

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Resource Packet for Appointed Leaders of Prayer

December 2020

(links updated June 2024)

NOTE: *Appropriate shortened form for referring to a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest is Sunday Celebration or SC*

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Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland (Maine)
Office of Lifelong Faith Formation & Office of Ministerial Services
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*Packet created for the sole use of pastors, pastoral life coordinators, & SC leaders of prayer serving in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland. **Please only share this packet, its content, or the included urls (webpage addresses) with those directly involved in implementing Sunday Celebrations in Maine. Thank you!***



Important Conversations between Pastor and Appointed Leaders of Prayer for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SC)

Schedule time to meet in the worship space and walk through the ritual together

- ☐ Orient to where lectionary, key to tabernacle, extra ciborium, corporal, and other liturgical items needed for an SC are stored in the sacristy and clarify role of the sacristan
- ☐ Set up the sanctuary as would if leading a SC, including
 - Determine where to place the lectern with the ritual text for primary leader of prayer
 - Determine where the leader(s) of prayer will sit
 - Become familiar with unfolding and refolding corporal on the altar
 - Orient to using the microphone system, especially if using a wireless lavalier mic
- ☐ Run through a practice SC to get used to the flow of the ritual and using the ritual text to guide the liturgy, including checking tabernacle for enough consecrated hosts for distribution
- ☐ Practice purifying ciborium

Suggest practicing together every six months and/or two weeks prior to a scheduled SC

Discuss related topics:

- ☐ Notifications regarding when a SC is scheduled (how and when will these happen)
 - Leaders of Prayer
 - Other liturgical ministers assigned for that liturgy
 - Parish community: Prior to scheduled SC & Pre-liturgy announcement wording
- ☐ Gospel reflection resource when priest or deacon unable to provide homily (see Study Edition of ritual text for suggestions)
- ☐ Choosing from among prayer options in ritual (opening, Act of Thanksgiving)
- ☐ Worship aids for assembly (when to use, who creates/prints, ...)
- ☐ Compensation
 - Ensure way of maintaining shared community stewardship for Sunday worship
 - Leaders of prayer may be paid an amount equal to the current remuneration for a supply priest. (split equally if 2 leaders for one SC), except if the leader is already paid as part of his or her regular parish work. Leaders would be treated as employees regarding IRS requirements
 - Parishes may reimburse mileage at the current volunteer rate SC leaders of prayer travels to multiple worship sites.
- ☐ Last minute/emergency absence of a priest
 - What role, if any, should the appointed SC leader of prayer take in an emergency when a priest does not show up for a weekend service that is scheduled as a Sunday Mass?
 - Should the community shift to celebrating a SC or some other liturgical prayer?

Online or Downloadable Resources

SC Leader of Prayer Resource Webpage

<https://portlanddiocese.org/scs-prayer-leader-resources>

- Printable worship aides
- [Diocesan norms](#) for Sunday Celebrations (2018)
- Diocesan training presentation slides for Part 1 and Part 2
- Handouts shared in trainings
- [Recording](#) of a SC liturgy lead by a deacon
- [Recording](#) of a SC liturgy lead by two lay people
- [Parishioner Education Booklet](#) “Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Responses to Common Questions”

[Study Edition](#) of the ***SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST: Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion Ritual Text*** (Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, **November 2020**)

[Video](#) demonstrating proper way to unfold and refold a corporal on the altar (Created by Fr. Christopher Gray of St Mary’s Catholic Church, Park City, Utah)

Roles and Responsibilities in SCs

From page 19 of Study Edition of *SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST*:
Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion Ritual Text (Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Nov. 2020)

Roles and Responsibilities

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion

Assembly

- Full, conscious, and active participation

Ushers

- Distribute prayer guides as people arrive
- Collect the monetary offerings during Announcements, bring to altar
- Secure funds collected in usual manner

Deacon or Layperson Serving as the Leader of Prayer

- Prepare vessels and credence table for distributing Communion
- Place corporal on the credence table before liturgy begins
- Introduction
- Greeting
- Collect
- DEACON ONLY: Gospel/Homily
- Introductions of Profession of Faith
- Introduction/Closing to the Prayer of the Faithful
- Communion Rite
- Introduction to the Our Father
- Invitation to Communion
- Purify vessels used for Communion
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (if recited)
- Concluding Rite
- Introduce Collection (if included)
- Prayer for the Vocation to Priesthood
- Blessing
- Invitation of the sign of peace
- DEACON ONLY: Greet assembly at the main doors as they leave the celebration

Extraordinary Eucharistic

Minister/Sacristan

- Assist with preparing vessels for distribution (if needed)
- Retrieve the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, if located in a different place than within the worship space
- Distribute communion

1st Reader and/or 2nd Reader

- Old Testament reading (New Testament reading during the Easter season)
- New Testament reading
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Announcements (during the collection)

Associate Lay Leader of Prayer

- Proclaim the Gospel reading (when there is no deacon present)
- Read the homily prepared by the pastor or the designated reflection

Music Leader

- Psalm (if sung)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Communion Hymn
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (if sung)
- Instrumental during collection (optional)
- Instrumental at the sign of peace OR sing a concluding song

Guide to Liturgical Terms in SC Ritual

ambo



podium usually only used during the Liturgy of the Word, usually a permanent or substantial furnishing in the sanctuary

Book of the Gospels



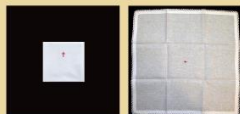
liturgical book composed of the Gospel readings assigned for each Mass; only deacons can use during a SC liturgy

ciborium



covered vessel used to hold consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle and for distribution during the Communion Rite

corporal



white linen cloth that unfolds from a small square to a larger cloth that is laid flat on the altar where the Blessed Sacrament will rest whenever outside the tabernacle

credence table



small table in or near the sanctuary that holds the corporal and other items needed for the Communion Rite

lectern



minimal podium used to hold the ritual text for the leader of prayer

lectionary for Mass



liturgical book composed of the scripture readings and the responsorial psalm assigned for each Mass of the year (Sundays, weekdays, and special occasions)

liturgical greeting

Deacon: The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.

paten



plate or shallow bowl to hold consecrated hosts for distributing Communion

purificator



linen cloth napkin used to wipe Communion vessels

purify vessels used for communion



leader of prayer places uncovered ciborium on corporal on altar, tilts empty paten over ciborium then wipes around the inside of the vessel to ensure any remnant of the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to ciborium and reserved in the tabernacle. Move used purificator and empty paten to credence table as clear altar

sanctuary



area in worship space surrounding the altar, usually includes ambo, seating for the priest and deacon; area often elevated



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST

What a Leader of Prayer Does

In a *Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest (SC)* who leads a particular element of the liturgy and how it is done differs whether led by one deacon or two laypeople. The chart indicates similarities and differences in the elements and leadership responsibilities for SCs between deacons and laypeople.

Similarities & Differences in Leading SCs

INTRODUCTORY RITES	D	L1	L2
• Brief explanation of SC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sign of the Cross & Greeting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Opening Prayer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LITURGY OF THE WORD	D	L1	L2
• Invitation to listen to God's Word	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Gospel Proclamation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Homily	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Dismissal of Catechumens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Profession of Faith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Opening & closing of Universal Prayer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMUNION RITE	D	L1	L2
• <i>Prepare altar, light candles, retrieve consecrated hosts from tabernacle</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Lord's Prayer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Invitation to Communion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Self-communicate</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Distribute Communion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Return consecrated hosts to tabernacle, extinguish candles, clear altar</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Act of Thanksgiving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONCLUDING RITE	D	L1	L2
• Intro to collection & announcements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Invitation to Pray for Priestly Vocations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Blessing prayer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Bless assembly with Sign of the Cross	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sign of Peace	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Greet at main door afterwards</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

November 2020

D = Deacon (vested, sit in sanctuary)

L1 = Primary Layperson (Sunday best, sit in front pew)

L2 = Associate Layperson (Sunday best, sit in front pew)



SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST

What a Leader of Prayer Does

LITURGY

From the Greek meaning "public work."
It refers especially to the public worship of the Church,
including Mass and the Liturgy of the hours.

U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, p 518

Tips for Leading Liturgical Prayer

Do everything in a spirit of prayer

- Ground yourself in the liturgical principle *lex orandi lex credendi lex vivendi* that translates *As we pray so we believe; as we believe so we live*
- Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and the whole community to lift hearts and minds to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity

Be an example of reverence

- Solemn bow toward the altar
- Genuflect toward the tabernacle
- Keep an unhurried pace
- Speak clearly with appropriate emotion and inflection
- Include silence

PRACTICE!

- Prepare ritual book with needed bookmarks and additional texts for the specific Sunday
- **Do the red. Say the black.**
- Walk through SCs liturgy in the worship space, including setting up the sanctuary
- Be mindful of postures, motion, and gestures like inviting responses, bowing, genuflecting, or blessings so you move with ease, avoiding stiffness that would call attention to you rather than guide the assembly into deeper prayer
- Look up at the beginning and end of a prayer or reading
- Read prepared texts and make prescribed gestures only to follow the Church's norms and eliminate ad-libs

August 2020

Sample Explanation for Assembly New to Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Given by SC leader of prayer or other liturgical minister 10 minutes before SC begins

Your presence and participation in the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest is a legitimate way to keep holy the Lord's Day along with the Church in liturgy. At the same time, you may leave if you would prefer to attend a weekend Mass at a different time or at a different church.

There are similarities and stark differences between the celebration of Mass and the Sunday Celebration liturgy we will pray today. You will notice:

- There is no entrance procession or opening hymn.
- The Introductory Rite includes the Sign of the Cross and a greeting, though there is no Penitential Rite since a priest is not present to lead it or Gloria since we are not offering the sacrifice of the Eucharist.
- The Liturgy of the Word is similar consisting of the 1st reading, responsorial psalm, 2nd Reading, Gospel acclamation, and the Gospel. A Homily is given by a deacon who is the leader of prayer whereas a lay leader of prayer reads a reflection prepared by the pastor or from an approved resource.
- A profession of faith is made, and then the universal prayers are offered.
- When possible, the Communion Rite consists of setting the altar, retrieving the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, reciting the Our Father, and the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Following the Communion Rite, an Act of Thanksgiving is led by the leader of prayer using a psalm or a song of thanksgiving may be sung.
- The Concluding Rite consists of making announcements and taking up the collection, a prayer for vocations to the priesthood, the final prayer, and a sharing of the sign of peace.
- There is no formal dismissal at the end of the liturgy or a recessional procession (*Optional*: We will sing hymn, however). You may leave after I leave the area by the altar (the sanctuary) and begin to exit the church as well.

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

OUTLINE FOR LITURGICAL MINISTERS

with page references to SC Ritual Text (USCCB 2012)
lead by a deacon or diocesan appointed lay prayer leader(s)

Musician may play instrumental music before lay prayer leaders take their places in the assembly

Introductory Rite: Lay Prayer Leader #1

Lay Prayer Leader #1 bows/genuflects then goes into the sanctuary to read introduction – pg. 77

*Leads congregation in the **Sign of the Cross** – pg. 78*

*Offers the **Greeting** – pg. 78*

*Leads assembly in the **Opening Prayer** for correct liturgical season – pgs. 79-82*

Liturgy of the Word: Lay Prayer Leader #1, Lector, Cantor/Musician, Lay Prayer Leader #2

Lay Prayer Leader #1 invites community to sit and listen to God's word – pg. 82

*Lector does **First Reading** assigned for that date*

*Cantor either sings or speaks **Psalm** assigned for that date and everyone gives the response*

*Lector does the **Second Reading** assigned for that date*

*Cantor sings or speaks the **Gospel Acclamation***

*Lay Prayer Leader #2 proclaims **Gospel** reads Gospel assigned for that date (omits 'The Lord be with you...' and starts with "A reading from the holy Gospel according to ...")*

*Lay Prayer Leader #2 reads a **Reflection on the Gospel** prepared/designated by the pastor*

*Lay Prayer Leader #2 returns to pew for **Period of Sacred Silence***

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 returns to sanctuary to lead **Profession of Faith** – pg. 85*

Lay Prayer Leader #1 introduces Prayer of the Faithful with one of the options on pg. 87

*Lector offers **Prayer of the Faithful** intentions (no Mass intention since not a Mass!)*

Lay Prayer Leader #1 concludes the intercessions with prayer on pg. 87 or one from the Appendix III

Lay Prayer Leader #1 reminds that collection will take place following Communion/Act of Thanksgiving



If there are not enough consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle to distribute Holy Communion to everyone, skip directly to the Act of Thanksgiving

Communion Rite: Lay Prayer Leader #1, Cantor/Musician, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion (EM)

Lay Prayer Leader #1 prepares the altar (goes to the credence table to sanitize hands, pick up a lighter and a corporal; s/he lights the candles on the altar, unfolds the corporal cloth on top of the altar, genuflects in front of the tabernacle, opens the tabernacle, takes out the ciborium with Blessed Sacrament and places it on the altar, removes the cover if one, then returns to stand with ritual book) – pg. 88

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 invites everyone to say the **Lord's Prayer** – pg. 88*

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 goes to the altar, genuflects, takes a consecrated Host from the ciborium then says the **Invitation to Communion** prayer (Behold the Lamb of God...) then and leads the congregation in the response (Lord, I am not worthy...) – pg. 89*

Lay Prayer Leader #1 takes Communion her/himself; if needed, gives communion to EM then gives each a paten (or ciborium) to help distribute holy Communion

Lay Prayer Leader #1 and EM give communion to the parishioners


Cantor/Musician may lead congregation in an appropriate song during Holy Communion

EM returns paten to the altar then returns to pew

Lay Prayer Leader #1 combines any remaining consecrated hosts into one ciborium, wipes out empty paten into main ciborium with purificator, covers ciborium then returns the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. S/he genuflects before closing and locking the tabernacle.

Lay Prayer Leader #1 returns to the altar, extinguishes the candles, refolds the corporal, places the corporal and purificator on top of any empty patens before returning them to the credence table

Lay Prayer Leader #1 returns to designated pew for moment of private prayer

 *Lay Prayer Leader #1 returns to the sanctuary to lead the congregation in **Act of Thanksgiving** – options on pg. 90-94 (may also be a song)*

Concluding Rite: Lay Prayer Leader #1, Ushers, Lector, Cantor/Musician

Lay Prayer Leader #1 introduces collection and announcements then returns to pew

*Ushers take up **Collection** and bring to altar*

*Lector makes **Announcements** from ambo*

Musician may play instrumental music during collection

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 leads congregation in **Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood** from the sanctuary – pg. 94*

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 says **Blessing** (makes no Sign of the Cross) – pg. 95*

*Lay Prayer Leader #1 invites everyone to share a **Sign of Peace** then leaves through side entrance– pg. 95*

Cantor/musician may conclude the celebration with a song or instrumental music