



JEFFREY J. WALSH

Bishop of Gaylord

By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See

DECREE OF PROMULGATION

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

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 Gaylord:

- 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. If the pastor has multiple parishes or limited use

churches, this includes Masses celebrated at any of them; therefore multiple parishes or churches cannot be used to increase the number of *ad orientem* celebrations.

- 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 the Feast of St. Teresa of Avila (October 15, 2026), anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Gaylord on this 2nd day of October 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey J. Walsh', with a cross symbol at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Jeffrey J. Walsh
Bishop of Gaylord

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina H. Ihlenfeldt'.

Christina Ihlenfeldt
Chancellor