

**Pastoral Notes
for the Celebration of the Eucharist
in Light of the
Revised Roman Missal**

Pastoral Notes for the Celebration of the Eucharist in Light of the Revised Roman Missal
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ABBREVIATIONS

Many texts listed below appear in *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963-1979: Conciliar and Papal and Curial Texts (DOL)* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982).

ACDM	Au Cours des derniers mois, Letter (DOL 244)
CB	Ceremonial of Bishops
CI	Christian Initiation, General Introduction
CL	Circular Letter concerning the preparation and celebration of the Easter Feasts
CSL	Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), Vatican Council II (DOL 1)
DMC	Directory for Masses with Children (DOL 276)
EM	Instruction Eucharisticum Mysterium, on worship of the eucharist (DOL 179)
EP	Circular Letter Eucharistiae participationem, on the eucharistic prayers (DOL 248)
GILH	General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (DOL 426)
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal (DOL 208)
GNLYC	General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (DOL 442)
HCWEM	Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass (DOL 266)
IO	Instruction Inter Oecumenici, on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy (DOL 23)
LI	Liturgicae instaurationes, on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy. (DOL 52)
LG	Lumen Gentium, Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. (DOL 4)
LM	Lectionary for Mass, General Introduction
MS	Instruction Musicam Sacram, on music in the liturgy. (DOL 508)
OCF	Order of Christian Funerals
OCM	Ordo Cantus Missae, Introduction (DOL 535)
RBC	Rite of Baptism for Children, Introduction (DOL 295)
RC	Rite of Concelebration, Introduction (DOL 223)
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
RS	Redemptionis Sacramentum
SG	The Simple Gradual, Introduction (DOL 533)
RDCA	Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Introduction (DOL 547)

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Pastoral Notes

for the Celebration of the Eucharist

according to the Fifth Edition of the

General Instruction of the Roman Missal

This guide is a pastoral and catechetical instrument to assist in the implementation of the Fifth Edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. It presumes the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and is in no way intended to replace it, but should always be read in conjunction with that official document.

INTRODUCTION

1. Liturgy, or worship is not primarily something we do, but is rather the expression of a relationship. It is first and foremost the action of Christ who acts on behalf of God's people and a response by that people who, prompted by the Holy Spirit, praise God's action in their midst. Ultimately, liturgy is the principal means by which God's people, even here on earth, enter into the communion and life of the Trinity.
2. Liturgy is a pre-eminent expression of faith, which, at the same time, strengthens faith. It is personal contact with the Father, through Christ in the Spirit by means of ritual and symbol. The mystery of the Father, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Church, Redemption, and Liturgy are all co-extensive and inseparable. When in liturgy we enter into mystery, we encounter the mystery of the triune God.
3. As liturgy is the action of Christ, the incarnation of the invisible God, so it is the action of the Body of Christ. By Baptism, Christians are united to Christ as members of his one Body, so that when Christ acts in the liturgy, the Church, his Body, acts as well. By the Spirit, made one with Christ, who offers himself to the Father, the Church glorifies God and continues Christ's work of sanctifying all humanity.
4. In the liturgy, the Body of Christ recalls, makes present and opens itself to the action of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way it responds to God's call and exercises its priestly mission of praising God and interceding for the salvation of the world.

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY AND THE EUCHARIST

5. Shortly before his Passion and death, Jesus spoke the following words to the crowd: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn. 12:32). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, poured forth in the Paschal Mystery, the risen and exalted Lord would draw the world to the Father and into communion of life in the triune God.¹
6. Such is the significance of the great assembly for Eucharist on the day of the Resurrection. On this day, which is called the Lord's Day, Jesus himself gathers the

¹ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 4 December 1963 (hereafter, *CSL*), nos. 5, 6, 47.

scattered peoples of the world and, in the Eucharist, draws them into his own passage through death into new and glorious life in God.²

7. The Paschal Mystery is Jesus' Passover through death to risen and glorious life and the world's passage through him, and with and in him to that same new life. This mystery lies at the heart of the Church's proclamation of the Good News of salvation. In the Eucharist, the Church celebrates this passing to communion in the life of the triune God.³

8. The Eucharist is the paschal feast that draws all creation into the saving Passover of Jesus Christ. In every Eucharist, the Church calls to mind the sacrificial Death and Resurrection of the Lord; through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's sacrifice is made present and accessible to all.⁴

9. By participating in the paschal meal, the People of God enjoy passage in Christ to the Kingdom of God and the life of glory. Hence, the Eucharist is the banquet feast of the Kingdom and the sacrament of the world's salvation. For this reason, the Eucharist is the Church's fundamental event and the summit and source of the whole Christian life.⁵

10. In the Eucharist, the gathered Church is drawn into the new and everlasting covenant that was sealed in the Death and Resurrection of the Lord. It hears the living call of God as it is proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word, and it responds with the Eucharistic Prayer and its Great Amen. Finally, it seals the covenant in its Communion in the Body and Blood of the Lord.⁶

11. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, the Father's work of reconciliation, accomplished in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5.10), is fulfilled in the assembly. Sharing the passage of Jesus to the life of the Kingdom, the assembly experiences the joy expressed in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians: "May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints of light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1.11-14).⁷

12. As often as it is celebrated through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist draws individuals into community and then transforms this assembly, drawing it into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ and into the unity and peace of the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist is a celebration of the highest order, the transforming work of the Holy Spirit,

2 *CSL*, nos. 6, 102; Congregation of Rites, *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, 21 March 1969 (hereafter, *GNLYC*), no. 4.

3 *CSL*, nos. 5, 6, 10.

4 *CSL*, no. 6; *Institution Generalis Missalis Romani*, 4th edition, 27 March 1975: *The Roman Missal (Sacramentary)*, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, revised edition, 1994 (hereafter, *GIRM*) Intro., no. 2.

5 *CSL*, nos. 8, 10, 47.

6 *CSL*, no. 110; *GIRM*, nos. 9, 33, 54, 56; *Missale Romanum, Ordo Lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera, 1981, Praenotanda: *The Roman Missal, Lectionary for Mass*, 2nd English edition, 1981, General Introduction (hereafter, *LM*), no. 6.

7 *CSL*, no. 5.

the restoration of the world in the cosmic Christ, the experience of communion of life in the triune God, a sacrament of salvation, and an event of fullest joy.⁸

13. The Eucharist is the sacred meal and memorial that celebrates and makes present the one and eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lord. At the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus directed his disciples to continue to do this in memory of him (1 Cor. 11.23-26). In the Church's celebration of this supper, the bread and wine become his own Body and Blood and the assembly, through its participation in this sacred food and drink, becomes transformed into the Body of Christ.⁹ The Eucharist is therefore a sacrificial meal that always recalls and makes present this saving sacrifice of Christ. Gathered at the altar by the Spirit, the Church offers this everlasting sacrifice to God in union with the Lord. Joined to Christ's sacrifice, it offers the gift of its own life for the glory of God.¹⁰

14. The Eucharist is the sign of unity. It is a sharing in the one great sacrificial act of Jesus Christ. It is the great celebration of his one Body. It gathers the world into the unity and peace of the Kingdom at the one table of the Lord.¹¹

15. As an expressive sign and to make present always his one and eternal sacrifice, Jesus instituted the Eucharist under the forms of both bread and wine. These two species – one of his Body given up for us, the other of his Blood poured out for us, consecrated separately upon the altar – signify in a most vivid way his sacrificial death upon the cross for our salvation. At the Last Supper he directed his disciples: Take, eat; this is my Body... Drink from it, all of you, for this is my Blood of the covenant... (cf. Mt. 26.26-28). The equal reverence given to both Sacred Species and the assembly's sharing where possible, in Communion of both the Body and Blood of the Lord are clear expressions of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist and its character as the new and eternal covenant sealed in his Blood.

16. The Eucharist is the foretaste of the paschal feast of heaven. In this meal, the Church is joined in communion to the angels and saints of heaven at the liturgy of praise in the New Jerusalem. It sits at the table of the feast of the Kingdom and shares the holy food and drink of the life of the Kingdom.¹² It partakes, even here on earth, of the divine life of the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

SUNDAY: THE LORD'S DAY

17. Each Sunday, the weekly Easter, is the Church's original and primary feast day. It is the day of Christ's Passover from death to resurrection and exaltation, the first day of the new creation, the "eighth" day.¹³ The eighth day reveals and opens out the everlasting Day of the Lord, the day of the great assembly and the eternal praise of God.¹⁴

8 *CSL*, nos. 7, 8.

9 Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, on the worship of the Eucharist, 25 May 1967 (hereafter, *EM*), no. 3.

10 *EM*, no. 3.

11 *EM*, no. 3.

12 *EM*, no. 3.

13 The term "eighth day" indicates that Sunday stands beyond the old creation and its seven-day week. It opens out the new age and the day that has no end.

14 *GNLYC*, no. 4.

18. Sunday, therefore, is the day of the world's transformation, accomplished through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On this day, the whole of creation, through its participation in the Church's Eucharist, experiences the mystery of Christ's passing and God's salvation. As Pope John Paul II noted:

"[I]t is clear that, although the Lord's Day is rooted in the very work of creation and even more in the mystery of the biblical "rest" of God, it is nonetheless to the Resurrection of Christ that we must look in order to understand fully the Lord's Day. This is what the Christian Sunday does, leading the faithful each week to ponder and live the event of Easter, true source of the world's salvation."¹⁵

Each Sunday is a new epiphany of the Lord, who gathers the world into the kingdom.

19. Just as Sunday towers over the week, the annual festival of Christian Passover, the Easter Triduum, towers over the liturgical year. This great feast reveals the full dimensions of the world's passage in Christ and gives meaning to the whole of Christian life.¹⁶

THE ASSEMBLY

20. From earliest times, the people of God have come together on the Lord's Day under the call of God in Jesus Christ. Gathered in full assembly,¹⁷ they encounter the God of salvation, who engages them in the enduring dialogue of love, calling them to share the life of the Kingdom and leading them forward to the paschal feast.¹⁸

21. Since, through their Baptism, members of the assembly are incorporated into Christ, the assembly itself is a particular place of Christ's presence in the liturgy. For Christ himself has promised "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt. 18.20).¹⁹ By reason of their Baptism, members of the assembly have a share in Christ's own priesthood and they "join in the offering of the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood... . They offer the Divine Victim to God, and themselves along with it" (LG, 10, 11). Clearly, the baptismal priesthood of the assembly and the ministerial priesthood are intimately connected, and in the Eucharist, their offering is joined together. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says that the faithful "should give thanks to God by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him" (CSL, 48). Ultimately, that joint offering is priestly because it is one with the great offering of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest, made once and for all time upon the Cross.

22. Similarly, just as Christ is present in the Priest in the celebration of the Eucharist, so Christ is truly present also in the assembly, as he is present in the word and present above all in the sacrament of the altar. In the case of the assembly, Christ's presence is in keeping with his promise, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there

15 Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, Pope John Paul II, 05 July 1998, par. 19.

16 *GNLYC*, no. 18.

17 Taken together, the Sunday assemblies of the Cathedral and parish communities constitute one great assembly of the local or diocesan church. This assembly, in turn, one with the assemblies of other local churches constitutes the one great assembly of the universal Church, the Church itself, the Body of Christ. Thus, Sunday is the day of the universal assembly of the nations.

18 *GIRM*, no. 5, Preamble.

19 *CSL*, no. 7.

among them” (Mt. 18.20). Because of Christ’s presence, every liturgical celebration is an action of Christ the Priest, and of his Body, the Church (*CSL*, 7).

23. The assembly, at once both local and universal, is the first sign of God’s work of reconciliation and the visible expression of the reality of the Church. In one way or another, it embraces all the world’s people who hear the call of the good news and respond to it in faith, and reaches out to those who have not yet heard the word or have even rejected it. Thus, it is catholic or all-encompassing, bringing together into a new communion of life people of every age, race and kind. It is the sign of the universal call to salvation and the gathering of the whole world into the unity and life of the Kingdom.²⁰

24. Since, through Christ, God engages the assembly itself in this saving action, the primary aim to be considered before all else in the celebration of the Eucharist is the “full, conscious, and active” participation of the entire community of faith.²¹ At its deepest level, this participation is nothing other than the assembly’s sharing in the mystery of salvation, in the prayer of Christ with whom his Body, the Church, prays in the liturgy.²²

25. This participation is rooted in faith and ritual. By faith, the people of God discern God’s call to gather. By faith, they recognize Christ’s presence in the brothers and sisters who make up the assembly, in the Bishop or Priest who presides, in the word proclaimed and, par excellence, in the Body and Blood of the Lord.²³

26. Ritual enables the assembly to encounter the infinite God in the present, and engages the whole person—body and senses, mind and heart—in the liturgical action in an integrated way. Hence, the assembly takes part in a rich variety of liturgical activities, including communal prayer, silence and reflection, acclamations and responses, various postures and gestures, song and movements. Through these actions, the whole body can be drawn into the expression of reverence, praise and joy.²⁴

27. Full, conscious and active participation in the Eucharist, engages the people of God in the entire personal and corporate action of the Body of Christ. This participation does not mean that every person in the assembly must be “doing” something. Rather it involves both interior and exterior dispositions which are connected to one another: the warm and gracious greeting of the brothers and sisters of the household of God (2 Cor. 13.11-12) as they arrive for the celebration; being attentive to the proclaimed word and receiving it as God’s urgent and living message today; a renewed commitment to God as embodied in the Eucharistic Prayer and its Great Amen; and, above all, the sealing of the covenant in the Body and Blood of Christ. Finally, this participation entails the assembly’s acceptance of its mission and its departure to witness joyfully to Christ in the world.²⁵

20 The sacramental sign is not restricted to the bread and wine. The full sacramental sign is the new assembly gathered in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. *CSL*, no. 2; Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 21 November 1964 (hereafter, *LG*), no. 2.

21 *CSL*, no. 14.

22 *LG*, no. 3.

23 *CSL*, no. 7.

24 *CSL*, no. 30.

25 *CSL*, no. 48.

- Participation in the Eucharist is personal rather than individual. The people of God are assembled not to stay isolated, but to be, in sign and in reality, the one Body of Christ, and to be drawn into the cosmic redemption brought about in Jesus' passage from death to everlasting life.²⁶
- The *Directory for Masses with Children* provides principles for the full, conscious and active participation of children in the Sunday assembly.

MINISTERS

28. All ministers are members of the assembly who facilitate the celebration of the Eucharist. These ministers act on behalf of Christ and serve the assembly and the entire Church.²⁷

29. Each of these ministers fulfills a particular function within the liturgical assembly. Hence, the primary expression of the Church is the celebration of the Eucharist in which the Bishop presides in the cathedral church surrounded by his Presbyterate and other ministers, and a large representation of the people of the diocesan family.²⁸

The Bishop

30. The Bishop, by the very nature of his office, is the Church's first witness to the word of God and the chief presider at its Eucharist.²⁹

31. It is the Bishop's role to convoke the assembly of the local Church in the name of God.

32. He presides at the Liturgy of the Word, assuming the teaching chair of Jesus Christ and the apostles in the midst of the community. In the Liturgy of the Word, he preaches the homily as the living, prophetic word of God, handing down in Apostolic Succession the Good News that he himself has received as coming from the Apostles. As the one who addresses the assembly, he is also the first listener to God's word.³⁰

33. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Bishop presides at the table of the Lord. Here, standing as the icon of Jesus, the Great High Priest, the Head of the Body, he receives the gifts of the assembly and gathers it into the Eucharistic Prayer, which joins all creation to the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ and consecrates it to God. In the rite of Communion, he ministers the holy food of the paschal feast in the name of Christ.³¹

34. The presidency of the Bishop secures the authenticity of the Eucharistic celebration as a visible and sacramental realization of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Through the Sacrament of Order, he stands in Apostolic Succession in the Church and is the visible link between this assembly and the Church throughout the ages. In episcopal communion with the See of Peter, the universal College of Bishops, and other local churches throughout the world, he is the visible link that joins this

26 *CSL*, no. 26.

27 *LG*, no. 11, par. 2.

28 *CSL*, no. 41; *GIRM*, nos. 91, 112.

29 *LG*, no. 21; *CB*, nos. 12, 15, 18.

30 *CB*, nos. 6, 15-17; *LG*, no. 21.

31 *CB*, no. 8.

assembly with the sister Churches everywhere, making this assembly a sacramental realization of the whole Church.³²

The Priest (presbyter)

35. The Priest (presbyter),³³ who shares in the sacrament of Holy Orders through the Bishop, presides with the authority and in the name of the Bishop. During the Liturgy of the Word, he proclaims the Good News and teaches in Christ's name. During the sacred meal, he carries out the fourfold action of Christ at the Last Supper who took, blessed, broke and gave.³⁴ The Bishop or Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist represents a particular form of Christ's presence in the liturgy, as the icon of Christ, the Head of the Body.

36. Within the Eucharistic celebration, the first goal of the presiding Priest is to engage the entire assembly in the faith-filled celebration of the sacred mysteries.³⁵

37. This is accomplished by his warm demeanour, the integrity of his greetings, the openness of his gestures, the measured pace he sets for communal prayer, his clear articulation of the presidential prayers, and his overall attentiveness to the whole assembly throughout the celebration. All these things will be assisted by his advance preparation of the liturgy, especially in conjunction with other ministers. In these ways, the presiding Priest acts as servant of the household of faith and facilitates the full, conscious and active participation of all the people of God.³⁶

- Any remarks the Priest makes where permitted during the rite should be succinct and well-prepared. These remarks should focus on the liturgical action and not draw undue attention to the person of the presider.

The Deacon

38. The Deacon, who also shares in the sacrament of Holy Orders, is the first assistant to the Bishop or, by extension, to the Priest who presides in the Bishop's place.

39. The Deacon assists the Bishop or presiding Priest (presbyter) at the chair and at the altar of the feast.³⁷ In the Liturgy of the Word, he proclaims the Gospel to the assembly; in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, he assists with the reception of the gifts of the faithful and is the first minister of the chalice. He has a special responsibility for facilitating the celebration, giving necessary directions to the assembly and supporting its participation throughout.³⁸

- There is an integral link between the Deacon's role in the Liturgy of the Word and in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. For this reason, the work of proclaiming the

32 *CB*, no. 5; *LG*, no. 20.

33 The technical term for ordained ministry is used in this section, since the term "Priest" refers to both presbyter (ordained Priest) and the Bishop.

34 *GIRM*, nos. 72, 93.

35 *CSL*, no. 14.

36 *EP*, no. 17.

37 The role of the Deacon is outlined in *GIRM*, nos. 171-186.

38 *GIRM*, no. 94; *LM*, no. 50.

Gospel and ministering the cup, as well as the other responsibilities within the liturgy, are normally carried out by one Deacon in any given celebration.

- When necessary, the Deacon should have access to sound amplification for the dismissal and other interventions, such as the intentions for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful), that are given at the chair or the ambo.
- A Master of Ceremonies is an important ministry and adds to the dignity of liturgical celebrations.

Other Ministers

40. The celebration of the Eucharist is also facilitated by a number of other ministers. These include such ordinary lay ministries as ministers of hospitality, ministers of music, servers, ministers of the word, commentators, sacristans and liturgy committees, as well as the extraordinary ministry of assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion.³⁹

- The members of each liturgical ministry should, where possible, reflect the composition of the community as a whole, especially in terms of gender, age and ethnic origins, since these liturgical ministries pertain to the entire people of God. All liturgical ministries of the laity are open to both women and men.
- Those who serve in these ministries should be chosen on the basis of their personal gifts and talents and should be supported by an ongoing program of liturgical, spiritual and technical formation.⁴⁰

41. Liturgical ministers act from within and at the service of the assembly. They participate not only in their specific work but also in every aspect of the celebration.

42. As a norm, liturgical ministers assume only one ministry within each Eucharistic celebration. It is also a valid custom that a minister should serve in only one liturgical ministry in a given time period.

Ministers of hospitality

43. Since the Church is the family of God, the “front line” ministry of the Eucharist is the ministry of hospitality. This ministry is exercised first of all by the assembly itself. More specifically, the ministers of hospitality greet the brothers and sisters of the community of faith, and especially newcomers, visitors, and those who need assistance, in a warm and friendly manner as they arrive for the celebration of the feast.

44. Throughout the Eucharist, they attend to the needs of the household in a familial and gracious way. In fulfilling this ministry, ministers of hospitality exercise the hospitality of God, who is the host of the paschal feast.

Ministers of music

45. The primary minister of music is the assembly itself. Ministers of music lead the assembly in song and foster the joy that characterizes the kingdom feast. Among the rich variety of musicians who form this ministry are cantors, leaders of music groups, singers,

³⁹ *CSL*, nos. 26-29; *GIRM*, nos. 98-107.

⁴⁰ *CSL*, no. 29; *LM*, no. 55.

organists and other instrumentalists, and leaders of song. Through their work, the entire assembly is enabled to raise its voice in songs of praise to the God of salvation.⁴¹

- Since the Responsorial Psalm is an integral part of the proclamation of the word, the cantor sings the verses of the psalm from the ambo.
- The leader of song leads the assembly in hymns, acclamations and psalm refrains as required. The leader of song does not stand at the ambo when fulfilling this ministry except for the Responsorial Psalm.⁴²

46. Ministers of music should be provided with a space that is integrated within the assembly and that allows ample room for instruments and other necessary articles. The music group's ability to lead the assembly in song should be a priority when choosing this space.⁴³

47. The human voice always holds a primary place in the singing of the Church.

- Prerecorded music must never replace the singing of the assembly, nor should it displace the ministry of music ministers. Only in cases of real necessity should prerecorded music be used in liturgical celebrations and then only to support and enhance the singing of the assembly.
- Instruments are intended to serve, not to replace or obscure the praise that comes from the heart.⁴⁴

48. Since the organ has a special capacity to elicit and support joyful song, selecting and placing one within the assembly should be a key part of the planning for church construction and renovation.⁴⁵

49. Communities should also be open to the technological advances of the present age.⁴⁶ However, these advances should not replace the human voice or the use of ministers.

Servers

50. Servers or acolytes are the general household servants of the Eucharistic celebration. Their responsibilities include carrying the thurible, cross and candles in processions, assisting at the chair (especially with the missal) and at the altar as required. Efficient and discreet serving contributes to the orderliness and flow of the celebration. In fulfilling their ministry, servers assume the way of Jesus, who came to serve (Mt. 20.28).⁴⁷

51. Servers should carry out their work in a quiet and dignified manner. They should not move about during the prayers, readings, or times of reflection and they should, except where their ministry absolutely requires otherwise, model postures and principles of participation for the rest of the assembly.

41 *GIRM*, no. 103.

42 *GIRM*, nos. 104, 309; *MS*, no. 21.

43 *MS*, no. 23.

44 *MS*, no. 64.

45 *MS*, no. 62; *CSL*, no. 120.

46 *CSL*, nos. 119, 120.

47 *GIRM*, nos. 100, 187-193.

Ministers of the word

52. Ministers of the word (lectors, readers)⁴⁸ are responsible for proclaiming the first and second readings in the Liturgy of the Word. When they announce the living Word of God in the assembly, they act as agents of Christ, who is present in the Word they proclaim. Speaking on his behalf, they seek to embody his message and make it come alive in their own person.⁴⁹ So that the assembly may hear the one Word of God proclaimed by a diversity of voices, it is preferable that there be different readers for the first and second readings.

- Cantors or psalmists are both ministers of music and ministers of the Word. They sing the scriptural psalm and open out to the household of faith the ancient prayer book and hymn book of the Church and of Jesus Christ himself.⁵⁰

53. Ministers of the Word should be provided with a formation program that will open their hearts to the sacred writings and help them to reflect prayerfully on the readings and psalms that they will proclaim in the assembly.

- Ministers of the Word should be trained to use the microphone effectively. They need to recognize that the sound system is intended to amplify and not to substitute for genuine proclamation.⁵¹

Ministers of Holy Communion

54. The “ordinary” and primary ministers of Holy Communion are the Priest and the Deacon who ministers the chalice. Other ministers of Communion assist the Priest and the Deacon as needed.⁵²

- All ministers who are to assist the Priest and assisting Deacon as ministers of Communion should be familiar with the local arrangements of the Communion Rite and should be present for the entire celebration.
- Ministers also bring Communion to the sick from the Sunday Eucharist. In doing so, they provide a valuable service to the Church, joining the sick to the assembly and its feast, and embodying the community’s care and affection for all its members.

55. “Extraordinary” ministers of Holy Communion are lay persons who have been instituted as acolytes or duly commissioned as ministers of Communion. They assist the ordinary ministers (Priest and Deacon) in giving the Body and Blood of Christ to the family of God. In doing so, they act in the name of Jesus and follow the example of service that he gave at the Last Supper.⁵³

48 *LM*, nos. 167 ff.

49 *GIRM*, nos. 55, 59, 98, 194-198.

50 *LM*, no. 56; *GIRM*, nos. 61, 102.

51 *LM*, no. 55.

52 Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship Instruction (third) *Liturgicae instaurationes*, on carrying out the Constitution on the Liturgy 5 September 1970. (hereafter *LI*), no. 6k.

53 *GIRM*, no. 98.

Commentators

56. The commentator's ministry originated with developments in liturgical celebration before the Second Vatican Council. Since then, the commentator, if there is one, usually makes the parish announcements, either before the Eucharist begins or following the Prayer after Communion

- The commentator may also be an appropriate person to announce the intentions of the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful).⁵⁴

Sacristans

57. Sacristans attend to the general preparations for the Eucharist. They also ensure that furnishings and the various articles used in the liturgy are maintained properly. Their attention to these matters contributes to the flow, beauty and reverence of the celebration and is another way that the Church shows hospitality to all who come.⁵⁵

Liturgy committees

58. While liturgy committees are once removed from the actual Eucharist, they are the necessary meeting ground, training forum and planning place for effective celebration. Their task is to facilitate the saving encounter between God and the world that takes place in the Eucharist and in the other sacramental celebrations of the Church. To this end, they will work to educate themselves and their communities of faith in matters pertaining to the sacred liturgy and they will promote, as an essential ingredient of liturgical renewal, the full, conscious and active participation of the entire assembly in the Eucharist of the Church.⁵⁶ It would be entirely appropriate that the liturgy committee would prepare well in advance the seasons to be celebrated, and the individual Sunday celebrations within these seasons.

ELEMENTS OF PARTICIPATION

Communal Prayer

59. In the Eucharist, the Church, which is Christ's Body, prays "through him, and with him, and in him." Thus, liturgical prayer is always the prayer and action of Christ and directed to the praise of God the Father. The Priest, in the person of Christ the Head, proclaims presidential prayers—the Opening Prayer, the Prayer over the Gifts, the Prayer after Communion and, above all, the Eucharistic Prayer—in the name of the entire assembly.⁵⁷ The assembly as Christ's Body, have their own proper prayers, songs and responses.

- In the Opening Collect, and other "prayers," a period of silence follows the invitation. This period of silence should be long enough to allow the members of the assembly to enter into genuine prayer and encounter the living God who acts through Christ.⁵⁸

54 *CSL*, no. 29; *LM*, no. 57.

55 *CB*, no. 37.

56 *GIRM*, no. 106; *CSL*, nos. 14, 19.

57 *GIRM*, no. 30.

58 *GIRM*, no. 54.

- The Opening Collect sets a ritual pattern; the entrance procession, the procession with the gifts, and the Communion procession are all closed by prayer. These prayers should be prayed in a decisive manner that clearly draws the rite to its conclusion, and points to the sacred action which follows.
- The entire assembly prays other prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer, in unison.⁵⁹

Silence and Reflection

60. Periods of silence and reflection, such as those that precede the presidential prayers or follow the readings, punctuate the liturgy and allow the assembly to internalize the celebration.⁶⁰

Greetings, acclamations and responses

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

61. This ancient Christian greeting used throughout the celebration evokes the faith and conviction of the Church that it is the living Body of Christ whose members offer the presence of Christ to one another.

62. The dialogue that begins with the opening greeting and continues throughout the liturgy is the traditional device by which the Priest and the rest of the assembly are constantly united in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. This dialogue invites the assembly into an encounter with Christ who acts in the assembly.

63. The concluding dialogue of the Eucharist (the Dismissal), reminds the members of the assembly that they leave the celebration assured of the abiding presence of the risen Lord and that they are the Body of Christ and his presence in the world. There is no greater greeting among Christians than the prayer that this presence may remain with the members of the assembly and abide in them always.⁶¹

- Acclamations and responses provide a primary way for the assembly to act together and express itself vocally within the celebration. They are more effective when sung.⁶²

Thanks be to God

64. This acclamation embodies the spirit of the entire Eucharist, which is one of thanksgiving to the God of salvation. It expresses the assembly's conviction that it has experienced the wonderful works of God.

65. When this response follows the dismissal, it points the assembly outward to a continuing life of celebration through the witness of praise and thanksgiving. What the assembly celebrates at Eucharist becomes its way of life forever.

⁵⁹ *GIRM*, no. 36.

⁶⁰ *GIRM*, nos. 45, 54; *LM*, no. 28; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Circular Letter *Eucharistiae participationem*, on the Eucharistic Prayers, 27 April 1973 (hereafter, *EP*), no. 18.

⁶¹ *GIRM*, no. 50.

⁶² *CSL*, no. 30.

POSTURES AND GESTURES

66. The liturgical postures and gestures are actions that engage the entire body within the celebration and, when carried out together, unify the assembly in a common cause. Thus, they both express and foster the unity of the assembly gathered in the Holy Spirit as the Body of Christ.⁶³

Standing posture

67. Standing, the fundamental posture of the Christian assembly, deserves special attention. It is the posture of a resurrection people,⁶⁴ the respectful posture of a community that recognizes the presence of the risen Lord, a sign of reverence for the Gospel, a sign of the common action of offering praise and thanksgiving expressed in the Eucharistic Prayer, and the posture of the family that lives in intimate communion with the all-holy God. It is also the posture of the action of offering and the posture of those who make covenant with their God. Finally, it is the posture of openness to Jesus Christ and to one another in the Eucharistic assembly.

- Since the Second Vatican Council, standing has once again become the common posture for liturgy.⁶⁵ Individual participants who are older, ill, disabled or tired, however, should understand that they are free to sit as necessary. Priests and pastors should communicate this to members of the assembly, especially older members and those who are ill.

68. The assembly stands for the following parts of the Eucharist: the Introductory Rites; the Gospel procession and its proclamation; the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful; the incensing of the people at the preparation of the gifts, the invitation to prayer and the Prayer over the Gifts; the Communion Rite (i.e., from the Lord's Prayer through Communion until all have received); and the Prayer after Communion and the Closing Rite.⁶⁶

The *General Instruction* invites the assembly to stand for the Eucharistic Prayer, except for the Consecration. Maintaining the "laudable" practice of kneeling throughout the Eucharistic Prayer is also appropriate. The decision is the responsibility of the Conference of Bishops.⁶⁷

- Standing during the sung acclamations allows the assembly to sing them properly and respects their intrinsic nature.

Sitting posture

69. Being seated is the posture of active attention to the word of God and the posture of reflection. The assembly sits for the first reading, the responsorial psalm,

63 *GIRM*, no. 42-44.

64 In the *Letter to Januarius*, St. Augustine states that standing is a sign of the resurrection: During this time [the 50 days of Easter]... we pray standing, which is an image of the resurrection. See *Epistula 55 ad Januarium*, 55.28. St. Basil makes a similar reference in *De Spiritu sancto*, 27.

65 In the fourth century, the Council of Nicaea decreed that on the Lord's Day and during the Easter season all should stand during prayer.

66 *GIRM*, no. 43.

67 *GIRM*, no. 43.

the second reading, the homily, during the preparation of the gifts until the incensing of the assembly (or, if incensing does not take place, until the invitation to prayer that introduces the Prayer over the Gifts), and for any prolonged period of silence that may follow the Communion of the assembly.⁶⁸

Kneeling posture

70. Kneeling is a posture of humility and repentance, reflecting God's mercy at work in the salvation of the world. The kneeling posture is especially appropriate on Good Friday and in penitential celebrations that prepare the way for the Eucharist. Its particular use for parts of the Good Friday liturgy and for the Litany of the Saints (outside the Easter season and Sundays) indicates the special character of these rites. As a sign of reverence and awe, provision is also made for the assembly to kneel for the Consecration during the Eucharistic Prayer. The liturgical norms provide, however, that for considerations of space, numbers or for "another reasonable cause," the assembly may stand instead. However, those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the Priest genuflects after the consecration.⁶⁹

Gestures

A rich array of gestures embodies the faith of the assembly.

Orans gesture

71. The posture of standing with arms extended and raised to the Lord, is the traditional way for Christians to pray. It expresses a profound openness to God and engages all the members of the assembly in the spirit and content of the prayer.

72. The Priest prays presidential prayers in this position. The open arms embrace the assembly and reach out to God. The open palms touch upon the presence of the unseen God, who is the source of all blessing and the giver of all good things. This posture indicates also an openness to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit.

Sign of the Cross

73. This dramatic gesture identifies the assembly as a baptismal people who are marked with the sign of Christ's Cross, who enter into the life of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and who embody in themselves the mystery of the Cross: Christ's victory over death and his passage to glory. It is a statement of faith that the Christian life is rooted in the Lord's Passover that is celebrated and made present in the Church's Eucharist.⁷⁰

74. The Sign of the Cross has sometimes been taken to be simply the introduction to the liturgical prayer of the Eucharist. Rather, it is a solemn liturgical action and commitment that reveals the inner truth and mystery of the assembly that is gathered for Eucharist. Thus, it is no mere introduction to prayer.

68 *GIRM*, no. 43.

69 *GIRM*, no. 43.

70 *GIRM*, no. 50.

Sign of peace

75. The *sign of peace* is the faith-filled communication of the Christ's peace among the members of the assembly.⁷¹ It is exchanged by a handshake or a bow and words of greeting such as "The Peace of Christ" or "Peace be with you."

Bowing

76. Bowing is a sign of respect for the signs of Christ's presence as manifested in the altar, the cross and the members of the assembly.⁷² The *General Instruction* defines two types of bows: a profound or body bow and a head bow.

Genuflecting

77. *Genuflecting* is the Church's acknowledgment of Christ as Lord, present in his Body and Blood.

- Three genuflections are prescribed by the *General Instruction*. The Priest genuflects during the Institution Narrative as a sign of humility, faith and devotion and before the invitation to Communion.
- Genuflection is also an appropriate gesture after Eucharist to reverence the sacramental presence of Christ in the tabernacle.
- Genuflection is also the appropriate gesture for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil

Processions

78. Processions signify the ongoing journey of God's people to the fullness of the kingdom. They also show the assembly's joy as it is gathered in the Lord and as it experiences the wonders of salvation. At times (such as Passion (Palm) Sunday or at the Easter Vigil) the entire assembly may form one great procession.⁷³

- Processions are by nature festive liturgical actions that evoke joyous songs of praise. Whenever possible, therefore, processions are accompanied by song.⁷⁴
 - The psalms and litanies are particularly well suited to accompany processions. When a cantor sings the verses and the assembly sings the refrain, the participants are freed from using hymn books and allowed either to take part directly in the procession or to follow its movement.
78. More stylized liturgical gestures may accompany processions of the Paschal feast.
- For example, on Passion (Palm) Sunday, ministers skilled in the art of movement might lead the procession with palms. Or on other days during the procession with the gifts, they might carry the bread and wine.

71 *GIRM*, no. 82.

72 *GIRM*, no. 275; Congregation for Divine Worship, *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 14 September, 1984 (hereafter, *CB*), no. 68.

73 Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Masses with Children*, 1 November 1973 (hereafter, *DMC*), no. 34.

74 *GIRM*, no. 86.

Liturgical chants and song

80. Singing is an integral part of the Church's liturgy. So closely is song joined to the Church's celebration that the Eucharist may be described as sung prayer.⁷⁵ The assembly's song is rooted in its faith in the sacred mysteries celebrated in the Church's Eucharist. The experience of communion of life in the God of salvation gives rise to songs of joy that come from the human heart.⁷⁶

- The solemn liturgy of the Church is filled with song: in its processions, its psalms and responses, its acclamations, and its communal prayers, particularly the Eucharistic Prayer.⁷⁷
- Particular attention should be given in every Eucharist to the singing of the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, and the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer, especially the Great Amen.⁷⁸

81. The assembly should always have adequate musical support, since every Eucharist should be celebrated with singing.⁷⁹ Even when musical and instrumental support are not available, the assembly should still be able to sing the acclamations and responses of the Eucharist.⁸⁰

82. Choirs can enhance the note of joy in psalms and hymns by adding harmony to certain verses or even by singing a particular verse on their own. On occasion, alternating verses between the choir and the rest of the assembly or between male and female voices may help the community recognize and own its voice in celebration.⁸¹

86. Participation in song at the beginning of the Eucharist as well as throughout sets the tone for the entire celebration. In particular, the opening hymn gathers the assembly together as the one Body of Christ, and turns its hearts and minds over to prayer.⁸²

84. Generally speaking, all the verses of a hymn are sung, since the text has usually been constructed in an integral way. This is especially true if there is Trinitarian development within the hymn, and a doxology at the end.

85. Because the Eucharistic Prayer must stand out clearly as the central prayer of the celebration, there is need for balance in the use of sung texts. Thus, while the Eucharistic acclamations should always be sung, care must be taken that singing in the other parts of the celebration, especially in the Introductory Rites, the Communion Rite and the

75 *CSL*, no. 112; *GIRM*, no. 39; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, General Introduction, 6 January 1972 (hereafter, *RCIA*), no. 33; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Rite of Funerals*, General Introduction, 15 August 1969 (hereafter, *OCF*), no. 30; Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musicam Sacram*, On Music in the Liturgy 5 March 1967 (hereafter, *MS*), nos. 5, 42.

76 St. Clement, *Ad Corinth.* 34.7 (see *Documents on the Liturgy [DOL]*, no. 4211); *DOL*, no. 4249, par. 3 (Letter); *DOL*, no. 4208, par. 3 (Address); *DOL*, no. 4251 (Letter); *OCF*, *GI*, no. 96.

77 *GIRM*, nos. 46-90.

78 *MS*, no. 33.

79 *MS*, no. 27.

80 *GIRM*, no. 62-64.

81 *DOL*, no. 4252 (Homily).

82 *GIRM*, no.47.

Concluding Rites, does not give the impression that they are more important than the Eucharistic Prayer.

A PLACE TO CELEBRATE

86. The church building is the home of the assembly, the house of the Church; it is the temple of God and the particular place of Christ's presence in the community and in the world. It should, therefore, be warm, bright, open and inviting, both inside and outside, with easy access for all.⁸³

87. The primary purpose of the church building is to house the assembly for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, although its structure must also take into account the other sacramental events to be celebrated there. The building and all its furnishings should be characterized by noble simplicity coupled with authenticity of materials and design.⁸⁴

A space to gather

88. Ideally, the church building should be designed with an area that provides for the free gathering of the family or household of God before they enter the nave. Ample in size and warm in character, it should be an inviting place for the brothers and sisters of the community of faith to meet and exchange greetings before the Eucharistic celebration begins.

- It may be said that the liturgy begins when the people of God leave their homes to go to the place of assembly, where they greet one another in an informal way. A space to gather freely greatly facilitates pastoral initiatives that encourage the community to come together as a family before the official celebration.
- The *narthex* or gathering space may also be used, as the occasion suggests, for the rite of blessing and sprinkling of holy water. This is particularly appropriate when the baptismal pool is located there.
- Because of the importance of this free gathering of God's household, communal devotions of any kind should be scheduled so that there is a distinct and appropriately lengthy interval between such devotions and the celebration of the Eucharist.

A PLACE FOR EUCHARIST

Nave

89. The *nave* or main body of the church building is designed first of all for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. Its basic shape and the arrangement of the furniture should emphasize above all the unity of the assembly and the fact that the assembly itself celebrates the Eucharist. The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the Priest, the Deacon and the other ministers exercise their

83 Sacred Congregation for Rites, Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, on carrying out the Constitution on the Liturgy, 26 Sept. 1964, (hereafter, IO), no. 90; Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship, *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, 29 May 1977 (hereafter, *RDCA*), no. 3 (Chapter II).

84 *CSL*, no. 122.

office. It should be suitably “marked off”⁸⁵ from the body of the church. At the same time, the altar, ambo, and chair, since they are focal points of the liturgical action, should be suitably located so that the assembly is seen to gather around them. This arrangement should convey a strong visual impression of the unity of the liturgical space.⁸⁶

- Attention should be paid to sight lines, so that the participants are able to see one another and recognize themselves as part of the whole, and so that there are no visible barriers to participation. In this way, the entire liturgical space may properly be called and seen as sacred space.

Acoustics

90. Good *acoustics* are a necessary condition for effective celebration. Hence, they should be given priority when all church buildings are constructed or renovated.

- The assembly must be able to hear itself speak and sing if it is to fulfill its mandate of full, conscious and active participation. Thus, special attention needs to be given to materials used in the construction and decoration of floors and walls. A lively, resonant building should be the community’s first concern.
- The church building should also be equipped with an excellent sound system designed for the particular space. It should include technical assistance for the hearing impaired.

Seating

91. *Chairs* or *pews* should be arranged so that no one is far removed from the altar and so that the people have free access and can move easily throughout the celebration.

- Liturgical space must allow members of the assembly to be as close to the altar as possible. This is of paramount importance for the assembly’s celebration of the Eucharist.

Altar

92. As a symbol of Christ, our Passover who was sacrificed for us and the Passover meal at which he instituted the Eucharist, the *altar* should, in its shape and form, be readily identifiable as the table of the paschal feast, and be of noble material and construction.⁸⁷

- The altar should be the clear and primary focus emphasizing that the Church’s central liturgical action is the celebration of the sacrificial paschal meal.
- Although the altar must be high enough for the assembly to see it easily, any steps that surround it should be built in a way that allows ministers and other members of the assembly easy access to it for communion.⁸⁸ Provision should be made for access of the disabled.

85 *GIRM*, no. 295.

86 *GIRM*, no. 294.

87 *RDCA*, Chapter II, no. 3, Chapter IV no. 9; *EM*, no. 24; *GIRM*, nos. 259, 263.

88 *IO*, no. 91.

- Since the single altar is a fundamental sign of Christ's one and unique sacrifice, and of the unity of the assembly as his one Body that gathers around it, there should be no other altar in the Eucharistic space.⁸⁹

Chair

93. The *chair* is the teaching chair of Jesus Christ and of the Apostles. It signifies the link that this assembly has, especially through its unity with its Bishop and with the whole local church, with the Church throughout the ages and throughout the world. It is the place of presidency for the Liturgy of the Word, just as the altar is the place of presidency for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.⁹⁰

94. Hence, the chair should be noble and solid in character, built in proportion to the altar and the ambo, and placed in the location from which the Bishop or Priest may most effectively preside. A seat for the Deacon is located beside it. Other participating Priests and ministers are seated nearby, but not immediately adjacent to the chair of the celebrating Priest.

Ambo

95. The *ambo* is the place from which the biblical readings, including the psalm, are proclaimed. The ambo is reserved for the proclamation of the scriptural texts and, as the occasion suggests, for the homily, the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful), and the Exultet. Because of the dignity and importance of this word, the ambo is reserved for this use alone.⁹¹

96. The ambo, like the altar and the chair, should be of noble construction and appropriate dimensions. The ambo is not a pulpit in the sense of an elevated desk used for preaching or conducting worship services, and it should not take on these characteristics. Nevertheless, its construction will allow for the homily to be given from it, if the homily does not take place at the chair.

- Only one ambo is used for the Scripture readings, since the word of God is one.
- Care should be taken to ensure adequate lighting and microphone placement at the ambo, so that the readers, cantor and Deacon can proclaim the word without difficulty.

Placement

97. If the altar, chair and ambo are to have their full visual impact on the faith community, they must be set in free, unobstructed space in the sanctuary, close to the assembly yet spatially separate.

- The altar or the ambo should not be obscured by flowers or other objects. The tabletop of the altar is covered with a white cloth,⁹² and candles preferably

⁸⁹ *RDCA*, Chapter IV, no. 7.

⁹⁰ *GIRM*, nos. 50, 71, 164, 310; *LM*, no. 26.

⁹¹ *GIRM*, nos. 61, 128, 309; *LM*, no. 32.

⁹² *GIRM*, no. 117.

placed adjacent to it,⁹³ so that nothing distracts the eye from the bread and the cup of the Eucharistic feast.

A place of reservation

98. It has long been the practice of the Church to reserve from the Eucharist in a tabernacle, the Body of the Lord, in sufficient portion for Communion for the dying, for Communion for the sick and for adoration.⁹⁴ The presence of the Eucharist in the tabernacle is shown by a veil or other suitable sign; the tabernacle is marked by a sanctuary lamp that burns constantly as a reminder of Christ's presence.⁹⁵

99. The tabernacle should be constructed in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer, yet distinct from the altar.⁹⁶ The placement of the tabernacle is determined by the judgment of the Diocesan Bishop (*GIRM*, no. 315).

- If the tabernacle is placed in the sanctuary, it must be apart from the altar of celebration. Since the altar must be so placed as to be truly the centre toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns,⁹⁷ the placement of the tabernacle and place of reservation must be carefully designed or selected.
- Ideally the tabernacle should be placed in a chapel suitable for the faithful's private adoration and prayer; nevertheless, the chapel should be organically connected to the church and readily visible to the Christian faithful. This allows the faithful to focus on the celebration of the Eucharistic action itself during Mass, and preserves a dignified place which fosters prayer and meditation outside of Mass by giving the tabernacle its own space. Here too, any particular norms of the diocesan Bishop are to be followed.

100. This chapel should normally be separate from the nave or main place of assembly. At the same time, the spatial design of the church building should show the connection between the altar-table of the Eucharist and the place of reservation.⁹⁸

- The chapel should be of noble construction, reflecting the community's faith in the real presence of Christ in the Reserved Sacrament.

101. No provision is made for the reservation of large amounts of Consecrated Bread. Reserved Elements should not be used for Communion at the celebration of the Eucharist, except in the case of unforeseen necessity. Communion for the sick is best taken directly from the Eucharistic table except on Good Friday when it can be taken to the sick at any time.⁹⁹

93 *GIRM*, no. 307.

94 Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, 21 June 1973 (hereafter, *HCWEM*), no. 5.

95 *HCWEM*, no. 11, *GIRM*, no. 316.

96 *GIRM*, no 315.

97 *GIRM*, no 299.

98 *HCWEM*, no. 9; *CB*, no. 49; *EM*, no. 53.

99 *GIRM*, no. 85.

A place for Baptism

102. Baptism is the first sacrament of the Church and, together with Confirmation, is the entrance way to the Eucharistic table, and to the fullness of membership in Christ's Body.¹⁰⁰

- The baptismal font or pool, which is often octagonal,¹⁰¹ should be impressive in size and suitable for the immersion of both adults and infants. It is best designed with flowing water.¹⁰²
- When the font or pool is located in the narthex or just inside the nave, the fundamental connection between Baptism and the Eucharist is visually maintained, and the community is reminded of its own initiation every time it gathers to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

ARTICLES USED IN CELEBRATION

103. All the articles used for the celebration of the Eucharist should be as natural and authentic as possible. For example, processional candles and candles for the paschal meal should be made of wax; a large bowl of water and a natural branch may be used for the rite of sprinkling; a burner of charcoal may be used for processions and for incensing the altar, the gifts and the assembly.¹⁰³

Bread and wine

104. In keeping with the sacramental nature of the Eucharist, the bread for the sacred meal should look like real bread. Moreover, it is to be baked in such a shape and size that it can be broken for at least part of the assembly.¹⁰⁴ The wine for the sacred meal is made from the fruit of the vine (see Lk. 22.18), that is to say, the fermented juice of grapes.¹⁰⁵ For the past thousand years, however, it has been the practice of the Latin rite to use unleavened bread only.¹⁰⁶ Either red or white wine may be used for the Eucharist; in keeping with the importance of the liturgy, it should be of good quality.

- While it must be possible to break the bread for the Priest at the Fraction Rite, an effort should be made to provide bread that can be broken for all taking part in the sacred meal.¹⁰⁷

100 Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (hereafter, *CI*), no. 3.

101 For a discussion of the shape of early baptismal fonts, see J. G. Davis, *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, (London, Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), pp. 1-42. The number eight symbolizes the Lord's Day, the day of the resurrection and the day of new creation and life.

102 *CI*, no. 22; *RCIA*, no. 206; Congregation for Divine Worship *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 15 May, 1969 (hereafter, *RBC*), nos. 2, 18; Pastoral Notes, p. 258, Appendix IV.

103 *GIRM*, nos. 328, 329, 332.

104 *GIRM*, no. 321.

105 *GIRM*, no. 322.

106 *GIRM*, no. 320.

107 *GIRM*, no. 321.

105. Enough bread is to be brought forward for the assembly's Communion, since, except in cases of true unforeseen necessity, everyone is to share in Communion from bread consecrated at that Eucharist.¹⁰⁸ In this way, the connection between participation in the Eucharistic meal and in the Eucharistic sacrifice itself is signified and respected.

Paten for the bread

106. The shape of the *paten* for the bread should identify it as such and be large enough to hold the amount of bread needed for the Sunday Eucharist.

- Auxiliary patens may be needed at the breaking of the bread. They should be of worthy construction, preferably of precious metal, suitable for liturgical use and clearly distinguishable from vessels intended for everyday use.¹⁰⁹

The chalice

107. Among the many articles used in the celebration, the *chalice* holds pride of place. The chalice should be a truly noble cup, crafted from worthy materials. It should be relatively large, since it is the common cup of the assembly's Communion. For hygienic reasons, at least the inside and lip of the cup should be made of high-density, non-porous material, preferably precious metal. Before the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the chalice may be covered on the credence table.¹¹⁰

- As a sign of unity, of our communion in the one Body and Blood of Christ, one large chalice serves the liturgical action best. However large assemblies may require auxiliary chalices for Holy Communion. These, too, should be worthy of their use in the paschal meal and should meet the necessary hygienic requirements of the assembly. These and their purificators remain on the side table until the preparation of gifts.
- If many chalices are needed, some may be filled with wine before the celebration. In this case, the main chalice is filled with wine (and water) by the Priest or Deacon at the preparation of the gifts.
- To preserve the symbolism of the one cup, one chalice may be of a larger size than the others. In addition, if the size of the altar permits, the auxiliary chalices may be placed to one or both sides of the altar.
- The pall serves as a practical cover for the chalice when it is necessary to shield its contents. Using the pall depends strictly on need.

Processional cross

108. The *processional cross* should have a size and stature that matches the dimensions of the assembly space. It must have the image of Christ crucified on it.¹¹¹ It may be designed as a glorious cross with embedded jewels or stones, reflecting the paschal glory of the Lord that is celebrated in the feast.

¹⁰⁸ *GIRM*, no. 85.

¹⁰⁹ *GIRM*, nos. 331-332.

¹¹⁰ *GIRM*, nos. 118, 330.

¹¹¹ *GIRM*, no. 308.

- In the eucharistic celebration, the cross is directly related to the table of the paschal meal. Hence, at the end of the opening procession, the cross should be placed near the table.¹¹²
- Only one cross is used for the celebration of the Eucharist. When a processional cross is used, no other crosses should be in the celebration space.¹¹³

Liturgical books

109. The size and noble binding of all liturgical books reflect the community's faith in the importance of the worship of God. No books of lesser dignity should be used in their place. All books of the liturgy should be carefully maintained.¹¹⁴

110. The *Book of Gospels* has always been given particular prominence and respect within the community of faith. It may appropriately be bound in a cover of bronze or other metal.¹¹⁵

- The *Book of Gospels* is carried in the entrance procession by the Deacon, or in his absence, a lector; otherwise, it is placed on the altar, closed and flat, before the celebration begins.¹¹⁶

111. The *Lectionary* is the celebration book that contains the readings for the Liturgy of the Word. It is placed on the ambo in preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist.¹¹⁷

112. The *Missal* contains the ritual prayers that are prayed by the presiding Bishop or Priest during the celebration. It is placed near the presidential chair or on the credence table before the celebration, and is held by a server for the Priest. It is only placed on the altar at the preparation of the gifts, and is removed after Communion.¹¹⁸

113. The *Catholic Book of Worship* is the official service book for the Church in Canada. It contains service music, canticles, and hymns.

Vestments

114. *Vestments* also play an important part in the Church's Eucharist. The *alb* is the white baptismal robe that reflects the dignity of the entire people of God.¹¹⁹ It is worn by the Priest and Deacon and may be worn by other ministers. The *stole* is the traditional mark of the Bishop, Priest and Deacon, who exercise their ordained ministries in the name of Christ.¹²⁰ The *chasuble* is the eucharistic vestment par excellence. Worn by the Priest, it displays the festive nature of the celebration. It symbolizes the all embracing

112 *GIRM*, nos. 117, 297, 308.

113 *GIRM*, no. 122.

114 *LM*, nos. 35, 37.

115 *LM*, no. 36.

116 *GIRM*, no. 117.

117 *GIRM*, no. 118b.

118 *GIRM*, nos. 118a, 306.

119 *GIRM*, no. 336.

120 *GIRM*, nos. 337, 338, 340. See also *Rite of Confirmation* (CCCB: 1973), Pastoral Notes, p. 105.

love of Christ which surrounds and protects those assembled.¹²¹ The vestment proper to the Deacon is the dalmatic, worn over the stole.¹²²

Incense

115. *Incense* is used as an expression of honour and reverence towards the symbols of Christ's presence in the liturgy. It also expresses the prayers of the people, rising up to God. It is particularly appropriate at the different moments of the celebration: to accompany the procession, reverence the cross, the altar, and the *Book of Gospels* at the beginning of the celebration. It may enhance the gospel procession and may be used at the preparation of the gifts to acknowledge and honour the presence of Christ in the sacred action. When incense is used at the preparation of the gifts, the presiding celebrant and the assembly should be incensed since they are modes of the presence of Christ.¹²³

¹²¹ *GIRM*, no. 337.

¹²² *GIRM*, no. 338.

¹²³ *GIRM*, nos. 120, 123, 134, 144.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

116. As members of the assembly arrive at the Church, they are greeted by ministers of hospitality and may be greeted by the Priest who will preside at the Eucharist.

117. The Eucharist begins with a series of introductory rites—the Entrance Chant and procession, the Sign of the Cross, the Greeting, Penitential Act, *Kyrie, Gloria*, and the Collect—that unite the assembly, draw it into celebration, and prepare it for the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Although by nature brief, their purpose is to establish a momentum and tone that will mark the entire liturgical action. Therefore, they should be lively and to the point.¹²⁴

- Since the Introductory Rites are preparatory, the parts of this rite to be sung should be carefully chosen so as not to prolong the rite unduly, overload it musically by singing all the parts of the Introductory Rites, or give these rites an undue emphasis over and above the Liturgies of the Word and Eucharist.¹²⁵

118. Within the Introductory Rites, the Missal offers a variety of options: three forms of the Greeting, and three forms of the Penitential Act or the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water. Familiarity with these options will allow for the most effective selection of rites according to the character (for example, seasonal or ritual) of the celebration and the needs of the assembly.

- Any remarks that the Priest makes during the Introductory Rites should be succinct and well-prepared so that this part of the liturgy does not become verbose or too long.
- Because the Introductory Rites prepare the assembly for the entire celebration, introductory comments should not be related exclusively to the Liturgy of the Word and its readings. Ideally, they should draw their inspiration from the scriptural text of the Entrance Chant for the day.

119. Particular celebrations, such as the reception of catechumens, Passion Sunday, and baptismal, marriage and funeral liturgies, provide their own opening rites. On these occasions, when they are permitted by the rubrics, the usual Introductory Rites are replaced by what is indicated in the ritual.¹²⁶

THE ENTRANCE

120. Even before the celebration begins, the pilgrim nature of the people of God is evident as families and individuals leave their homes, make their way to the church building and gather freely with one another. The liturgical opening procession embodies this journey of the Church in the entrance procession.

121. The entrance procession also reveals the paschal nature of the Church: the community that has heard God's call in the good news of Jesus Christ, has responded in faith, and now journeys with the risen Christ to the Kingdom of God. The procession

124 *GIRM*, nos. 24, 46.

125 *GIRM*, no. 40; See also *A Companion to the Catholic Book of Worship: Guidelines for Liturgical Music*, CCCB, 2006, nos. 21, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42.

126 *GIRM*, no. 46.

embodies this New Testament exodus of God's people in the assembly's passage into the special presence of Christ and the Kingdom displayed in Eucharist.¹²⁷

122. In the opening procession, the liturgical focus is the procession itself. The entrance procession is not a time to greet the Priest or mark his arrival with other ministers. Such a presentation obscures the procession's rich and fundamental meaning. The presence of other ministers in the procession witnesses to the wider dimensions of the gathering and provides a more complete picture of the particular assembly that celebrates this ritual action.

123. The strength of the procession as a ritual action lies in part in the quality of its symbols. Smoking incense, the processional cross and candles, and the *Book of Gospels* (carried for everyone to see), while not always necessary to the procession, powerfully evoke images of a festal celebration of the Kingdom.

- When the community has gathered apart from the main body of the church, the entire assembly participates in this procession.
- When the community has already gathered in the main body of the church, the procession should still include a significant number of persons.
- It is sometimes appropriate (e.g. Palm Sunday) for the assembly to follow the course of the procession as it moves towards the altar.

124. The order of participation in the procession is as follows:¹²⁸

- a minister carrying a thurible with smoking incense;
 - ministers carrying the processional cross and two candles;
 - other liturgical ministers who may be part of the procession;
 - the Deacon, carrying the *Book of Gospels*;¹²⁹
 - concelebrants;¹³⁰
 - the celebrating Priest.
- If a Deacon is not present, a reader may carry the *Book of Gospels*.¹³¹
 - Even if the *Book of Gospels* is not used, the *Lectionary* is not carried in the procession¹³² but is placed on the ambo beforehand.¹³³

ENTRANCE CHANT

125. During the procession, the assembly sings an opening song. The music chosen should engage the whole assembly. The song should envelop the entire procession and should not end until after the Priest has taken his place at the chair.¹³⁴

127 *GIRM*, no. 42.

128 *GIRM*, no. 120.

129 *GIRM*, nos. 120, 171f, 172; *IL*, no.17; and *CB*, no. 128.

130 *GIRM*, no. 210.

131 *GIRM*, nos. 120d, 194 and *IL*, no. 17.

132 *GIRM*, no. 120d.

133 See Pastoral Notes on the Use of the *Book of Gospels*, *National Bulletin on Liturgy* 137 (Summer 1994), pp. 115-125, nos. 6, 12, 48.

134 *GIRM*, nos. 47-48, 50, see also nos. 39-40; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Ordo Cantus Missae*, Introduction, 24 June 1972 (hereafter, *OCM*), no. 1.

- The long history of liturgical celebration has shown that the psalter is an excellent source for this music.¹³⁵The Missal provides an antiphon (refrain) for each day, intended to be sung together with an accompanying psalm. It may be replaced, as required, by another suitable antiphon or song appropriate to the liturgy of the day.¹³⁶
- If, for some reason, there is no singing during the procession, the antiphon provided in the Missal may be recited or its sentiments may be incorporated into the Priest's opening comments following the greeting.¹³⁷

126. A hymn suited to the liturgy of the day may also be chosen. Most useful and suitable will be:

- those composed with a refrain;
- general or seasonal songs of praise, or songs that capture the spirit of the journey;
- hymns that the assembly knows well and can sing easily.

REVERENCING THE ALTAR

127. When those taking part in the procession arrive at the altar, they reverence it with a profound bow.¹³⁸

- When the tabernacle with the Reserved Sacrament is located in the sanctuary, the ministers genuflect when they approach the altar.¹³⁹
- Those who are carrying liturgical objects (incense burner, cross, candles, *Book of Gospels*) do not make a profound bow, but only a bow of the head.¹⁴⁰

128. While the ministers and others go to their places, the Priest and Deacon approach the altar. The Deacon places the *Book of Gospels* on the altar, then the Priest and Deacon greet the altar with a kiss.

- A reader who is carrying the *Book of Gospels* places it on the altar and then goes to an appropriate place.¹⁴¹

129. As a sign of respect, the Priest may incense the cross and the entire altar.¹⁴²

130. The Priest, accompanied by the Deacon, then goes to the chair.¹⁴³

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

131. Following the entrance procession and song, the Priest and the entire assembly sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross.¹⁴⁴

135 *GIRM*, no. 48.

136 Congregation of Rites, *The Simple Gradual*, Introduction, 3 September 1967 (hereafter *SG*), nos. 9, 15.

137 *GIRM*, no. 48; *OCM*, no. 1.

138 A profound bow is an inclination of the body; see *GIRM*, nos. 49, 275.

139 *GIRM* no. 274.

140 *GIRM*, nos. 173, 275.

141 *GIRM*, nos. 122, 195.

142 *GIRM*, no. 123.

143 *GIRM*, nos. 50, 124.

144 *GIRM*, nos. 50, 124.

GREETING

132. The Priest and the assembly then exchange the traditional greeting of the Christian community: “*The Lord be with you.*” “*And with your spirit.*”

- The purpose of the greeting is to elevate our minds and hearts to God, facilitate a dialogue of love, and celebrate the mystery of God’s action.¹⁴⁵
- This genuinely Christian greeting is never replaced by or supplemented with common, non-liturgical greetings. To follow or precede “*The Lord be with you*” with, for example, “Good morning,” diminishes the importance and significance of the liturgical greeting, makes it redundant, and draws the people’s attention away from God’s action and presence among the people.
- The greeting should not be confused with a gesture of welcoming the assembly or of thanking people for coming to pray. The church building is the home of the assembly; the community has gathered in its own faithful response to the call of God.

133. After the liturgical greeting, visitors, guests and particular groups (such as the catechumens, the elect, or large groups of children) may be acknowledged briefly on behalf of the community when this seems appropriate.¹⁴⁶

PENITENTIAL ACT

134. The Penitential Act follows the Greeting; the choice of this text should be based on the liturgical season, the feast, the particular occasion (such as the celebration of a Ritual Mass), or the assembly’s special circumstances.

135. Each form of the Penitential Act begins with an invitation by the Priest. On occasion, this invitation may appropriately be incorporated into the introductory comments that may follow the greeting.

- A brief pause for silence is observed after the Priest’s introduction in all forms of the Act.¹⁴⁷

Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

136. The blessing and sprinkling with water reminds the assembly of Baptism: the gateway to the Eucharistic celebration, the first sacrament of the covenant, and the introduction to Easter joy.

- This rite is appropriate for Sundays, particularly during Easter Time.¹⁴⁸

137. In large assemblies, the Priest may move through the assembly for the sprinkling, during which an appropriate song is sung.

- The sprinkled water should touch as many members of the assembly as possible. To do this, the Priest should move throughout the assembly using a generous amount of blessed water.

¹⁴⁵ *GIRM*, no. 50.

¹⁴⁶ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory of Masses with Children*, Pueros baptizatos, 1 November 1973 (hereafter *DMC*), no. 17.

¹⁴⁷ *GIRM*, no. 51, see also no. 45.

¹⁴⁸ *GIRM*, no. 51.

138. If the community has gathered in the narthex before the celebration, the Greeting and the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water could take place there, followed by the Entrance Procession and Collect.

139. If the baptismal font is at the entrance, and the liturgical space allows the assembly to face the entrance and see the Priest readily, the Greeting and the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water could take place at the baptismal font.

Forms of the Penitential Act

140. The “I Confess” or *Confiteor*: This form prepares the assembly for celebration by way of a common confession of sin and a general prayer of absolution. This form was originally a private preparation of the Priest for the Eucharist. Today it expresses the common condition of all human beings before God, and contains a communal acknowledgement of our sinfulness before God, the Church and one another.

- This form is especially appropriate during Lent.
- The *Kyrie* follows the absolution prayer.

141. The second form consists of verses from Psalm 51, a penitential psalm, and absolution prayer.

- Since “Lord, have mercy” no longer is part of this formula, the *Kyrie* follows the absolution.

142. The third form, similar to a litany, consists of three invocations or acclamations which acknowledge the power of the risen Lord, whose grace alone allows the assembly to stand in the merciful presence of God.

- This form is suitable for all celebrations, especially the Sundays of Advent and Ordinary Time.
- The Missal provides models for the invocations. Other suitable forms (tropes) may be composed along the same line.
- The litany engages the Priest and the assembly in a dialogue. The Deacon may announce the invocations and the assembly responds.
- The litany may be sung, in which case the Deacon or a cantor announces the invocations.

The Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy)

143. The Kyrie (*Lord, have mercy*) is an ancient chant by which the assembly acclaim the Lord and gives witness to his loving kindness. The Roman Church adopted it from the Eastern liturgies, where it formed the response to various litanies of intercession. In keeping with the longstanding tradition of the church, and as a sign of unity with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, it is preferable to maintain it in its original Greek.

- The Kyrie (*Lord, have mercy*) is normally meant to be sung. Its use is especially appropriate for the season of Lent. Discretion should be used regarding the singing of the Kyrie (*Lord, have mercy*) when the *Glory to God* will be sung in

case this overloads the Introductory Rites with music, prolongs the Mass, or gives these rites undue emphasis.¹⁴⁹

- The assembly repeats the invocation announced by the cantor or choir.¹⁵⁰

Gloria (Glory to God)

144. The *Glory to God* is one of the Church's most ancient hymns of joy. In the West it was originally used only in the most solemn Eucharistic celebrations.¹⁵¹

145 It is sung during the seasons of Easter, Christmas and the Sundays of Ordinary Time and on Solemnities and Feasts. It may not be replaced by another chant or text. It also may be sung on special occasions of a more solemn character. It is not sung during the Advent and Lenten seasons.¹⁵²

- The *Glory to God* is by nature a hymn and is normally sung. The assembly either sings the entire hymn, alternates with the choir or repeats a refrain announced by the cantor or choir.¹⁵³

OTHER RITES

146. Particular celebrations, such as the Reception of Catechumens, Passion (Palm) Sunday, and baptismal, marriage or funeral liturgies, provide their own opening rites. On these occasions, the usual Introductory Rites are replaced by what is indicated in the ritual.¹⁵⁴

The Collect (Opening Prayer)

147. The Collect,¹⁵⁵ which is presidential in character, concludes the Introductory Rites. It is the primary element in these rites, and one of the oldest.

148. Each Sunday is provided with a Collect Prayer, translated from the Latin text. The Prayer sums up or "collects" the prayers of the members of the assembly which, it would seem, were at one time prayed aloud. For this reason, this prayer is called the *collect*.

- The prayer always ends with the full Trinitarian conclusion.
- The Collect should not be overshadowed by sung parts, such as the *Kyrie* and *Glory to God*, and should be prayed with energy and power.

149. After the invitation, *Let us pray*, the assembly spends some time in silent prayer, allowing the Spirit to work with power in its midst.

- Sufficient time should be given for genuine prayer to take place.¹⁵⁶

149 See *A Companion to the Catholic Book of Worship: Guidelines for Liturgical Music*, CCCB, 2006, nos. 21, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42.

150 *GIRM*, no. 52.

151 *GIRM*, no. 53.

152 *GIRM*, no. 53.

153 *GIRM*, no. 53.

154 *GIRM*, no. 46.

155 *GIRM*, nos. 54, 127.

156 *GIRM*, nos. 54, 127, see also no. 45.

150. Then the Priest prays this prayer with hands and arms extended in the *orans* position.

151. A distinct pause before the Liturgy of the Word begins may indicate the transition from the Introductory Rites to the first major section of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and may help to clarify the progress of the celebration.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

152. The Liturgy of the Word takes up anew the enduring dialogue between God and creation. In the Liturgy of the Word, God, through his Son, Jesus, speaks directly to the assembly by means of the voice and the faith of the reader, inviting it to share the good news of Jesus' passage to the life of the heavenly Kingdom. This call and invitation are the foundation of the Church's joy.¹⁵⁷ Recalling God's mighty deeds throughout salvation history, the Liturgy of the Word is intended to dispose the hearts and minds of the assembly for the great salvific act of Christ that is celebrated and made present in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

- As a dialogue, God speaks to the assembly through his Word and his Son. In response to God's Word to it, and disposed by the Holy Spirit, the assembly listens in silence before it responds to God through the psalm, acclamations and prayers of the Liturgy of the Word.
- The Liturgy of the Word must promote reflection on God's Word, therefore, any haste that hinders recollection must be avoided.¹⁵⁸

153. The readers, cantor, Deacon and Priest announce the word on behalf of God the Father and the risen Lord. They are his agents within the living and historic discourse of the Eucharistic celebration. In the Gospel, Jesus brings the good news to the world today. In the homily, the Priest, handing down in apostolic witness the Gospel that he himself has received, reveals the good news as fulfilled in the very midst of the assembly, even as it listens. Thus, the Liturgy of the Word is God's living call, given in Jesus Christ, engaging the assembly and by the Spirit's power evoking its response within the Eucharist today.¹⁵⁹

154. In the Liturgy of the Word the assembly celebrates God's message of salvation: it announces it, proclaims it, heralds it, reflects on it, savours it, makes it known, and brings it forth in joy. Like the entire Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Word bears the marks of genuine celebration.¹⁶⁰

155. The assembly celebrates the word in many ways: through proclamation, acclamation and song; through silence and meditation, through posture, gestures and reverences of various kinds; through processions with the *Book of Gospels*, smoking incense and candles; and by receiving the word anew in faith and joy. The readers, cantor and other ministers, together with the Deacon and Priest, all contribute, through the variety of their gifts and offices, to the celebration and enable the assembly to encounter the presence of the living God.

- The Lectionary of the *Roman Missal* provides the Order of Readings for Mass. "The present Order of Readings for Mass ... is an arrangement of biblical readings that provides the faithful with a knowledge of the whole of God's word in a pattern suited to the purpose ... [T]he choice and sequence of readings

157 *LM*, no. 6; *GIRM*, no. 29, 55.

158 *GIRM*, nos. 55-56.

159 *LM*, nos. 38-43.

160 *LM*, nos. 44-48.

are aimed at giving the faithful an ever-deepening perception of the faith they profess and of the history of salvation.”¹⁶¹

- Because of the importance of the inspired Word of God, no other readings, even of a religious nature, may replace or be added to the lectionary texts.¹⁶²

156. The Lectionary contains the psalter for the Sunday Eucharist; musical versions of the psalms and acclamations in the Lectionary may be found in a variety of sources. In addition to the refrains for each Sunday, the Lectionary includes seasonal psalms and refrains that may replace the texts assigned to a given Sunday. These psalms and refrains provide for fuller participation when the assembly has difficulty singing refrains that change from one celebration to the next or when no cantor is available.¹⁶³

157. Very occasionally, a brief introduction to the Liturgy of the Word may be given by the Priest.¹⁶⁴ Such an introduction should situate the context of the reading or highlight the significance and importance of the proclamation of God’s salvation. This is not, however, the place for a homily or for exegesis or catechesis.

158. The reader, as an agent of God, delivers the reading as the living Word of God addressed to the assembly today. This Word is an embodied Word that comes alive and is made concrete in the reader’s proclamation. Hence, it is the reader’s ministry to lift the great story of God’s salvation from the printed page and to announce it as the Word he or she has accepted in faith and as the assembly’s own story—a living Word that engages the assembly again today.

159. Readers and the psalmist (cantor) are ministers of the Word. The cantor unfolds the Word of God in song, making its inner meaning and depth intelligible to the assembly by allowing them to meditate on it. A clear voice is one of the cantor’s special gifts, for the Word must be heard and understood by all.

160. Led by the celebrating Priest, the assembly listens to the proclaimed Word, hearing it as its own story of salvation and receiving it anew by responding with faith and joy. Receiving the proclaimed Word is an essential element of full, conscious and active participation in the Church’s Eucharist.

161. The Liturgy of the Word is a living engagement with the God of salvation and not simply a shared reading session.

- Different readers should proclaim the different readings, since each reading requires its own kind of preparation and presentation. The change in voice and style brought by separate lectors better maintains the assembly’s attention.¹⁶⁵
- To help readers proclaim well, the Scripture texts in the Lectionary are printed in sense lines and divided into appropriate sections.
- Missalettes or other materials containing the printed text have no place within the celebration. Only people who have trouble hearing or understanding the lector should use missalettes.

161 *LM*, no. 60.

162 *LM*, no. 12; *GIRM*, no. 57; *RS*, nos. 61-62.

163 *GIRM*, nos. 61, 129.

164 *GIRM*, no. 128.

165 *GIRM*, no. 109.

162. Silence and reflection are important elements in the Liturgy of the Word. After the first and second reading, and the homily, silence allows the assembly to grasp the sense of what was proclaimed and internalize it so as to better respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁶

FIRST READING

163. For the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, “[The first] readings have been chosen to correspond to the gospel passages ... above all to bring out the unity between the Old and New Testament.”¹⁶⁷ On weekdays, “select passages that ... bring out the character of the individual books are used.”¹⁶⁸

- When the assembly is settled and ready, the first reader approaches the ambo to proclaim the first reading.¹⁶⁹
- The reader does not bow to the Priest either before or after proclaiming the reading. However, if the reader crosses in front of the altar, he or she is to bow to the altar, the symbol of Christ.
- With eye contact, the reader invites the assembly to listen, then introduces the reading using the formulary given in the Lectionary and proclaims the reading.
- The reader does not read aloud chapter and verses nor the brief summary given in fine print at the top of the text. This is only a guide for the readers themselves.
- The introduction provided in the Lectionary is sufficient. Amplifications, such as “*The First Reading is a reading from...*” do not serve the liturgy well.

164. The closing dialogue, “*The Word of the Lord.*” “*Thanks be to God.*” has the form of a double acclamation and should be rendered as such. This acclamation refers not to the written text but to the live proclamation. It may be sung.

- At the end of the reading, the reader pauses and then engages the assembly in this closing acclamation.
- The reader does not lift the Lectionary at this time.
- The reader may be instructed to place the Lectionary on the ambo shelf or to carry it to some appropriate place after the first reading to allow the cantor space for the book containing the responsorial psalm.
- Hymnals or books containing the text and music for the psalm are not placed on the Lectionary.

165. A period of silence follows the reading. This silence is an obligatory part of the celebration that allows the assembly to receive this Word in the heart. It should be long enough to allow for genuine reflection yet not so long as to destroy the natural flow of the liturgy.¹⁷⁰

- The reader remains at the ambo for this period of reflection.

166 *LM*, no. 28; *GIRM*, nos. 45, 55-56, 128.

167 *LM*, no. 106.

168 *LM*, no. 110.

169 *GIRM*, no. 128.

170 *LM*, no. 28; *GIRM*, nos. 45, 56.

- Everyone takes part in this reflection. The cantor, for example, does not use this time to prepare for the psalm or to approach the ambo, yet is prepared to proceed without needless delay.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

166. The responsorial psalm is more than a response to the first reading: it is a sung proclamation of God’s Word and fosters meditation on what the assembly has heard.¹⁷¹ As the name implies, the psalm is sung in responsorial style: the cantor sings the verses of the psalm and the assembly repeats the refrain. This continues the dialogue between God and the people begun in the first reading.¹⁷²

167. The psalm is a song; every effort should be made to ensure that it is sung.¹⁷³ It may be sung in one of two ways, either responsorially or directly. Singing the psalm responsorially is the preferred method. In this case the refrain should be selected so that it can be sung easily by the entire assembly. When sung directly, the refrain of the psalm is omitted and the cantor sings the entire psalm as a unit.¹⁷⁴

- Singing the appointed psalm and refrain for the day is preferred.
- A seasonal psalm may be sung instead of the appointed psalm for a particular Sunday and may be used for a number of Sundays. Another option is that a common or seasonal refrain may be chosen from the Lectionary or hymnal and sung with the psalm of the day. The common refrain or the seasonal psalm should be selected so that it is an appropriate response to the first reading and is consistent with the thought of the reading.¹⁷⁵
- The Lectionary offers a selection of seasonal refrains and common refrains.
- Fidelity to the scriptural text requires that the psalm be proclaimed, not in a modified version, but as it has been handed down.
- It is the cantor’s special gift to interpret the psalm and capture the many nuances of the text.
- After the period of silence, the cantor approaches the ambo to lead the psalm.
- Cantors may hold their book or place it beside the Lectionary on the ambo.

168. The cantor first sings the refrain; the assembly repeats it. The cantor then sings the first verse of the psalm; the assembly responds with the refrain. This pattern continues throughout the psalm.¹⁷⁶

- When the cantor is not available to sing the verses, the assembly should still sing the refrain.
- The psalm is never introduced with the phrase “*The response to the psalm is...*” or any other introductory words.

¹⁷¹ *GIRM*, no. 61.

¹⁷² *LM*, no. 20.

¹⁷³ *LM*, no. 20; *GIRM*, no. 61.

¹⁷⁴ *LM*, no. 20; *GIRM*, no. 61.

¹⁷⁵ *GIRM*, no. 61.

¹⁷⁶ *GIRM*, no. 61.

- The cantor must sing the refrain clearly since the whole community will repeat it.
- If there is no leader of song, the cantor may lead the assembly into the refrain by a gesture of the hand.
- The choir may enhance the refrain by adding parts to the principal melodic line once the congregation is secure with the melody.
- When there is no cantor, another minister (preferably one not assigned to proclaim one of the readings of the day) reads the verses of the psalm in a manner that captures their spirit.
- The assembly recites the refrain only as a last resort.
- After singing the psalm, the cantor then returns to their place.

SECOND READING

169. After the responsorial psalm has been sung, the second reader approaches the ambo to proclaim the second reading.¹⁷⁷

- The second reading should always be read by a second reader.
- The same procedure is followed as for the first reading.
- If the *Book of Gospels* will be used for the Gospel proclamation, the reader removes the Lectionary at the end of the reading and puts it in a place where its importance and dignity will be respected.

GOSPEL

170. “The reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word.”¹⁷⁸ The gospel proclamation includes an acclamation and a festive procession. The procession and its accompanying chant allow the assembly to show its reverence for the *Book of Gospels*, which represents Christ, and to greet the Gospel proclamation with joy.

- The traditional posture for the proclamation of the Gospel is standing, showing the assembly’s commitment to the good news and its conviction that, through shared life in Christ, it is itself the living Gospel of the Kingdom of God.
- The triple sign of the cross indicates the intimate union of Christ and the Church. The assembly celebrates the Gospel with a mind that is open to the Word of Christ, with a mouth that confesses that Jesus is Lord, and with a heart that cherishes the good news of salvation.

171. A Deacon or Priest other than the presiding Priest proclaims the Gospel, since, like the proclamation of the readings, it is a ministerial rather than a presidential function. The presiding Priest should first hear the Gospel before delivering the homily.¹⁷⁹

- The presiding Priest proclaims the Gospel only in the absence of the Deacon or a participating Priest.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ *GIRM*, no. 130.

¹⁷⁸ *LM*, no. 13; *GIRM*, no. 60.

¹⁷⁹ *LM*, no. 38; *GIRM*, no. 59.

¹⁸⁰ *GIRM*, no. 59.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

172. The *Alleluia* (or, in Lent, the Lenten version of the Gospel acclamation) that accompanies the Gospel procession is a jubilant shout of praise to the God of salvation. (*Alleluia* is taken from *hallel* and *Yah* [or YHWH] and means “Praise God!”). By this acclamation, the assembly expresses its joy at the presence of Christ experienced in the proclamation of the good news as well as its faith in the Gospel by which it lives.¹⁸¹

173. The Gospel acclamation is a sung text, and every effort should be made to ensure that it is sung in every Eucharistic celebration. The assembly should be able to sing the Gospel acclamation even without instrumental accompaniment.

- The *Alleluia* may be sung on its own even if, for some reason, the intervening verse cannot be sung.
- If the *Alleluia* cannot be sung, the verse is also omitted.¹⁸²

174. During the procession, the assembly stands and sings the *Alleluia* or the Lenten Gospel acclamation.

175. The cantor sings the acclamation; the assembly repeats it.

- The cantor sings the intervening verse and the assembly repeats the acclamation.
- Further verses may be added and the *Alleluia* (or Lenten equivalent) repeated as required so that the chant continues until the procession arrives at the ambo.
- The choir may enhance the acclamation by adding parts to the principal melodic line.
- The cantor does not lead the Gospel acclamation from the ambo but from another place. If this is not possible, the cantor leaves the ambo after singing the verse of the acclamation so as not to hinder the procession to the ambo by the Deacon and ministers.

GOSPEL PROCESSION

176. When the period of silence that follows the second reading is over, the Priest at the chair adds incense to the thurible.¹⁸³ Then the Deacon comes in front of the Priest and asks for a blessing and goes to the altar, where the procession forms. The Deacon takes up the *Book of Gospels*. The incense bearer and candle bearers lead the procession.

- Depending on the arrangement of liturgical space and the size of the assembly, the procession may move around the altar or through the assembly before arriving at the ambo.
- Arriving at the ambo, the candle bearers stand on either side of it, facing the *Book of Gospels*.
- If incense is not to be used for the procession, then, following the period of silence after the second reading, the Deacon comes in front of the Priest and asks for a blessing and goes to the altar, where the procession forms.

¹⁸¹ *LM*, no. 23; *GIRM*, no. 62.

¹⁸² *LM*, no. 23; *GIRM*, no. 63c.

¹⁸³ *GIRM*, nos. 132, 175.

- When the *Book of Gospels* is not used, the Deacon asks for the blessing in a low voice and goes directly to the ambo along with the incense bearer and candle bearers and proclaims the Gospel from the Lectionary.

177. Where there is no Deacon, a participating Priest takes on the function of reading the Gospel and follows the procedures described above.¹⁸⁴

- A concelebrating Priest only asks for the blessing when a Bishop is presiding, otherwise he says the prayer quietly in front of the altar, picks up the *Book of Gospels* and goes to the ambo along with the incense bearer and candle bearers.¹⁸⁵

178. If the celebrating Priest proclaims the Gospel, he first goes to the centre of the altar, bows and quietly says the prayer “Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I might worthily proclaim your Gospel.” He then picks up the *Book of Gospels* and carries it in procession to the place of proclamation.

- If the *Book of Gospels* is not used, the Priest first says the prayer quietly, bowing in front of the altar, and then goes directly to the ambo.¹⁸⁶

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

179. The assembly stands and faces the Deacon (Priest) for the Gospel proclamation.

180. The Deacon (Priest) greets the assembly in the traditional manner. He announces the Gospel passage and makes a sign of the cross first on the book and then on his forehead, lips and breast.

The assembly makes a similar gesture and responds with the acclamation “*Glory to you, Lord.*”

- The greeting, announcement and acclamation may be sung.
- If incense is used, the Deacon incenses the book and then proclaims the Gospel.
- The Deacon (Priest) proclaiming the Gospel does not extend his hands when he says *The Lord be with you*, since another gesture, the triple sign of the cross, is immediately made at the announcement of the Gospel passage.¹⁸⁷

181. He then proclaims the Gospel, which may be sung.

182. At the end of the proclamation, the Deacon (Priest) pauses and then introduces the acclamation: “*The Gospel of the Lord.*” The assembly responds: “*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*”

- This acclamation may also be sung.

183. The Deacon (Priest) then kisses the *Book of Gospels* as a sign of love and respect and of dedication to the good news of Jesus Christ. He prays quietly, “Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.”

- The *Book of Gospels* is left open on the ambo.

¹⁸⁴ *IO*, no. 49; *GIRM*, nos. 60, 212. A concelebrating Priest or another Priest participating in the celebration may take on the functions of a Deacon.

¹⁸⁵ *GIRM*, no. 212.

¹⁸⁶ *GIRM*, no. 132.

¹⁸⁷ *GIRM*, no. 134.

- If a Bishop is presiding, the Deacon brings the *Book of Gospels* to the Bishop so that he too may venerate it with a kiss.¹⁸⁸

HOMILY

184. The homily is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word. “In the Eucharistic celebration the homily points to the presence of God in people’s lives, and then leads a congregation into the Eucharist, providing ... the motive for celebrating the Eucharist in this time and place.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, the homily and the Eucharistic action are intimately linked: the homily calls us to respond with thanksgiving.¹⁹⁰

185. The homily properly pertains not only to the sacrament of Orders but in a particular way to the Priest who presides: the readers proclaim the readings, the Deacon proclaims the Gospel, and the Priest announces the good news as fulfilled in the assembly today. Therefore the homily is the role of the presiding Priest.¹⁹¹

- If the presiding Priest assigns the task of the homily to a Deacon or another Priest, that person is to take part in the whole celebration.

186. The homily proclaims that the saving deeds of God just announced in the Gospel are still happening today in the community. As the assembly hears this living Gospel proclaimed, it discovers new reasons for thanksgiving, new depths of wonder and awe at the mighty works of God. When the assembly is invited in the Eucharist to give thanks to God, it will truly be able to reply: *It is right and just*. At the same time, the homily forms the community for mission.

- Preparation sessions with members of the parish community may enrich the homily. The collective experience and wisdom of the Church—men and women, young and old alike—is thus brought to the living proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

187. The homily is never omitted on Sundays and holy days of obligation.¹⁹² It is also recommended that a homily be given at all celebrations of the Eucharist, regardless of their size or scope even if the homily is a brief one.

- Presentations of some other kind unrelated to the proclaimed word are never to replace the homily.

188. The presiding Priest delivers the homily at the chair, the place of the presidency during the Liturgy of the Word, or at the ambo.¹⁹³

- If the Priest has difficulty speaking the language of the people, he may ask a participating Priest or the Deacon to give the homily or he may ask another person to translate his homily for the assembly.
- The homily is neither introduced nor concluded by the Sign of the Cross.

188 *CB*, no. 141; *GIRM*, no. 175.

189 *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, The Homily in the Sunday Assembly, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) © 1982, no. 60.

190 *EP*, no. 15; *LM*, no. 24.

191 *GIRM*, no. 66.

192 *GIRM*, no. 66; *RS*, no. 74.

193 *GIRM*, no. 136.

- No devotional prayers are prayed at the end of the homily.

189. It is appropriate that a period of silence follow the homily, so that the assembly can reflect upon the marvels God is working in their midst.¹⁹⁴

190. If catechumens or the elect are present in the assembly, they are normally dismissed after the homily so that they may reflect together on the Word that has been proclaimed. Model texts for the dismissal (which is properly given by the Deacon), are provided in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

191. The Creed or Profession of Faith follows the homily. Proclaimed by the assembly, the profession is a living witness to the faith by which the assembly lives and a sign of its unity with the Church through the ages and throughout the world. The Profession of Faith is a summary statement of the great story of salvation that lies at the foundation of Christian life; in this profession of faith, the assembly celebrates its participation in the great story and its sharing in the salvation revealed through the Church.¹⁹⁵

192. Either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed may be used. Every community should be familiar with both forms and use them at appropriate times throughout the church year. The Profession of Faith may be recited or sung by all together or alternating by two parts of the assembly or the choir and the assembly.¹⁹⁶

- There is a natural affinity between the celebration of certain feasts, such as Christmas and the proclamation of the Nicene Creed. Moreover, there is an ecumenical value in using the Nicene Creed at least from time to time, since it is used by many Christian churches.
- It is especially appropriate to use the Apostles' Creed during Lent and the Easter Season, the season for initiation.
- The creedal (question) form of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises is used on Easter Sunday and when the sacrament of Baptism is celebrated during the Sunday Eucharist.
- The *Roman Missal* directs all to bow during both creedal formulas at mention of the incarnation.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER (PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL)

193. Following an ancient tradition, the Liturgy of the Word closes with a series of general or universal intercessions. The intercessions are truly the prayer of the whole Church and the work of God's priestly people. The assembly, conscious of its identity as the Body of Christ and renewed by recognizing that God continues to act in its midst, confidently commends the world and the Church to God's care.¹⁹⁷

194. The assembly earnestly prays that the whole world may receive the good news in faith and that God's love, peace, unity and joy may reign supreme. It prays for healing,

¹⁹⁴ *LM*, no. 28; *GIRM*, nos. 66, 136.

¹⁹⁵ *LM*, no. 29; *GIRM*, no. 67.

¹⁹⁶ *GIRM*, no. 67.

¹⁹⁷ *GIRM*, nos. 69, 138; *LM*, no. 30; *EP*, no. 16.

freedom and dignity for all. It prays for the Church on its journey and in its mission to the world. And it brings these needs before God as they are found in the world and in the Church today.

195. The Prayer of the Faithful follows a pattern that ensures that their scope is universal. As a rule, the sequence of intercessions is as follows:

- a) for the needs of the Church;
- b) for public authorities and the salvation of the world;
- c) for those burdened by any difficulty; and
- d) for the local community.¹⁹⁸

Models for these prayers are provided in the *Roman Missal*.

196. The intercessions are properly prepared and announced by the Deacon.¹⁹⁹ He has been called by ordination to attend to those in need and will thus be able to present the concerns of the community to the assembly.

- A committee of parishioners might assist the Deacon or pastor in formulating the intentions.
- When a Deacon is not present, another minister announces the intentions.
- The Priest announces the intentions only when another appropriate minister is not present.
- Devotional prayers are not added at the close of the Prayer of the Faithful. Rather these needs are expressed in the individual intentions.
- In smaller celebrations, the intentions may be invited freely from the assembly itself, or the opportunity to do so may be provided after the prepared texts have been announced. Where this is done, the community should be aware of the principles that guide the prayer. Otherwise, the intercessions may lose their universal character and become individualistic. An alternative arrangement is to have the minister announce the general intention (for example, for the sick) and to allow time for members of the assembly to voice particular names.
- On certain occasions, such as ritual events (for example, the celebration of marriages or funerals), specific intentions concerning the celebration may be given special attention in several petitions. Nevertheless, the universal themes of the prayer should not be neglected.²⁰⁰

197. To ensure the unity of the rite, the minister who will announce the intentions approaches the ambo before the Priest's introduction is given and remains there until the concluding prayer has been prayed and the assembly says its *Amen*.

198. The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the faithful) follow this format:

- The Priest introduces the intercessions from the chair by inviting the community to place its needs before God.
- The Deacon (minister) announces the intentions from his place beside the Priest or from the ambo.

¹⁹⁸ *CSL*, no. 53; *GIRM*, no. 70.

¹⁹⁹ *GIRM*, no. 71.

²⁰⁰ *GIRM*, no. 70.

- The assembly responds with an acclamation or a period of silence.²⁰¹
 - The Priest concludes the intercessions with a prayer that gathers and sums up the prayer of the people.²⁰²
199. The intentions and the acclamation may be sung, or simply the acclamation alone.
- It is appropriate that the whole assembly, including the ministers, participate fully in the Prayer of the Faithful. Other ministers should not be engaged in other tasks or movement at this time.

²⁰¹ *GIRM*, no. 71.

²⁰² *GIRM*, no. 71.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

200. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are so closely connected that they form one act of worship; for this reason they are never separated by time or celebrated in a different place from one another.²⁰³ In this worship, Jesus Christ himself is present as the celebrant in the midst of his Body, the Church, as he offers himself to the Father and Spirit to gather the world into the divine liturgy. Drawn together by the Holy Spirit, the assembly becomes one with the offering of Christ for the glory of God the Father and the sanctification of the world.

- The Liturgy of the Word announces and enfleshes the divine covenant anew. The Liturgy of the Eucharist seals this covenant afresh in the Body and Blood of Christ.²⁰⁴
- The Liturgy of the Word calls the world to renewed reconciliation with the Father. The Liturgy of the Eucharist achieves that reconciliation through the paschal sacrifice of Christ that brings about communion of life in the triune God.
- In the Liturgy of the Word, the assembly celebrates God's enduring call to join Christ in his passage to the life of the kingdom. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the assembly celebrates its response to that call at the table of the paschal feast.

201. The Liturgy of the Eucharist has three parts:

- a) the preparation of the table of the Lord and the gifts;
- b) the Eucharistic Prayer;
- c) the Communion Rite.

202. Corresponding to the actions of Christ himself, who at the Last Supper “took a loaf of bread and after blessing it he broke it and gave it to the disciples” (Mt. 26.26), four principal actions make up the Liturgy of the Eucharist: taking, blessing, breaking and giving.²⁰⁵ In the Eucharistic liturgy, it is Christ himself who remains the agent of these actions; the Priest who performs them does so in his name. In the preparation of the gifts, the principal action is that of taking the gifts that will become the offerings; in the Eucharistic Prayer, it is that of blessing or consecrating; in the Communion Rite, the principal focuses are the breaking of bread and the giving of the Lord's own Body and Blood.²⁰⁶

PREPARATION — *TAKING*

203. The focus of the liturgy now shifts from the table of the proclaimed word to the table of the Eucharistic feast. The first action of the Eucharistic liturgy – *taking* – is embodied in the preparation of the gifts. Here, the community presents the gifts of bread and wine that will be shared with the community; the Priest *takes* them. This rite should be characterized by utmost simplicity. It must never overshadow the Eucharistic Prayer. Gestures made here must not confuse the actions of taking and blessing. The focus of this rite is always the action of taking the gifts and placing them on the altar. The Prayer over the Gifts concludes this part of the celebration.

203 *CSL*, no. 56; *RS*, no. 60.

204 *LM*, nos. 4, 5, 6.

205 *GIRM*, no. 72.

206 *GIRM*, no. 72.

- Care is to be taken that this rite not obscure the fact that the offering takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer, when the Priest and the assembly in the sacrifice of praise offer up to God Christ the Divine Victim, and themselves along with him.²⁰⁷

204. The Christian community has an ancient tradition of caring for the needs of the poor and of the Church. The monetary and other gifts collected during the celebration bond the Church to Jesus, whose care for others is described in the Scriptures. The collection takes place before the procession with the gifts begins, since the collected money is carried forward in that procession. Ideally there should be only one collection at a Eucharistic celebration.

- When two monetary concerns must be addressed in the same celebration, it is better to use separate envelopes for each cause and retain the one collection.

205. Music unifies the various actions that make up the preparation rites. It should start when the collection begins and extend through the washing of the hands.

- Instrumental music serves this purpose well.
- Hymns that express sentiments of praise, joy, unity, and peace are appropriate, as are texts that express the nature of the liturgical season.
- When there is no music, the Priest may say aloud the two prayers: “*Blessed are you....*” The assembly may then respond with the acclamation “*Blessed be God forever.*”

206. First, the table of the Lord is set as the monetary gifts are collected. The Deacon and servers place the corporal, purificator, chalice, pall and Missal on the altar.²⁰⁸

Members of the assembly collect the gifts of the assembly.

- An ample corporal (linen cloth on which the bread and chalice are placed) is laid on the altar cloth.
- The chalice may be prepared at the credence table. In this case, it is not brought to the altar at this time.²⁰⁹

207. Members of the assembly then bring forward the bread and wine for the celebration along with the collection and other gifts for the poor.

- The bread should be carried forward on a single plate and the wine in a single large cruet or container suitable for wine.
- Along with the collection, and according to circumstances, additional gifts for the needy, such as food and clothing, may be brought forward in procession. This kind of procession is given special recognition in the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, but is appropriate at other times as well. If gifts for the poor are being presented, the entire assembly may be involved in the procession with the gifts.²¹⁰

207 In the past, this rite has usually been called the *offertory*. This term is no longer used to make clear that the offering of the Eucharist takes place in the memorial (*anamnesis*) of the Eucharistic Prayer.

208 *GIRM*, no. 73, 139; *CB*, no. 145.

209 *GIRM*, no. 73.

210 *GIRM*, nos. 73, 140; *RS*, no. 70.

Significance of the Presentation of the Gifts

208. The following principles apply to the procession of gifts and serve the liturgical action best:

- It is appropriate that any monetary gifts or other gifts for the needy be presented first so that their presentation does not interrupt the acceptance of the gifts of bread and wine for the Eucharist.
- The procession with the gifts should be neither overdeveloped nor overextended. The processional cross and candles are not carried from the altar. The Deacon does not lead the procession.
- Materials and objects for the altar, such as the cloth, Missal and chalice, which are not in fact given away are not presented in the procession.
- Banners, crafts, flowers and symbolic objects that represent the assembly belong more appropriately in the entrance procession.
- Those bringing the gifts carry them directly to the altar.

209. The Priest remains at the chair until the preparation of the altar is complete and the gifts are ready to be brought forward. A server brings the water as necessary, and holds it, standing close to the altar. The Deacon, when present, accompanies the Priest to the altar to receive the gifts.

- If more than one chalice is required for Communion under both kinds, the servers place these at the side of the altar; these may be filled with wine by the Priest or Deacon.²¹¹
- If a large number of chalices are required, these may be filled with wine before the celebration begins and brought to the altar at this time.
- The flow of movement at this point in the liturgy is that the gifts are received, the prayer is said, and then the gifts are placed on the altar.

210. The collection and the bread and wine for the Eucharistic feast are then brought forward by members of the assembly. The following procedure is recommended:

- The Priest receives the *collection* (along with any other gifts for the poor), and then gives it (them) to a minister, who carries it (them) to the side table or to some other suitable place.
- Money and gifts are not placed on or at the Eucharistic table.
- The gift-bearers give the large *paten* containing the bread, and the *container of wine* directly to the Priest. Handing the container of wine to the server, he carries the paten to the altar, says the prayer, and places paten on the corporal.
- The servers approach with the chalice and the water; the Priest pours the wine into the chalice, takes the chalice, adds a few drops of water, turns to face the altar and says the prayer and places the chalice on the altar. The gift-bearers then return to their places and the servers return the containers of wine and water to the side table.

²¹¹ *RS*, no. 105.

211. If a Deacon is present, the Priest gives him the container of wine, and he prepares the chalice, without setting the container of wine on the altar. Afterwards, the Deacon hands the chalice to the Priest, who prays the blessing and places the chalice on the altar.

212. When reciting the prayers for the bread and chalice, the Priest does not wait for the music to stop, but immediately says the prayers quietly, as they are meant to be said.

- The container of wine is not left on the altar.²¹²

213. If incense is used, the gifts, the Cross, the altar, the Priest, and the people are incensed. A Deacon or other minister may incense the Priest and the entire assembly. Before they are incensed, the people stand.

214. The washing of hands is a ritual gesture long associated with a community at prayer. Rooted in the Jewish tradition, it is specific to the one who prays on behalf of the community, reflecting the need for interior holiness and openness to the power of the Spirit. The Priest washes his hands before the Eucharistic Prayer, not for the sake of cleanliness but as a presidential action of ritual purification before proclaiming the Church's prayer of offering.

- The prayer that accompanies this gesture is designed to help the Priest maintain his reflective attention during the ritual action and is said quietly.

215. The Prayer over the Offerings brings the preparation rites to a close. This prayer is preceded by an invitation to the people to pray, "*Pray, brothers and sisters...*".

- The invitation invites the people to pray that "...the sacrifice which is mine and yours..." will be acceptable to God. The (Latin) text names both Priest and people to show that all are united in offering the one sacrifice.
- The invitation to the prayer refers to the Eucharistic Prayer, the sacrifice of praise prayed in union with Christ, the Eternal High Priest. Hence, the Priest does not point to the bread and wine while giving this invitation.
- The assembly should stand after the Priest washes his hands, so as to be ready for the invitation "*Pray, brothers and sisters...*" and make the response.²¹³

216. A discreet pause will separate the preparation rites from the proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER — *BLESSING*

217. As its name indicates, the Eucharistic Prayer is essentially a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Its action focuses on blessing and thanking God for the mighty work of salvation, above all, for Jesus' passage from death to eternal life.²¹⁴

Significance of the Eucharistic Prayer

218. The Eucharistic Prayer is the great prayer of thanksgiving and praise for all God's mighty deeds, above all the paschal sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the sacred meal he left in his memory. It is the preeminent liturgical prayer of the Church. In this prayer, with and through the Priest, the assembly responds to God's call by joining in Christ's self-offering

²¹² *RS*, 106.

²¹³ *GIRM*, no. 146.

²¹⁴ *GIRM*, no. 78.

to the Father, and with Christ offering the gift of its life in praise and thanksgiving to God's glory.

219. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the Priest, the assembly and the whole Church join Christ, the Eternal High Priest, and the whole company of heaven in offering the priestly prayer of self-giving at the right hand of God. The Church becomes one with Christ in his everlasting sacrifice and offers it in union with him.²¹⁵

220. The Eucharistic Prayer has been known by various titles over the long history of the Church's celebration. Each of the titles provides an insight into the meaning of the prayer.

- The title *Eucharistic Prayer* is derived from "eucharist," meaning thanksgiving. From early times, the entire celebration was called the Eucharist, and the central prayer of blessing and thanks was called the Eucharistic Prayer: hence the current preference for "Eucharistic Prayer."
- From a very early date, the term *anaphora*, meaning "offering," has been used to designate the Eucharistic Prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer is the great offering that the Church as the Body Christ makes in union with Christ himself.²¹⁶
- It has also carried the title *canon*, meaning "rule." The Eucharistic Prayer is the standard prayer that establishes and marks the identity of the Church.
- Finally, it is sometimes called *the sacrifice of praise*. Praise and thanksgiving express and embody the Church's self-offering and its union with Christ in his sacrifice.

ELEMENTS OF THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

221. The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed as a single, unified prayer. However, among the various forms of the prayer, it is possible to discern a number of consistent and distinct elements.

- These elements include the opening dialogue, the preface, the acclamations, the epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit, the narrative of the institution, the anamnesis or memorial of the saving acts of Christ, prayers of intercession and a closing doxology or prayer of praise to the glory of God.²¹⁷

The Preface (Opening) Dialogue

222. The Eucharistic Prayer begins with the opening dialogue between the Priest and the assembly. The dialogue has been part of the liturgical celebration since very early times.²¹⁸ It engages the entire assembly in the great prayer by inviting them to lift up their hearts to the Lord, echoing the central element of thanksgiving.

²¹⁵ *EM*, no. 3.

²¹⁶ Consilium, *Guidelines Au cours des derniers mois*, to assist catechesis on the anaphoras of the Mass, 2 June 1968 (hereafter, *ACDM*), no. 1.

²¹⁷ *GIRM*, no. 79.

²¹⁸ *GIRM*, no. 34

The Preface

223. The Preface is a proclamation of praise and thanksgiving to God for the marvellous works of salvation accomplished in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, singling out from time to time particular deeds of God according to the feast or season.

- The name “preface” can be deceiving, since it seems to suggest that this part of the prayer is merely an introduction. According to its original usage, however, preface indicates a proclamation, a speaking out before God in the midst of the assembly. The preface is, in fact, an integral part of the Eucharistic Prayer.²¹⁹

224. In the Roman rite, the Preface has been a variable part of most Eucharistic Prayers, allowing the assembly to focus on a particular aspect of the mystery of Christ. A large number of Prefaces are included in the Missal and are assigned to particular feasts, seasons and occasions.

- Eucharistic Prayer II has an attached Preface, although other Prefaces may be used with it.
- Eucharistic Prayer IV, which is patterned on the Eastern tradition, has a fixed Preface. Other Prefaces cannot be used in its place. It is not used on a day that has a proper (designated) Preface.
- Certain other Eucharistic Prayers, such as those for Children, for Reconciliation, and for Various Needs and Occasions, also have fixed Prefaces. (Although other suitable Prefaces may be used with the Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation.)

Acclamations

225. Acclamations punctuate the Eucharistic Prayer and draw the whole assembly into the proclamation.²²⁰ They should always be sung, even when no instrumental support is available.

- The acclamations are never to be sung by the choir alone, since they indicate the participation of the whole assembly in the Eucharistic Prayer, together with the Priest.
- The musical line, while strong, must remain uncomplicated and easy for everyone to sing. The acclamatory character of the texts may be enhanced by the instruments and choir.
- The memorial acclamation is composed of two parts. The first part, *The Mystery of Faith*, is acclaimed by the Priest (not the Deacon), since it is an integral part of the prayer itself, not an invitation. The assembly responds immediately with the response.
- Musical settings of the memorial acclamation should evoke and encourage the greatest participation of the assembly.
- To preserve the rhythm and phrasing of the Eucharistic Prayer, long instrumental introductions to the acclamations should be avoided.

²¹⁹ *GIRM*, no. 79a.

²²⁰ *GIRM*, no. 147; see also nos. 35, 40.

- Any approved additional acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer should be cued by the Priest. The cue should flow from the Priest's text; the assembly should not repeat this cue as part of the acclamation.

The Epiclesis

226. An integral part of every Eucharistic Prayer is the *epiclesis*, the prayer invoking the power of the Holy Spirit over the gifts and upon the people. Through prayer and the imposition of the hands of the Priest, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the Church, is invoked to effect the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is later invoked over the assembly that it too may be transformed into the Body of Christ in which it shares.²²¹

The Institution Narrative and Consecration

227. As part of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Institution Narrative roots the whole prayer in the context of Christ's paschal sacrifice and the gift of his own Body and Blood, linking the Last Supper and his Death and Resurrection to the action of the Church at the present time. As the axis of the prayer, it brings together past and present, death and new life, meal and sacrifice, reconciliation and covenant.²²²

The Memorial-Offering (Anamnesis and Oblation)

228. Within the context of remembering the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the Church joins itself to Christ in his offering to the Father of his saving sacrifice, and looks to the future when Christ will return in glory. At the same time the Holy Spirit is called down anew to transform all those who share in the sacrificial meal and bring them into unity as members of his Body.²²³

The Intercessions

229. All liturgical prayer moves from praise and thanksgiving to intercession and supplication. The remembering of the saving deeds of Jesus in the past naturally leads to supplication that God continue to work in the assembly for the salvation of the world. The Intercessions of the Eucharistic Prayer also serve to make present the whole Church: the living and the dead, heaven and earth, those present and those absent, clergy and laity, those assembled with the local and universal Church.²²⁴

The Concluding Doxology

230. The Doxology characterizes the whole prayer as a prayer of praise, and the Great Amen publicly and joyfully proclaims that the assembly, united to Christ himself by the Holy Spirit, says "yes" to the Father for the great gifts of life and salvation. With the Great Amen, the assembly affirms all that has been prayed. It is thus the most significant acclamation of the entire celebration and should resound with conviction, power and joy.²²⁵

221 *GIRM*, no. 79c.

222 *GIRM*, no. 79d.

223 *GIRM*, no. 79e-79f

224 *GIRM*, no. 79g.

225 *GIRM*, no. 79h.

- The Doxology (from the Greek *doxa*, glory, and *logos*, word or utterance) is the culminating point of the Eucharistic Prayer, and in a sense summarizes all that has been proclaimed before.
- The Doxology is an integral part of the Priest's proclamation. The Priest should pay special attention to this Doxology, praying it as the climax of the Eucharistic Prayer so as to evoke the assembly's Great Amen.

GESTURES

231. The Eucharistic Prayer combines gesture and text. The gestures, an integral part of the proclamation, embody and concretize the prayer. The Priest should ensure that these gestures are properly integrated into the prayer, that they are tailored to the action of the moment and the dimensions of the space, and that they support and clarify the liturgical rite. The gestures should be made in such a way that the prayer maintains its proper rhythm and development throughout.

The orans gesture

232. The orans prayer posture is the first and fundamental gesture of the Priest during the Eucharistic Prayer. With arms outstretched and hands open, this posture is used to embrace the whole community and to indicate that the prayer of the community gathered by the Spirit into unity with Christ is directed to the Father.²²⁶

Imposition of hands

233. The gesture of holding or imposing both hands over the gifts is the traditional gesture associated with the calling down of the Holy Spirit. This is an especially solemn gesture, and any concelebrants join the celebrating Priest by making the same gesture. At the end of the epiclesis, the Priest makes a sign of the cross over the elements.²²⁷

The holding of the elements

234. During the institution narrative the Church recalls that Jesus took bread and "after blessing it" (Mk 14.22), broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. In imitation of this ancient practice for a table blessing or *berakah*, the Priest holds the bread a little above the table so it may be seen by the assembly. The same gesture is repeated for the chalice. Since the Church's Eucharistic Prayer is a long and highly developed prayer that is prayed over the bread and chalice together, no attempt is made to hold the bread and chalice throughout the prayer. Instead, the Priest holds the elements only at certain specified moments.

- The scope of this gesture will depend on the size of the assembly and the distance of the participants from the altar.
- Following the words of Institution, the Priest shows the Eucharistic Bread and Chalice to the people. Since the gesture is one of showing and not of offering, it should not be exaggerated or prolonged.

235. While proclaiming the words of the Narrative, the Priest does not make gestures of breaking and giving, since the Institution Narrative is not a reenactment of the

²²⁶ *GIRM*, nos. 146, 148, 152, 165.

²²⁷ *GIRM*, no. 79c.

original event.²²⁸ Breaking and giving belong to the Communion Rite, which follows the Eucharistic Prayer. Likewise, and for the same reason, the Priest does not make a gesture of giving the chalice during the Narrative of the Institution.

236. After the Priest has shown the Eucharistic Bread and the Chalice to the assembly and replaced each on the altar, he genuflects.

237. At the doxology, the Priest and the Deacon elevate the large paten with the Eucharistic Bread and the Chalice above the altar.

- The Priest gives the chalice to the Deacon. If there is no Deacon, a concelebrating Priest may take up the chalice. If there is no Deacon or concelebrant, the celebrating Priest holds both. Only the one large paten and the one chalice are part of this gesture.
- The Eucharistic Bread and Chalice are held until the conclusion of the Great Amen.
- This gesture is neither a showing of the elements to the assembly nor an expression of offering, but simply, at the conclusion of the prayer, recapitulates what has gone before. The text itself, provides the context and constitutes the climax of the prayer.

The Role of the Priest

238. The Priest prays as the sacramental icon of Christ, the Head of the Body, gathering the entire assembly into this proclamation. The assembly, open to the presence of the Holy Spirit and gathered around the altar in a spirit of covenantal commitment, actively participates in the prayer, interiorly and exteriorly, by listening attentively to the prayer and making Christ's self-offering its own.²²⁹ It joins vocally in the proclamation through the acclamations which are proper to it.

239. The Priest's responsibility is to proclaim, not merely recite, the liturgical text. The Priest's clear and deliberate style should make this prayer stand out above all other prayers as the great prayer of the Church.

- The Priest's gestures should be ample enough to invite the entire assembly to participate in the prayer; the tone of the sung or spoken text should be warm and engaging, and should possess an energy that draws the assembly into the liturgical action.

240. The heartfelt proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer manifests the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community of faith and carries the prayer beyond ritual formulation to life-giving encounter with the God of salvation. This style of proclamation can best be achieved when the Priest knows the text so well that he can concentrate on the meaning of the words rather than on the Missal.

241. Since the Eucharistic Prayer is by nature the prayer of the whole Church gathered by the Spirit as the Body of Christ, the Priest's first goal is to maintain the assembly's involvement throughout, while directing the prayer that is his and theirs to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²²⁸ *RS*, no. 55.

²²⁹ *RS*, nos. 52, 54.

- Ideally, the Priest sings the Eucharistic Prayer;²³⁰ music for chanting the text is found in the Missal. However, the quality of the proclamation must be the first consideration. Vocal skills can be developed with effective training.
- For the sake of the integrity of the prayer, the Priest should sing at least the preface dialogue, and the first part of the memorial acclamation and the doxology.

242. The Priest should pray the Eucharistic Prayer as a unified prayer, molding together its diverse elements so that it does not become fragmented.

- The Priest must be alert to the rhythm, flow and momentum of this highly developed and richly nuanced prayer and blend these elements into the proclamation. Because the prayer combines word and gesture, the Priest should ensure that the gestures are drawn into the natural flow of the prayer.

243. Only the celebrating Priest prays the doxology. Although it is not required by the rubrics, concelebrants may join the presiding celebrant in the words of the doxology. Especially when it is sung, it should be only the voice of the presiding Priest that is heard by the assembly. The Bishop has the right to make regulations regarding the practice of concelebration.

244. After the Great Amen, a short pause indicates the transition from the great Eucharistic Prayer to the Communion Rite.

- This is not an appropriate time for ministers of Communion, ordinary or extraordinary to approach the altar.

COMMUNION RITE – *BREAKING/GIVING*

245. Four elements comprise the Communion Rite, the third part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist: the Lord’s Prayer with its embolism and acclamation, the Sign of Peace, the Fraction (Breaking) of the Bread and the Communion Procession. Its primary liturgical actions are the breaking of bread and the giving of bread and chalice. These gestures of the Communion Rite should stand out clearly: The Eucharistic Bread is broken in a deliberate and reverent fashion, in keeping with its sacred nature and symbolic value; the assembly comes in procession to the altar table to share in the paschal meal as it is given the Body and the Blood of the Lord.

246. The breaking of the bread (also called the Fraction Rite) is so significant that this was the earliest name given to the Eucharist. The one Body of Christ, present under the form of bread made from many grains of wheat, is now shared out among the many and becomes the sacrament of the world. “Be one or be a thousand fed, they eat alike the living Bread” (Sequence, Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ). Likewise, the Blood of the Lord, present under the form of the wine made from many grapes, is poured out in Communion for the salvation of the world.²³¹

²³⁰ See Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, tr by Francis A. Banner, Christian Classics, Inc. (Westminster, Maryland: 1986), II, pp. 107-8 and 258; and I, p. 377. The Eucharistic Prayer was chanted in a loud voice until the end of the eighth century. From this time until the reforms of Vatican II it was recited silently. The parts of the prayer that were said aloud were always sung at the “High” or “Solemn” Mass, preserving the tradition of singing the Eucharistic Prayer.

²³¹ *GIRM*, no. 83.

One Table of the Lord

247. Sharing at the altar draws the assembly into intimate communion of life in the Triune God. The assembly becomes one with Christ in his passage to the Father and is united in the bonds of shared life in the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, par excellence. Since the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, the Communion Rite draws attention as much as possible to the one table of the Lord, the One Bread broken and shared by all, and the One Cup poured out and shared by all.

- Fundamental to the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the sacramental unity established between the paschal sacrifice of the Lord, and the sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ. The connection between the sacred meal and the altar is best maintained when the participants go to the altar directly and share in Holy Communion.
- The practice of regularly drawing from the tabernacle for Communion at the Eucharist fractures the integrity of the feast, and creates the appearance of an unwarranted distinction between the reception of Communion and the Lord's sacrifice; the Church strongly urges that it not be done. Therefore, the use of previously consecrated Eucharistic Bread is properly restricted to cases of unforeseen need.²³²

248. In the Communion Rite, the assembly shares the table of the kingdom and the victory feast of the Lamb. In the Eucharist, the Church, an Easter people, shares in the life of the glorious Christ. Hence, this liturgical action is the occasion of the Church's special joy.

Posture during the Communion Rite

249. The assembly's standing posture during the entire Communion Rite reflects the rite's covenantal nature and the unity of God's people in this action. The communicant's "Amen" is a commitment to live Christ's paschal life and to be Christ for the world. The communicant's gesture of reaching out with the hands embodies the desire to receive God's gracious gift of salvation. When everyone has shared in Holy Communion, the assembly has been renewed as the community of the covenant, as the New Testament Church.

Ministers of Communion

250. A basic principle of the Communion Rite is that the Body and Blood of Christ are ministered or given, not taken. Therefore, an appropriate number of ministers are needed.

- Concelebrants help with Communion in numbers required.
- Other Priests and Deacons assist as available. They should, however, be present for the entire celebration.
- Extraordinary ministers assist as required when concelebrants, Priests and Deacons are not available.
- Extraordinary ministers are commissioned Ministers of Communion. For this reason, there is no further commissioning prayer associated with their reception of the patens and chalices.

²³² *GIRM*, no. 85; *RS*, no. 89.

- *GIRM* no. 162 states that “In case of necessity, the Priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion, using the Rite of Deputing a Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion” (*Roman Missal*, appendix III.)

251. Since Communion is a public act of sealing the covenant sacrifice, ministers of Communion seal the covenant by receiving Communion first; they must first receive what they are going to give. They do not, however, take the Eucharistic Bread and Chalice directly.

Communion from the Chalice

252. Communion from the Chalice fully respects the Lord’s command: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it.” It is the Chalice of the new and everlasting covenant that the communicant shares. For this reason, Communion directly from the Chalice is in every way to be encouraged.²³³

253. Communion by intinction, in which the Priest, Deacon or other minister dips a portion of the Eucharistic Bread in the Chalice and then places it in the mouth of the communicant, while permitted, is positively discouraged because it fails to fulfill the sacramental mandate described above. Moreover, intinction alters the long-standing practice of the separate communication of the elements. It also removes the communicant’s option of receiving the Eucharistic Bread in the hand, which is permitted in Canada.

- The practice of allowing the communicant to dip the Eucharistic Bread in the Chalice is not permitted, since it is the Church’s tradition that the consecrated elements are to be given, not taken.²³⁴

254. It is important to be attentive to matters of hygiene. For this reason, the Priest, Deacon or extraordinary minister of Communion should carefully cleanse both the inside and the outside of the lip of the chalice, rotate the chalice, and shift the purificator for each communicant.

Communion stations

255. As much as possible, it should be visibly evident from the arrangement of Communion stations that the people are approaching the table of the Lord. Therefore, Communion stations should not be set up in areas that are far removed from the altar or that require the communicants to turn away from the altar in order to share in Holy Communion.

- Since Communion is an act of unity, Communion stations should not be multiplied beyond genuine need.

Music during the Communion Rite

256. It is important that music accompany the communion procession, since it strengthens the communal dimension of the rite, and allows the assembly to express its

²³³ *GIRM*, no. 85, 160, 283; *RS*, no. 100; *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, vol. 14, no. 77 (January-February 1981), Sunday Eucharist: II, p. 31.

²³⁴ *RS*, nos. 94, 104.

joy.²³⁵ Texts that speak of unity, covenant, peace, joy, or other aspects of the liturgical action are particularly appropriate. Songs of praise and thanksgiving may also be used.

- The unity of the rite is best served by a single communion song. Thus it is generally not advisable to sing a second hymn immediately after the communion song, since this would overload the rite.²³⁶ The hymn or psalm can be extended by instrumental interludes.
- A psalm sung in responsorial style can be extended during the entire procession; it engages the assembly in a repeated refrain that can be sung on the move. A metrical hymn, or a chorus to a hymn, if well enough known to be sung without books, can also be sung in procession.
- Hymns composed for veneration of the Blessed Sacrament outside Mass do not serve the liturgical action well and should not be used. Texts that tend to make the Communion Rite a private matter should also be avoided.
- *GIRM* no. 88 allows for a Psalm or a Canticle of Praise or a hymn to be sung by the whole congregation.

257. The Communion chant begins as the Priest receives Communion since this unites the whole rite of Communion. It also clearly distinguishes the action of Communion from the Breaking of the Bread, which precedes it.²³⁷

258. Members of the music ministry may approach for Communion last or in small groups throughout the rite so that they can continue their ministry until the end of Communion. The communion song should not be postponed until after music ministers have been given Communion.²³⁸

THE LORD'S PRAYER

259. The Communion Rite begins with the community praying of the Lord's Prayer. Throughout this prayer it honours Jesus' injunction to pray as he taught his disciples. In the Communion Rite, this prayer eloquently witnesses to forgiveness and reconciliation, to the unity of the assembly and of the whole Christian people, and leads the community into communion of life in the triune God.

- The Lord's Prayer may be sung if the assembly can sing the whole prayer comfortably. When the Lord's Prayer is sung, it is appropriate to sing the doxology as well.²³⁹
- The integrity of the text is always to be maintained. Hence, the text is never altered to suit a melodic line.
- Care should be taken that singing the Lord's Prayer does not take away from the importance and centrality of the Eucharistic Prayer that immediately precedes it.

²³⁵ *GIRM*, no. 86.

²³⁶ *GIRM*, no. 86.

²³⁷ *GIRM*, nos. 86, 159.

²³⁸ *GIRM*, no. 86.

²³⁹ *MS*, no. 29.

- The assembly may assume the orans gesture for the Lord's Prayer, which is a more traditional one than holding hands. Holding hands is a gesture that belongs more properly to the Sign of Peace that follows.

Sign of Peace

260. At the invitation of the Deacon or the Priest, the members of the assembly exchange the sign of peace with those nearby. This greeting is an ancient celebration of God's peace experienced and expressed by the assembly as it prepares for Holy Communion. It is a genuine exchange of the peace of Christ within the community of the Holy Spirit which prepares the assembly for Holy Communion. This exchange is an act of profound ritual significance, the traditional time for the members of the assembly to ensure that they are reconciled and at peace with one another before they share in the sacrament of unity.

- The greeting of peace is not to be confused with a gesture of welcoming, which is part of the general hospitality that is expressed when the community gathers for the celebration.²⁴⁰

261. The sign of peace is introduced by an invitation from the Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, the Priest.²⁴¹ It is exchanged freely among the members of the assembly, not in a formal or ordered manner, that is, from the Priest to the Deacon and then to others. It should be neither unduly brief nor unduly long.

- Each person offers the sign of peace only to those who are nearest.
- The Priest exchanges the sign of peace with the ministers at the altar. He may appropriately, according to circumstances, e.g.: funerals, weddings, exchange the sign of peace with nearby members of the assembly.²⁴²
- Because it is important for the musicians to take part in the ritual gesture within the assembly, no music accompanies the sign of peace.

BREAKING (FRACTION) OF THE BREAD

262. Immediately following the sign of peace, the Breaking of the Bread and its accompanying chant begin. The Priest Breaks the Bread into portions and places them in extra vessels; if needed he may be assisted by other Priests or Deacons.

- Servers may bring extra patens to the table, if needed.
- The ministers of Communion may approach the altar area at this time, although they do not stand at the altar or next to the Priest. They do not assist with the breaking of bread as this is reserved to the celebrating Priest, and if necessary to other ordained ministers.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ *RS*, nos. 71-72.

²⁴¹ *GIRM*, no. 181.

²⁴² *GIRM*, no. 82.

²⁴³ *GIRM*, no. 162; *RS*, no. 73.

- The practice of ministers washing their hands at this time is to be avoided since it distracts from the ritual action of the washing of the hands that has earlier been done by the Priest.²⁴⁴
- Ministers should minimize the use of lotions, perfumes or scents. These are often a concern for those receiving Holy Communion.

263. The Lamb of God, of Byzantine origin, was introduced into the Roman liturgy at an early date. It follows the style of a litany and begins during the Breaking of Bread. While three invocations are prescribed, the invocations should continue until the Breaking of the Bread and the preparation of the patens (and chalices) have been completed.²⁴⁵

- The preferred arrangement is for the cantor or choir to sing the invocation and for the assembly to sing the response, “have mercy on us.”
- The final response, “grant us peace,” is sung when the breaking of the bread has been completed.
- When the Lamb of God cannot be sung it is recited.
- The Priest says the prayer of preparation quietly during the singing of the Lamb of God.

COMMUNION PROCESSION

264. Sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ is the culmination of the entire celebration. Holy Communion seals the sacrificial nature of the passover meal, the covenantal dialogue of the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic Prayer. It involves both God’s initiative and the communicant’s response. Each person comes forward in the communion procession to renew his or her covenant in the Body and Blood of Christ. As a covenantal and sacrificial act, Holy Communion calls for reverent, attentive, and personal involvement of all participants. Since this requires time, every suggestion of haste should be avoided.

265. The Priest takes a piece of the Eucharistic Bread and holds it slightly raised above the paten or above the Chalice saying, “Behold the Lamb of God...” as provided in the Missal.²⁴⁶ The Priest and the assembly then say together, “Lord, I am not worthy...”.

266. The Priest immediately receives Holy Communion under both kinds. The personal prayers prescribed are said quietly. Separate prayers accompany each action.

267. As the Priest receives Communion, the extraordinary ministers of Communion approach the altar and the Communion chant begins and extends throughout the procession, concluding before the Prayer after Communion.²⁴⁷

244 As noted in *GIRM* no. 76, the washing of hands is associated with the Priest who prays on behalf of the community. Thus washing of hands is associated with the act of presiding in the name of Christ and the community and not with the act of giving Communion. The washing of hands for hygienic reasons is better done with soap and water before the celebration begins. Communion ministers might also have with them small containers of purifying liquid which they might use discreetly before approaching the altar.

245 *GIRM*, no. 83, 155.

246 *GIRM*, nos. 84, 157.

247 *GIRM*, nos. 86, 159.

268. The Priest, Deacon and any other ministers receive Communion before going to the communion stations.

- The Priest gives Communion under both forms to the Deacon. Then they both serve the other ministers of Communion. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not receive Communion with the Priest.
- When the diocesan Bishop or other Bishops are present, the presiding Priest and the Deacon (and not other ordained or extraordinary ministers) should offer the Bishops Holy Communion.

269. When the various ministers have received Communion, they are given the communion patens and chalices at the altar; they then go to the communion stations.

270. Each communicant comes forward to renew the covenant in the midst of the assembly.

- Communicants should not be ushered to Communion row by row. Such a practice singles out those who cannot or choose not to approach for Communion.
- As a rule, only those who are going to share in Communion take part in the procession.
- It is appropriate for young children to accompany their parents.
- The rite of Communion does not provide a blessing for those who are not participating in Communion.
- Those who are not sharing in Communion participate by (standing and) singing the Communion chant, and by their interior disposition of spiritual communion with Christ and with their fellow worshippers.

271. At the communion station, the Priest waits until the communicant is comfortably in place and composed. The Priest holds a portion of the Eucharistic Bread a little above the paten and engages the communicant in the liturgical dialogue *The Body of Christ – Amen*. The Priest then places the portion of Eucharistic Bread in the hand or on the tongue of the communicant.

- In Canada, the “appropriate sign of reverence” is a bow of the head and is to be made by those who receive Communion standing while approaching the Priest (Deacon, minister).²⁴⁸
- The Priest should never rush the communicant. His attitude should be personal, warm, inviting and engaging, and he should maintain eye contact with the communicant.
- Other ministers of Communion follow the same procedure.

272. The communicant consumes the Body of Christ before proceeding to the minister with the Chalice.

- The communicant alone decides whether to receive in the hand or on the tongue.
- Anyone who has been admitted to Communion is free to receive from the Chalice.
- Age is not a factor in the general permission either for Communion in the hand or for Communion from the Chalice.

²⁴⁸ GIRM, no. 160.

273. In ministering the Chalice, the Deacon or other ministers of Communion wait until the communicant is comfortably in place and composed.

- He or she engages the communicant in the liturgical dialogue *The Blood of Christ — Amen* and then hands the Chalice to the communicant, who consumes a portion of the Consecrated Species and returns the Chalice to the Deacon.
- The Deacon or other minister then wipes the Chalice.
- When the assembly is large, the ministers of the Chalice may need to return to the altar to obtain other Chalices and fresh purificators, or these could be brought to them.

PURIFICATION

274. When Communion is completed, the remaining Eucharistic Species are brought to the altar. At this time, the Body of the Lord is given to ministers who will bring it to the sick. Then the remaining Consecrated Species are consumed by the Priest and Deacon. Some of the Consecrated Bread may be placed in a ciborium and brought to the tabernacle where it is customary to reserve the Body of the Lord for Communion to the sick.

- The empty patens and chalices may be purified by the Priest or Deacon at the altar or preferably at the credence table at this time; but it is generally better to attend to this after the end of the celebration.²⁴⁹
- The *Roman Missal* provides a silent prayer to be used during the purification.

Communion to the Sick

275. The sick members of the community are united to the assembly by sharing in Communion from the table of the Eucharist. For this reason, ideally, Communion to the sick is taken directly from the altar; the sick share in the Lord's Body consecrated at this Eucharist.

276. The ministers designated to bring the Eucharist to the sick first share in Communion themselves. They may then approach the altar and remain nearby until Communion is completed.

- At the altar, the Priest (assisted by the Deacon), places the Eucharistic Bread in pyxes and hands them to the ministers.
- No prayer blessing or dismissal is prescribed at this time, since it is the action of handing the Elements to the ministers that is important. Moreover, a sending forth ceremony would break the flow of the Communion song.
- The ministers may leave immediately to bring Communion to the sick, or remain near the altar and leave in the closing procession, or return to their places.

277. After the Priest has presented the Body of Christ to the ministers, he attends to the remaining Consecrated Elements and then goes to the chair.

- The Deacon either accompanies the Priest to the chair or joins him there after the purification of the vessels.

²⁴⁹ *GIRM*, no. 163.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

278. The Prayer after Communion is directly related to the Communion procession and brings that procession and the Communion Rite to a close. A period of silent prayer is also appropriate before the prayer.²⁵⁰ No other elements, such as announcements or reflections, should separate the Communion procession from the Prayer after Communion.

279. Before the Prayer after Communion is prayed, the preferred option is for the assembly to be seated for a period of silent prayer. However, the assembly may sing a psalm or hymn of praise. This is an occasion when reverent silence is to be given preference to a hymn or psalm. When this option is chosen, it is properly a hymn or psalm in which the whole assembly participates.²⁵¹

280. The assembly stands. Following “Let us pray,” a brief period of silent prayer is observed, after which the Priest prays the Prayer after Communion.

- If a time of silence was not observed before the prayer, then an extended period of silence is observed after the Priest says “Let us pray.”

281. A brief pause separates the Communion Rite from the Concluding Rite of the celebration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

282. When necessary, announcements are made after the Prayer after Communion has been prayed and before the Concluding Rite begins.

- When announcements take place before the prayer, it separates the prayer from the Communion Rite and thus makes it appear to be the closing prayer of the entire celebration and not the conclusion to Communion.²⁵²
- Announcements should be brief and should refer particularly to the pastoral action, flowing from the Eucharist, that the community will undertake over the next period of time.
- Announcements may be made before the celebration begins.

283. The announcements may be given by the Deacon, a designated minister, or the Priest. The Deacon will usually make the announcements from his place beside the Priest, and the Priest, from the chair. A designated minister makes the announcements from some suitable place, but not from the ambo.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ *GIRM*, nos. 89, 164.

²⁵¹ *GIRM*, nos. 88, 164.

²⁵² *GIRM*, nos. 90a, 166.

²⁵³ *GIRM*, no. 309.

CONCLUDING RITES

284. The Concluding Rite closes the Eucharist and sends the assembly forth with God's blessing and with the mission to carry the good news of Jesus Christ to the world.²⁵⁴ The rite consists of a greeting, a blessing and a dismissal. All of these parts may be sung, although the dismissal deserves special consideration.

- The Concluding Rite is brief, since the Liturgy of the Eucharist is an action of such profound fulfillment that no further ritual activity can add to it.
- It is also marked by a considerable degree of energy. The experience of the encounter with the Lord propels the assembly outward to share its joy with others and to invite the world to the paschal feast.

GREETING

285. The Priest and the assembly exchange the ancient Christian greeting: "*The Lord be with you — And with your spirit*" as they did in the Introductory Rites and at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer.²⁵⁵

BLESSING

286. The Priest invokes God's blessing on the assembly. As members go forth from the assembly, the actions they undertake for the sake of the Kingdom will stand under the hand of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. God's constant care and loving-kindness go with them on their journey.

287. The Missal provides a variety of forms for the blessing. Besides the simple form, *Solemn Blessings* as well as *Prayers over the People* are particularly appropriate on certain Sundays and during certain seasons of the liturgical year. Familiarity with these options will enable the Priest to select the most appropriate blessing for the celebration.

- The Priest blesses the assembly in the name of God and as the sacramental icon of Christ the Head of the Body; thus the wording "*May almighty God bless us...*" or "*In the name of the Father...*" are inappropriate.

DISMISSAL

288. The importance of the Dismissal is reflected in the history of the Roman liturgy. At certain times in its history, there have been three dismissals: the dismissal of the catechumens, the dismissal of the penitents, and the dismissal of the faithful. These dismissals were so significant that in time the Eucharist itself came to be called "the dismissal": the *Missa*, or the Mass.²⁵⁶

289. The dismissal links the assembly's celebration and its mission in the world. It is the dramatic sending forth of the assembly on its work of witness, evangelization and catechesis, and of extending God's call to the whole world. It evokes the urgency of the call to witness and the assembly's enthusiasm to undertake its work.

²⁵⁴ *GIRM*, no. 90c.

²⁵⁵ *GIRM*, no. 167.

²⁵⁶ *GIRM*, no. 90c.

- Several formularies for the dismissal are given in the Missal. No commonplace comments should be allowed to intrude upon the ritual text and undermine the significance of the dismissal unto mission.
290. The Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, the Priest, dismisses the assembly in a clear, crisp and decisive manner.
- The Deacon should ensure that the conclusion of the dismissal is always clearly marked, so the assembly will know when to respond.
291. The assembly responds with the acclamation “*Thanks be to God.*”
292. After the dismissal the Priest and the Deacon kiss the altar. They make a profound bow to the altar or a genuflection to the Reserved Sacrament as a final reverence and then leave.²⁵⁷

PROCESSION

293. Although a closing procession is customary, none has ever been mentioned in the rite. It appears to have been the practice for the assembly simply to leave in an informal manner. This informal kind of departure may be seen as the natural thing for a household to do at the end of a celebration. When this practice is followed, instrumental music appropriately accompanies the departure.

- The closing procession is the movement of the assembly outward toward the world and onto its continuing journey toward the fullness of the kingdom.

294. Although no ritual chant is indicated for the closing procession, well-known music that speaks of the Church’s mission and journey is suitable. A general or seasonal hymn of praise and thanksgiving may also be sung. The music that accompanies the procession should begin as soon as the dismissal has been given, and the Priest, Deacon, and the others who are part of the procession should begin to leave.

- Instrumental music may accompany the assembly’s departure.
- Hymns in verse form generally create a stronger musical experience than compositions that provide only a refrain for the assembly to sing. Because hymns in verse form encourage the kind of authentic ritual embodiment that the assembly needs as it turns outward unto mission, they are particularly appropriate for the closing procession.
- The choice of a short hymn will allow the community to respect the unity of the text and, at the same time, the integrity of the dismissal.

295. The final procession speaks more vividly when the assembly participates directly in the procession out, since the assembly now continues the Church’s mission in the world and takes up the journey to the fullness of the kingdom. Alternatively, the assembly may remain in place until the procession has left.

296. When a closing procession takes place, those who were part of the entrance procession may take part in this procession as well.

²⁵⁷ *GIRM*, nos. 90d, 169.

297. If another rite follows immediately (such as in a Funeral or Eucharistic Adoration or Processions), then the greeting, blessing and dismissal are omitted.²⁵⁸

SAYING FAREWELL

298. The Priest, Deacon, and even the other ministers should remain at the church door(s) to greet the members of the assembly as they leave.

- Welcoming and saying goodbye (*God be with you*) in an informal manner are basic courtesies of a Christian household. Hence, it is better for the Priest, Deacon and ministers to remain at the entrance rather than to return immediately to the sacristy.

299. Because of the centrality of the Eucharist and the nature of the dismissal, other activities in the church, such as communal devotional prayer, should be separated from the celebration by a significant period of time.

²⁵⁸ *GIRM*, no. 170; *HCWEM*, no. 94.

