



SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE GUIDELINES

After consultation with the Presbyteral Council, the Deans, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, and the Archdiocesan Worship Commission, the *Mass Schedule Guidelines* as promulgated by Archbishop Bernardin on May 12, 1981, are revised as follows:

- 1) Any changes in a parish Mass schedule should be submitted to the Chancellor, together with the written opinion of the local Dean. This is in keeping with the present policy of the Archdiocese and will keep current a central directory of Mass times.
- 2) Pastors are urged to evaluate the parish Mass schedule and determine whether attendance at any Mass utilizes less than 50% of the seating capacity of a church facility. This examination should involve consultation with the Parish Council and/or Worship Commission and will consider the possibility of consolidating liturgies. In evaluating the schedule, there will certainly be special groups or needs to be considered at each parish, but the goal of the consultation is to ascertain whether there is a legitimate rationale for retaining a Mass on the parish schedule that is minimally attended.
- 3) Each parish should have only one Saturday liturgy for the Sunday obligation. Exceptions will be made by the Chancellor for cogent pastoral reasons.
- 4) No parish should have two liturgies being celebrated at the same time in different locations, on the same property. Special circumstances can be brought to the attention of the Chancellor for permission for this type of scheduling, although identical starting times are to be avoided.
- 5) The starting time for Masses should be, at least, 90 minutes apart to allow for a prayerful liturgy, as well as accommodate parking needs and travel time for the priest.

- 6) Where a pastoral region shares a pastor, the Mass schedules for all parishes in the region should be reviewed collectively. In as much as possible, each weekend, there is to be at least one obligation Mass in every parish.
- 7) While the Church's law does allow priests to trinate on any day in case of pastoral need, (cf. *Clerus Cincinnatiensis*, current edition), in reviewing the Mass schedule, all consideration should be given to whether it is truly necessary for a priest to trinate, taking into account the following factors:
 - a. The added demands on the priest's time;
 - b. The impact that added demands have on the health of the priest;
 - c. In Church law, trination is understood to be the exception rather than the norm.

(NB: According to a rescript of May 30, 1997, from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (Prot. N. 494/97/1), priests of the archdiocese may celebrate three Masses on any day, with due regard for canons 951, 904 and 905. The Congregation granted the rescript (Prot. N. 494/97/1) *ad beneplacitum* until further notification.)

- 8) Pastoral regions and neighboring parishes should collaborate in creating Sunday and weekday Mass schedules. Pastors are to communicate any change in a parish Sunday Mass schedule to the priests of the deanery, as well as the Chancellor of the Archdiocese.
- 9) It should be the responsibility of the pastor to review the parish Mass schedule with the Parish Council and/or Worship Commission every two years to determine whether the schedule does fit the guidelines and the needs of the parish. The Worship Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will regularly remind pastors of this responsibility.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) May *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP)* be celebrated in the parish?

The Archbishop of Cincinnati has *not* given permission for such celebrations to take place in parishes. However, in the event of extraordinary circumstances (i.e. when the priest is unexpectedly ill), a parish should publish (e.g., in the bulletins, on recorded messages, on websites, and/or at the entrance to the church) the schedule of Masses in nearby parishes.

If the nearest parishes are at a considerable distance, and if the pastor or administrator concludes that a significant percentage of the community is unable to proceed to a neighboring church, then in such an instance, one of the rituals found in SCAP may be celebrated by a deacon or a lay person, at the specific direction of the pastor or administrator. These celebrations are not to be scheduled, but are used only in case of an emergency. Only one such celebration may be celebrated on a given Sunday.

2) What is the earliest time an anticipatory Mass may be scheduled?

The earliest time for an anticipatory Mass was determined to be 3:00 p.m. in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as stated in the *Clergy Bulletin*, March 17, 1970.

3) May weddings after 3:00pm on Saturday fulfill the Sunday obligation?

Canon 1248.1 states, “The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.”

Therefore, anyone participating in any Mass from 3:00pm on a Saturday (or the day before a holyday) through 11:59pm on a Sunday or holyday fulfills his/her obligation to attend Mass.

Ritual Masses, for example, the Rite of Marriage, may be celebrated after the anticipatory Mass, except if that Saturday is a Solemnity.

As for scheduling weddings within Mass after 3:00pm on a Saturday or the day before a holyday, Archdiocesan policy strongly discourages this practice unless the wedding is held within the context of a regular Sunday Mass or is a celebration of marriage outside of Mass. Additionally, care must be taken to observe the norms of the liturgical year.

NB While weddings may be scheduled on Sundays which allow for ritual Masses to be celebrated, the priest may choose not to schedule a wedding because of a conflicting schedule or other duties. A wedding may be celebrated in the context of a parish Sunday Mass; however, the readings and prayers of the day are used.

4) May liturgies for Sunday and holydays be celebrated in homes?

The instruction, *Redemptionis sacramentum*, states the following: “ ‘The celebration of the Eucharist is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise. In this case, the celebration must be in a decent place.’ The diocesan Bishop shall be the judge for his diocese concerning this necessity, on a case-by-case basis (108).”

Accordingly, permission must be received from the Archbishop to celebrate Mass anywhere other than a church or oratory on any day of the week.

5) What ritual text and scripture readings are to be used on “privileged days”?

On solemnities and certain Sundays of the year, the texts and readings of the day may not be substituted by other ritual texts (i.e. Rite of Marriage, Rite of Confirmation, etc.) On these days at which a ritual Mass may not be celebrated, the proper texts of the day must be used. Sometimes, it is permitted to substitute the first or second reading of the day with a scripture reading from the ritual Mass. Please refer to the specific ritual text, “Choice of Rite”. The Worship Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati provides annual liturgy notes found on the Worship Office website. These are also helpful in determining what may be used on specific days. www.catholiccincinnati.org/offices-ministries/worship .

Appendix

Following are the days which require their own scripture readings and ritual texts:

1. The Sundays of Advent
2. The Sundays of Lent
3. The Sundays of Easter (including Pentecost)
4. All Solemnities
 - Mary, the Mother of God (January 1)
 - St. Joseph the Worker (March 19)
 - The Annunciation of the Lord (March 25)
 - The Birth of John the Baptist (June 24)
 - Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29)
 - The Assumption of Mary (August 15)
 - All Saints (November 1)
 - The Immaculate Conception (December 8)
 - Nativity of the Lord (Christmas - December 25)
 - The Days within the Octave of Easter

Moveable Dates:

Epiphany of the Lord
The Most Holy Trinity
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
Sacred Heart of Jesus
Christ the King
Ascension (Sunday)
Ash Wednesday
All Souls Day (November 2)
The days of Holy Week

6. **No ritual Masses** may be celebrated during the Triduum.