

## Directives: Number of Sunday Masses in Activated Family of Parishes

### 1. Grounded in our Mission:

- Go out therefore and make disciples... (Mt 28:19). Disciples are called to be people of the Sacraments and it is the Sunday Eucharist that is at the foundation of our faith:

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

**2181** - The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason....

**2182** – Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**2177** – The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. "Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church."

- Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist: Are we offering all people the opportunity to attend Mass? Are we making the celebration accessible to all so that they can fulfill this Sunday commitment?

### 2. A Preferential Option for those in need:

#### A. The needs of the people:

- What are the socio-economic concerns?
- Is it possible for people to travel to other parishes?
- Is there public transit? Can people afford public transportation?
- What nationalities are being served? (cf. *Directives on National Parishes*)
- Accessibility: Are all parish buildings barrier free/ accessible? Is paratransit available?

#### B. Other considerations:

- Proximity of other Parishes
- Location: Is this an urban or rural Family of Parishes
- Weather Conditions: Is weather usually a concern (e.g., road closures due to inclement weather)? How will this affect parishioners and priest?
- Seasonal component: How will Mass times need to change based on seasons?
- Travel time for clergy but also for parishioners
- Parking availability

- C. Avoid the temptation of our age, assimilation and globalization which is a form of levelling that does away with local cultures; we must meet the people where they are, and decisions should take into consideration the local culture (e.g., ethnic linguistic groups, devotional groups) (cf. Rafael Luciani, Pope Francis and the Theology of the People. 2017)

### **3. Practical matters:**

Decisions should be made in a spirit of prayer, consultation, dialogue, and discernment. Including:

- Wide consultation: listening to the voices of those who are often marginalized (cf. point 2 above)
- Future needs of the parish community (e.g., demographics, possible growth, aging population, clergy availability, etc.)
- Major changes may need to be reviewed and there will be need for ongoing consultation
- Pew capacity
- Availability of clergy

It will be important to form and prepare people. How might we help parishioners:

- Move from the “going to Church” to “being Church”?
- Understand why we go to Church: not because of obligation but because of love. What can be done in all our parishes to form intentional disciples?
- Who feel disenfranchised and those who will leave? Do we know our parishioners well enough to recognize that they have left? Who will reach out and listen to them?

Note: what has worked in the past or in other parishes may not work for all

### **4. Final Considerations**

As we work with the parish community they will want to know that:

- Decisions are being made after consultation and are based on good rationale. Decisions reflect our mission.
- We have considered how this will impact parishioners. Even though the rationale is sound, and our intentions are good, changes impact people in different ways. How will they be affected? There may be an emotional response and we will need to accompany people through this important journey.
- Changes are more than just a rearranging of Mass times and availability. How might we promote the changes while addressing their needs? As we announce the changes, for example, we might let people know which choir (e.g., contemporary, folk, Praise and Worship) will be at which Mass. We could let them know which Masses will include children’s church. We must let them know how their experience and participation at the liturgical celebration will be enhanced.