daily Mass should be celebrated in each parish.
2. The Mass schedule of nearby parishes should be available to parishioners. If for some valid reason Mass is not available on a weekday in a certain parish (the priest is sick, on retreat, etc.) the parishioners should be encouraged to attend Mass at a neighboring parish.
3. Pastors may always allow deacons and lay ministers to lead the Office of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in their churches.
4. Re: "Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Holy Communion." This rite is designed for those who are prevented from being present at daily Mass in the parish church (for example, patients in a rest home or inmates in a prison). The proper ritual for the Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Holy Communion is found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*.
5. The specialized provisions of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* **are not appropriate** to weekday celebrations. Because of the small size of our diocese, and the number of priests available, use of the ritual *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* is not authorized, even on weekends in the Diocese of Oakland. Give our people the Mass!
6. A Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Holy Communion should never be scheduled for the purpose of 'providing a role' for deacons or lay ministers. Likewise, choosing the option of the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass solely to provide a role for the deacon is inappropriate. It is also inappropriate to have the deacon preside at the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass when a priest is available to celebrate a Funeral Mass.