

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

GUIDELINES SCHEDULING OF SUNDAY MASSES

The promulgation of guidelines for the scheduling of Sunday Masses is being done to enhance Canon #897 in the Code of Canon Law.

The Most Holy Eucharist is the most august sacrament, in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and the source of all christian life; it signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and achieves the building up of the Body of Christ. The other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely related to the Holy Eucharist and are directed to it.

- a. Parish staffs are to review the number of Sunday Masses every three years. The following formula is used to determine the number of Masses needed: 60% of registered parishioners divided by 75% of the church's capacity.
- b. There is to be a minimum of one hour and thirty minutes between the starting time of Masses.
- c. When arranging the Mass schedule, the following is to be considered:
 - 1) Parishioners ought to be able to gather, as much as possible, as one worshipping community.
 - 2) Consideration is to be given that parishioners need to be able to fulfill their Sunday obligation.
 - 3) The liturgy is not to be rushed, allowing for a worthy and full celebration.
 - 4) Time needs to be allowed for the occasional celebration of special rites.
 - 5) Liturgical ministers are vital to good worship and ought not to be required to overextend themselves.
 - 6) Priests are to preside at no more than four (4) weekend Masses in observance of Sunday in order not to overextend themselves.
 - 7) The Mass schedule ought to be coordinated with the neighboring parishes (if applicable)

- 8) The travel schedule of available priests needs to be taken into account.
- 9) When parishes merge, the people need to be given an understanding that changes in the Mass schedule will take place.
- d. If the parish staff, in consultation with the pastoral council, judges that the Mass schedule is to be changed, an explanation of the rationale is to be given to the parish community.
- e. Any changes in the Mass schedule are to be given to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese.
- f. Even though Canon Law does not set a specific time, it is Archdiocesan policy that anticipated Masses, when needed, are not to begin before 4:00 p.m. on Saturday or the night before a holyday.
- g. The number of masses in a parish might be reduced on those occasions when special celebrations of the parish or deanery are observed. However, each parish is to make available at least one alternate eucharistic celebration.

Addendum:

All of those entrusted with the care of a parish are reminded that Canon #1247 states: "On Sunday and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass". The opportunity for the faithful to fulfill this obligation on holy days is to be provided.