

CATHOLIC KYOTO DIOCESE

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To all Priests, Religious and Faithful of Kyoto Diocese:

Peace of the Lord.

The present letter is directed to all Priests, Religious and Faithful to communicate the findings that the Diocesan Board for Liturgy made about the “Celebration of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest” in their meeting of June 20, 2009, and to be implemented in the realization of the Celebrations of the Word.

In the General Assembly for Priests of November 2008 I told the assembly to reinforce the rules of the Catholic Ritual “Eucharistic Adoration and reception of Holy Communion outside Mass” concerning the part of “Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest”.

When Monsignor Kenichi Tanaka was Bishop of Kyoto it was introduced for the first time the Ritual of Celebrations of the Word in 1977 as a way to answer to the needs of the Diocesan Church at the time concerning Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest, naming the first Ministers of the Word. At that time it was considered as an innovating action that would last. After that, and as an answer to the needs of the Church, in 1988 the Holy Congregation for Liturgy published the document “Guide for the Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest”.

At the beginning of the Missionary Pastoral of Cooperation in 2001 this document was introduced in all the parishes of the Diocese, widening the practice of the Celebrations of the Word resulting in several aspects that we witness in the present. In 2004 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament published the Instruction “Redemptionis Sacramentum” on certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist.

Even though the Guide for Celebrations of the Word was published in 1988, Kyoto Diocese did not take the necessary steps to revise this question and to give the necessary guidelines to improve this practice, bringing as a consequence the confusion we see today. For that I sincerely apologize.

In order to have all Celebrations of the Word performed as prescribed in the “Guide for Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest” I ask you to publish the recommendations expressed in the document attached. I ask for your comprehension and help.

TO ALL PRIESTS:

To all priests I ask to give the necessary guide to the faithful regarding the document “Guide for Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest” after careful consideration and study.

All priests are responsible for the correct implementation of the liturgy on each block and Parish, I hope all realize this. The lack of coordination and unity in the Liturgy in Kyoto Diocese is a big hurdle in the progress of the Missionary Pastoral of Cooperation and causes misunderstandings. Ecclesiastical authority should fully and efficaciously regulate the Sacred Liturgy lest it should ever seem to be anyone’s private property, whether of the celebrant or of the community in which the mysteries are celebrated. It is an action that represents the whole ecclesial community expressing its faith and where the Mystery of Christ is lived. (Eucharist that gives life to the Church 52, Redemptionis Sacramentum 11, 18).

TO ALL RELIGIOUS AND FAITHFUL:

I wish that all religious and faithful understand that Holy Mass is to be celebrated on Sundays, and the Celebrations of the Word on Sunday in absence of a Priest are only for extraordinary situations (Guide 21) there is no change in this matter.

The use of the “Guide for Celebrations of the Word on Sundays in absence of a Priest” is to be done in case of the absence of a Priest able to celebrate Holy Mass, and the faithful considering the importance of the Day of the Lord gets together to listen to the Word, pray together and receive the Holy Sacrament (Guide 26).

The purpose of this letter is to have a better understanding of the Priestly ministry of the People of God given through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and to be realized in the Celebration of the Word on Sunday when really necessary.

In the Year of the Priest I ask you to keep praying for the sanctification of all priests and for an increase of priestly vocations.

In case of questions regarding the “Guide for Celebrations of the Word on Sundays in absence of a Priest” please direct it to the Diocesan Curia and it will be answered through the Board of Liturgy.

August 4 2009

Memory of St. John Marie Vianney

Paul Otsuka Yoshinao

Bishop of Kyoto

August 4 2009
Kyoto Diocese
Bishop Paul Otsuka Yoshinao

To all Priests, Religious and Faithful of Kyoto Diocese:

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD IN ABSENCE OF
A PRIEST ON SUNDAY FOR KYOTO DIOCESE**

- 1.- The Celebration of the Word is to be done only “in absence of a Priest on Sunday”. If a Priest is present he should celebrate the Holy Mass (Redemptionis Sacramentum 162). In having a Celebration of the Word it is important to observe the norms 18, 25 and 26.
- 2.- The Celebration of the Word is to be realized “in absence of a Priest on Sunday”. It is not allowed to have a celebration of the Word with communion on week days. Permission to have a Celebration of the Word with communion is given only for Sundays (Redemptionem Sacramentum 166).
- 3.- Celebration of the Word is not to be done in the Parish where Holy Mass will be celebrated Saturday night or Sunday (norm 21).
- 4.- Celebration of the Word is not to be used for instruction of the faithful; neither as a test in case of a future absence of a Priest. It is not an instrument to promote the Missionary Pastoral of Cooperation (Ibid).