

Discerning the Worship needs of the Sunday Community

For communities faced with the prospect of fewer opportunities for Sunday Mass, discernment is needed to determine how the community will function and gather in the Lord's name on the Lord's Day.

Since early times, gathering on Sunday has been the hallmark of the Christian Community. In the life of the Christian community the faithful actively participate and find a true spirit of community on this day. It is an opportunity to be renewed spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In light of the **Guidelines on Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest** (Liturgical Commission, Archdiocese of Hobart, 2006) communities, in collaboration with the Archbishop, undergo a process of discernment about their future needs.

Some questions for members of the community

Why do you attend Mass?

How important is it to gather in your own community?

How vibrant is this community?

What might happen if this community did not gather on Sunday?

Does this community have sufficient people for the celebration of the liturgy? Are there sufficient ministers?

How often can Mass be celebrated on Sunday through the year?

How will the community continue its sacramental life?

How will the community celebrate other rituals such as funerals?

Where and at what time would Sunday liturgies be held?

How would the community exercise outreach to the local community?

How will the parish financially support the local centre?

How will the community communicate and remain in touch with itself and the wider Church?

Some other ways of regularly celebrating Sunday if the community is unable to hold a Liturgy of the Word and Communion:

- Small group gatherings to pray and reflect on the Sunday scripture
- Family gathering to pray and reflect on the Sunday scripture
- Individual private reflection and meditation on the Sunday scripture

A community discernment process for Leaders:

1. Publish a general description of the role and qualities needed in the Community Bulletin and encourage discussion. (The archdiocese has a number of resources which may assist e.g. newsletter article: 'Our Community and Lay Leaders of Liturgy' overleaf).
2. Call for nominations reminding people that leadership is more about service than expertise, that they will need the ability to communicate with people and be commissioned for a specific period of time for this community only. Indicate that there will be training and support and that they will be provided with a Leaders' Manual approved by the Archbishop for the Archdiocese.
3. Each nominated person would be recommended by at least two people. The names of those who accept the nominations are put forward to the community leaders.
4. The Parish priest and Parish Pastoral Council decide the number of leaders required, endorse the nominations and inform the nominees and the community.
5. Nominated leaders begin Diocesan training and formation. Others in the community could also attend sessions.
6. Leaders' names and details are submitted to the Archbishop for approval.
7. The leaders are publicly commissioned for a specific term.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Our Community and Lay Leaders of Liturgy

Our Parish has determined that there may be occasions when a priest may not be available to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist. We are undergoing a prayerful discernment process so that we may choose and form suitable people to lead Sunday prayer, should the need arise.

Through their baptismal calling, lay leaders have the privilege and responsibility to use their gifts for the good of the community. Called by the Spirit, affirmed by the community and commissioned by their Pastor, lay leaders commit themselves to prayer and learning more about the Church's worship. These leaders acknowledge the faith community as the body of Christ and recognise the Holy Spirit in each person.

The qualities needed by lay leaders of liturgy might include:

- a sense of prayer, both private and communal
- a commitment to inclusiveness and collaboration in the Church
- a pastoral sensitivity to the needs of others
- the ability to communicate with priests and people
- an understanding of leadership and liturgy

Our parish is establishing a process for discerning those who may be formed as lay leaders. Once chosen, these people will undergo a period of training and formation and be publicly commissioned.



Gathering on Sunday

'Too much importance can never be attached to the Sunday assembly, whether as the source of the Christian life of the individual and of the community, or as a sign of God's intent to gather the whole human race together in Christ.'

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