

Pastoral Directory



Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora

Diocesan Office

The Cathedral

Galway

Our mission is to carry the gospel to others by the witness of our lives in order to transform the world (Pope Francis). That is the context for this updating of pastoral guidelines which have been in place in this diocese since 1990. The aim of our Pastoral Directory is to help us, as priests, to be as effective as we possibly can in carrying out our mission. The Directory is not all-inclusive. It draws on wisdom learned from past and current practice in the diocese. The regulations set out here offer us distilled wisdom to support us in our efforts to further the Kingdom of God.

+ Martin Drennan

8th December 2015

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Foreword

In the Rite of Ordination the candidate is reminded that the priest is called to consecrate his life to God for the salvation of his people and to unite himself more closely every day to Christ; to preach the Gospel; to sustain God's people and celebrate the liturgy; to meditate on the law of God, believe what he reads, teach what he believes and put into practice what he teaches.

Conscious of sharing in the work of Christ, the priest must "seek to bring the faithful together into a united family and to lead them effectively, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father, always remembering the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served, but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who were lost". (Rite of Ordination).

The pages which follow bring together some of the norms and guidelines through which the priests of the diocese may more effectively answer their call to serve God's people.

**DIOCESE OF GALWAY, KILMACDUAGH AND
KILFENORA**

Pastoral Directory for the Priest

Contents

Celebration of the Sacraments	5
Ecumenism	32
Diocesan Organisations & Groups	42
Appendices	47
I Meetings with Parents of Primary School Pupils	47
II Statement on Mass Offering	50
III Proper Place for Baptism and Funerals	57
IV Church Music and Concerts in Churches	59

Celebration of the Sacraments

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1. We are made Christians by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. One sacrament leads to the next. All three are ordered to the building up of the Body of Christ and to the mission of the Church in the world.

Baptism, then, should be seen in relation to Confirmation, to the Eucharist and to Christian living.

2. Infant Baptism – Children or infants are those who have not yet reached the age of discernment, and therefore cannot have or profess personal faith.
3. Parents, godparents, the people, and the priests have each a special part to play in the Baptism of children.
4. Parents – Children are baptised ‘in the faith of the Church’, which is proclaimed by the parents, godparents and the community in attendance. The role of parents is paramount. They have to take the initiative in seeking Baptism for their child. They play an important role in the actual celebration and they have the responsibility of leading their child to a knowledge of God, and of preparing him for Confirmation and the Eucharist.
5. Godparents – There may be two godparents or sponsors, one of each sex, but one sponsor, male or female is sufficient. The godparents undertake to assist and support the parents in bringing up the child in the faith.
To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

- i. be appointed to act as sponsor.
 - ii. be a Catholic who has received Confirmation and the Eucharist and is mature enough to undertake this responsibility.
 - iii. be not less than 16 years of age unless a just reason exists for an exception to be made. As a general recommendation those who have received Confirmation may be accepted as sponsors.
 - iv. a Christian of another communion may be admitted, with a Catholic godparent, as a Christian witness of Baptism, but never as a godparent.
6. The People

Children have a right to the love of the community both before and after Baptism. Children are baptised in the faith of the Church and so, normally, the local community should be represented on the occasion of Baptism. The people not only welcome the new member of the Church but also join in making the act of faith on behalf of the child.

On Sunday Baptism may be celebrated even during Mass, so that the entire community may be present.

7. The Priest

It is the duty of the priest to prepare families for the Baptism of their child and to help in the task of their Christian formation.

In the actual celebration of Baptism, he will see to it that everything is done ' with dignity and accommodated as far as may be necessary to the conditions and desires of the family'. It is largely through the actual celebration that the people will realise what Baptism really is.

Baptismal Name

Parents, sponsors and parish priests are to take care that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment (Canon 855).

The Time of Baptism

An infant should be baptised within the first weeks after birth, though the welfare of the child must first be considered, then the health of the mother, so that as far as possible, she too may be present at the ceremony.

Baptism should normally be celebrated on Sunday, or if possible, on the vigil of Easter, so as to bring out the paschal character of Baptism.

As far as possible, Baptism should be celebrated only once a day in the same Church, and all recently born babies should be baptised together in common celebration.

8. The Place of Baptism

The ordinary place of baptism is in the parish church, so that Baptism may be seen as the sacrament of the Church's faith, and of admittance into the people of God.

Except in danger of death, Baptism may not be celebrated in private houses.

Baptism should be celebrated in hospitals only in cases of emergency or for some serious pastoral reason.

9. Children of Parents of Weak Faith, Lapsed etc.

Where parents are lapsed, or have insufficient faith to make the promises, or have shown in the past that they do not, in fact, bring up their children as Christians, some delay in baptising may be necessary. There should not, however, be an outright refusal. A sacrament should not be celebrated without faith, but the very fact that the parents have asked for Baptism is something positive to work on. It is a very delicate matter requiring tact and prudence. We must try to help parents to see that baptism involves serious undertaking. A good rule of thumb is “Never refuse – sometimes delay” (the instruction on infant baptism speaks of ‘an educational delay’).

Registration of Baptism

Baptism should be recorded carefully and without delay in the Baptismal Register.

10. Baptism of Adopted Children

Since 1981 there is one central register in each diocese for the baptism of adopted children. In this diocese that central register is kept at the Cathedral, under the care of the Parish Priest. All future entries, e.g., Confirmation, Marriage, Religious Profession etc., will be made only in this central register, and no certificate will be issued, except from it.

Once a child has been adopted, there will be no further communication with the place where the child was originally baptised. No reference to the adoption will be made in that register, no subsequent entry will be made in it, nor will any future certificate issue from it.

If a child is adopted before it is baptised, and the adopting couple present the child to their own parish priest for baptism, the parish priest should not enter the details in this own register. He should send all the particulars to the central register at the Cathedral. The adopting parents should be informed that all future certificates will be issued from there.

When a certificate is required for marriage, or entry into a seminary, or into religion, it should contain the original record of its entirety. This special certificate is sent by the diocesan Curial office to the Bishop responsible for the canonical investigations. It is forbidden to give the certificate to the adopted person, or to transmit it otherwise than above.

Documents: A “Ceremony of Thanksgiving for an Adopted Child” is available from the National Centre for Liturgy, Maynooth.

11. Christian Initiation of Adults

The rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults, was promulgated on 6th January, 1972. The contents may be summarised as follows:-

- i. Rite of Catechumenate is normally received in stages. Initiation takes place step by step in the midst of the community of the faithful.

- ii. (There are four main stages, and three rites by which one passes from one stage to the next).
- iii. Simple rite of Initiation – this may be used, with the permission of the Bishop, (a) when the candidate cannot go through all the stages of initiation, or (b) when the local Ordinary, judging the sincerity of the candidate’s conversion and religious maturity, permits the candidate to receive Baptism without delay.
- iv. Short Rite of Initiation in danger of Death.
- v. Preparing uncatechised adults for Confirmation and Eucharist. This is for those adults baptised as infants but who did not receive further catechetical formation and did not receive Confirmation and the Eucharist.
- vi. Rite of Initiation for Children of Catechetical age.

This rite is for children, unbaptised as infants, who have reached the age of reason and are capable of being taught.

There is an Appendix to the document – The Rite of Reception of Baptised Christians into full Communion with the Catholic Church.

This rite is for those born and baptised in a separated ecclesial community.

For Eastern Christians, nothing more than a simple profession of faith is required.

(No abjuration of heresy is required of one born and baptised outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church – a profession of faith will suffice).

The Sacrament of Baptism is not to be celebrated in these circumstances as a matter of course. Conditional Baptism is not permitted, unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact of validity of the baptism already received.

Document: The material mentioned above is contained in "The Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults" published by G. Chapman and Veritas Publications.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1. PARENTS AND CONFIRMATION.

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is, for the most part, the responsibility and concern of the parents. They are to form, and gradually increase, a spirit of faith in their children, and prepare them for a fruitful celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. Obviously, they will need the help and support of teachers and priests in carrying out this task.

For this reason, meetings between parents, teachers and priests should be arranged.

2. PRE-CONFIRMATION MEETINGS:

These meetings have already been referred to in Chapter 1 and are dealt with in Appendix 1.

3. THE CONFIRMATION PLEDGE

The Confirmation Pledge is offered to the children on the occasion of their Confirmation. If after discussing the matter with their parents they decide to take a pledge, they promise that they will abstain from alcoholic drink until the age they have decided upon with their parents. Priests should explain to the children what is involved in taking the pledge, encourage them to take it, advise them to consult with their parents beforehand, and support them in their efforts to be faithful.

4. MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a Bishop. However, in the Galway Diocese the Bishop is assisted by the Vicars Forane.

In respect of those in danger of death, the Parish Priest or indeed any priest, has, by law, the faculty to administer the sacrament.

Faculties to receive a convert into the Church now include the faculty to administer Confirmation to the convert.

5. SPONSORS

The sponsor of Confirmation should be a Catholic, sufficiently mature to understand the role of the sponsor (Canon 874). Parents may present their child for Confirmation and they may stand with the child before the Bishop; however, they may not act as sponsors.

NOTE: Formal preparation and training of children to receive Holy Communion in the hand is to commence when the children are being prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

THE EUCHARIST/THE MASS

1. INSTRUCTION

From time to time, instruction should be given on the meaning of the rites and prayers of the Mass.

It is of the utmost importance that the enunciation of the prayers and readings be clear, unhurried and reverent.

2. SACRED MUSIC

Singing should be widely used at Mass, depending on the type of people and the capability of each congregation. It is not, of course, necessary to sing all of the texts which were composed for singing at every Mass.

Preference should be given to the more significant parts, especially those sung by the priest or ministers with the people responding, or those sung by the priest and people together.

3. SILENCE

Silence should be observed at designated times, as part of the celebration. Its character will depend on the time it occurs in the particular celebration, so priests should not say audibly prayers which are to be recited 'quietly' such as the private prayers during the Offering of the Gifts.

4. SUNDAY LITURGY

The Sunday Liturgy should be planned. Thought, time and attention should be given to it during the preceding week. It is very desirable that there be a liturgy group in every parish,

which will meet regularly to plan the liturgy. In planning the liturgy, the spiritual good of the faithful should be paramount, rather than the desires or preferences of the priest, or liturgy group.

The Word of God should be proclaimed, not recited. Readers should be well prepared beforehand. The dignity of the readings demands that they should be read from the Lectionary, not from a missalette or a sheet of paper. Where necessary, properly trained people should be involved in the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass and in bringing Communion to the sick.

5. CHILDRENS' MASSES AND EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

A Directory of Children's Masses was published on 1st November 1973. Chapter 1 of the Directory sets out the principles for adapting the Mass to the needs of children, and suggests the various ways of helping them to understand the Mass. Chapter 2 deals briefly with adult Masses in which children also participate, and Chapter 3 deals more extensively with children's Masses in which some adults also take part.

The Directory is concerned with children who have not yet reached the stage of pre-adolescence. While stressing the need for adaption, it emphasises the importance of orientating the children's Masses towards Masses for adults. Through their own Masses, children should be led towards participating effectively in Masses for adults.

6. HOLY COMMUNION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Priests should seek to ensure that all children with special needs receive preparation for the Eucharist according to their capacity.

It is not necessary that such children have a full knowledge of the Real Presence, but it is necessary that they realise that they are receiving something holy, which is to be received with reverence.

Parents should be encouraged to receive Communion with the child. The desire and devotion of the parents themselves will be an important factor in helping to give the child the necessary minimum appreciation of the Eucharist. Those whose ability is such that no amount of preparation would bring them to even a limited understanding of the Eucharist, cannot receive Holy Communion.

The child with special needs is usually ready to receive Holy Communion earlier than he or she is capable of grasping what is involved in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

7. COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

Holy Communion, considered as a sign, has a fuller form when it is received under both kinds. Before giving Communion under both kinds, priests must be satisfied that the people have had adequate catechesis and preparation.

8. COMMUNION FOR COELIACS

A separate chalice should be consecrated for Communion of Coeliacs and this should be frequently announced to ensure that all, including visitors, are aware of it. Communion breads with minimum gluten are available for purchase.

Although these special communion breads are acceptable to many coeliacs they are not acceptable to other coeliacs who have a more severe condition. Even the slightest amount of gluten can affect some coeliacs. Therefore, these special communion breads must never be used as the only option for

coeliacs and a chalice with the precious blood must always be available during Mass. The chalice must be separate from the chalice used by the celebrant for the rite of intinction, as even the slightest amount of gluten would make the chalice unacceptable to coeliacs.

9. FIRST PENANCE/FIRST COMMUNION

Parents need the help of priests at all stages of the catechetical programme, but especially during the preparation of their children for first Penance and First Holy Communion.

In this diocese, children are prepared for these sacraments while in second class.

9.1 As part of the preparation, there are three meetings with the parents. These have already been referred to in Chapter 1 and are dealt with in Appendix 1.

10. HOLY COMMUNION

It is recommended that the faithful be able to communicate with hosts consecrated at the Mass which they attend.

Communion is, thus, a clearer sign of sharing in the sacrifice that is actually being celebrated.

The faithful who have received the Blessed Eucharist may receive it a second time on the same day only within a Eucharistic celebration in which they participate. It may not be received more than twice.

11. VIGIL MASSES ON SUNDAYS & HOLYDAYS

11.1 Each parish of the diocese is obliged to celebrate the First Mass of Sunday on Saturday evening. This Mass may not take place before 5pm.

11.2 Only one such Mass is to be celebrated in any parish without the written permission of the Bishop.

11.3 There is to be no Mass of the Saturday in any Church after 4.00pm and this applies to the Nuptial Mass also.

11.4 Once the times of the First Mass of Sunday have been agreed upon, the Diocesan Office should be notified and no change may be made in this without the Bishop's written permission.

11.5 In the rural parishes of the diocese, i.e., all deaneries except the city, **Sunday Evening Masses are forbidden** unless in particular cases the Bishop's written permission has been received.

In the city deanery any church that already has Sunday evening Masses may continue with one Sunday evening Mass if the parish priest so wishes.

11.6 If a Holyday falls on a Saturday, the faithful should be reminded that the Saturday evening Mass may be chosen to fulfil the Holyday obligation or the Sunday obligation, but not both.

12. EUCHARISTIC FAST

Whoever is to receive the Blessed Eucharist is to abstain, for at least one hour before the time of Holy Communion, from all food and drink, with the sole exception of water and medicine.

A priest, who on the same day celebrates Mass twice or three times, may consume something before the second or third celebration, even though there is not an hour's interval.

The elderly, or those who are suffering from some illness, as well as those who care for them, may receive the Blessed Eucharist, even if within the preceding hour they have consumed something (Canon 919).

13. MASS STIPENDS

No priest may lay down parish policy on Mass Offerings which is contrary to Diocesan policy, independently of the Bishop.

By the general law of the Church, a priest may not retain more than one Mass stipend on the one day, with the exception of Christmas Day.

Priests who binate or trinate within the diocese may apply these Masses for stipends received, but the stipends must be transmitted to the purpose designated by the local Ordinary, which in this diocese is the Disabled Priests' Fund.

A priest who on the same day concelebrates a second Mass may not under any title accept an offering for that Mass.

The current official stipend for a manual Mass is €10. The stipend for a foundation Mass or for a bequest of Masses is €20.

Each priest must accurately record in a book the Masses which he has accepted to celebrate and those which he has in fact celebrated and the date on which they were celebrated.

The Ordinary is obliged to inspect these books each year, either personally or through others.

Those who transfer Masses are without delay to record in a book both the Masses which they have accepted and those which they have transferred and to whom, noting also the offerings for these Masses.

Statement on Mass Offerings – Appendix III

13.1 SURPLUS MASS INTENTIONS

Priests in the Foreign Missions welcome Mass stipends. Very Rev. Peter Canon Rabbitte is designated by the Bishop to act as agent to receive surplus Mass stipends and to transfer them to the Missions.

13.2 MASS CARDS

The faithful are to be helped through homilies and other appropriate means to eliminate all abuses in relation to Mass Offerings and in particular to the wrong use of Mass Cards.

In this connection the joint agreed statement of the Hierarchy and the Major Religious Superiors (Oct. 1988) should be noted:

“Having signed or Stamped Mass Cards for sale to the public in shops and other commercial outlets is a practice that is not approved by the Episcopal Conference, the Major Religious Superiors or the Superiors of Missionary Societies. It undermines a correct Eucharist theology and is unacceptable. We ask that this practice, wherever it exists, be discontinued”.

14. CONCELEBRATION

In a special way Concelebration shows the unity of the priesthood and of the sacrifice, and the unity of the People of God.

It is for the Bishop of the Diocese to regulate the discipline for concelebration in the diocese, in accordance with the law, even in churches and semiprivate oratories of exempt religious communities.

15. EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Church strongly encourages both public and private devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and calls on pastors to foster such devotion among the faithful, by word and example.

For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance, four to six candles are lighted and incense is used.

For exposition with a ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted and incense may be used.

A single genuflection is made in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle, or exposed for public adoration.

The blessing with the Blessed Sacrament is preceded by a suitable period of adoration, during which use may be made of Scripture readings, a homily, hymns, prayers and silent reflection. The blessing should be seen as the conclusion of the ceremony.

Exposition which is held exclusively for the giving of the blessing is prohibited.

Since prayers during Exposition should be addressed to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, it is more fitting that prayers addressed to Our Lady, or the Saints, and devotions in their honour, be held outside the period of Exposition.

Document: The Rite of Exposition and Benediction, with suitable prayers, chants and acclamations will be found in "Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament", published by the Irish Institute of Pastoral Liturgy and approved for use in Ireland.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The Sacrament of Penance continues the work begun in Baptism, which is the sacrament that sets the direction of our lives. The Sacrament of Penance should be regarded as a 'special moment' in the whole process of conversion to which we are continually called.

1. INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION

The Rite of Penance maintains individual confession as the norm. Everything must be done to ensure that the sacrament is celebrated in a prayerful and personal manner.

The penitent should examine his or her conscience in the light of God's word. A catalogue of sins is not enough. We must bring ourselves, our attitudes, motivation and our life-situation to the celebration.

A routine recital of sins and an automatic dispensing of absolution must be avoided. Penances should be realistic and healing.

The setting for the sacrament should be warm, welcoming and friendly.

2. FREQUENCY

How often a person should go to confession is something that is best decided between priest and penitent. However, it must be borne in mind that frequent and careful celebration of the sacrament is a very useful remedy for venial sin: "This is not a mere ritual repetition, or psychological exercise, but a serious striving to perfect the grace of Baptism..." (Rite of Penance No. 7 (6)).

3. FACULTIES TO HEAR CONFESSION

Priests who have the faculty habitually to hear confessions, whether by virtue of their office, or by virtue of a concession by the Ordinary of either their place of incardination, or of where they have a domicile, can exercise that faculty everywhere, unless in a particular case the local Ordinary has refused (Canon 967). All priests who have faculties to hear confessions in the diocese have faculties to hear the confessions of professed Sisters or Novices, and to 'stand in' for the regular confessor.

4. RESERVED CENSURE

There is no Reserved Sin in the diocese. In addition to this, every confessor who has the faculties of the diocese, has also the faculty to absolve from the excommunication attached by Law to the crime of abortion, when hearing within the diocese.

DAYS OF PENANCE

The forty days of Lent (excluding the Sundays) and all Fridays (unless a solemnity) are days of penance. We are recommended on these days to practice some act of self-denial, such as abstaining from food, or to perform some extra good work of charity or devotion.

DAYS OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are the days of fast and abstinence.

Fast: One full meal and two small meals may be taken.

Abstinence: No meat, or meat produces may be taken.

The law of fasting binds all those who have celebrated their eighteenth birthday and have not yet celebrated their sixtieth.

Abstinence is binding on all those who have celebrated their fourteenth birthday.

THE SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Christians whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age should be anointed. The anointing with oil signifies healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Spirit.

Who may be Anointed ? The requisite requirement for receiving the sacrament of anointing is 'serious illness' – not 'danger of death'. The sacrament is meant to be a healing of the sick, in the fullest sense of that term. The sick person should, as far as possible, be able to take part in the celebration consciously and actively.

Therefore, it is important that great care should be taken to see that those of the faithful whose health is seriously impaired by illness or old age, receive the sacrament in good time. It is misusing the sacrament to delay its celebration.

A prudent judgement is sufficient for deciding on the seriousness of the illness. There is no reason for scruples in this matter.

The sacrament, however, should not be trivialised. It should be celebrated only when there is an illness that people would commonly regard as serious.

Elderly people may be anointed if they have become notably weakened even though no serious illness is present.

The sacrament may be repeated if the sick person recovers after anointing, or if during the same illness, the person's condition becomes more serious.

Those who are judged to have serious mental illness may be anointed.

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

1. All couples preparing to marry within the Church must complete a Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form. The priest will advise the couple of the documents required for the marriage. In general these will be:

- A recent Certificate of Baptism;
- A Certificate of Confirmation;
- A completed Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form;

- A Letter of Freedom from each parish where the person to be married has lived for six months or more since 16 years. If it is not possible to obtain a Letter of Freedom from each parish where the person has lived for six months or more since 16 years, the person must provide an Affidavit, signed by a Solicitor, stating that he/she has never been married;
- A Pre-Marriage Course Certificate;
- In the case where one partner is not a Roman Catholic, permission for Mixed Religion/Dispensation from the local Bishop will also be required.

PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE

Attendance at a Pre-Marriage Course is required. A Pre-Marriage Course normally consists of four two hour sessions, where topics such as communication, God's place in the relationship, expectations and experience of marriage, family life and responsibilities are discussed in a relaxed and informal way.

Because of the present demand for courses, couples will need to make timely application, normally up to ONE YEAR in advance.

Courses are conducted by ACCORD at Árus de Brún, Newtownsmith, Galway. Information and Applications Forms are available from the ACCORD Office at
Tel: 00-353-91- 562331.

Courses at Esker Retreat House, Athenry are residential.
Tel: 00-353- 91-844549.

2. The meetings between the couple and the priest on the occasion of the preparation for the celebration of marriage are a privileged pastoral occasion. For some couples it may be one of their rare opportunities for a personal meeting with a priest. The impression they carry away can be decisive for their future attitudes to the Church. Indeed the experience is an experience of the Church for the couple. Among all their memories of the marriage, the couple's meetings with the priest should remain among the happiest.

2.1 It is the responsibility of the priest at his first meeting with a couple when they come to make arrangements for their marriage to discuss the question of music at their wedding in the context of the overall liturgy.

He should have at hand copies of the three booklets (for the priest, couple and musician) which were issued in September, 1990 by the Irish Episcopal Conference "Christian Marriage - Preparation and Celebration".

Organists and soloists should be presented with copies of the Musician's Book which contains guidelines for the selection and use of music at weddings together with a list of hymns and biblical songs which are acceptable and suitable.

Couples wishing to have hymns other than those listed must have approval from the priest.

A copy of the booklet which is addressed to the couple should be given to each couple on the occasion of their first meeting with the priest.

2.2 If the couple are being married outside the country, the papers must be sent to the place of marriage through the Diocesan Office. Any marriage papers which come in from outside the country, need to be sent to the Diocesan Office.

2.3 Papers for couples wishing to marry in Rome should be submitted about three months in advance of the date of the wedding. A separate Certificate of Confirmation is required by the Chancery in Rome. Couples wishing to get married in Rome through the Irish College must personally make contact with one of the priests of the college either by phone or by letter. Care should be taken to ensure that the name(s) on the church documents correspond with those on the civil form(s), e.g., Passport etc. A State document is also required for those wishing to get married in Rome. Couples should apply to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin for the necessary application form.

2.4 Pre-Nuptial Forms, since they include a private assessment of the parties by the priest who signed them, should be treated carefully. In particular, they should never be handed to the parties for delivery to another priest, and should not be left lying around the sacristy during the marriage ceremony.

3. Each person planning to get married is expected to give at least three months notice to the priest who is responsible for filling up the marriage papers. If there appears to be a serious reason for departing from this regulation, priests are required to consult the Bishop.

4. In the Diocese of Galway the minimum valid age for marriage is 18.

5. If the priest who fills up the Pre-Nuptial papers has good reason to doubt the parties' fitness for marriage, he should consult the Bishop. If the reason is serious enough, the Bishop will not permit the marriage to take place, as long as the reason exists.

The priest will be responsible for providing special talks with the couple, so that they can be better prepared and their fitness assessed.

6. For validity, delegation to officiate at a marriage must be expressly given to specific persons. If there is a question of a special delegation, it is to be given for a specific marriage. In the case of general delegation it is to be given in writing.

7. When all the Civil requirements have been completed the couple will receive from the Registrar a Marriage Registration Form (MRF). The solemniser must check the MRF before the wedding to ensure that the details are correct. After the wedding it is the responsibility of the couple to return the MRF to the Registrar's Office. It must be returned within one month of the marriage.

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

In the celebration of a funeral, all the members of the People of God must remember that to each one a role is entrusted: to the relatives and friends, the funeral directors, the Christian community as such, and finally the Priest, who, as the teacher of the faith and the minister of comfort, presides at the liturgical rites and celebrates the Eucharist.

In preparing and planning a funeral, priests are to keep in mind with delicate sensitivity, not only the identity of the deceased and the circumstances of the death, but also the grief of the bereaved and their needs.

Priests should be especially aware of persons, Catholic or not, who seldom or never participate in the Eucharist, or who seem to have lost their faith, but who assist at liturgical celebrations on the occasion of funerals, and hear the Gospel.

Priests must remember that they are the ministers of Christ's Gospel to all people.

A brief homily should be given after the Gospel, but without any kind of funeral eulogy.

1. **SYMBOLS**

Only Christian symbols may rest on, or be placed on a coffin during the funeral ceremony in church. Mass cards and flowers or flags should not be placed on a coffin while within the church building.

The Bible, or a cross, may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God, and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life.

Fresh flowers, used in moderation, can enhance the setting of the funeral rites.

2. **CREMATION**

Funeral rites are to be granted to those who have chosen cremation, unless there is evidence that their choice was dictated by anti-christian motives.

The Church, however, earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burial be retained. Where there is cremation, it is more fitting that the ashes be buried in a cemetery with the usual liturgical rites.

3. **MISCARRIED OR STILL-BORN BABIES**

The funeral rites cater for the burial of miscarried babies (i.e., those who die before the age of 28 weeks), and still-born (those babies born after 28 weeks, but not alive).

The Roman Missal has a funeral mass for a child, who has died before Baptism could be celebrated. Alternatively, a liturgy of the Word could be celebrated in the child's home, or in the hospital, or perhaps at the graveside.

The local Ordinary may permit the funeral to be celebrated in the home of the child, even in accordance with the full rite of funerals. This is appropriate for someone born into a Christian family.

The priest, as a minister of the Church's compassion and kindness, must be sensitive to the deep sense of loss parents experience on such occasions.

Who 'follows' the funeral?

The priest who celebrates the funeral Mass normally officiates at the graveside. If the priest who celebrates the funeral Mass is not to officiate at the graveside, for instance because of distance or local custom, he should ensure that another priest is available to officiate.

Registration of Deaths.

The Code of Canon Law states that a Register of Deaths should be kept in each parish (Canon 535).

Proper place for Funerals – c.f. Appendix IV.

Ecumenism

Sharing in Liturgical Worship

The liturgy of a particular community is its official worship celebrated by its minister or delegate, and it primarily signifies the oneness of faith and life of that community. Worship in common (*communication in sacris*) is not considered a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of unity among the Christians. (Decree, par. 8). To avoid misunderstanding and embarrassment in ecumenical relations, invitations to members of other Christian communities to participate in Catholic worship should ordinarily only be issued in circumstances where it is possible to accept similar invitations in return. Similar guidelines should be observed in accepting invitations.

Sharing with other Separated Brethren

As regards sharing in worship with Christian Churches other than the Eastern Orthodox, Catholics may be present at baptisms, marriages, funerals and similar ceremonies of such Churches.

Witnesses at Marriage

They may act as bestman or bridesmaid at marriages validly and lawfully contracted among Christians of these Communions. The Roman Directory (par. 57) does not permit a Catholic to act as sponsor (official godparent) at the baptism of a member of such a Church. The reason for this is that the sponsor at baptism is the official representative of the particular Christian community into which that candidate is being baptised and the guarantor of his faith. But it allows a Catholic to act as a Christian witness of such a baptism.

At the ceremony of the Lord's Supper celebrated by our separated Christian brethren **Catholics are not permitted to communicate**. Neither may they act as Scripture reader, or preach, at such a celebration, or, in those ecclesial communities that do not celebrate the Lord's Supper, at their principal liturgical service of the Word (Roman Directory, par 56).

Sponsors at the Baptism and Confirmation of a Catholic and witnesses at a Catholic Marriage

In view of the meaning of sponsorship, as already explained, Christians of denominations other than the Eastern Orthodox may not act as sponsors at a Catholic baptism or confirmation.

They may act at these sacraments in the role of witness, and may act as bridesmaid or bestman at Catholic marriages.

Eucharist

Participation in the Eucharist raises special problems, because of the unique place of the Eucharist in the Church's faith and worship.

Should Christians of other denominations assist at Mass, it is very appropriate, if they so wish, that they would join with the congregation in prayers. They may act as leader in prayer (e.g. prayers of the faithful or bidding prayers). Since, however, the liturgy of the word is an integral part of the total Eucharistic liturgy, they may not act as scripture reader or preacher at Mass. For reasons which flow from the meaning of Eucharist itself as the supreme expression and the sacramental realisation of the unity of Christ's body, the Church, Christians or other denominations may not be admitted to Holy Communion.

The Eucharist is the great sacrament of unity, manifesting and presupposing that gift of unity which Christ won for his Church by his death on the Cross. As such, it implies that those who gather to celebrate it are already one in faith and worship. In the absence of such unity, the practice of intercommunion would conflict with the deepest meaning of the sacrament. It would assert an untruth, namely that divided Churches are already one.

So far from giving impetus to work for unity, it would lessen this impetus, by dimming awareness of the fact and the sadness of being divided.

The Code of Canon Law lays down precisely the conditions under which the Sacraments may be shared by Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

Can. 844:1 Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments only to catholic members of Christ's faithful, who equally may lawfully receive them only from catholic ministers, except as provided in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this canon and in can. 861:2.

Par:2 Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ's faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick from non-catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.

Par:3 Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick to members of the eastern Churches not in full communion with the Catholic Church, if they spontaneously ask for them and are properly disposed. The same applies to members of

other churches which the Apostolic See judges to be in the same position as the aforesaid eastern Churches so far as the sacraments are concerned.

Par:4 If there is a danger of death or if, in the judgement of the diocesan Bishop or the Episcopal Conference, there is some other grave and pressing need, catholic ministers may lawfully administer these same sacraments to other Christians not in full communion with the catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who spontaneously ask for them, provided that they demonstrate the catholic faith in respect of these sacraments and are properly disposed.

PASTORAL CARE BEFORE MIXED MARRIAGES

Just as in the case of a marriage between two Catholics, the priest should meet the couple on a number of occasions to discuss the meaning of Christian marriage, the vocation of Christian parenthood and the essential qualities of the marriage relationship, especially its unity and indissolubility. In order to be able to give the most effective help and guidance to each partner, it should be his aim to see the partners individually on at least one occasion.

Where there is co-operation – as the Catholic Church earnestly desires – between the ministers of both Churches, it should be normal practice that each minister would explain the provisions of his own Church regarding mixed marriages. Even where such co-operation is lacking, clergy, of whatever denomination, should scrupulously avoid misrepresenting the other Church's provisions either in their letter or in their spirit. They should also be keenly sensitive to the possibility

that what should be an occasion of great joy can, if the marriage takes place without the blessing of one or other Church, become instead a source of acute distress for the couple and their families. They should leave nothing undone to ensure that such a sad situation does not arise.

The Code of Canon Law and the Directory on Mixed Marriages in Ireland lay down the conditions for Mixed Marriages.

1. Without the express permission of the competent authority, marriage is prohibited between a Catholic and one belonging to a Church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church (Can. 1124).
2. The local Ordinary can grant this permission if there is a just and reasonable cause. The following conditions must be fulfilled:
 - a) The catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith, and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power in order that all children be baptised and brought up in the Catholic Church.
 - b) The other party is to be informed in good time of these promises.
 - c) Both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which are not to be excluded by either one. (Cano. 1125).
3. It is for the Episcopal Conference to prescribe the manner in which these declarations and promises, which are

always required, are to be made, and to determine how they are to be established in the external forum.

The Irish Episcopal Conference decrees that the undertakings, which may be given orally or in writing, and preferably in the presence of the other party, should take the following form:

'I declare that I am resolved, as God's law demands, to preserve my Catholic faith, and to avoid all dangers of falling away from it. Moreover, I sincerely undertake and I will, as God's law also requires, do everything possible, so far as in me lies, to have all the children of our marriage baptised and brought up in the Catholic Church'.

THE CELEBRATION OF A MIXED MARRIAGE

When a Catholic is married, even in a mixed marriage, the exchange of consent must normally take place before a properly authorised Catholic minister and two witnesses. This manner of celebration is described as "the canonical form". This form is prescribed because the Church sees the marriage of two baptised persons as a Sacrament, that is to say, it is a liturgical act, a sacred reality blessed by the presence of Christ, a celebration of the Church, a sign and means of grace. By expressing their consent, the bride and groom bring the sacramental sign into being and, in doing so, act as instruments of Christ and this Church. The Church, therefore, wishes to be officially present in the person of its authorised minister.

A dispensation from the canonical form will not be granted simply on request, but where serious pastoral reasons may

seem to warrant it, a request for the dispensation will be sympathetically considered.

DIRECTORY ON MIXED MARRIAGES

The Liturgical Form of Mixed Marriages in the Catholic Church

The selection of prayers and readings within the rite should be made by the couple together with the priest who will officiate at the marriage.

With the consent of the Local Ordinary the marriage of a Catholic and another baptised person may be celebrated according to the rite for the celebration of marriage within the Mass. It may be, however, that this would cause embarrassment, because other Christians will be unable to participate fully in the Mass. On the other hand, a Nuptial Mass may be preferable where its omission might be taken to imply a lack of fraternal feelings towards fellow-Christians. The options available should be carefully explained by the priest to the couple.

When a Nuptial Mass is celebrated, the prescriptions of the Holy See concerning the reception of the Eucharist must be observed. These lay down that, because the Eucharist is 'the supreme expression and the sacramental realisation of the unity of Christ's Body, the Church', Christians of other denominations may be admitted to Holy Communion only in very exceptional cases. The conditions required, the fulfilment of which must be verified in each particular case by the local Ordinary, include: (i) faith in the Eucharist in conformity with that of the Catholic Church; (ii) a serious

spiritual need to receive the Eucharist; (iii) inability over a prolonged period to have recourse to a minister of one's own communion.

It would, in our judgement, be extremely rare to find all these conditions fulfilled in this country. The fact that it is not possible for the couple, and for their relatives and friends, to share the Eucharist together at their wedding can be a source of suffering which should stimulate the couple, and all who share that pain, to prayer and effort in order that the Lord may hasten the day when we can celebrate the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood in the unity he willed for his followers.

When a mixed marriage is to be celebrated in the Catholic Church without a Nuptial Mass, the rite to be followed is that of **The Celebration of Marriage** (Veritas Publications, 1980) pp. 46f. Separate rites (not including Nuptial Mass) are provided for the marriage of a Catholic to a non-baptised person, *ibid.*, PP. 46f. The respective rites are also to be found in **The Celebration of Marriage** (Chapman 1971), pp. 31ff. (Directory on M.M. 1983). The celebrant must ensure that the ceremony is consistent with the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal.

Participation of the Clergy

- (a) *Marriage celebrated according to the canonical form*
It is desirable that the minister of the other denomination should be invited to attend a mixed marriage which is being conducted according to the rites of the Catholic Church. The visiting minister should be seated in a place of honour in the sanctuary and may wear appropriate liturgical dress. The Catholic priest should invite him to participate in the ceremony by words of greeting or exhortation and by

additional prayers and blessings at the close of the actual marriage ceremony itself. If the marriage is celebrated apart from Mass, the priest may also invite him to read a lesson from Scripture or to preach.

(b) *Marriage celebrated with a dispensation from the canonical form*

Where there has been a dispensation from the canonical form the Catholic priest may accept an invitation to participate in the rite in the same way as the minister of another denomination at a Catholic ceremony. He should wear choral dress. If the marriage service is not part of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or of the principal Liturgical Service of the Word in those Churches which do not celebrate the Eucharist, he may, if invited, preach and read a lesson.

A Catholic priest may not celebrate marriage according to the rites of another Church. He may, however, participate in a service of blessing and thanksgiving in the Church of the other denomination subsequent to a marriage in the Catholic Church.

Under no circumstances, however, should there be anything which could be understood as a second marriage rite. Any such double marriage ceremony would be both theologically unsound and ecumenically unhelpful. Neither is it permitted to celebrate a mixed marriage before a Catholic priest or deacon and a Christian minister of another Church where each, in accordance with the rites of his own Church, receives the matrimonial consent of the parties.

The Registration of Mixed Marriages

Mixed marriages celebrated in the Catholic Church are recorded in the marriage register in the ordinary way. When a mixed marriage is celebrated with a dispensation from the canonical form in the Church of the party who is not a Catholic, the local Ordinary will give advance notice to the Parish priest in whose territory the marriage is to take place. It will be the duty of the Parish Priest of the Catholic party to ascertain reliably and exactly all the usual details for entry in the marriage register of his parish together with a note as to the place of marriage and the diocese where the dispensation was granted. If relevant, he must also send details of the marriage, for entry in the baptismal register, to the Parish Priest of the place where the Catholic party was baptised. He must keep all the papers connected with the marriage in the archives of his parish.

A record of the granting of the dispensation is to be kept in the Chancery Office of the Ordinary who issued it.

The Catholic priest should make available to the authorities of the other Church an authentic document of the marriage celebrated in his Church if this is required.

Diocesan Organisations and Groups

Voluntary Health Insurance

Each priest of the diocese is strongly urged to be a member of the Voluntary Health Insurance. In so doing, he is providing for financial cover in the event of illness or accident. A Group Scheme for the VHI operates in the diocese, allowing each individual priest to have the cover of his own choice.

Diocesan Chapter

A Chapter of Canons appointed by the Bishop acts as Trustees for the property and other assets of the Diocese. The principal function of the trustees is to ensure that the assets of the Diocese are managed in accordance with the law of the land for the good of the Catholic religion. The Chapter fulfils other roles assigned to it by law or by the Bishop.

Diocesan Council of Priests

Councils of Priests were established in each diocese following the norms of the Motu Proprio 'Ecclesiae Sanctae' of 6th August, 1968.

The majority of members are elected by the priests of the diocese as their representatives. There is a small number of ex-officio and co-opted members.

College of Consultors

In accordance with Canon 502, the Bishop appoints members of the Council of Priests to constitute the College of Consultors. The College of Consultors is a diocesan body whose role is to assist the bishop in the governance of the diocese. The membership of the college is no fewer than six and no more than twelve. The term of the college is five years.

Diocesan Ecumenical Officer

The Diocesan Ecumenical Officer will encourage various initiatives in the diocese for prayer and Christian unity, will work to see that ecumenical attitudes influence the activities of the diocese, identify special needs and keep the diocese informed about these. This officer is also responsible for representing the Catholic community in its relations with the other Churches and ecclesial Communities and their leaders and will facilitate contacts between the latter and the local Bishop, clergy and laity on various levels. He will serve as counsellor on ecumenical issues for the Bishop and other offices of the diocese and will facilitate the sharing of ecumenical experiences and initiatives with pastors and diocesan organisations. This officer will see to the maintenance of contacts with officers or commissions of other dioceses. Even in areas where Catholics are in majority, or in those dioceses with limited personnel or resources, it is recommended that such a diocesan officer be appointed to carry out the activities mentioned above in so far as these are possible or appropriate.

Meitheal

Meitheal was set up in 1982. It is a diocesan fund which enables parishes to receive interest free loans for building projects when needed.

Diocesan Finance Committee

The committee helps the Bishop in overseeing the financial administration of the diocese.

Liturgical and Sacred Music Officer

To advise on liturgical matters and to help in the training and preparation of Lay Ministers of the Eucharist and Lay Readers and to encourage greater use of Sacred Music and greater participation in congregational singing.

Diocesan Advisors' Ministry

The Diocesan Advisors support and encourage the work of Religious Education in the Catholic Primary schools of the Diocese.

They encourage the use of the Programme *Grow in Love* as approved by the Bishops.

They visit all Primary Schools in the diocese annually, meeting teachers and children.

The Diocesan Advisors are members of the Diocesan Pastoral Team and the National Association of Primary Diocesan Advisors.

Vocations Director

Every Christian is called to reflect on their own call, to consider a religious vocation, to pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life and to foster and promote vocations in their family, parish and community. It is a particular duty of diocesan priests to actively encourage those he believes have the skills, personality and gifts for priesthood to step forward in service.

The Diocesan Vocations Director provides resource material to parishes, schools and clergy for this task, arranges appropriate workshops and events and facilitates in a supportive way those who are actively considering priesthood.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

This Pilgrimage takes place every year from the 1st to 6th July and is led by the Bishop. The Pilgrimage Director is Canon Martin Moran.

Catholic Primary School Managers Association (CPSMA)

A Diocesan Education/CPSMA Secretary Service is based in the Pastoral Centre, Tel: 091-565066. A helpline is provided for Boards of Management and training for Board members is organised to facilitate the work of Boards of Management of Primary Schools.

ACCORD

Provides remedial counselling, pre-marriage courses, natural family planning, psychosexual counselling.
Árus de Brún, Newtownsmith, Galway. Tel: 091-562331.

APPENDIX I

Meetings with Parents of Primary School Pupils

Pre-sacramental preparation

There are a number of programmes available to support parishes as they help children and their parents prepare for these significant events in their lives.

First Holy Communion

Do This in Memory offers parents/guardians, children and the parish community the opportunity to prepare together for First Confession and First Communion. The programme is designed to take place within the context of the Sunday Parish celebration of the Eucharist. It is then continued in the home through the use of activities and resources for both parents/guardians and children. This highlights the importance of the Sunday Eucharist as a place where we gather, are nourished by the Word and the Bread of Life, and are sent forth to live the Gospel. It also acknowledges the home as the most important and significant place, where the faith of our children is nurtured, nourished and sustained.

The programme begins with an Enrolment Sunday in late September or early October and then continues on one Sunday a month concluding on the feast of Corpus Christi. The Sundays on which the programme takes place have been specially chosen because of the Gospel's accessibility to the children. The readings and Gospel taken from the Children's Lectionary are included in the Manual. Suggestions for the Prayer of the Faithful and a Communion Reflection are also offered.

The Coordinator's Manual offers homily guidelines and suggestions for making the Sunday celebration, and indeed the church environment, a place where children feel welcome and have a sense of belonging.

The Bridge is a new programme designed to help parents and families to explore and articulate their own faith, and to be more confident and involved in their child's faith formation both during the preparation for First Holy Communion and beyond. It does this by offering a series of five sessions for parents, each of which focuses on different ways they can share faith with their families. These can be done as an Advent or Lenten initiative or may be scheduled every six weeks or so throughout the year, according to the needs and desires of the participants.

Confirmation

You Shall Be My Witnesses is a programme designed to be a resource for members of parish teams that would encourage, challenge and invite parents and the wider parish community to become more actively involved in the preparation for Confirmation by exploring what it means to belong to the Christian family, what we believe, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and how we can witness to the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Through their participation in the programme parents have an opportunity to grow in a deeper understanding of their own faith which can only serve to further the ongoing journey of faith for their child. Training and participation in parish sacramental programmes is a form of adult faith formation so necessary in the church today. Leaders have the opportunity to share their faith with the candidates and hopefully create a space where all can learn from each other.

The first four sessions take place before the celebration of confirmation and a fifth session takes place after the celebration to reinforce the idea that we are not simply preparing for a one day event but that confirmation is the beginning of a new journey as a full members of the Church.

The parish programme complements the school curriculum, and supports the valuable work of the teachers and the school. You Shall be My Witnesses often takes place in parish pastoral centres but many parishes rely on their local primary schools to offer meeting places. Parishes greatly appreciate the offering of such essential practical support.

All the programmes are available directly from *Veritas*. However, the staff in the Diocesan Pastoral Centre are available to assist with the sourcing, setting up, training and implementation of all of the programmes.

APPENDIX II

Statement on Mass Offerings

A. The Theological Question

1. It is part of our Catholic faith that a priest may offer Mass for the intentions of a third party. The Council of Trent stated that Mass may be offered not only for the living in their spiritual and other needs, but for the dead, still in the way of purification.
2. The Church has never either taught or implied that the intention of a third party monopolises the Mass as if it became “his” or “her” Mass. The Eucharist prayers themselves which speak of the Eucharist Sacrifice being offered for the Church, the Pope, Bishops, Clergy, the Faithful, etc., demonstrate that the Eucharist is celebrated for many intentions and is never limited to any one intention of the priest. Hence, any attempt to quantify the effects of the Mass in terms of a third party’s intention as against that of others, is an abuse which we should help the faithful understand and thus eliminate.

B. The Custom of Mass Offerings

1. The practice of bringing gifts on the occasion of the celebration of the Eucharist, goes back to the very early days of the Church. In the ancient Church, the faithful who participated in the celebration of the Eucharist, offered what was necessary for the celebration, especially bread and wine, as well as other natural gifts.

What wasn't needed for the celebration was distributed to the Church's ministers and to the poor. By about the eighth century, gifts of money were frequently substituted and their purpose became chiefly the support of the clergy. The custom of the priest taking a single offering (stipend) for each mass gradually developed. The practice became widespread in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In 1415, the Council of Constance defended the practice against those who opposed it on the theological grounds and who claimed it was simony. In 1794, Pope Pius VI also defended the practice. In his Apostolic Letter, *Firma in Traditione* of June 15, 1794, Pope Paul VI says that the practice has not merely been approved but has been positively encouraged by the Church. Canons 945 - 958 of the New Code, simply reflect the discipline on Mass Offerings which has been enacted by various Popes, including Pope Paul VI, down through the years.

2. Perhaps the most important change in the 1983 Code's treatment of Mass Offerings occurs in the title of the chapter. The title in the 1917 Code was "Mass Alms or Stipends". The new title is "The offering made for the celebration of Mass". The word 'stipend' reflected a cold contractual exchange of goods. The word 'offering' clearly indicates that it is a gift freely given by the faithful. One of the main concerns in the New Code's regulations on the subject, is that every trace of contractual associations be removed from the treatment of Mass Offerings. On a more general level, it can be said that the Canons of this chapter in the Code are simply regulations designed to eliminate abuses. Their

observance does not depend on any particular theological theory on the justification of Mass Offerings.

3. The practice of Mass Offerings is a very long established custom in the Church in Ireland. It is a venerable Christian tradition which has underwritten the faith of our people in the power and meaning of the Eucharist. It has also underwritten their genuine and sincere desire to contribute towards and support the worldwide mission of the Church, because they know that a very considerable number of Mass Offerings are sent to priests working on the foreign missions in places where the custom of Mass Offerings doesn't exist – very often because the people are too poor. For these reasons, we must endeavour to ensure that nothing is allowed to undermine this tradition. We must endeavour to eliminate everything which would tend to relate it more to the secular than to the Sacramental spheres. One such practice is *the sale of signed Mass Cards*. This with other such abuses has been the subject of a joint statement by the Hierarchy and Major Religious Superiors.

“Having signed or stamped Mass Cards for sale to the public in shops and other commercial outlets is a practice that is not approved by the Episcopal conference, the major Religious Superiors or the Superiors of Missionary Societies. It undermines a correct Eucharist Theology and is unacceptable.

We ask that this practice, wherever it exists, be discontinued”.

(Statement issued following the October 1988 meeting of the Hierarchy at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth).

- 4.0 In order to resolve any misunderstanding in the Diocese concerning Mass Offerings and to eliminate any abuses which exist, the following guidelines are being laid down as *Diocesan Policy on Mass Offerings*.
- 4.1 The decision contained in our 1979 Pastoral: "Priests Revenue and Parish Income", to retain Mass Offerings, is hereby confirmed.
- 4.2 The minimum Diocesan Offering is €10. No priest may demand a higher offering but it is permitted to accept an offering voluntarily made, which is greater or even less than that determined.
- 4.3 One Mass must be said for the donor's intentions for each offering, even if small, which has been made and accepted.
- 4.4 If a sum of money is offered for the application of Masses, but with no indication of the number of Masses to be celebrated, their number is to be calculated on the basis of the offering prescribed in the place where the donor resides, unless the donor's intention may lawfully be presumed to have been otherwise.
- 4.5 A priest who celebrates a number of Masses on the same day may apply each Mass for the intention for which the offering was made, subject however to the rule that apart from Christmas Day, he may retain for himself the offering for only one Mass; the others he is to transmit to purposes prescribed by the Ordinary.

- 4.6 A priest who on the same day concelebrates a second Mass may not under any title accept an offering for that Mass.
- 4.7 Members of Religious Institutes of all kinds must abide by Diocesan regulations.
- 4.8 No one may accept more offerings for Masses to be celebrated *by himself* than he can discharge within a year.
- 4.9 One who intends to transfer to others the celebration of Masses to be applied, is to transfer them as soon as possible to priests of his own choice, provided he is certain that they are of proven integrity. He must transfer the entire offering received, unless it is quite certain that an amount in excess of the Diocesan offering was given as a personal gift. Moreover, it is his obligation to see to the celebration of the Masses until such time as he has received evidence that the obligation has been undertaken and the offering received.
- 4.10 Those who transfer Mass Offerings are to record in a book both the Masses which they have accepted and those which they have passed on, noting also the offerings for these Masses.
- 4.11 Each priest must accurately record the Masses which he has accepted to celebrate and those which he has in fact celebrated.

- 4.12 Each and every Administrator of Pious Causes and those, whether clerics or lay persons, who are in any way obliged to provide for the celebration of Masses, are to transfer to their Ordinaries, in a manner to be determined by him, such mass obligations as have not been discharged *within a year*.
- 4.13 The duty and the right to see that Mass obligations are fulfilled belongs, in the case of churches of the Diocesan clergy, to the Local Ordinary; in the case of Churches of Religious Institutes or Societies of Apostolic Life, to their Superiors.
- 4.14 The Parish Priest, as well as the Rector of a Church or other pious place in which Mass Offerings are usually received, is to have a special book in which he is accurately to record the number, the intention and the offering for the Masses to be celebrated and the fact of their celebration.
- 4.15 The Ordinary is obliged to inspect these books each year, either personally or through others.
- 4.16 No priest may lay down Parish policy on Mass Offerings which is contrary to Diocesan policy, independently of the Bishop.
- 4.17 The faithful are to be helped through homilies and other appropriate means, to eliminate all abuses in relation to Mass Offerings and in particular, in relation to the wrong use of Mass Cards.

4.18 The observance of these guidelines in the true spirit underlying the custom of Mass Offerings in the Irish Church, will ensure respect for the custom and be a powerful means of excluding even the semblance of trafficking or trading Mass Offerings.

APPENDIX III

Proper Place for Baptism and Funerals

In the case of **Baptism** Canon 857 states:-

“As a rule and unless a just reason suggests otherwise, an adult is to be baptised in his or her proper parish church, and an infant in the proper parish church of the parents”.

For this reason and because of the special difficulties encountered by priests of developing parishes in building community and a sense of belonging, people should be positively encouraged against going outside their own parish for the baptism of their child.

- (i) If however there was a reasonable cause for the baptism to take place elsewhere – a letter from the proper parish granting permission must be obtained.
- (ii) The parents should be recommended to invite one of the priests from their parish to perform the ceremony in the church they have chosen for the baptism. Otherwise, stole fees should be sent to the proper parish.

In the case of **Funerals** Canon 1171 states:-

“The funeral of any deceased member of the faithful should normally be celebrated in the church of that person’s proper parish.

However, any member of the faithful, or those in charge of the deceased person’s funeral, may chose another church; this requires the consent of whoever is in charge of that church and a notification to the proper parish priest of the deceased”. Since the parish church is normally the centre of the person’s life of faith, it is only fitting that the funeral rites should be

celebrated in the parish church. People should therefore be encouraged to bring the remains to their own parish church. If however, they insist on another church for the funeral rite, it should be recommended to them that one of the priests from their proper parish be invited to celebrate the funeral Mass.

APPENDIX IV

Church Music and Concerts in Churches

The regulation of the use of churches outside of formal liturgies is stipulated by Canon 1210 of the Code of Canon Law:

In a sacred place only those things are to be permitted which serve to exercise or promote worship, piety and religion. Anything out of harmony with the holiness of the place is forbidden. The ordinary may, however, for individual cases permit other uses, provided they are not contrary to the sacred character of the place.

Concerts in Churches of the Diocese are regulated by the following directives:

1. Permission is to be requested in writing from the Bishop for proposed concerts. The programme and names of performers are to be included in the application. This directive does not apply to concerts of sacred music performed by parish choirs, cantors or organists.
2. Even though a concert may be organised by parish staff or volunteers, the parish priest must be briefed in advance on all aspects of the concert.

3. The performers and audience must be dressed in a manner fitting to the sacred character of the church.
4. Respect shall be shown to sanctuary furnishings, especially the altar, the presider's chair and the lectern.
5. If the Blessed Sacrament is in the immediate area of the performers, it shall be removed to a more suitable place for the duration of the concert.
6. Only music, which is sacred in character, is allowed to be performed in a church concert.

