



Sharing of Catholic Churches with Other Church and Ecclesial Communities

The Archbishop of Vancouver has established norms for the Sharing of Catholic Churches with other Christian communities that request the use of them for public worship.

The norms are in conformity with the "Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism" issued by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on March 25th, 1993, that states:

"Catholic churches are consecrated or blessed buildings which have an important theological and liturgical significance for the Catholic community. They are therefore generally reserved for Catholic worship. However, if priests, ministers or communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church do not have a place or the liturgical objects necessary for celebrating worthily their religious ceremonies, the diocesan Bishop may allow them the use of a church or a Catholic building and also lend them what may be necessary for their services. Under similar circumstances, permission may be given to them for interment or for the celebration of services at Catholic cemeteries." (No. 137)

1. The Archbishop of Vancouver or his delegated representative will customarily grant permission to all requests from Catholic pastors who would like to allow another Christian community to use their church building for public worship. However, pastors should seek permission from the Archbishop before entering into any agreement. In an emergency situation such as a fire, or a flood, a pastor may proceed by granting provisional permission on the presumption that the Archbishop would customarily grant such a request.
2. Pastors should arrange that the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the tabernacle on these occasions.
3. Pastors are not to enter into agreements to share the use of their church building with other Christian communities that extend beyond a year at a time. Any written agreements should be sent to the Chancery for the Archdiocesan records.
4. Christian communities using a Catholic church should be required to keep an inventory of any of their goods that may be stored in the church.
5. Financial compensation from other Christian communities shall be set at the discretion of the pastor and parish finance council.

The preceding norms are promulgated on the Fourth Day of June, 2008, and will take effect on the Fourteenth Day of June, 2008.

This policy does not replace the Policy for Use of Church Property for Filming, issued February 4, 1993, nor the directives of the Congregation for Divine Worship on Concerts in Churches issued November 5, 1987.