

CHAPTER IV

SACRED PLACES AND TIMES

“Sacred places are those which are designated for Divine worship or for the burial of the faithful by dedication or a blessing which the liturgical books prescribe for this purpose” (can. 1205).

SECTION I: PARISH CHURCHES, CHAPELS AND ORATORIES

189 §1. The erection, renovation or modification of a church, chapel, or any other building on parish or school property requires compliance with the norms published in the Building Policy of the Diocese of Bismarck. (Appendix 25)

§2. A parish church may become an oratory if circumstances favor such a canonical transfer. This is only done under the direct supervision of the Diocesan Bishop and following the appropriate procedure. (Appendix 26)

190 §1. Pastors, rectors and chaplains are charged with the responsibility of maintaining the proper cleanliness and good order befitting a place of divine worship in churches, chapels and oratories.

§2. Every effort should be made to make churches, chapels, oratories and other spaces where the faithful gather accessible to persons who are physically disabled.

§3. All upkeep and repair of sacred art in a church, chapel or oratory is to be done by competent artists.

191 Admission to churches, chapels and oratories for all sacred functions must be absolutely free of charge as specified in can. 1221. Any custom to the contrary is not to be tolerated. Money may be collected only once during church services, unless the Diocesan Bishop has given permission for an additional collection.

192 Churches, chapels and oratories may not be used for any purpose except divine worship. Such functions as civic programs, music concerts and the like may not take place in a church, chapel or oratory without the express approval of the pastor, rector, or chaplain.

193 §1. Priests and others charged with the care of sacred places shall familiarize themselves with the ecclesiastical regulations pertaining to sacred art. It is to be kept in mind that the function and duty of sacred art is to enhance the beauty of the house of God and to foster the faith and piety of the faithful who gather there for divine worship. Anything that distracts or diminishes the devotion of the faithful is to be removed.

§2. In the building of a church, chapel or oratory, or renovations of those existing, the norms of the Universal Church, as well as those established in Art, Architecture and Sacred Space are to be followed.

194 Flags representing national or state insignia are not to be displayed in the sanctuary of churches, chapels, or oratories. They may be displayed in other areas of the church where the faithful gather.

195 Any pastor, rector, or chaplain who intends to erect or establish a chapel for the perpetual exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, either in an existing church building or in a free-standing chapel, must submit a request in writing to the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION II: SACRED TIMES

“Christ taught us: ‘You must pray at all times and not lose heart’ (Lk 18:1). The Church has been faithful in obeying this instruction; it never ceases to offer prayer and makes this exhortation its own: ‘Through [Jesus] let us offer to God an unceasing sacrifice of praise’ (Heb 15:15)” (*General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, n. 10). Although Jesus commands us to pray at all times, certain times – especially the primordial feast of Sunday and the celebrations of the various moments of the Paschal Mystery - are set aside as particularly sacred (see can. 1246).

196 §1. It is only for the Apostolic See to establish, transfer, and suppress feast days and days of penance common to the Universal Church, without prejudice to the prescript of can. 1246 §2.

§2. The Bishop of Bismarck can decree special feast days or days of penance for the Diocese, but only in individual instances.¹

§3. The norms for Holy Days of Obligation in the Diocese of Bismarck are to be followed. (Appendix 27)

197 Priests having the care of souls are to admonish the faithful that the present widespread commercialization of Sundays and Holy Days constitutes a serious disregard of the Third Commandment of God. Unnecessary buying and selling or burdensome labor on these days violate the sanctity of the Lord’s Day and the right of the worker to a day devoted to divine worship and rest.

198 §1. Each year and no later than the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the Lenten regulations for the Diocese of Bismarck shall be announced and carefully explained to the faithful. This is the responsibility of the proper pastor or chaplain.

§2. The faithful are encouraged to pray the Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season.

199 For a just cause, a pastor, and indeed any priest ministering in the Diocese of Bismarck with the appropriate faculty, can grant in individual cases a dispensation from the general laws of fasting, abstinence and the observance of feast days, including Sundays, according to the norms of can. 1245, and should encourage, in their place, other prayers or pious practices.² (Appendix 11)

200 The faithful are to be catechized concerning the penitential character of Fridays throughout the year. They are to be encouraged to maintain abstinence on Fridays in accord with cann. 1250 and 1251, or to substitute some other suitable form of penance or charity in accord with the USCCB “Pastoral Statement on Prayer and Fasting.”³

¹ See can. 1244 §2.

² **Can. 1252** The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year of age. The law of fasting, however, binds all those who have attained their majority (18) until the beginning of their sixtieth year. Nevertheless, pastors of souls and parents are to take care that minors not bound by the law of fast and abstinence are also educated in a genuine sense of penance.

³ USCCB “Pastoral Statement on Prayer and Fasting,” n. 23: “Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that comes with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ.”