

## **The Bishop Promulgates Norms for Communion Services in the Diocese of Wilmington**

Bishop Malooly recently issued norms regarding the celebration of Communion Services in the Diocese of Wilmington. The Bishop has directed that the following be placed in all parish bulletins:

In recent years, it has become somewhat common practice for parishes to schedule Communion Services on those days when daily Mass is cancelled or not scheduled. The Church views Communion Services during the week as an extraordinary exception rather than the norm. (Sunday Mass where no priest is available is addressed below.)

Although the Church does, in limited instances, foresee a Liturgy of the Word with Communion (i.e., a Communion Service) typically on a Sunday, the Church asks that such liturgies be rarely permitted on weekdays and then only by extraordinary exception.

The following guidelines are effective immediately in all parishes and parish mission churches in the Diocese of Wilmington:

1. Communion Services may not be substituted for Daily Mass, except in unexpected circumstances. For instance, the scheduled priest fails to show up or has a sudden illness or personal emergency.
2. When a daily Mass is cancelled, and published as such in advance, the faithful must be notified of the availability of other daily Masses in surrounding churches.
3. In lieu of daily Mass, the Pastor may schedule another type of service: Liturgy of the Hours, a Liturgy of the Word, Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, or the communal recitation of the Rosary.
4. In the extremely unlikely event that a priest is indisposed from being able to be present for a Sunday Mass, then the ritual that the Church has provided must be utilized, that is *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. A priest's absence from Sunday Mass must be for a very serious reason and every effort must be made by him to find a priest replacement.
5. The Leader of prayer on those occasions when there is no priest shall be a Deacon, or a Seminarian who has been assigned to the parish, or a Religious, or a Lay minister designated by the pastor. It is a laudable practice that other members of the Lay Faithful share parts of the service.

Hopefully, these new guidelines will eliminate confusion surrounding the question of Communion Services and render us all united in what we celebrate and when and by whom.