



# SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

## **Introduction:**

Our Catholic life centers around the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. It is necessary, therefore, that we preserve and protect their integrity and that all things possible are done to preserve the greatest reverence and diligence in their celebration. To that end the following directives based on the *Code of Canon Law* and the practices of the diocese are offered to those entrusted with the celebration of the sacraments and to their record keeping. It is a sacred trust we keep.

## **Sacraments in General:**

1. In the celebration of the sacraments in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, the priests and deacons, pastoral administrators and lay leaders of prayer are to use the liturgical books most recently approved by the Holy See and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
2. Cultural sensitivity and adaptation through music and gesture in the celebrations of the sacraments is encouraged. In order to protect the integrity of the sacramental life of the Church and avoid abuses, the adaptations need the approval of the bishop. Requests for approval are to be made through the Office of the Bishop.
3. The ordained ministers may not refuse the sacraments to those who ask for them at appropriate times, who are properly disposed and who are not prohibited by law from receiving them (CIC 843.1).
  - 3.1 All members of the Church have the right to be assisted by their pastors with the spiritual riches of the Church, especially the Word of God and the sacraments (see CIC 213). Therefore, pastors are responsible for providing the sacraments to all members of the Church living in the territory of the parish whether these persons are registered, contributing members of the parish or not.
  - 3.2 Ordained ministers are not to create prohibitions of their own that are not already in the *Code of Canon Law*, the approved liturgical books and laws, and the policies set down by the Bishop of Great Falls-Billings.
  - 3.3 If one of the Christian faithful is requesting that a sacrament be celebrated after it has already been delayed/deferred, the ordained minister that is being asked the second time ought to consult with the one that delayed/deferred the first request or with the Vicar General before the celebration of the sacrament takes place.
  - 3.4 Christian faithful who feel aggrieved by the decision of an ordained minister to delay/defer a sacrament may have recourse to have their right to the sacraments vindicated if indeed they were violated (see. CIC 221,



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1400). The minister is to follow the directives given by the competent authority.

3.4.1 If the grievance is against one of the members of the parish staff, not the Pastor, recourse is to be presented to the pastor.

3.4.2 If the grievance is against the pastor, or the aggrieved party wants to appeal the decisions of 3.4.1, recourse is to be presented to the Vicar General.

3.4.3 If the grievance is against the Vicar General, or the aggrieved party wants to appeal the decision of 3.4.2, recourse is to be presented to the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. The Bishop is advised of the grievance and the decision.

3.4.4 The decision of the Tribunal is ordinarily the final decision. If subsequent appeals are possible, the aggrieved party will be notified of the procedures.

4. Ordained Catholic Ministers may not ordinarily administer the sacraments to those who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church; with the exception mentioned in canon 844.3:

Catholic ministers may licitly administer the sacraments of penance, eucharist and anointing to members of the oriental churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, if they ask on their own for the sacraments and are properly disposed. This holds also for members of other churches (Protestant) which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition as the oriental churches as far as these sacraments are concerned. (Aside from the affirmative judgment regarding the Polish National Catholic Church in the United States and Canada, no formal statement has been made by the Apostolic See concerning other Reformation communions. For further information consult canon 844.) Foundation for the above can be found in *The Decree on Eumenism* of Vatican II in speaking of the Anglican communion and in the conciliar decree, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, #27.) This information is taken from New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law, Book III, Study Edition, p. 1026, by Frederick McManus, 2000.

5. Beyond the offerings defined by diocesan policy the ordained ministers may not ask for further offering for the administration of the sacraments (see. CIC 848, 1264, 1161). Care is to be taken that people are not denied the sacraments because they cannot afford the fees.
6. The sacraments are to be celebrated in the parish church unless permission has been granted for a different location. Exceptions would be emergency baptisms and also Anointing of the Sick in the home, hospital, or nursing homes.



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7. Sacramental records of the parish are confidential.
  - 7.1 Since sacramental books are official documents of the Church, every effort must be made to keep them neat, and, as far as possible, safe from theft, fire or water damage. Fire-proof cabinets or a safe are recommended.
  - 7.2 While it is a right of the faithful to obtain an authentic copy of the records that affect their status in the Church, parish staff is not to allow them to inspect the parish sacramental books since they contain information about others. (CIC 487.2: It is a right of interested parties to obtain personally or through their proxy an authentic written copy or a photocopy of documents which are public by their nature and which pertain to the status of such persons.)
  - 7.3 Pastors and administrators are to see that their staff is properly instructed about the confidentiality of records and that they adhere to secrecy about the information that is found in the parish records.
  - 7.4 In providing baptismal information of those who have been adopted, care must be taken that the natural parents are not revealed unless a court order has been issued in accord with the statutes of the State of Montana. Names of the adopting parents are recorded.

<p>When a sacrament involves a person from an Eastern Catholic or Orthodox Church, please call The Tribunal Office before proceeding.</p>
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N.B. Throughout the following documents, pertaining to sacramental and liturgical guidelines of the diocese, two different translations of the Code of Canon Law and the Documents of Vatican II were used. The words at times differ from one another however the intent carried is the same. (The canons come from translations in 1983 and 2000. The documents come from translations by Austin Flannery, OP in 1975 and 1996.)

Revised & Promulgated  
By Bishop Michael W. Warfel  
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