

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

HIS EXCELLENCY
Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
Bishop Of Sioux City

DECREE PROMULGATING A POLICY FOR SCHEDULING MASSES IN PARISHES.

As the number of priests in active ministry and people attending Mass diminishes, often the expectation is that the number of Masses in a parish or grouping of parishes remains unchanged. Due to the desire to serve the people entrusted to them with a pastoral heart, and out of a sense of duty, priests may find themselves celebrating more Masses than the Church allows on any given day.

The Church has legislated the maximum number of Masses that any priest may celebrate on any given day (c. 905). The Code of Canon Law also allows for additional Masses to be celebrated by a priest when, at the judgement of the local ordinary, there is a pastoral necessity.

One of my obligations as bishop is to protect the rights of our presbyterate and to take care that they correctly fulfill their obligations (c. 384). Therefore, having heard the Presbyteral Council on October 14, 2022, in accord with canon 8, §2, I hereby establish and promulgate as particular law for the Diocese of Sioux City the following *Policy for Scheduling Masses in Parishes*, effective December 1, 2022.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

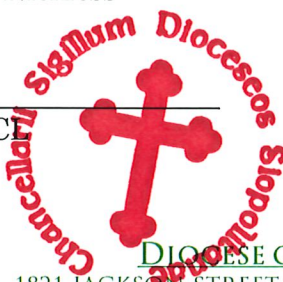
Given in Sioux City on November 1, 2022.

R Walker Nickless

Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Bishop of Sioux City

Rev Mark J Stoll

Reverend Mark J. Stoll, JCL
Chancellor



Diocese of Sioux City
Policy for Scheduling Masses in Parishes
Approved by Presbyteral Council
October 14, 2022

The Code of Canon Law states:

Can. 905 §1. A priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except in cases where the law permits him to celebrate or concelebrate more than once on the same day.

§2. If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

When scheduling Masses in a parish, the following norms are to be observed:

Weekdays

- From Monday to Friday a parish or grouping is only allowed to schedule one daily Mass per priest assigned to the parish. If a parish or grouping has only one priest, that means they can only schedule one Mass per weekday, regardless of the number of churches.
- It is expected that the priest takes a weekday off. On those days, the parish is not to schedule a daily Mass, unless there is a parochial vicar assigned to the parish who takes a different day off. Parishes should not rely on retired priests to schedule regular Masses, although they may cover when needed.
- Parishes with school are allowed to schedule a second Mass on a weekday for the benefit of the school. Parishes are also allowed to schedule a second Mass on a weekday at a nursing home.
- Because trination is not allowed on weekdays, if a funeral were to be requested on a day when the parish has already two Masses scheduled per priest, they are to cancel one of the regularly scheduled Masses, or request coverage from another priest.

Saturday

- On Saturdays, a parish or grouping is not to schedule more than one Anticipated Mass, commonly known as vigil, per priest assigned to the parish or grouping. That would allow the priest or priests to be available for a funeral or a wedding. Care must be taken that a priest does not celebrate more than two Masses on Saturday.

Sunday

- On Sundays, a parish or a grouping is to schedule up to two Masses per priest assigned to the parish or grouping.
- If the parish needs to add another Mass on Sunday, which would make a priest trinate, even if it is for a single occasion (for example, First Communion, baccalaureate, graduation, etc.), the Pastor is to request explicit permission from the Bishop.

Regular Third Sunday Mass

- If a pastor believes he needs to have an additional weekend Mass on a regular basis, he is to request written permission from the Bishop, explaining the reasons.
- If the permission is granted, it will be a Sunday Mass, and not an anticipated Mass, also known as a Vigil.
- The permission will only be granted for up to 1 year. During that time, the parish will be required to provide weekly Mass counts for all Anticipated and Sunday masses.

Criteria to be used by the Diocese when a request is received for a habitual third Mass on Sunday

- Permission will be granted for up to a year.
- Permission will be for a Mass on Sunday, and not an anticipated Mass.
- The occupancy from the previous year will be used as a metric to evaluate the need.
- Permission should not be granted unless all Masses combined celebrated in the language of the additional Masses is above 70% capacity.
- If Masses in any other language do not exceed 70% capacity combined, the Bishop may request the parish to reduce the number of Masses in said language, in order to free the priest for another Mass without having to trinate.