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GUIDELINES FOR GUEST SPEAKERS AT SUNDAY MASS

The Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama has established the following guidelines to provide direction to priests in the parish celebrations of Mass on Sundays, specifically regarding presentations by guest speakers on behalf of their appeals for funds or on a variety of other issues.

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

- A. Because of the large number of requests from guest speakers to give presentations at parish Sunday Masses, the pastor is to limit the number of these speakers, in order to assure the integrity of the liturgical celebration and not unduly to prolong it. This is also intended to avoid a general dissatisfaction that can arise among the faithful, when they are subjected to an excessive number of appeals or promotions.
- B. While it is necessary to limit guest speakers, it is not necessary to limit the appropriate appeals. There is to be a pastoral effort to utilize the parish bulletins, pamphlets, and/or brochures to describe and to promote an appeal when feasible.

II. GUEST HOMILISTS

- A. When a priest or deacon is a guest speaker at Mass, either in support of an appeal, or on behalf of some other charitable cause, or in promotion of some other organization, he may be invited to preach the homily. However, his message must truly be a homily as such, and not simply an informative presentation.
- B. "A homily must be given at all Masses on Sundays and holy days of obligation which are celebrated with a congregation, and it cannot be omitted except for a grave cause" (**Canon 767, §2**).

- C. In the homily, the mysteries of faith and the norms of Christian life are to be explained (**Canon 767, §1**), using the passages from Sacred Scripture for that particular day. The homily is never to be substituted for an appeal, although the appeal can be appropriately made during the homily.
- D. In accord with the prescripts of the **Code of Canon Law** (**Canon 767, §1**, and the authentic interpretation of May 26, 1987), as well as the norms of the various liturgical books, the homily is always and exclusively reserved to a priest or deacon.

III. GUEST SPEAKERS AFTER THE “PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION”

- A. Lay members of the Christian faithful, including religious sisters and brothers, are not permitted to preach the homily. Further, they are not permitted to speak in support of an appeal at the time of the homily, or immediately after the homily is preached by the priest or deacon.
- B. The appropriate time for a lay person to serve as a guest speaker at Mass is after the *Prayer After Communion*. A priest or deacon who serves as a guest speaker at Sunday Mass, but who does not preach the homily, is also expected to give his appeal after the *Prayer After Communion*.
- C. The length of this appeal and the remarks are not to replace or to overshadow the homily given by the priest or deacon. Also, consideration must be given to the needs of the faithful. Therefore, the remarks must not exceed five minutes in length.