

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
of
BALLARAT



Diocesan Liturgical Commission

MANUAL FOR LAY LEADERS OF SUNDAY ASSEMBLIES OF WORD & COMMUNION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

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PREAMBLE

The Ballarat Diocesan Liturgical Commission offers this Manual as a guide to the celebration of Sunday Liturgical Assemblies in the absence of a priest.

In producing this manual the Commission stresses that such celebrations are for use in occasions of necessity only. In no way does the Commission wish to encourage such celebrations as the norm for Sundays. The Eucharist is and will always be the proper manner of celebrating Sunday.

While stressing the centrality of Sunday and the Eucharist for the Catholic community, the Commission recognises, however, that there will be some occasions when there is not a priest available for the Sunday celebration. Such occasions may be for instance when the priest is taken ill suddenly or when, despite his best efforts, he is unable to obtain the services of a priest for supply.

If it is impossible to assist at a Eucharistic celebration, either because no sacred minister is available or for some other grave reason, the faithful are strongly recommended to take part in a liturgy of the Word, if there be such in the parish church or some other sacred place, which is celebrated in accordance with the provisions laid down by the diocesan bishop; or to spend an appropriate time in prayer, whether personally or as a family or, as occasion presents, in a group of families.

§1248, no.2

This manual has been prepared and is offered in an attempt to assist parishes so that, if the need does arise, there will be leaders trained and parishes prepared to assemble as the Catholic community to worship God and to honour Sunday in the most appropriate manner.

LITURGICAL BACKGROUND

THE CENTRALITY OF SUNDAY

Since the beginning of the Church, Sunday has been the focus for the life of the Christian community. The Second Vatican Council describes Sunday as follows:

By a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place. They should listen to the Word of God and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus, and giving thanks to God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3). The Lord's Day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the faithful and taught to them so that it may in fact become a day of joy and freedom from work.

CSL 106

The Eucharistic assembly is the specific characteristic of Sunday, according to the overwhelming testimony of the tradition and teaching of Vatican II. On the occasions when that celebration of the Eucharist is not possible, the faithful need nonetheless to come together on the Lord's Day, in order to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word and, if possible, to receive the Body of Christ.

WHY WE GATHER

We gather on the Lord's Day to:

- hear God's Word;
- reflect on it;
- make intercession for the Church and the world;
- sing God's praises;
- encourage one another in the gospel way of life.

In this way the community

expresses

and

develops itself as

CHURCH

PRIMACY OF THE WORD

The importance of the Word of God and its proclamation to the Christian Community on the Lord's Day is not solely related to its place in the Eucharistic celebration. The importance of the Word of God is that it is God speaking to us. The Liturgy of the Word is a dialogue between God and the People of God, a dialogue carried out in proclamation and reflection, in attentive listening and in the response of prayer.

The Liturgy of the Word allows the Word of God to be recognised in our lives in the light of Scripture, be taken to heart and rise to our lips in the profession of faith, in the intercessory prayers and in a prayer of thanksgiving, the greatest thanksgiving prayer being, of course, the Eucharist.

Our experience of the Liturgy of the Word should be that of being one people, gathered into one Body by the Lord, finding ourselves in the presence of the Father, who reveals himself to us anew and calls us to be his people and his witnesses in the world of today.

WEEKDAY LITURGIES

It should be noted that even if a parish is able to celebrate the Eucharist on a day other than Sunday, this does not and cannot replace the gathering of the Church community on the day of the Lord's resurrection, Sunday.

When the Church community chooses to gather for a weekday liturgy it should only be as an extension of the Sunday Assembly. When such weekday gatherings are not for the celebration of the Mass, it could be more appropriate to refrain from holding a communion service and use other forms of liturgical prayer such as the Liturgy of the Hours.

PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

***A CHURCH ASSEMBLY CAN BE SEEN
TO REVOLVE AROUND FOUR ACTIONS:***

WELCOME

A people gathered together in the Lord's name

WORD

A people called and challenged by the Good News

PRAISE and COMMUNION

A people that remembers and renews its covenant with God

DISMISSAL for action

A people sent on mission

WITHIN A SUNDAY ASSEMBLY IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST, THE TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES AND PATTERNS OF THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH MUST BE APPROPRIATED

- a. The basic structure of individual "units" of prayer such as an opening prayer (Collect), a blessing, a Litany, a credal statement, intercessory prayer, must be learnt.
- b. The "language" of posture, gesture and symbol used in liturgical celebrations must form a basis for Sunday Assemblies and must be developed and understood by those leading such celebrations.
- c. Leaders must be sensitive to the basic principles of ritual activity.
- d. Improvisation of models of prayer must only follow respect for and knowledge of the traditional forms.

LAY LEADERS OF PRAYER

Recognising that there will be some occasions when there is not a priest available for the Sunday celebration, parishes should ensure that appropriately selected and trained people are available to respond at such times to ensure that the Sunday Assembly takes place.

THOSE WHO LEAD THE SUNDAY ASSEMBLY IN PRAYER SHOULD:

- ◆ be known and well accepted by the parish community or by a majority of those whom they will serve in this capacity;
- ◆ have an adequate background in the Christian faith enabling them to carry out this role meaningfully and competently;
- ◆ have, over a period of time, been actively engaged in community-oriented activities and enjoy a good reputation within the community;
- ◆ have demonstrated an openness and availability to the working of the Spirit by respecting others and by a prayerful approach to life;
- ◆ have been selected by representatives of the particular community (Parish Council) with the approval of the priest responsible for the parish;
- ◆ possess basic communication skills;
- ◆ be able to work with others on a team or committee to plan liturgical services;
- ◆ be publicly commissioned for the ministry of lay leadership in prayer.

OUTLINE OF RITUAL FOR A SUNDAY ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance Song
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Shared Reflection
- Profession of Faith
- Prayers of the Faithful
- Collection

RITE OF THANKSGIVING

- Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving

COMMUNION RITE

- Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Admonition to Unity
- Communion
- Communion Song/Silent prayer
- Prayer after Communion

CONCLUDING RITE

- Greeting
- Blessing
- Dismissal

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

FOR A WORTHY CELEBRATION OF THE SUNDAY ASSEMBLY, THE FOLLOWING MUST TAKE PLACE:

- a. A team approach to the celebration with communication between leaders and appropriate parish groups, eg. musicians.
- b. Ministries which already exist for the celebration of Mass, eg. readers, need to be respected and incorporated in the celebration.
- c. Reflection on the Scriptures of the day is the starting point for planning.
- d. The Mass prayers of the Sunday provide the basis and model for the prayers of the Sunday Assembly.
- e. A review of each celebration in order that leaders and participants learn from their experiences.

In other words, preparation and planning can be summed up as:

PLANNING TOGETHER

KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD UPPERMOST

WORKING CREATIVELY AS A TEAM

PROCEDURES

LEADERSHIP

- ◆ The Assembly is lead by more than one person.
- ◆ Those leading are seated as part of the Assembly and move to the Sanctuary when necessary.
- ◆ Leadership of the Assembly in prayer is accompanied by the appropriate gestures.

USE OF SANCTUARY

- ◆ The Altar is not used during this celebration. It is stripped of any adornment as a clear sign that this celebration is not a Mass.
- ◆ The Presider's Chair is not used. This indicates the absence of the Eucharistic leader.
- ◆ The Lectern is used only for the proclamation of the Word in the Readings and Psalm.

REFLECTION ON THE WORD

- ◆ A shared reflection by the leaders explaining the meanings the readings had for their original hearers, and indicating how these readings relate to this particular community, is given after the Gospel.
- ◆ Such a shared reflection should be brief and not more than of five to seven minutes duration.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

- ◆ If Communion is to be given at this celebration, the minister of Communion leaves the ciborium lid at the tabernacle and proceeds directly to the distribution of Communion. The ciborium is not placed on the altar.

MUSIC

- ◆ As with the Eucharistic celebration, music plays an integral role. Music is normally used at the following places:
 - i. As the service opens;
 - ii. Responsorial Psalm;
 - iii. Gospel Acclamation;
 - iv. During the Communion rite, where hymns should be related to the action of Communion;
 - v. At the conclusion of the service.

ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Signs and symbols of our worship should be used to enhance the celebration.
- ◆ Candles and flowers should be placed in the Church, but not on the altar.
- ◆ The Lectionary should be a fitting book, used in procession, with candles beside the Lectern.
- ◆ Incense can be used at the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ◆ Banners and liturgical colours should be used, but arranged to include the whole church building, not just the front or sanctuary area.

RESOURCES

RITUAL BOOKS AND MATERIALS FOR PREPARATION AND PLANNING:

1. The Roman Missal.
2. Lectionary I: Proper of the Seasons and Sundays in Ordinary Time.
3. Ordo for the Dioceses of Australia and New Zealand:
The Liturgical Calendar of the Church's Year.
4. Pastoral Liturgy: *WA Liturgy Commission publication useful for preparation of liturgy and reflection on the Word*
<https://liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au/sunday-celebrations-in-the-absence-of-a-priest/>
5. Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2004): *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Directives for the Dioceses of Australia.*
<https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Sunday-Celebrations-in-the-absence-of-a-priest-Directives-for-the-dioceses-of-Australia>

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