

08 - Weekday Communion Services in the Diocese of St. Augustine

The Vatican issued the Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum: On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist* (RS) in 2004. It cautions against routinely separating the reception of Holy Communion from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, especially on Sundays, and recognizes several significant dangers in such a practice.

The Instruction also states:

“Likewise, especially if Holy Communion is distributed during such celebrations, the diocesan Bishop, to whose exclusive competence this matter pertains, must not easily grant permission for such celebrations to be held on weekdays, especially in places where it was possible or would be possible to have the celebration of Mass on the preceding or the following Sunday.” (166)

Therefore, in parishes that have Sunday Masses, permission would not usually be given for a weekday Communion Service.

It is a worthy practice that many Catholics desire to attend the Mass on weekdays and receive Holy Communion. However, daily Communion is not always possible. Moreover, a weekday Communion Service is never a substitution for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Some time has passed since *Redemptionis Sacramentum* was issued. Now greater care must be taken to conform to the teaching of the Church in this matter. Therefore, the following directives will be followed for the diocese of St. Augustine:

1. Permission for a weekday Communion Service must be granted by the Bishop.

2. Instead of a Communion Service the following liturgies or devotions may be celebrated in the parish when a Mass is not possible:

(A) A Word Service where the daily Scripture Readings are proclaimed and the Intercessions of the day are prayed. If a deacon leads this service, he may preach a brief homily. No Communion is to be distributed at this service.

(B) The Liturgy of the Hours, Morning or Evening Prayer, may be celebrated.

(C) Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. A Deacon or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may expose the Blessed Sacrament for worship by the faithful. Hymns should be sung, a Scripture passage read, especially the readings assigned to the day, and religious silence observed with adoration. Intercessions should be prayed. If a deacon is present, he may preach a brief homily and celebrate Benediction. Incense is only used when a deacon is present. The Sacrament is not to be exposed only for a blessing.

(D) The Rosary or litanies, such as Sacred Heart devotions, and other devotions could be observed at the scheduled time.

3. In those rare instances where permission may be granted for a Communion Service the following is to be observed:

(A) Proper Ritual. Whenever a weekday communion service is scheduled, *with the Bishop's permission*, the proper ritual must always be observed. The proper ritual for weekday communion services is to be found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*. No part of *Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest* is appropriate for weekday communion services.

(B) Ministers. Deacons are ordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Whenever a deacon is reasonably available to preside at a weekday communion service a deacon must be scheduled to preside.

Additionally, reasonable attempts must be made by the pastor or administrator to secure the services of a deacon before a weekday communion service is entrusted to a member of the lay faithful. When a weekday communion service is entrusted to a member of the lay faithful, he or she may not be referred to as "presider."

At any weekday communion service the proper liturgical roles must be respected. For example, neither a deacon presider nor a lay leader should also fulfill the role of lector.

4. Hospitals and Nursing Homes. In these circumstances, a weekday communion service may be permitted in a hospital, nursing home or extended care facility where the resident patients are usually unable to attend a Sunday Mass. The pastor or administrator of the parish in which the facility is located is *already authorized* by the Bishop to grant one such communion service per week.

5. Diocesan Priests Retreat. During the Priests Retreat a number of priests still celebrate morning Mass in their parish. Such celebrations should be advertised in nearby parishes which will not have Mass. The faithful should know when and where the celebrations of a weekday Mass will occur.

For parishes which will not have a nearby Mass celebrated, one Communion Service is granted for mid-week at the pastor's or administrator's determination.

Approved by Bishop Estevez on September 16, 2019