



DECREE OF PROMULGATION

PARTICULAR LAW REGULATING THE CELEBRATION OF THE MASS “VERSUS POPULUM” AND “AD ORIENTEM” IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

WHEREAS the revision of the norms governing the sacred liturgy in accord with the Second Vatican Council allowed for the restoration of Mass facing the people (*versus populum*) at free standing altars while not prohibiting the continued celebration of the Mass in which the priest and people all face the same direction (*ad orientem*);

Whereas the Roman Missal continues to give clear instructions to the priest celebrant regarding when he is to face the altar and when he is to face the people, and these directives apply both to Masses celebrated *ad orientem* as well as those celebrated *versus populum*;

Whereas no. 299 of the General Instruction of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal indicates that it is desirable whenever possible that Masses be celebrated *versus populum*;

THEREFORE, in accord with the norm of canon 223 §2, I promulgate and establish the following as particular law for the Diocese of Erie:

- On Sundays and holy days of obligation and on the preceding evenings, all Masses with a congregation are to be celebrated at a free-standing altar *versus populum*.
- In parishes on other days throughout the week, no more than two (2) Masses with a congregation may be celebrated *ad orientem*, provided that the pastor has first consulted the parish council members on this matter, has prayerfully considered their input, and has properly catechized those who take part.
- In non-parochial communities, the above-referenced norm for parishes is to be applied *mutatis mutandis*, so that the priest entrusted with the care of souls must first consult the relevant advisory body, prayerfully consider the opinion of its members, and properly catechize those who take part.
- All other remaining Masses with a congregation, including all ritual and votive Masses, e.g., funerals, weddings, etc., are to be celebrated at a free-standing altar *versus populum*.
- Masses celebrated according to the 1962 *Missale Romanum* are governed by their own norms, so that the particular law promulgated herein does not apply to them.



I direct that this Decree be published and take effect on Ash Wednesday (March 2, 2022), anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery
of the Diocese of Erie
on this 14th day of January, 2022

+Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie

Christopher J. Singer

The Reverend Christopher J. Singer, JCL
Chancellor