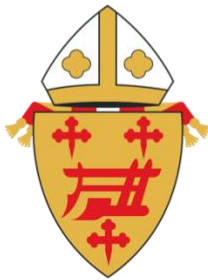


Sunday Mass Schedule Policy

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

1. In every Family of Parishes, there must be at least one Mass offered each weekend to fulfill the Sunday obligation.
 - a. Any individual parish church should have only one Saturday afternoon/evening anticipatory Mass regularly scheduled to fulfill the Sunday obligation (after 3:00 pm). Exceptions may be made by the dean for pastoral reasons.
2. No parish may have regularly scheduled Masses being offered at two different locations (e.g. church and gym) at the same time. Occasional exceptions (e.g. Christmas) are permitted for pastoral need.
3. The starting times for regularly scheduled Sunday Masses in a church must be at least 90 minutes apart.
4. Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation is to be offered only in a church, chapel, or oratory; permission for such Masses to be celebrated elsewhere must be sought from the archbishop in advance.
5. To ensure adherence to this policy, each pastor must review the Family of Parishes Sunday Mass schedule at least once every two years, and after consultation with the pastoral council and/or worship commission, make needed changes.
6. Changes to the schedule of Masses to fulfill the Sunday obligation in every Family of Parishes must be approved by the local dean and notification given to the chancellor.
 - a. Any changes to the regular schedule of such Masses must be submitted first to the local dean for his approval. The dean submits approved changes to the chancellor.
 - b. The dean will communicate the change in schedule to the pastors within the deanery.



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BACKGROUND on POLICY

#1:

The availability of retired or religious order priests without canonical assignments to the Family of Parishes should not lead to an increase of Sunday Masses, but rather a reduction in the workload of pastors and parochial vicars.

Consideration should also be given to how many Masses any priest regularly celebrates each day. While the Church's law does allow priests to trinate on any day in case of pastoral need, (cf. *Clerus Cincinnatiensis*, current edition), in reviewing the Sunday Mass schedule of a Family of Parishes, all consideration should be given to whether it is truly necessary for a priest to trinate, taking into account the following factors:

- a. The added demands on the priest's time;
- b. The impact that added demands have on the health of the priest;
- c. In Church law, trination is understood to be the exception rather than the norm.

#3:

Allowing sufficient time between Masses will allow for appropriate parking lot turnover, adequate travel time for priests, suitable time for priests to greet the faithful after Mass, and above all a reverent and dignified, unhurried celebration of the Eucharist.

It is also strongly discouraged that two churches within a Family of Parishes would have Sunday Masses starting at the same time. Offering staggered starting times within a Family would be of benefit to the faithful in most cases.

#4:

The instruction, *Redemptionis sacramentum* (2004), states the following: "The celebration of the Eucharist is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise. In this case, the celebration must be in a decent place.' The diocesan Bishop shall be the judge for his diocese concerning this necessity, on a case-by-case basis (RS 108)." Accordingly, permission must be received from the archbishop to celebrate Mass anywhere other than a church, chapel, or oratory on any day of the week.

DEFINITION OF POLICY TERMS

Based upon the Code of Canon Law (1983)

parish: A definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church [diocese] (*cf.* Canon 515)

Family of Parishes: Multiple parishes in geographic proximity with a common pastor, who cooperate in some particular ways in a long-term relationship established by the diocesan bishop. Cooperation may include common staff, ministries, worship, formation, etc. (In some cases, a single parish is considered a “Family” for the purposes of pastoral planning.)

church: A sacred building destined for divine worship to which the faithful have a right of access for divine worship, especially its public exercise. (*cf.* Canon 1214) The most common example of a church is a parish church or diocesan cathedral

chapel: A place designated for divine worship for the advantage of one or several physical persons with the permission of the local ordinary. (*cf.* Canon 1226) Chapels do not have the same public character as churches.

oratory: A place designated by permission of the ordinary for divine worship for the benefit of some community or assembly of the faithful who gather there. (*cf.* Canon 1223) An oratory is a space more public than a chapel, but not as public as a church.

dean: Also called a *vicar forane*, this priest promotes and coordinates the common pastoral activity within the deanery (also called a *vicariate*). Among the other duties entrusted to him, he is to supervise the lifestyle and ministry of the clergy, to supervise liturgical functions, care of churches, and church administration in general. (*cf.* Canon 553-555)

pastor: The proper shepherd of the Family of Parishes entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop. (*cf.* Canon 519) Only a priest may be a *pastor*. (*cf.* Canon 521)

parochial vicar: a priest who renders services in pastoral ministry within a parish, a definite part of the parish, or in multiple parishes concurrently as a co-worker with the pastor in common counsel and endeavor with him and also under his authority. (*cf.* Canons 545, 546)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULING

1. What is the earliest time an anticipatory Mass may be scheduled?

The earliest time for an anticipatory Mass was determined to be 3:00 pm in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as stated in the Clergy Bulletin, March 17, 1970.

2. May wedding Masses after 3:00 pm on Saturday fulfill the Sunday obligation?

Canon 1248.1 states, “The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.”

Therefore, anyone participating in any Mass from 3:00 pm on a Saturday (or the day before a holyday) through 11:59 pm on a Sunday or holyday fulfills his/her obligation to attend Mass. Ritual Masses, for example, for the Order of Matrimony, may be celebrated after the anticipatory Mass, except if that Saturday is a Solemnity.

The practice of scheduling a wedding Mass after 3:00 pm on Saturday is strongly discouraged unless the wedding is held within the context of a regular Sunday Mass or is a celebration of marriage outside of Mass. Additionally, care must be taken to observe the norms of the liturgical year.

While weddings may be scheduled on Sundays which allow for ritual Masses to be celebrated, the priest may choose not to schedule a wedding because of a conflicting schedule or other duties. A wedding may be celebrated in the context of a parish Sunday Mass; however, the readings and prayers of the day are used.

3. May *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP)* be celebrated in a Family of Parishes?

The Archbishop of Cincinnati has not given permission for such celebrations to regularly take place in parishes and the ministry of multiple priests within a Family of Parishes should eliminate the need even in exigent circumstances. In the event of a true emergency (i.e. when no priests are available), a Family of Parishes should publish (e.g. on recorded messages, on websites, and/or at the entrance to the churches) the schedule of Masses in a nearby Family of Parishes.

However, if the nearest churches are at a considerable distance, and if the pastor or administrator concludes that a significant percentage of the community is unable to proceed to a neighboring church, then in such an instance, one of the rituals found in *SCAP* may be celebrated by a deacon or a lay person, at the specific direction of the pastor or administrator. These celebrations are not to be scheduled, but are used only in case of an emergency. In any case, only one such celebration may be celebrated on a given Sunday in a Family of Parishes.