INTERDICASTERIAL

Instruction *Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of priest

Vatican City 15 August 1997

Article 7

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

§ 1. In some places in the absence of priests or deacons,(90) non-ordained members of the faithful lead Sunday celebrations. In many instances, much good derives for the local community from this useful and delicate service when it is discharged in accordance with the spirit and the specific norms issued by the competent ecclesiastical authority.(91) A special mandate of the Bishop is necessary for the non-ordained members of the faithful to lead such celebrations. This mandate should contain specific instructions with regard to the term of applicability, the place and conditions in which it is operative, as well as indicate the priest responsible for overseeing these celebrations.

§ 2. It must be clearly understood that such celebrations are temporary solutions and the text used at them must be approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.(92) The practice of inserting into such celebrations elements proper to the Holy Mass is prohibited. So as to avoid causing error in the minds of the faithful,(93) the use of the eucharistic prayers, even in narrative form, at such celebrations is forbidden. For the same reasons, it should be emphasized for the benefit of those participating, that such celebrations cannot substitute for the eucharistic Sacrifice and that the obligation to attend mass on Sunday and Holy days y obligation is satisfied only by attendance at Holy Mass.(94) In cases where distance or physical conditions are not an obstacle, every effort should be made to encourage and assist the faithful to fulfill this precept.

Congregation for the Clergy
Pontifical Council for the Laity
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
Congregation for Bishops
Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts

(90) Cf. *ibid.*, can. 1248, § 2.
(93) Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Directorium de celebrationibus dominicalibus absente presbitero, *Christi Ecclesia* (10 June 1988), n. 35: l.c.; cf. also C.I.C., can. 1378, § 2; n. 1 and § 3; can. 1384.
(94) Cf. C.I.C., can. 1248.