

# Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest



**With priest retirements over the next few years** in the “North Country” the pastoral leadership has meet to discuss on how we are going to be able to minister to the Catholic Community.

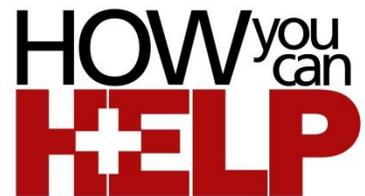
**Older faithful members** are dying out or moving. **young people** do not attend. People are **too busy**.

And there are **more retired priests** than active.

**Our challenge** then is to reach out to bring people back to Christ and the Church, and at the same time create a Mass Schedule that **will not kill the remaining priests**. We have to look at ways in which we can support those parishes who are struggling financially.

The Congregation for Divine Worship published a Directory for the Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest on **June 2, 1988**. The Bishops of the United States Catholic Conference in 2007 approved a New Rite for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. This has been revised in light of the publication of the Roman Missal, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. It may be used **under the direction of the diocesan bishop**.

**We need lay people to become familiar with these rites**, in the case of an emergency when a priest is not available. As time goes on and with the Bishop’s approval, these rites may become the norm, not the exception.



The Diocese will be offering **a training session at Our Lady of the Annunciation** Parish 448 Aviation Road Queensbury on September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. This will be led by Elizabeth Simcoe from the Office of Prayer and Worship. If you would/could attend please contact the parish office for more information and to register.

**The Ritual book offers some options** ... Morning or Evening Prayer with Holy Communion distributed, a Liturgy of the Word with or without Holy Communion.

In the case of the later, the format has been changed ... this is not the usual Eucharist / Mass which the priest celebrates. Parts have been omitted (The Penitential Rite, the Offertory procession to name a few) and Prayers have been added (Act of Thanksgiving, Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood) The response to the greeting, “The Lord be with

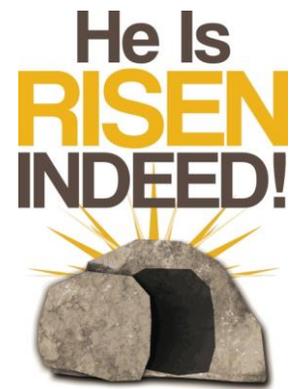
you” is not “And with your spirit” but rather “**Blessed be God forever.**” **We will explain this in a future insert.**

**Our effort as a church is to be pro-active.** It is a desire to minister to our Catholic communities that they may be a sign of the presence of Christ in our midst.

**Other options** are being considered ... the use of foreign priests, moving the Sunday celebration to a weekday, the merging of parish communities.

## **SUNDAY and ITS OBSERVANCE**

from *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*



1. “By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ’s resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eight days; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord’s day or Sunday.”
2. The New Testament and the Fathers of the Church give ample evidence that for the early Church Sunday was the “Lord’s Day”. For it was on Sunday that the Lord conquered sin and death and rose to new life. In our own time, the Second Vatican Council has reminded us “For on this day Christ’s faithful should come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection, and the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, and may thank God who ‘has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope’ (1 Peter 1:3)”
3. The complete liturgical celebration of Sunday is characterized by the gathering of the faithful to manifest the Church, not simply on their own initiative but as called together by God, that is, as the people of God in their organic structure, presided over by a priest, who acts in the person of Christ. Through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word the assembled faithful are instructed in the paschal mystery by the Scriptures which are proclaimed and which are then explained in the homily by the priest or deacon. And through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, by which the paschal mystery is sacramentally affected, the liturgical assembly participates in the very sacrifice of Christ.

Next Insert – Looking at the Actual Rite – what do we do?