

3.2.3 CHURCHES OTHER THAN THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH

1. The diocesan bishop freely designates the primary or principal parochial church and the location for the pastoral administrative offices for a parish. The principal parochial church is to be the center of divine worship as well as the center of the spiritual, liturgical, teaching and social mission of the entire parish community. If the diocesan bishop permits other churches to be maintained as part of the same parish, then they are regulated by the following norms.
2. The pastor, as well as all who cooperate with him or assist him,¹ is to take particular care so that all parishioners are concerned for the entire parish community and work to promote it.²
3. The pastor is to see that all churches belonging to his parish are suitably furnished for divine worship, cared for and safeguarded in a manner appropriate to their status as sacred places.³ However, the principal parochial church of the new or receiving parish is to enjoy a priority of resources in order to fulfill the mission of the entire parish community. Resources should not be allocated to other churches to the detriment of the principal parochial church.
4. Acts of divine worship can be performed in another church of the parish by way of exception with due regard for the parochial rights of the new or receiving parish.⁴
 - a. The rites of the Triduum are normally to be celebrated in the main parochial church.⁵
 - b. The rites of the Catechumenate and of Reception into Full Communion with the Church are normally to be celebrated in the main parochial church of the parish.
 - c. Churches other than the main parochial church may have a baptismal font.⁶ If the pastor determines that a just cause exists, infants and adults may be baptized in a church other than the parochial church outside of the Triduum.⁷
 - d. The pastor is to take care that Masses are not multiplied needlessly.⁸

¹ c. 519.

² c. 529 §2.

³ c. 1220.

⁴ c. 1219 and see c. 530 and cc. 558-559.

⁵ See *Paschalis Solemnitatis*, nn. 43, 46-49, 94.

⁶ c. 858 §2.

⁷ c. 857 §2.

⁸ See SRC, *Instr. Eucharisticum mysterium*, (23 May 1967) n. 26. AAS 59 (1967), 558.

- e. For a just pastoral reason, the pastor may authorize the celebration of Mass on a Sunday in any other church of the parish.
 - f. For a just pastoral reason, the pastor may authorize the celebration of Mass in any other church of the parish on a holy day of obligation, Ash Wednesday, All Souls Day and on the patronal feast of the church or community.
 - g. If the pastor determines that it is of spiritual advantage to the faithful who live nearby and the norms of canons 934-944 are carefully observed, he is authorized to reserve the Most Holy Eucharist in a church other than the main parochial church.¹
 - h. The Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass within a celebration of the Word is to be done only at the main parochial church and only on an emergency basis.
 - i. According to the judgment of the pastor, confessions may be scheduled in another church in the parish.²
 - j. For a serious pastoral reason, the pastor may permit a wedding to be celebrated in any other church of the parish.³
 - k. According to the judgment of the pastor, a priest may administer the Anointing of the Sick on an individual basis in another church in the parish.⁴
 - l. For a just pastoral reason, the pastor may authorize any of the rites of the Order of Christian Funerals, including the Funeral Mass, to be celebrated in another church of the parish.⁵
 - m. According to the judgment of the pastor, sacramentals and the Liturgy of the Hours as well as approved public devotions may be conducted in a church other than the parochial church. These include, illustratively, those associated with a patronal feast, a public novena, Stations of the Cross, etc.
5. The pastor is to take care that
- a. No group of people associated with another church appear to supplant the parish pastoral council, parish finance council or any other parish commission. They are to represent all people who are now part of the newly merged parish.
 - b. All actions of divine worship in other churches that require recording are promptly and accurately inscribed in the parochial register or book of Mass intentions which are stored in the parish office of the main parochial church according to the norms of law.⁶ None are to be stored in other churches.

¹ c. 934 §1.

² c. 964 §1.

³ c. 1118 §1.

⁴ c. 1002.

⁵ c. 1177.

⁶ c. 535.

- c. All collections, offerings and records are safely and promptly transported to the business office of the parish. None are to be stored in other churches.
6. Before a donation that is restricted to the use of a church other than the parochial church is accepted by the pastor, he must consult the diocesan bishop and receive permission if necessary.¹
7. No secular activity or event is to take place in these churches without the permission of the ordinary (that is, the diocesan bishop).²
8. See *A Guide to Parish Clusters, Mergers and Closures* for additional norms³ (especially regarding records [not sacred objects] which will be transferred to the diocese.)

¹ c. 1267 §§2-3.

² c. 1210.

³ *A Guide to Parish Clusters, Mergers and Closures*, promulgated by Bishop of Lansing, 2 June 2008. II. Parish Mergers, Diocese of Lansing Policies, pp. 12-14 and III. Parish Closures, Diocese of Lansing Policies, pp. 15-16.

9. Commentary

Parishes and churches are distinct notions in canon law. A parish is a determined and stable community of the faithful with its pastor under the diocesan bishop (c. 515 and c. 519). A church is a sacred building in which divine worship takes place (c. 1214). While a parish may have more than one church building in its territory, only one of them is the parish or parochial church.

When a parish is merged or amalgamated into another “new” or “receiving” parish, it loses its canonical status as a parish.¹ However, unless a particular action removes its sacred character (c.1212 and c. 1222), that former parish church continues to be a sacred place as a church (c. 1214). It continues to possess the title that was given to it when it was dedicated (c. 1218).² It belongs to the new or receiving parish that the diocesan bishop designates (c. 121), and is subject to the administration of its pastor (c. 519, c. 532, c. 1279 §1).

When the diocesan bishop designates one church to become the parochial church of the new or receiving parish, it becomes the principal and primary sacred place for divine worship and the principal and primary place of origin for all other activities of the parish.

Still the diocesan bishop exercises authority and oversight over these other churches and over the acts of divine worship which are conducted in them (c. 381 §1, c. 392 §2, c. 397, c. 838 §4, and see c. 1213).

These norms apply when one or more parishes are merged or amalgamated into a new or existing parish by the diocesan bishop.

¹ That is, the "unio extinctiva" of canon 121. See in Congregation for the Clergy, Prot. N. 20060481, letter to Bishop William Skylstad as president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

² See additional norms regarding changes of title in CDWDS, notification, *Omnis ecclesia titulum*, 10 February 1999, N 35 [1999] 158-159.