Roman Catholic Lay Leader

Training Program - Overview
Revised 26 April 2012
Roman Catholic Lay Leaders

• “The laypersons appointed as leaders should regard the office entrusted to them . . . as a responsibility and, above all, as a service to their brothers and sisters under the authority of their pastors. They should carry out their office with sincere devotion and decorum demanded by such a responsibility and rightly expected of them by God’s people” (21).
Overview

• I. Lay Leaders in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

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• IV. Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest
I. Lay Leaders in the AMS

- Lay leaders in the AMS are members of a command who are volunteers in a Command Religious Program.
- Lay Leaders are appointed by the Command and supervised by the command chaplain.
- Lay Leaders assist in facilitating the free exercise of religion for those of the same faith group. This is done by seeking the services of a chaplain of their faith group, arranging for church parties, and leading lay worship services.
I. Lay Leaders in the AMS: Religious Organization

• Prior to appointment, Lay Leaders must receive the approval of the religious organization that they represent.
• The approval will specify what the Lay Leader is authorized to do.
• For Roman Catholics, the religious organization is the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.
• Its approval will specify that RC Lay Leaders may lead Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest.
II. Roman Catholic Lay Leaders: Requirements Overview

• Volunteer and meet the criteria
  – Maturity
    • “Such persons are to be chosen in view of the consistency of their way of life with the Gospel” (21)
  – Completed Sacraments of Initiation
    • Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation
  – Practicing Catholic
    • If married, in a valid and licit marriage
    • Attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days
    • Faithful to the Magisterium

• Recommended and trained by Roman Catholic priest-chaplains

• Authorized by the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, supervised by RC priest-chaplain
II. RC Lay Leader Requirements: Interview, Training, & Supervision by Catholic Chaplain

- The interview and training process should be completed well in advance of a deployment.
- During the interview the priest-chaplain will assess the volunteer’s suitability for service.
- In addition to the training required for all Lay Leaders, specific training for RC Lay Leaders must be provided by RC chaplains. After completion of the training, the RC chaplain may request that the Archdiocese approve a service member as a RC Lay Leader.
- An RC Lay Leader must have and must maintain approval by the Archdiocese in order to represent the Catholic Church and conduct Lay Services.
- Supervision must be provided by a Roman Catholic chaplain.
III. RC Lay Led Religious Services

Basic principles: Sunday

• Sunday was the day that the Lord conquered sin and death and rose to new life. The Church celebrates the paschal mystery every Sunday.

• The complete liturgical celebration of Sunday includes the gathering of the faithful with their priest, who acts in the person of Christ. The Holy Mass includes the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
III. RC Lay Led Religious Services

Basic principles: Absence of a Priest

• Without a Catholic priest, there can be no celebration of the Mass.
• Even if there is not an opportunity for Mass, it is important for the Catholic community to assemble as a Catholic community to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord.
• RC Lay Leaders are appointed by the Archbishop for the Military Services to lead Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest.
III. RC Lay Led Religious Services

Basic principles: Lay Services

- It is important to avoid confusing Lay services from Mass.
  - Before Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest are begun, it should be explained that although the celebration substitutes for Mass, they are a less than ideal solution to present circumstances.

- Lay Leaders should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office. The leader who is a layperson uses the special forms indicated in the rites for the greeting and blessing, does not use words that are proper to a priest or a deacon.
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Overview

• Prior preparation is essential, including finding the appropriate prayers and readings for the day. It is also important to designate persons who will assist by reading Scripture or offering petitions.

• Note that the a new translation of the Roman Missal went into effect on the First Sunday of Advent 2011 and the prayers changed.
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest
Four Elements

• There are four elements of the celebration:

  – Introductory rites
  – Liturgy of the Word
  – Thanksgiving
  – Concluding Rite
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest
Introductory Rites (1 of 2)

Leader: We gather here to celebrate the Lord’s Day. Sunday has been called the Lord’s Day because it was on this day that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life. Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate the Mass because we do not have a priest. Let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection.

Leader: (the Lay Leader makes the sign of the cross on him/herself) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God for ever.
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest
Introductory Rites (2 of 2)

Leader: Let us pray.

(The opening prayer for the corresponding Sunday Mass may be used or the following)

Praise to you, O God, our Father, for you give us this first day of the week
to restore our hope, to refresh our spirits,
and inspire us for works of mercy, charity, and apostolic service.
On this day that belongs to you, we recall in faith that day when Christ rose from the dead;
and with great fervor we look forward to the future of Christ’s return.
May our gathering this Sabbath day lead us to a deeper solidarity of faith
and a profound sense of gratitude for the grace of our Baptism.
May our prayer lead us to a love for the poor, a greater respect for the dignity of human life,
and the liberation of the oppressed.
As we remember the resurrection of your Christ,
may we receive the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit,
so that we might be effective witnesses of the Gospel.
To you belong all glory and honor and power both now and forever.

All: Amen.
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Liturgy of the Word

- (The readings and the psalm are those assigned in the Lectionary for Mass for that particular Sunday.
  - Look in the Ordo for the date, (e.g. 26 February 2012) to find the day (1st Sunday of Lent, Year B) and the proper readings (Genesis 9:8-15; 3:1-7, Psalm 25, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:12-15). Then use those readings which can be found in a Missal, Lectionary, the pdf file with Sunday Readings, or on the website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings

- First Reading
- Psalm
- Second Reading
- Gospel
  - A reading from the Gospel according to N.
  - (note that a layperson does not use the greeting, “The Lord be with you.”).

- Following the readings, there may be a period of sacred silence for reflection on the Word of God.
- When the leader is a layperson who has not been delegated to preach, the pastor may prepare a homily to be read during the celebration.
- Profession of Faith
  - Nicene Creed (note that the text has changed with the revision of the Roman Missal)
- General Intercessions
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Thanksgiving

• Thanksgiving can take one of two forms, depending on the Liturgical Season.
  – Anytime except Lent: the Gloria (*note that the text has changed with the Revised Roman Missal*)
  – During Lent: the Magnificat

• As an option, the Angelus can be said. It is on the last section of the Worship Aid.
IV. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

Concluding Rite

- The Concluding Rite consists of the Lay Leader guiding the people in blessing themselves (the Lay Leader makes the sign of the cross on him/herself) and invites the people to exchange the sign of peace.

- The Concluding Rite does not include the final prayer for Mass, since it frequently refers to having just received the Eucharist.
Thank you for your ministry of service.

For additional resources and support online visit,

http://www.milarch.org/lay-leaders