

# **INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY**

## **PART II**

IN THE LIGHT OF CONCILIAR AND POST-CONCILIAR  
LITURGICAL DOCUMENTS

**Lit 006**

**Simon Peter Kyambadde**

March 2005





# Contents

Introduction	5
The Liturgical Environment	7
Vessels and other Sacred Objects	32
Linens and Vestments	47
Liturgical Colours	61
The Matter of the Sacraments	66
Liturgical Books	75
Liturgical Ministries	89
Ceremonial Actions	127
Liturgical Hygiene	154
Liturgical Accidents	157

## **INTRODUCTION**

The work of a priest is in some way comparable to that of a general advocate. In order to be able to defend cases of politicians, business people, doctors or clergy, the lawyer needs to some extent, besides acquiring the requisite knowledge in law, to be familiar with the world of these different areas. Similarly, a priest in the modern world is prepared to serve the needs of men and women in different fields, peasants as well as politicians, traders as well as teachers. Now, while lawyers may specialise so that one finds legal representatives specifically for copyright law or computer technology, priests do not generally do so, with the exception perhaps of a few areas such as prison and military chaplains or those trained to form other priests. Adequate seminary training therefore, aims at producing priests who are “all rounded”, and who can feel comfortable in the different sectors of the ever-changing society. In working towards this end, seminary authorities have introduced, among other things affiliation to universities, local or foreign. This has in turn led to overloading of the seminary syllabus, to the bewilderment of students who have to cover so much more, as well as traditional seminary staff who must compress so much academic material within the given time, while at the same time giving enough room to the necessary spiritual and moral formation of the seminarians. The result is that in spite of the seven years of post-college training – a period which is longer than most university degrees – the time in the major seminary is hardly enough to produce an academically “well-baked” priest, not mentioning the other aspects of a priest’s training which are in no way less important.

This booklet is one in a series that emerged in the course of liturgy lectures in St. Paul’s National Seminary, at the time of affiliation to external universities. The writer realised like other fellow lecturers, that it was almost impossible to cover the material taught before the affiliation, while at the same time giving due time to the new university program. On the other hand reducing the areas covered in liturgy would have meant sending out priests who were ill-

prepared for their ministry in that all-important aspect of a pastor's life. The alternative course of action would then be to cover less in class, while giving a future priest a package of ready reference in his pastoral activity.

The series therefore is a form of liturgical companion, written particularly with a pastoral orientation. It is written with the realisation that in the modern world of fast-moving technology the most important thing is not to know all that is necessary in one's area of work, for that is absolutely impossible. Rather, it is to know where to look for the answers in case of questions. For that reason, a lot of effort has been put in referring to the basic liturgical sources that are available to pastors.

Because it is a form of "liturgical companion" it renders itself beneficial also to those priests and other pastoral workers who are already in the field. The book is not a substitution for the actual rituals. That would be both unnecessary since such rituals are available and impossible since it would imply reproducing a great bulk of material. Rather, it is a parallel to the corresponding ritual. It helps the pastor to see the rationale behind the rubrics.

The backbone of the material are the different rites issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and their Praenotanda or official Introductions/Instructions/Norms. This gives the seminarian/priest the confidence of administering the authentic liturgy of the Catholic Church.

For lack of a better expression several topics are grouped in this book under the name "Tools of the Liturgy". This is the ensemble of objects and actions that make the liturgy meaningful, effective and authentic.

# THE LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL .....	9
PARTICULAR ITEMS .....	9
<i>The Church Building</i> .....	9
<i>The Baptistry</i> .....	11
Purpose .....	11
Location of the font .....	11
Condition of the font.....	12
<i>The Nave</i> .....	13
Qualities of a well-built nave.....	13
Specific components of the nave .....	13
<i>The Sanctuary</i> .....	16
The Ambo.....	18
Presidential Chair .....	19
Credence Table.....	20
Cross or Crucifix .....	21
<i>The Altar</i> .....	22
Items on the Altar .....	23
Altar Clothes.....	24
Candles at the Altar .....	24
Flowers at the Altar .....	25
Microphones.....	26
<i>The Tabernacle</i> .....	27
<i>The Sacristy</i> .....	28
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	30

## Bibliographical References:

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 253-256.

*Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite*.

Martimort A.G. "Liturgical Signs: Sacred Places", in A.G. Martimort (ed.), *The Church at Prayer*, vol. I. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1986. Pp. 201-211.

DOL, 542-548

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (USA). *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*.

Thomas G. Simons and James M. Fitzpatrick, *The Ministry of Liturgical Environment*.

“Place For Worship Activities” in Richter, Klemens. *The Meaning of the Sacramental Symbols: Answers to Today’s Questions*. Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1990, p. 145-157.

For the celebration of the Eucharist, the people of God normally are gathered together in a church or, if there is no church or if it is too small, then in another respectable place that is nonetheless worthy of so great a mystery. Churches, therefore, and other places should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should, moreover, be truly worthy and beautiful and be signs and symbols of heavenly realities.<sup>1</sup>

The environment in which the liturgy is performed is important for its overall success. Depending on how it is arranged it may help the worshippers to focus attention on the object of their worship or it may distract them. The environment should neither be uncomfortable nor may it be too comfortable. It should be dignified and worthy of divine worship without being luxurious. The particular arrangement may serve to remind the worshippers of the occasion their celebrating. Whatever is used should foster rather than hinder worship. The environment should also not just focus on the liturgy alone, but also cater for other human needs such as the need breathe, to see, to hear, to move or even to relieve oneself by the provision of toilets.<sup>2</sup> Of course all this must be done within the limits of a community’s resources.

---

<sup>1</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *General Instruction 2002*, no. 293.



## LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL<sup>3</sup>

Ordinaries are to take care that in encouraging and favouring truly sacred art, they should seek for noble beauty rather than sumptuous display. They should ensure that works of art which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or through lack of artistic merit or because of mediocrity or pretence, be removed from the house of God and from other sacred places. (SC 124).

...the Church constantly seeks the noble assistance of the arts and admits the artistic expressions of all peoples and regions. In fact, just as she is intent on preserving the works of art and the artistic treasures handed down from past centuries and, insofar as necessary, on adapting them to new needs, so also she strives to promote new works of art that are in harmony with the character of each successive age.<sup>4</sup>

## PARTICULAR ITEMS

### *The Church Building*<sup>5</sup>

The amount of space for a church of course largely depends on the economic status of the people who worship in that church. Many would need a bigger church but cannot afford to build one. We refer to the ideal, assuming that funds are available for it, how should it be. The space should express *unity* of the worshipping community, not create a kind of gap between the ministers and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Criteria for Liturgical Art SC 125, 129, GIRM 278, EACW 18, 33, 98, 100; relationship to music SC 112; EACW 12, 20-25, 34, 55-62; role of art in liturgy SC 127, EACW 12, 20-25, 34, 55-62; types of liturgical art SC 46, 122-128; GIRM 254, 278, EACW 18, 22, 98, 100.

<sup>4</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 289.

<sup>5</sup> Arrangement for Mass, GIRM 253-280; General Instruction 2002, no. 294; building and renovation of a church SC 124, 128; GIRM 256; EACW 43, GSPD 1-7; decoration of SC 125, 128; GIRM 278, 280; CB 38, 48; DMC 29; EACW 98, 100-103; dedication of GIRM 255; DedCh 1.1-3.2, 5.1-5.7. Design of a church GIRM 279-80; CB 42-54; EACW 39-48, 52-54, 65; furnishings for a church: SC 122-128; GIRM 253-280, 287-312; CB 37-38, 42-54; EAWC 63-83. Role of Cathedral churches SC 41; CB 42-46.

rest of the congregation. It should foster *active participation*, with room for different postures (kneeling, standing, processions, communion, etc).

There should be enough light. In this regard it is important to think of the size of the windows, the colour on the walls. The darker the colours the more they absorb light, making the place look darker. Many churches make use of transparent roofing to brighten up the interior by partially using natural light. This has the advantage of being less expensive once installed. The church should be arranged in such a way that the participants are able to see one another as well as the focal point of the liturgy. (huge pillars in basilicas are an impediment. So are cross-form churches). Galleries make the choir not seen by the rest of the congregation. Light should be arranged so as to reflect levels of priority of what is seen. The sanctuary might have more light. During adoration there might be a lamp that focuses on the Blessed Sacrament.

Perhaps more important than lighting is the acoustic status of a church. There is a problem of reduction of echo particularly in bigger churches. The problem with echo is that unless the microphone system is very efficient, just being loud enough does not help the hearing.

Old churches tended to emphasise the role of the minister, thus being built very much like a theatre. Modern churches have the tendency of being circular, thus establishing a sense of closeness. Either has its advantages and disadvantages.

It is important that a church is not over crowded with decorations, paintings and statues. These can also be a distraction to prayer. There should be a balance between nobility and simplicity. There are so many churches that serve more than museums to be admired rather than places of prayer.

## *The Baptistry*<sup>6</sup>

### Purpose

The baptistry is the area where the baptismal font flows or has been placed. It should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism, and should be a worthy place of Christians to be reborn in water



and the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> The presence of a baptistry in a church bears testimony to the importance of baptism as the primary sacrament by which new members enter the Church. The use of the baptismal font especially when baptism is made by immersion also recalls the original form of baptism, and brings out the full symbolism of death to sin and rebirth to a new life. The different shapes used in the building of baptismal fonts bring out this

symbolism fully. Cross-shaped fonts indicate that the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord is the price by which rebirth into the Church was achieved. Womb-shaped fonts symbolise baptism as a rebirth. While tomb-shaped fonts indicate that baptism is a death to sin and a resurrection to the new life of grace. Heptagonal-shaped fonts point to the seventh day, the day of the resurrection of the Lord.

### Location of the font

The baptismal font should be located in an area where those that are directly involved in the baptism can comfortably be accommodated, while the rest of the congregation are able to see what is going on. This means that whatever the location the font ought to have enough space around for the people to stand and that

---

<sup>6</sup> (Area where the Baptismal font is situated). See Dennis McNally, “Baptistry” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 127-129. Further information on the Baptismal font: SC 128; EACW 76, 77.

<sup>7</sup> *Rite of Christian Initiation* 25.

it should be in a prominent place for the congregation to see. In some Churches the font is set in the sanctuary, while in others it is located at the back of the church. In the latter case the rest of the congregation has the disadvantage of having to turn their backs to the altar in order to follow what is taking place at the font.

Some fonts are movable, and can be placed at some non-conspicuous place when out of use and brought in a prominent place when needed.

#### Condition of the font

The baptistery should be kept clean for hygienic purposes and out of reverence for the sacrament of baptism, which it represents. Preferably it should be fixed. In areas where there is winter or cold seasons there should be provision for warming the water so that it is not too cold for those baptised, particularly babies. Within the baptistery may be kept other necessary implements used at baptism such as white vestments, the Easter candle and other the sacred oils, etc. these may be decently kept in a cupboard. Except during the Easter Season, the Easter candle stands near the font, in a suitable bracket or candlestick.

A font should provide for the options of baptising infants either by infusion or immersion. Depending on local practice, some churches will require a large font that may serve for the immersion of adults. However, while a fountain of running water is favoured for Baptism because of hygienic and its resemblance to the baptism of Jesus and of the early Church which was carried out at running water, perpetually flowing water may be distracting if the font is located in or near the sanctuary.

The holy water stoups at the doors of the church are signs, which recall the baptismal washing of the faithful. The sacristan ensures that they are regularly replenished and cleaned.

## *The Nave*<sup>8</sup>



### Qualities of a well-built nave

The nave is a section of the church where the assembly sits. A well-built nave should facilitate easy movement to the sanctuary. It should also be built in such a way that people are able to see and hear what goes on in the sanctuary. There should be facilities for people to kneel as well as to turn and offer each other the sign of peace.

### Specific components of the nave

Whatever may be the design of a church, the area for the congregation is designated as the "nave". The seats for the faithful should be so arranged that the people can participate easily in worship by being able to see the altar, lectern and chair, and that they should be able to come to Communion conveniently. There should be enough room for worshippers to stand and kneel conveniently. Therefore, whatever form the seats take, they should

---

<sup>8</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 311.

be spaced carefully and equipped with some form of comfortable kneeler.

The choir and organ are to have their own place, determined both by their role in the liturgy and the convenient access of choir members to Holy Communion. Expert advice should be sought when locating the choir in order to promote its indispensable role in Catholic worship. The Second Vatican Council explicitly endorsed the place of the organ in the Roman Rite.

In most churches provision should be made for a chapel or chapels, but not for a multiplicity of altars. Shrines for the devotion of the faithful to Our Lady and the saints have their place, without detracting from the liturgy. Therefore, sacred images set up for the devotion of the faithful should not be placed permanently in the sanctuary.<sup>9</sup> Restraint should be exercised in the number and arrangement of sacred images, and two images of the same saint should not be included in the same building. This need not necessarily preclude images of Our Lady under different titles or other representations of a saint included in a group of figures.

Usually near the nave, confessionals are provided for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance according to the first and second rites of reconciliation. In modern practice, these are pleasant and reasonably spacious soundproof rooms, equipped with a chair, a kneeler and with a screen or grille, between the priest and penitent, as the Code requires. Where the bishops allow it, the room should be designed so that the penitent may also choose the option of "face to face" confession.

The Stations of the Cross are usually placed in the nave, or in a chapel or area where the faithful may easily make this devotion. The practice of grouping all the Stations closely together at one point is unfortunate because it eliminates the significant movement from place to place which is part of this devotion. Each Station should be easily identifiable, surely not an abstract symbol. Stations are to be blessed by a bishop or priest, but a new set of Stations erected in a church about to be dedicated is blessed by the act of dedication- as

---

<sup>9</sup> See more about the placement of sacred images in the church in *General Instruction 2002*, no. 318.

are the font, cross, images or statues, organ, bells, etc., in that place.<sup>12</sup> The Stations should not be confused with the twelve or four crosses set onto or into the walls of a dedicated church.

### *The Sanctuary*

The sanctuary is the prominent sacred area where most of the ministerial actions of the liturgy are carried out. It should be



spacious, clearly defined and delineated. This is usually achieved through elevating it from the nave by a step or two, depending on the shape or style of the church itself.<sup>10</sup> Great care must be taken in choosing the appropriate number of steps so that the faithful can be visually involved in the sacred action. In some churches, with the good intention of involving the people, the number of sanctuary steps has been reduced and those of the faithful sitting further from the sanctuary cannot see what goes on at the altar. In all the Rites of the East and the West, the sanctuary is a permanently fixed area, the sacred space reserved for action at the altar. It is contrary to sound religious psychology to relocate the sanctuary area from time to time in the course of the year or to place chairs for the faithful in it. “The priest celebrant, the deacon, and the other ministers have places in the sanctuary. Seats for concelebrants should also be

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *General Instruction 2002*, no. 295.



prepared there. If, however, their number is great, seats should be arranged in another part of the church, but near the altar.”<sup>11</sup>

The sanctuary ought not to be overcrowded with people. This is the case for instance in a church where not only the main celebrant, concelebrant and servers have a place in the sanctuary, but also the readers, the Eucharistic ministers, catechists, those to collect the gifts at the offertory as well as commentators; all sit in the sanctuary. The sanctuary should be reserved for those who conduct the liturgy. One ought to avoid the temptation to allocate a special place in the sanctuary to civil leaders or any other distinguished guests who have no special role to play in the execution of the liturgy. At the liturgy we are all brothers and sisters of the same Father, all equal regardless of social rank, for that is not what God judges us by. Certainly such people can be made to sit in a special and reserved place, for instance in the first pews. But they face the altar and not the congregation.

Several items are to be found within the sanctuary. These include the ambo<sup>12</sup>, the presidential chair, the credence table, the crucifix, the altar and all its furnishings, as well as the tabernacle. These are examined individually in the following paragraphs.

---

<sup>11</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 294.

<sup>12</sup> GILM, 32-34; GIRM, 272, CB 51; EACW 61, 74, 75.



### The Ambo<sup>13</sup>

There is to be one preferably permanent ambo or lectern for the proclamation of the word of God from or near the sanctuary. By tradition and favoured practice, it may be in a fixed position to the left of the altar on what was called the "Gospel side".<sup>14</sup> However, the distinctive plan of a church or the choir liturgy of a religious community or seminary may require a different place for the ambo. It should be designed to harmonise with, but never to overshadow the altar. The ambo may be covered with a dignified antependium or "fall" of the colour of the day or season, preferably matching the antependium on the altar.

If possible, the surface where the book rests should be adjustable, to meet the needs of readers, including children. In most churches a reliable microphone and good lighting will be required. A shelf or cupboard may be built into the ambo for books. The area around it

---

<sup>13</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 309.

<sup>14</sup> In some churches it is still the practice to have the gospel read from the left side and the other readings from the right hand side. This means that there are two ambos. The purpose of such a practice was to give a prominent place to the gospel in distinction from the rest of the readings. However, it appears more meaningful to have the same place for the whole of the liturgy of the Word, for all the readings are part of the inspired word of God. The gospel may then be given its prominence in another way. That way one has two principle foci: the liturgy of the word symbolised by the ambo and the liturgy of the Eucharist symbolised by the altar.

must allow room for the candle bearers and thurifer at the reading of the Gospel, and also for the Easter candle, which is set up near the ambo during the Easter Season. The homeliest should be able to see a clock from the ambo.

A cantor, choir director or commentator should not use the ambo reserved for the proclamation of the word of God. The ambo is reserved for all that constitute the Word of God, the readings, the responsorial psalm, the explanation of the readings or homily, the proclamation of the Easter *Exultet*, or sequences on those occasions where they are prescribed in the liturgy, etc.



### Presidential Chair<sup>15</sup>

The presidential chair should be located behind or near the altar, in a convenient place and at a height where the celebrant may be seen to preside over the assembly. It is named as such in the sense that it is the seat of the presider, who in that capacity represents Christ in the liturgy. Taking into account the size and plan of the church, the chair should

be arranged so that the priest presides without dominating. A truly beautiful and dignified chair should be designed or chosen, in harmony with the style of the church, nor should the comfort of the celebrant be forgotten. It must not resemble a throne. However, in a cathedral, the cathedra is a throne reserved for bishops. The cathedra should be raised on steps so that the bishop is clearly visible when he presides in his own church. A separate chair must

---

<sup>15</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 310.

be provided for a priest who is the celebrant at the main altar of a cathedral.

Seats may be placed on either side of the chair or the cathedra for deacons and perhaps for an instituted acolyte and the master of ceremonies at solemn functions. Other seats will be needed for concelebrants. The servers should never occupy these places. If possible, servers should not sit facing the people, as if they were presiding. Chairs, stools or benches should be provided for them in the sanctuary itself, preferably near the credence table and along the sides. However the sanctuary should never be cluttered up with chairs or benches.

From the presidential chair (and not from the ambo or altar, unless this is required for practical reasons, such as lack of where to place the book, or having the microphone installed only at the ambo and altar), the main celebrant reads the prayer and gives the blessing. A server holds the book when the celebrant reads any text at the chair. A simple lectern placed in front of the chair may be tolerated only during a Mass celebrated without servers.



#### Credence Table<sup>16</sup>

In the modern Roman Rite, the credence table plays a prominent and practical role, like the table of prosthesis in the Byzantine Rite. Therefore it should be at least a medium-sized table of normal height, large enough for the sacred vessels, cruets, the missal on its stand, the processional candles, etc. It should be covered by a cloth, at least during Mass. The credence table is most conveniently located to the left

of the altar as you face it, except when Mass is celebrated facing the

---

<sup>16</sup> GIRM 80, 84, 120, 139, 238.

altar when it is located to the right. For pontifical ceremonies, a second credence table is convenient, usually located to the right of the altar.

### Cross or Crucifix<sup>17</sup>

There should be a crucifix in the sanctuary visible to the people.<sup>18</sup> Usually it hangs somewhere in the middle behind the altar. It should be of reasonably big size to be clearly seen. Some churches have two crosses, one on the wall one on the altar side. However, it should be recalled that major signs are not to be duplicated.<sup>19</sup> In the context of the Roman liturgy, "cross" means a crucifix.<sup>20</sup> A figure of the risen Christ behind an altar cannot be regarded as a substitute for the cross, however there is a wide range of styles of figures to choose from which may be suitable for the liturgical crucifix.

“The cross adorned with a figure of Christ crucified and perhaps carried in procession may be placed next to the altar to serve as the altar cross, in which case it ought to be the only cross used; otherwise it is put away in a dignified place.” Located at the centre, it need not obscure the celebrant if the altar is large. The liturgical crucifix is not primarily for the private devotion of the celebrant<sup>21</sup> but is a sign in the midst of the Eucharistic assembly proclaiming that the Mass is the same Sacrifice as Calvary. For that reason it should face the people and not the main celebrant. Especially for Masses celebrated outside the main church, the cross should not be laid on the altar “on its back” for then the people do not see it. It should be made to stand. One needs to acquire a crucifix that either

---

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the liturgical use of the cross see also GIRM 82, 236; CB 1011-1922; EACW 88. Placement of the Cross: GIRM 84, 270; EACW 86, 88.

<sup>18</sup> GIRM 270.

<sup>19</sup> GIRM, 278.

<sup>20</sup> Although strictly speaking a crucifix is a cross with a figure of the crucified.

<sup>21</sup> In the Tridentine Missal, at various moments during the celebration of the Mass, the priest was required to look at the crucifix. In the present Missal that is no longer required.

has a stand or can be fixed to one. Modern Mass kits usually have that provision.

### *The Altar*<sup>22</sup>

The altar is the main symbol of Christ's presence and his action both as victim and high priest.<sup>23</sup> Due reverence therefore ought to be given to the altar. At the beginning of celebration, after genuflection to the tabernacle (where the tabernacle is found in the sanctuary), the main celebrant and concelebrants kiss or venerate the altar with some other acceptable gesture such as a deep bow. They reverence the altar again at the end of the celebration: the concelebrants make a profound bow to it while the principle celebrant, along with the deacon, venerates it with a kiss.<sup>24</sup>

Because of its importance the altar should not be cluttered with non-essentials during liturgical celebration. It is not the place for cruets, water vessels and finger towels. Occasionally one may place them on the altar for lack of an acolyte or mass server. But even in those cases usually it is possible to place these items on a credence table and position the credence table next to the altar within arm's reach, so that the minister does not have to move away from the altar. Much less is the altar the place for spectacles, homily notes and "reference books", missalettes or personal handkerchiefs.

The main altar of a church should be fixed. According to biblical symbolism and Western tradition, at least the table of a fixed altar is made of natural stone. Another "solid, becoming and skilfully constructed material" may be approved by the Episcopal conference. Fixed altars are solemnly dedicated by a bishop or, exceptionally, by a delegated priest. Movable altars are blessed by a bishop or authorised priest. The altar stands at the central axis of the sanctuary.

---

<sup>22</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 296-308; Decoration of the altar: GIRM 49, 268-70; CB 48; EACW 95, 103; PS 17, 25, 48-49, 57; IRL 43; Dedication of an altar: DedCh 2.16, 4.1-4.30; Design and placement of an altar SC 128; GIRM 261-267; Giapp 263; CB 48, EACW 61, 71-73.

<sup>23</sup> The tabernacle *contains* Christ in the form of the Blessed Sacrament, it does not *symbolise* him.

<sup>24</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 251.

The proportions of an altar are important. While its height may be slightly lower than in times past, there has also been a tendency in recent years to reduce the size of the altar, to emphasise the celebrant as he faces the people. But the altar is not a pulpit nor a functional object. In itself it is the great and holy sign of Christ. Accordingly, it should be designed to be revered and respected at all times. A small altar may be appropriate in a small chapel, but in a church an insignificant altar should be replaced by an ample table of sacrifice that is beautiful and worthy of the sublime action of Christ our Priest.

The relics of a saint, not necessarily a martyr, should be placed beneath the mensa (table top) of a new fixed altar when it is dedicated.<sup>25</sup> The relic must be authentic and an identifiable part of the body of a saint, kept in a reliquary built into or located within the substructure of the new altar.

The steps around the altar should be planned carefully so that all the people can participate visually and so that the ceremonies can be carried out conveniently. The missal assumes that Mass can be celebrated either facing the people or facing the altar. Therefore there should be ample space on the footpace or "predella" on both sides of the altar for the celebrant to stand and genuflect and also so that he may conveniently walk around the altar when he incenses it. The footpace is usually covered with fine quality carpet.

#### Items on the Altar

The altar is to be covered with at least one white cloth. In addition, on or next to the altar are to be placed candlesticks with lighted candles: at least two in any celebration, or even four or six, especially for a Sunday Mass or a holy day of obligation. If the Diocesan Bishop celebrates, then seven candles should be used. Also on or close to the altar, there is to be a cross with a figure of Christ crucified. The candles and the cross adorned with a figure of Christ crucified may also be carried in the Entrance Procession. On the altar itself may be placed the Book of the

---

<sup>25</sup> See GIRM no. 266.

gospels, distinct from the book of other readings, unless it is carried in the Entrance Procession.<sup>26</sup>

### Altar Clothes

At least one altar cloth must be provided for Mass. This cloth should not be confused with a coloured antependium. In the Western tradition, it is white or some similar colour. Adornment may be added to it according to local custom and culture. An undercloth may be useful. A plastic or waxed undercloth is necessary on a recently dedicated altar where much Chrism has been used. The altar cloth may be removed after Mass, but the stripped altar is a distinct sign best reserved for Good Friday. It is more convenient to cover the altar cloth with a simple dust cover, to keep it clean at all times.

Although not obligatory, an antependium, or frontal, enhances the dignity of the altar. Together with a matching lectern fall and tabernacle veil, it clearly defines the season by changing the whole setting for the celebration in a harmonious but vivid way. Depending on the design of the altar, the antependium usually comes to the ground, at least at the front of the altar. Care should be taken to choose fabrics of good quality and a noble design in accord with the architecture of the church.

### Candles at the Altar

Candles are required for Mass: two, four or six. Varying the number of candles is a way of distinguishing days and celebrations. A good custom has developed in some places of using two for ferial days and memorials, four for feasts and six for Sundays and solemnities or other important celebrations. The Roman Rite envisages an uneven number of candles on the altar, seven, only when the diocesan bishop celebrates on major occasions. There are various ways of arranging the candles on or near the altar. It is also possible to place the candles in an asymmetrical fashion, for instance putting three or four candles of unequal length to one side of the altar, and a flowers to the other side.

---

<sup>26</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 117.



White or cream wax is customary for altar candles. There is no obligation to use bees wax, but high quality candles seem to be preferable. Glass protectors may be useful in a place subject to draughts and are necessary outdoors. They should be made of clear glass to avoid confusion with lamps.

A tendency to reduce the size of candles and candlesticks is giving way to common sense and better taste. Many traditional candlesticks of reasonable proportions can be used for Mass facing the people because in fact they do not obscure the celebrant and often enhance the dignity and proportions of the altar.

There is much to be said for standard candlesticks, which especially improve the appearance and proportions of a small altar. They may stand near the altar, and the top of each candlestick should be at least level with the surface of the mensa. Sets of six large candlesticks inherited from the past can be refurbished for use as standard lights. Whatever way of arranging the liturgical candles is chosen, these beautiful signs of divine light and the angelic presence should be visibly related to the altar, so as to draw all eyes to the central focus of the worshipping assembly.

#### Flowers at the Altar

The liturgical use of flowers is governed by the liturgical seasons and local custom. Flowers are not used on or near the altar during Lent, on All Souls Day or at funerals. It seems preferable to use them with moderation during Advent. The presence or absence of flowers is an effective sign according to the principle of contrast. Flowers can also be carefully selected so as to reflect the liturgical season or occasion depicted also in the liturgical colour of the day. Except for flowers growing in pots, the use of indoor plants seems best avoided. It also seems preferable never to use artificial flowers.

The manner of selection and arrangement of flowers depends very much on artistic taste. But flowers can also depict a love and reverence for sacred liturgy (or lack of it). Wilted and shrivelled flowers with betters and pollen grains scattered all over the place reflects badly on the solicitude of the sacristan.

## Microphones

The microphone has become an important part of the liturgy in as far as it enables to congregation to hear what is said. Pastors should therefore be prepared to do some spending to ensure that microphones used are of good quality and in good working order. The choice of microphones is also important. Large microphones detract from the sacred vessels and clutter the Mensa. Visually they violate the ancient rule that nothing that does not pertain to the Eucharistic Sacrifice is ever to be placed on an altar. Ideally the altar microphone should be a flat type that is not visible to the congregation. This type of microphone has the added advantage of a capacity to pick up sounds of the concelebrants<sup>27</sup> at the altar, without having to be shifted.

Wireless portable and wearable microphones have a lot to recommend them for the liturgy. They are not conspicuous. Besides they permit free movement of the celebrant: from the presidential chair to the altar and to the ambo, or even to any other place in the church on such occasions when this is needed such as baptisms, matrimony, or conducting the stations of the cross. Thus they serve in place of three or more fixed microphones, avoiding the inconvenience of having to shift a microphone from one place to the other. Moreover, they are not very expensive in comparison to the conventional wire microphones. They can also be used for liturgies conducted outside the church building since they are easily portable. One who uses a wireless microphone, however, needs to pay particular attention to switch it off whenever it is not needed, for it transmits all the little sounds made by the one who wears them. Even a cough or sneeze may be a distraction, for instance when a reading is being taken by someone other than the one wearing the microphone. At times a careless minister may even get out the church after the liturgy and start talking to people with the

---

<sup>27</sup> It is to be noted that the concelebrant speaks loudly only when it is his turn to take a part of the eucharistic prayer reserved for concelebrants. Otherwise with regard to those parts where the concelebrant accompanies the main celebrant he should speak in a barely audible voice and not compete with the main celebrant. He need not even make use of the microphone.

microphone still on distracting those who remain in the church for some moments of private reflection and prayer.



*The Tabernacle*<sup>28</sup>

The tabernacle is a receptacle for the reservation of the Eucharist. As such it should be “immovable, made of solid and non-transparent material (for this would be tantamount to perpetual exposition), and so locked as to give the greatest security against any danger of profanation.”<sup>29</sup> It should be sited in a distinguished place in the church or oratory, a place that is conspicuous, suitably adorned and conducive to prayer.<sup>30</sup> It is recommended

that the tabernacle be placed in a separate chamber or “tabernacle chapel” which is part of the main church, where this is possible. It may be placed in a wall niche, on a pillar or Eucharistic tower.<sup>31</sup> The

---

<sup>28</sup> SC 128; CB 49; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 314; EACW 80.

<sup>29</sup> Can. 983 § 3

<sup>30</sup> It is a grave abuse to relegate the tabernacle to a room or to an area at the back of a church or to place it behind seats for the people. The place of reservation cannot be said to be “very prominent” or “distinguished” if the faithful cannot see it from the body of the church or if they cannot find it easily.

<sup>31</sup> The *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* mentions the altar as one of the places on which the tabernacle may be located (no. 276). In the document of the American Episcopal Conference it is stated that [the tabernacle] should not be placed on an altar for the altar is a place for action not for reservation. It is the opinion of the writer that the two statements do not necessarily contradict. The normal place of reservation of the Eucharist is the tabernacle away from the altar. In extraordinary circumstances, however, such as during Mass celebrated outside the

tabernacle must be kept clean and dry. It is customary to place a small corporal within it and to line the inner walls with fine fabric or gold. A ledge or table in front of the tabernacle is useful if it is not located on or close to an altar.

Whatever form the tabernacle takes, it should be veiled as the primary sign of the Real Presence. The veil may be white or preferably the colour of the day or season. The veil represents the holy tent of the Lord. It is thus a paradoxical sign of mystery, revealing by concealing the sacred Presence of Emmanuel who "tabernacles" among us.

The lamp (or lamps) perpetually burning before the Eucharistic Lord<sup>32</sup> should be a living flame fed by oil or wax, but obviously not a volatile fuel. A natural flame is preferable because it signifies an offering as well as light. However, the bishop may allow an electric lamp for practical reasons. Always visually related to the tabernacle, the lamp may be set on a wall bracket or on a stand, or it may take the dignified traditional form of a hanging lamp. However, as with other objects, the lamp should not stand directly on the tabernacle or immediately in front of the door. Roman practice prescribed a clear glass for the lamp, but this has been widely superseded by the red. In some places, permanent electric illumination is also directed onto or around the tabernacle itself. This practice has much to commend it, although it is no substitute for the Eucharistic lamp or lamps.

### *The Sacristy*<sup>33</sup>

While not strictly part of the liturgical setting, the sacristy plays an important role in the preparations for worship and in its worthy accomplishment. The sacristy may be located near the sanctuary or the entrance to the church. where the sacristy is located behind the altar at least a distinct vesting room near the door to the church is desirable.

---

Church the altar becomes the most suitable place for temporarily reserving the Blessed Sacrament.

<sup>32</sup> Can. 940

<sup>33</sup> GIRM 81, CB 53; EACW 82.

A *crucifix* or some other sacred image should be the central focus of the major sacristy, as this is customarily venerated by clergy and servers before and after liturgical celebrations. A *card* should be displayed bearing the names of the Pope and the diocesan bishop and the title of the church, for the information of visiting celebrants. Holy water should be available in a stoup at the door into the main church. A *bell* may be hung on the wall near this door to alert the people when a procession is about to enter the church.

In designing or renovating a sacristy, the following details should be kept in mind: a *spacious table* or bench for setting out vestments, ample *cupboards and drawers*, a secure *safe* for sacred vessels and the tabernacle key, a *sink* and *towels*, a second small sink leading directly into the earth (sacrarium or piscine), a *place for storing bread and wine*, a *bookcase* for the liturgical books, safer custody for sacramental registers, a *fixed place for the current "Ordo"* or calendar, a *clock*, a *bracket* for the processional cross, a place for reserving the Eucharist during the Easter ceremonies, and a repository or *ambry* for the Holy Oils, if they are not kept in the baptistery.

In the "work sacristy", there should be a large sink with hot and cold water and an ironing board and iron, storage for a vacuum cleaner, a polisher, cleaning materials, storage space for candlesticks, candelabra, the Easter candle stand, crib figures and for church supplies such as candles, votive candles, oil or wax lamp refills, incense, charcoal, last year's palms. A refrigerator may be useful. A fireproof area where thuribles are kept and prepared should be in or near the sacristy. However, the servers and a robed choir should have their own separate vesting rooms.

"The practice is to be kept of building a sacrarium in the sacristy, into which are poured the water from the purification of sacred vessels and linens..."<sup>34</sup>

The same principles of cleanliness and order should be maintained in the sacristy as are essential in the care of the church itself. Special care should be taken of decorative objects, vessels and vestments handed on from the past, except for objects of no great value which

---

<sup>34</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 334.

are beyond repair or refurbishing. Silence before and after a liturgical celebration should be required of all who assist in the sacristy.<sup>35</sup>

### *Conclusion*

“All these elements, though they must express the hierarchical structure and the diversity of ministries, should nevertheless bring about a close and coherent unity that is clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people. Indeed, the character and beauty of the place and all its furnishings should foster devotion and show forth the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there.”<sup>36</sup>

The love of the house of the Lord includes the care for it as well as its cleaning and decoration. It requires constant repairs and maintenance. Within the church there should be a general atmosphere of silence and reverence, even outside liturgical activities. Certainly this needn't be exaggerated. People do not have to whisper while sweeping or cleaning the church if for some reason they need to communicate. But at the same time the church is not the place to hold idle and banal conversations. One needs only to recall the reverence demanded for the house of the Lord. It was the lack of reverence for it that led to the one occasion in the gospels in which it is reported that he reverted to physical violence against the offenders.

Fear of being seen as a "sacristy priest" should never diminish the care each faithful priest and deacon ought to have for the holy and dedicated place where he celebrates the Divine Mysteries and sacraments for his people. Such a love for the house of the Lord should be evident in the use the clergy make of the church outside the time of public worship. It is the best place for the private celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. Here we make visits to our Eucharistic Lord, maintain our filial devotion to Mary, make our meditation and find time for prayer. These personal acts are always ecclesial, for the house of the Lord is the gathering place of His holy People, living stones in God's temple.

---

<sup>35</sup> CB, 37-38.

<sup>36</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 294.

Here we can be ourselves. Here we can anticipate our eternal destiny and, with the Psalmist, say, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!" (Psalm 83:1) and "I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord (Psalm 121:1). And in another text: "Now when the priests came out of the holy place . . . and when the song was raised with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments in praise of the Lord, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever,' the house, the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God." 2 Chronicles 5:11-14

## VESSELS AND OTHER SACRED OBJECTS

INTRODUCTION .....	34
SACRED VESSELS .....	34
<i>Chalice and Paten</i> .....	34
<i>Ciborium</i> .....	37
<i>Pyx</i> .....	38
<i>Monstrance (Ostensorium)</i> .....	38
<i>Oil Vessels</i> .....	39
<i>Cruets</i> .....	41
<i>Ewer and Basin</i> .....	41
<i>Water vessel near the Tabernacle</i> .....	41
<i>Holy water Vessel and Sprinkler</i> .....	42
<i>Thurible and incense boat</i> .....	43
OTHER SACRED OBJECTS .....	44
<i>Procession candles</i> .....	44
<i>Missal stand or cushion</i> .....	44
<i>Communion plates</i> .....	44
<i>Altar candles and other Candles</i> .....	45

### Bibliographical References:

Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, vol. II 2003, Gale, p. 630-632.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 289-310.

*Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite*, pp. 35-57.

DOL, 549-554

Martimort A.G. “Liturgical Signs: Vestments and Insignia of Celebrants and Ministers” in Martimort, *The Church at Prayer* vol. I, pp.189-201; 211-215. (he traces the historical origins of the different vestments, as well as the reform of the second Vatican Council of these vestments.)

T. Jerome Overbeck, “Vessels Sacred,” in *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, 1300-1305.



John D. Laurence, “Vestments, Liturgical,” in *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, 1305-1314.

## INTRODUCTION

As a general rule regarding sacred vessels the principle of noble simplicity applies. Whatever is used in the liturgy should be of fine quality, beautiful and worthy of God. At the same time it should be unpretentious. All should be maintained immaculately clean.<sup>37</sup> The material from which vessels are made should be durable, one that does not easily break or deteriorate.<sup>38</sup> “Like the plates and chalices or flagons, all other vessels and implements used in the liturgical celebration should be of such quality and design that they speak of the importance of the ritual action. Pitchers, vessels for holy oils, bowls, cruets, sprinklers, censers, baskets for collection, etc. - all are presented to the assembly in one way or another and speak well or ill of the deed in which the assembly is engaged.”<sup>39</sup>



### SACRED VESSELS<sup>40</sup>

#### *Chalice and Paten*

The chalice and paten are the most sacred of sacred vessels, for in them the bread and wine are consecrated and transformed into the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>41</sup> Other sacred vessels merely come in contact with the sacred. By virtue of their sacredness the chalice and paten

---

<sup>37</sup> GIRM, 312

<sup>38</sup> GIRM, 290

<sup>39</sup> EACW, 97.

<sup>40</sup> Types of vessels GIRM 80, 100, 292, 293; EACW 96-97. Number and design of vessels GIRM 293, 295; HLS 40-42; EACW 96. Material used in vessels GIRM 290-292, 294; HLS 40-41; EACW 97. Blessing and consecration of vessels GIRM 289, 296.

<sup>41</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 327.

are normally blessed by the bishop.<sup>42</sup>

The chalice should be a truly beautiful vessel, a worthy offering of human art. In itself it is the most characteristic expression of the majesty of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. If possible, a church should possess various chalices for different occasions and a larger chalice for concelebration.

The traditional form of chalice seems preferable; with a suitable cup, a convenient node and a very stable base. Not only is it always easier to use, but it is already a familiar Eucharistic symbol in the minds of our people. Chalices which resemble secular objects may provoke a profane association of ideas. A chalice is a unique sacred cup reserved for the Eucharist.

“Sacred vessels are to be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, then ordinarily they should be gilded on the inside.”<sup>43</sup> “As regards chalices and other vessels that are intended to serve as receptacles for the Blood of the Lord, they are to have bowls of non-absorbent material. The base, on the other hand, may be made of other solid and worthy material.”<sup>44</sup> A glass or ceramic chalice is easily breakable and is thus excluded as also are chalices with cups made of absorbent material or material which deteriorates easily. Moreover, it may well be argued that a priest should never celebrate the Sacred Mysteries in vessels less worthy than those he would use at his own table. The contrived "poverty" of chalices made of wood or pottery seems to end up expressing only a lack of esteem for the Eucharist itself. On the other hand, the artistic use of such simple materials for other objects in worship can embody a "noble simplicity". But what has always distinguished the Eucharistic vessels is that they are partly defined and identified as "sacred vessels" by being of significant material value. Secular vessels are never to be used for the Eucharist.

There are extreme occasions of course that can require the modification of the rule. The late Cardinal F.X. Nguyen van Thuan

---

<sup>42</sup> See Ceremonial of Bishops, p. 267f.

<sup>43</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 328.

<sup>44</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 330.

wrote in his book "Five Loaves and Two Fish" which contains some of his reflections while in prison by the communist regime in China: "once I used to celebrate with a gold-plated paten and chalice, now [I consecrate] your blood in the palm of my hand... once I used to go and visit you in the tabernacle, now I carry you with me, night and day in my pocket." For him his palm had become a chalice and his pocket a tabernacle. There is a beauty and holiness that shines through these words. It reminds one of the fact that our own bodies are greater tabernacles and chalices than those coated with gold. It reminds one of the simplicity of the Lord who chose to be born in a manger. In fact it is not far fetched to imagine that to the Lord that celebration of the Eucharist with the palm as a chalice and with the pocket as a tabernacle is more precious and authentic to the Lord than many celebrations and repositions in the 'proper' places. Nonetheless the cardinal was forced to do this by circumstances. It would be totally misplaced zeal for one to try one day and consecrate in their palms when they had the ordinary vessels, or to carry communion to the sick in their bare pockets.

A cross is usually placed on the base of the chalice to denote the side from which the celebrant drinks, thus simplifying the ablutions. The tradition of gilding the interior of the cup is commendable and also has practical advantages when cleansing the chalice.<sup>6</sup> As part of the care of the vessels he uses, the priest should ensure that the cup is regaled from time to time.

Greater freedom pertains to the form and material of the paten, ciborium, pyx or monstrance. In contrast to the chalice, "they may be made of other materials which are locally considered valuable and appropriate for sacred use, such as ebony or hard woods". But the same principles of value and worthiness are important. A large paten is favoured, but common sense would preclude a platter. It should be fashioned out of fine metal or some durable, valuable material and be clearly distinguished from a secular plate by sacred art. A shallow low ciborium may replace the patent. However, while it may be used in conjunction with the paten, the traditional ciborium would not seem appropriate to replace the main paten because it looks like a second chalice.

Guided by St. Paul, "one bread . . . one cup (1 Corinthians 10)", the ideal is to use one chalice and one paten, especially at Concelebration. However this is not always possible. It seems preferable at a major concelebration to use a set of chalices of the same design, arranging them at convenient points on the altar, not necessarily around the main chalice on the corporal. Consecrating wine in a flagon or decanter does not seem to be a sound liturgical solution, both from a practical and a symbolic point of view.

What is said of the chalice also applies to the paten. Ideally there should be one paten, for the "one Bread". In practice at major celebrations other patens or ciboria are used.

### *Ciborium*

Etymologically ciborium means a container for food. It is used to contain the consecrated hosts and for their custody in the tabernacle. The ciborium ought to be furnished with a lid that is airtight. Wooden ciboria whose covers allow in air are not good for the reservation of the sacrament since the hosts absorb moisture and become damp and possibly mouldy, unless changed at very short intervals. The ciborium should not be confused with a chalice. This could occur due the great variety of shapes for the two. However, generally the chalice is corn-shaped with slanting edges, while the ciborium whose lid must fit has edges that are straight up. Moreover the chalice usually has a cross or some appropriate mark on one side of its base.





### *Pyx*

The pyx used for taking the Eucharist to the sick should be of convenient proportions - not too small for carrying communion to several people, and not too large and difficult to carry discreetly. It should be

designed so that it may be securely closed and easily purified. Traditionally it is kept in a small bag or wallet, lined with silk, with a cord or chain so that it may be discreetly carried around the neck. It appears inappropriate to carry the Blessed Sacrament in a trouser pocket, together with keys, handkerchiefs and wallet. Certainly not in a hip pocket or a shopping bag!

### *Monstrance (Ostensorium)*

The purpose of the monstrance, or *ostensorium*, is to prolong the sacred moment of "showing" at the elevations, and so to present Our Lord to His People for adoration. For that reason the monstrance should be simple enough to draw attention not to itself, but to the Blessed Sacrament which it contains. At the same time it should be of such a quality to emphasise the dignity of the one it carries. I imagine that a monstrance made in pure glass of fine shape would ideally fulfil this conditions, since glass would be able to elevate the sacrament to the eyes of the people without allowing much else to be seen.



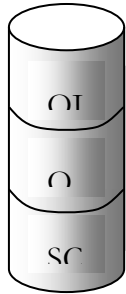
The monstrance takes various forms, always with a convenient lunette or gilded clip to hold the sacred Host for exposition, and usually equipped with a glass door on a hinge. It should be a glorious throne for Our Lord, because the splendour of the vessel contrasts with the simplicity of the appearances of bread, through which He presents Himself to us for adoration. A small or insignificant monstrance usually fails to emphasise the Host. By custom, a light veil or white cover is provided for the monstrance when it is not in use. In the tabernacle, the Host in a lunette is kept in a large pyx.



### *Oil Vessels*

The vessels for the Holy Oils take two forms, the larger chrismatories, which should be used to reserve the oils in the church, and the smaller vessels (stocks), used for convenience in the administration of the sacraments. When the parish priest obtains the oils from his bishop, he should "keep them carefully in fitting custody". Therefore care should be taken to provide for the secure reservation of the oils, preferably in a suitable and noble repository in the baptistery or sacristy. While the tubular oil stocks made with three clearly marked sections are essential in practical pastoral situations, a more significant and beautiful vessel seems preferable for the solemn liturgical celebration of the sacraments in the church.

The person using the oils should be familiar with their different designation, for there are different conventions of marking the oils. One who is not sure of the initials might do well to label the oils in words that he understands. The common designations are:

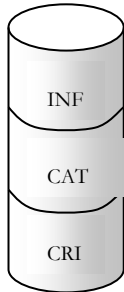


*Olio Infirmorum* (Oil of the Sick)

*Olio Catechumenorum* (oil of catechumens)

*Sancta Chrisma* (Sacred Chrism)

Other symbols used are:

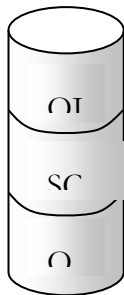


*INF* (for the infirm, sick)

*CAT* (for Catechumens)

*CRI* (Chrism)

A minister who is not sure of the different markings might do well to go by elimination. For instance:



= Oil of the Infirm

= Sacred Chrism

Can only be for the catechumens



### *Cruets*

The cruets are preferably made of glass or crystal so that the priest, deacon or server may immediately identify the wine. Metal cruets create practical problems when the acidic content of wine reacts with the metal. Some glass cruets are given a metal encasing thus



combining strength and transparency. Larger

vessels, such as decanters made of non-leaded crystal, are necessary for concelebration or when Communion is given under both kinds. Cruets of value and beauty may be reserved for major celebrations.

### *Ewer and Basin*

Distinct from the cruets, a separate ewer and basin is used for the washing of the celebrant's hands on those occasions that call for it such as after anointing during baptism, on ash Wednesday after the smearing with ashes and on Holy Thursday at the washing of feet. It should be reasonably large for the washing of his hands, not the tips of his fingers. It is made of glass or ceramics. By tradition, a ewer and basin of precious metal is reserved for bishops or prelates. The pontifical ewer and basin should be a fine work of art.

### *Water vessel near the Tabernacle*

Near the tabernacle (on the altar of reservation or on a ledge or small table) there should be a covered vessel filled with fresh water together with a purificator for taking the sacred particles off the fingers of those who distribute Holy Communion. It is also customary in many places to place two candles near a tabernacle located in an area distinct from the sanctuary. These are lit when the tabernacle is opened.

### *Holy water Vessel and Sprinkler*

A holy water vessel and sprinkler of ample proportions are easier to clean and to use. Water may be blessed in this vessel at the rite of



the blessing and sprinkling at the beginning of a Sunday Mass. A reasonably deep "bucket" with a moveable handle is more convenient. The sprinkler may take the form of a brush or of a hollow, perforated ball, perhaps containing a sponge. Other sprinklers, particularly those contained in Mass kits are made in such a way that

they can contain holy water. At the moment of sprinkling they are half unscrewed to allow the water to get out in desired quantities. Such sprinklers are handy for the administration of sacraments and sacramentals outside the church building, because of their portability. But the pocket-size sprinkler conveniently used in pastoral situations does not seem appropriate for celebrations in a church.

*Thurible and incense boat*



The thurible seems to function best when it is fashioned along traditional lines, hanging from four chains, the lid raised by the central chain, and secured by a ring. Thuribles made with one chain are not as convenient to use as they seem. In the West, the chains are usually about a meter or a yard long, so that the thurible may be swung at length with one hand in processions. It should be at the same time a beautiful and a practical vessel, with ample openings for the smoke and a secure but removable cup for the charcoal. It should be regularly and carefully cleaned. The thurible should be regularly cleaned of the incense that melts and coagulates on it. It should not be filled with charcoal or coal up to the brim when under use, for fear of spilling the burning embers.

The incense boat should be conveniently designed to hold the incense, with a hinged lid and a practical spoon. The holy water vessel, thurible and boat may be fashioned out of the same metal, in

harmonious design as a matching set of objects. The incense boat and spoon should also be cleaned regularly.

## OTHER SACRED OBJECTS

### *Procession candles<sup>45</sup>*

The processional candlesticks used by servers should be tall candlesticks; not too heavy, preferably designed with a large dish to catch falling wax, and a knob and base so that servers may carry the candles securely and conveniently. During Mass, these candles rest on the credence table and remain burning for the whole of the rite. In some places the altar candles are used for processions, although this does not always seem convenient or desirable. The processional candlesticks may match the processional cross in material and design because they are used as a "set".

### *Missal stand or cushion*

A convenient and dignified stand or cushion is normally required for the missal. It seems preferable to use a missal stand that can be adjusted at different angles to suit the needs of various priests. A veil of the appropriate liturgical colour may cover the stand, or a cushion case of a similar colour may be used to cover the cushion. It never remains on the altar outside the time of Mass, nor is it placed on the altar at Mass with the people until the preparation of the gifts.

### *Communion plates*

The communion plate is required when the Eucharist is ministered by intinction, lest drops of the Precious Blood fall. It is still used in some churches whenever Communion is distributed. It should be kept on the credence table during Mass. The main celebrant, or whoever else cleans the vessels, should remember to wipe the communion plates and pour the particles in the chalice before cleansing them with water. Better not trust the eye in judging whether particles have stuck on the communion plates or not.

---

<sup>45</sup> GIRM 79, 269; EACW 89-90.

### *Altar candles<sup>46</sup> and other Candles*

There are orderly procedures that should be taught to all who have the care of candles and lamps before, during or after liturgical celebrations. A taper should always be used to light candles, not only because it is more convenient but also because it is more dignified than using a match or cigarette lighter. The taper may be held in a metal tube, usually attached to a rod to make it easy to light tall candles, such as the Easter candle. The taper should also be bent or curved slightly, but never broken, so that it meets the wick of the candle at a convenient angle.

A suggested order of lighting the altar candles is as follows: (a) Light the taper in the sacristy and bring it to the sanctuary. Bow to the altar, or genuflect if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved behind or on it. (b) Light the candles from whichever side is more convenient, so that you do not have to stretch out over the altar or over a candle which is already burning. (c) Start on the right-hand end, then go to the left-hand end, making the customary reverence at the centre. (d) If there are four or six candles to light, start by lighting the inside candle on the right-hand end first, moving out to the next candle, likewise for candelabra if they are used for Eucharistic adoration. (e) If four or six candles are arranged along each side of the altar, light the candle at the back first, moving forward. (f) Finally, make the customary reverence, return to the sacristy and only then extinguish the taper.

To extinguish candles, always use a suitable snuffer, which should be cleaned regularly. Proceed exactly as for the lighting of candles, except: (a) extinguish them beginning on the left-hand end of the altar, and (b) if there are four or six candles to extinguish, start by extinguishing the outside candle, moving in to the next candle. Never force the snuffer down onto the warm wax. It functions best when it is lowered steadily over the flame, which consumes the air

---

<sup>46</sup> Regarding their origin see: "The Development of Ceremonial: Candles on the altar" in Don Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1945. Pp. 319-332. More information on Candles and Candlesticks in GIRM 79, 269, EACW 89-90.

inside it and then goes out. Never leave a wick smouldering, as it may burn away to powder.

Because it is normally large, decorated and valuable, the Easter candle should always be lit or extinguished carefully. Do not forget to check whether by negligence it has been allowed to remain burning after any celebration at which-it has been used.

A taper should be used to light the wax refill of a sanctuary lamp or votive lamps, because pieces of a burned match floating in wax or oil may ignite. To avoid splashing wax around the church, tapers should always be used to light the hand candles carried by the people at the Easter Vigil and during the processions for the Presentation of the Lord, Corpus Christi and on other occasions.

Sacristans should lightly smear oil over the cup of a candlestick or over a metal tray beneath votive candles, so that drops of wax may be removed easily. A hot iron over brown wrapping paper lifts most wax from altar cloths or vestments.

## LINENS AND VESTMENTS

LINENS .....	48
<i>Corporal</i> .....	48
<i>Pall</i> .....	49
<i>Chalice Veil</i> .....	50
<i>Finger towel</i> .....	50
<i>Purificator</i> .....	51
VESTMENTS.....	52
<i>Amice</i> .....	53
<i>The Alb</i> .....	54
<i>Cincture (Girdle, Cinglum)</i> .....	55
<i>Stole</i> .....	55
<i>Chasuble</i> .....	56
<i>Dalmatic</i> .....	57
<i>Cope</i> .....	57
<i>Humeral Veil</i> .....	57
REGALIA OF A BISHOP .....	58
<i>The Mitre</i> .....	58
<i>Skull Cap (Zucchetto)</i> .....	59
<i>Crosier (Staff)</i> .....	59

## LINENS

All linens should be kept clean, ironed and spotless. Old linens should be replaced. A good supply of linens should be available.<sup>47</sup> Finger towels and purificators are best made of a material that easily absorbs water such as cotton.

### *Corporal*



The corporal must always be used for Mass. It is square so that it may be folded customarily into nine sections and hence stored flat. It should be made of white linen or a similar white fabric of the finest quality. Corporals may be starched so as to fold easier. A larger

corporal may be used for concelebration. Sometimes it may be necessary to use more than one corporal where there are several chalices and ciboria. Considering its traditional association with the holy shroud, it is preferably left unadorned, although a cross is usually worked into the centre of the side near the celebrant. A corporal may also be kept in a burse near the tabernacle. A small corporal is used in a pyx and inside the tabernacle. The corporal should be carefully folded and unfolded so as not to spill the small particles of consecrated hosts that fall on it. The following are the steps through which a corporal is folded and unfolded.

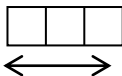
---

<sup>47</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 57.

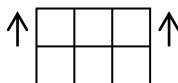




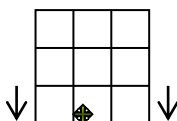
Step one: place the corporal facing upwards



Step two: unfold the corporal sideways



Step three: unfold the corporal away from you



Step four: unfold the remaining flap towards you

The folding of the corporal takes the opposite procedure from that of opening it. During baptisms the corporal should not be used as a baptismal veil on the heads of children whose parents did not bring their own white garment.

### *Pall*

The pall is the hard spare pad used to cover the chalice. The pall is optional. It is made of starched linen or fabric stretched over a card or wood. It is convenient at those times of the year when insects and dust are prevalent or in places where objects could fall into the chalice, for example during Mass celebrated outdoors. Its upper surface may be beautifully adorned.

### *Chalice Veil*



The chalice veil has fallen in disuse in many places today. Yet it is recommended in the *General Instruction*.<sup>48</sup> The chalice veil is to be used at Mass. In fabric and colour it usually matches the vestments, but it may always be white. Veiling the chalice for the duration of the Liturgy of the Word is a visible way of emphasising the transition to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, when the chalice is unveiled at the altar and the gifts are prepared. Unless a pall is placed under the veil, it usually will not fall neatly. Although no longer required, the use of a matching burse has practical advantages because it maintains the neatness of the corporal, which is frequently handled by servers and other ministers.

### *Finger towel*

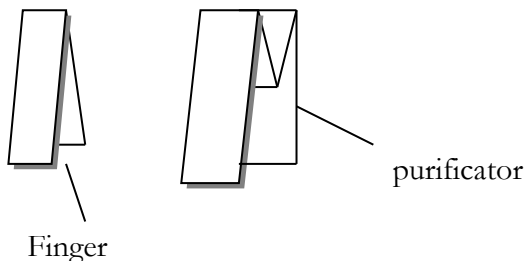
The finger towel is usually white and smaller than purificators. However, the towel for the washing of the celebrant's hands should be practical, absorbent and ample. Finger towels should be frequently changed with clean ones.

---

<sup>48</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 118: "It is a praiseworthy practice to cover the chalice with a veil, which may be either the colour of the day or white." It is also listed among the requisites for a stational Mass in CB 125.

### *Purificator*

The purificator is used for cleaning the chalice and wiping of the ciboria and communion plates. It is not to be used for the wiping of the mouth of the communicant, particularly when there are other concelebrants. This is a matter of charity, hygiene and common sense. It is usually folded three times length-wise so as to function



as a convenient towel for the cleansing of the sacred vessels. It should not be over-adorned and should be made of white linen or some other absorbent fabric. As

mentioned above, the purificator should be distinguished from a finger towel. Usually the cross of the purificator is placed right in the middle while that of a finger towel is on the side. At times the purificator is marked with a red cross while the finger towel is plain white. Another distinguishing mark is the way the two are folded. The purificator is folded in the shape of a capital M in order to allow it to rest on the chalice with a depression to hold the spoon, which scoops water for mixing with the wine. The purificator on the other hand is folded in a V shape with the flaps pressed together. In large communities of priests it is advisable for each to carry their own purificators. Each could have a small box marked with their names or numbers, kept in the sacristy, to contain their personal purificators (an amicti).

## VESTMENTS<sup>49</sup>

### Bibliographical Reference

“The Development of Ceremonial: Vestments” in Don Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1945. Pp. 398-410.

“Vestments, Liturgical”, in Peter E. Finks, *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 1305ff.

One of the objectives of wearing vestments during liturgical functions is to distinguish the different liturgical roles. “Not all the members of the Church, the body of Christ, have the same functions to fulfil. That there are different ministries performed in the course of a celebration is made clear by the use of different vestments. These signify the role proper to each person who has a special part in the rites, and they help to make the ceremonies beautiful and solemn.”<sup>50</sup>

Liturgical vestments have much the same role as that of a police uniform, or a doctor’s gown, or the white uniform of a navy office, or an airline hostess. These vestments have a psychological effect. A person is given some confidence in seeing a doctor coming to examine him or her in an immaculate white gown and a stethoscope around his neck, much more than one who comes in a loose T-shirt and shorts. Again one is more inclined to support a soccer team in a beautiful uniform than one with each player dressed anyhow, if one knows neither team. Similarly a person performing a liturgical role with the proper vestments does give a first impression. The vestments add to the beauty of the ceremony. Obviously the first impression alone is not enough. Nonetheless it is important.

---

<sup>49</sup>*General Instruction 2002*, no. 335-347; Meaning of vestments GIRM 297, EACW 93, various types of vestments GIRM 161, 298-303; CB 65-67. Design of vestments SC 128; GIRM 394-307; CB 37-38; EACW 93-94.

<sup>50</sup> GIRM, 297.

“The beauty and dignity of liturgical vestments is to be sought in the excellence of their material and the elegance of their cut, rather than in an abundance of adventitious ornamentation. Any images, symbols or figures employed in decorating vestments should be sacred in character and exclude anything inappropriate.”<sup>51</sup> In particular one ought to be choosy in selecting the material of the vestments. It is true that there is a lot of room given with regard to the selection of material. “Besides the materials traditionally used for making sacred vestments, natural fabrics from each region are admissible, as also artificial fabrics which accord with the dignity of the sacred action and of those who are to wear the vestments...”<sup>52</sup> This does not mean that any material is good for the making of vestments. Vestments should be kept clean and well ironed. It is not rare to find on big occasions a concelebrant wearing an alb or chasuble that looks like one rescued from the mouth of a cow, all crumpled and creased. Nor should they be too old, faded and worn out; stained or torn. It does not seem appropriate to patch vestments unless the patch is made in such an expert way that it does not show.

### *Amice*



An amice is a rectangular or square white garment with straps on two corners for fastening it around the waste. Its use is optional,

---

<sup>51</sup> GIRM, 306.

<sup>52</sup> GIRM, 305; SC, 128.

but hygienic and practical: it protects against dirtying the alb around the neck with perspiration. It is much easier to wash the amice than the alb. A church ought to have enough supply of amices, so that amices that have been used by one person may not be used by another before they are washed. The amice is also helpful in covering the ordinary neckwear or inside the alb, particularly when an alb is open around the neck. In place of an amice a petty-collar may be used.<sup>53</sup>

### *The Alb*



The alb is common to all ministers,<sup>54</sup> even though usually servers wear a their own servers' dress and seminarians use cassocks during the liturgy. When necessary all these may use the alb.

The alb should be ample and preferably tailored for the man who wears it. Whether or not it is worn over a cassock, it should fall to the ankles and come to the wrists. An alb used with the cincture should be longer than normal, for the cincture tends to make it appear shorter. Where affordable it is good that each priest has a personal alb tailored to their measure. In such a case it is good also to have a supply of albs of different sizes for visitors.

A collar on the alb to replace the amice should conceal the everyday dress of the priest, preferably not resembling the monastic amice,

---

<sup>53</sup> The petty-collar is normally worn under a coat to substitute for a clerical shirt. If worn under the alb it covers the street clothes.

<sup>54</sup> GIRM, 298, 301

which covers the hood of monks and friars. When the alb is adorned with embroidery, lace, this should be of good quality.

### *Cincture (Girdle, Cingulum)*

Unless the alb is tailored in a specific way that requires no use of a cincture, the cincture ought to be used.<sup>55</sup> The cincture also helps to hold the stole in place where the stole is not worn over the chasuble. There are different styles of fastening the cincture that one should learn. One should not fasten it like a shoelace! There is also an elegant way of folding it so as to unfold it easily. It may be white or the same colour as the vestments. A narrow band of fabric may replace the cincture. Some albs have the band attached to the alb themselves. The problem with these is that they tend to be specific to a particular waste size of an individual. If the person is narrower in the waste then the bands even when fastened will leave the cincture loose around the waste. On the other hand if the person has a wider waste size then the bands may not serve the intended purpose.

### *Stole*

The stole is worn by priests around the neck and hanging down evenly at the front. A deacon wears the stole on his left shoulder, crossing it under his right arm, where it is secured in a convenient way. Because the stole is the symbol of the sacramental and teaching authority of those in Sacred Orders, it is worn only by bishops, priests and deacons. Sacramental or "preaching" stoles are usually more ornamented than those worn under the chasuble. A priest or one assisting him to vest should see to it that the stole hangs evenly at the front. One can easily check this by looking at the stole's two ends above one's feet and adjusting them to match. Some stoles have symmetrical patterns. By adjusting these to be at the same level one makes sure that the stole is properly in place. It is also good to have a dressing mirror in the sacristy for the ministers to see that they are properly dressed. Improper dressing can be a distraction to the congregation.

---

<sup>55</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 119.

## *Chasuble*

The chasuble is worn over the alb and stole. Ornamented stoles may be worn over the chasuble). During Mass the principle celebrant should wear at least a chasuble and stole over the alb.<sup>56</sup> Where possible even concelebrants should wear chasubles, but it is also permissible for them for a good



reason to simply wear an alb and stole. This is the case for instance when they are in big numbers or when the chasubles are not sufficient.<sup>57</sup> The beauty and dignity of this most visible Eucharistic vestment is essential in a properly ordered liturgy. A wide variety of styles of chasuble has evolved over the centuries, each having its own distinct contribution to Catholic worship and art. The integrity of these different "shapes" should be respected, because there is no such thing as a "correct" style of chasuble, although the architecture of a church may favour a specific style. Its distinctive beauty should be derived from the material and form of the whole garment rather than its decoration. Attention should be paid to the quality of fabric and the skilled workmanship involved in making the gracious sacerdotal vestment common to all Rites in the West and most Rites in the East.

Traditionally, the chasuble is seen to represent the charity of Christ which "covers all things" (Colossians 3:14). In the context of celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice, this symbol of charity should surely take precedence over the symbol of authority. Therefore it does not seem fitting that the stole be worn over the chasuble.

---

<sup>56</sup> GIRM 81a, 161, 299; Can. 929

<sup>57</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 209.



### *Dalmatic*

The deacon's dalmatic should normally be of the same fabric as the celebrant's chasuble. As it is the deacon's own vestment, he should not always accept the second option of wearing only an alb and stole. However, the dalmatic may be omitted either out of necessity or for less solemnity.<sup>58</sup> In churches where several deacons minister, at least two dalmatics should be provided to match each of the chasubles used at a solemn Mass. In cathedrals more matching dalmatics are required because when the bishop presides solemnly he should be assisted by at least three deacons.

### *Cope*

The cope is worn for the solemn celebration of the sacraments outside of Mass, for the sung celebration of Lauds and Vespers in the Liturgy of the Hours, for certain processions<sup>59</sup> - such as Corpus Christi and Eucharistic Congresses - and for Eucharistic Benediction with a monstrance. Whether shaped to rest on the shoulders or not, it is preferably a full half-circle in shape, usually with a hood, and secured at the front by a band of fabric or a clasp. Although no longer named as part of Episcopal regalia, tradition reserves the large and richly worked clasp to the bishop in his own diocese. One who wears a cope should take care not to stumble over it particularly when climbing steps.

### *Humeral Veil*

The humeral veil is a fabric similar in shape to an amice, but bigger, of richer material and without the straps. It is held at the front by a clasp or tied with a ribbon. It should be of ample proportions. The white humeral veil is worn over the shoulders when carrying the Eucharist in procession and when giving Eucharistic Benediction. It may fittingly match the cope or, for the sake of convenience, be of a lighter fabric. The humeral veil should be handed to the minister in such a way that the clasp or straps are easily accessible to both his hands. Some humeral veils are furnished with a kind of pockets into

---

<sup>58</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 119 b; 338. CB 67

<sup>59</sup> GIRM, 303

which the minister inserts his hands before holding the Blessed Sacrament. When the humeral veil lacks these pockets, the minister should wind it around the hands, first on one the on the other, so as no part of the arm is visible at the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament. Afterwards he should hold the monstrance with one veiled hand while freeing the other and vice versa so as not to knock over the Blessed Sacrament. The idea of blessing with the Blessed Sacrament with hands veiled is to emphasise that it is the Eucharistic Lord who blesses even if through the instrumentality of the minister.

## REGALIA OF A BISHOP

### *The Mitre*<sup>60</sup>

At Mass, in addition to the priestly vestments, the bishop may use either of the two kinds of mitre, ornate or simple, depending on the occasion. The mitre is worn at all solemn Masses and at major functions, such as the public celebration of sacraments.

The removal and replacement of the mitre is a complicated affair that usually throws into panic those unfamiliar with serving a bishop. Sometimes a bishop is kind enough to deal with his own mitre if he has no special Master of Ceremony, and if those celebrating with him are not familiar with the movements of the mitre. However, a deacon in his capacity as official server of the bishop on liturgical functions, ought to know when to remove and to replace the mitre. In case of doubt one can borrow and study a bishop's ceremonial before hand (normally each bishop has a copy of the Ceremonial of Bishops).

In general a mitre is worn from the beginning of the procession to the point of genuflection (or bowing) before the tabernacle and/or altar. It is removed before the genuflection and handed to the server (otherwise it might fall off). It is replaced when the bishop sits to hear the first reading. It is then removed when he stands to hear the gospel, usually after he has put incense into the incense

---

<sup>60</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. II, p. 636.

boat and blessed the deacon who is to read. It is replaced before the bishop begins his sermon or homily. Other concelebrating bishops also replace their mitres. It is removed at the conclusion of the homily. It is replaced when the bishop sits after intercessions and during the collection of gifts. It is removed before offering the gifts, that is, before the prayer “blessed are you of God...” It is then replaced only before the final blessing at the conclusion of Mass.

*Skull Cap (Zucchetto)*

The skullcap (Zucchetto)<sup>61</sup> is worn beneath the mitre. It is worn under the mitre. Before the Eucharistic prayer (that is, before the introduction of the Preface with the words “the Lord be with you”) the skullcap is removed and placed either at the credence table or at the seat of the bishop, for he will not need it again until he goes back to sit. It is replaced when he sits after communion. One who removes and replaces the mitre should be careful as much as possible not to dislodge the skullcap. Sometimes it is necessary for the bishop to re-adjust the mitre for himself, in order to set the skullcap in position.

*Crosier (Staff)<sup>62</sup>*

The crosier of staff is used by the Ordinary in his territory as a sign of his duty to shepherd the flock of Christ. He during solemn Mass the bishop carries the crosier up to before the genuflection at the entrance procession. It is then given to him at the sermon, and removed immediately after it. It is given back to him before imparting the final blessing - immediately after the words “the Lord be with you”.

When a server (or any other person who is not the bishop) holds the crosier it should face him like an inverted P. He should hand it

---

<sup>61</sup> Probably it is called zucchetto from the Italian zuccho, which means a pumpkin due to its shape, which is like a sliced pumpkin. Zucchetto is a diminutive meaning “little pumpkin”.

<sup>62</sup> On its origins and origins of other episcopal insignia see: “The Development of Ceremonial: Insignia” in Don Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1945. Pp. 410-416. See also *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. II 2003, p. 637.

over like that to the bishop, who holds it facing the people like a proper P.

## LITURGICAL COLOURS<sup>63</sup>

WHITE .....	61
RED .....	62
GREEN.....	62
VIOLET (PURPLE).....	62
ROSE .....	63
BLACK.....	63
CHOIR DRESS .....	64

The liturgical colours express some aspect of the particular mystery celebrated, be it a feast day solemnity or Memoria. They give a sense of progress of the liturgical year with the shifting colours of the liturgical seasons. They also add to the beauty of the liturgical ceremonies.



### WHITE

White is worn for solemnities, feasts and memorials of the Lord other than his passion. It is worn at the feasts and memorials of Our Lady and of the angels. It is worn in the festive seasons of Easter and Christmas, both at the offices and

during Mass. At funerals white may be used instead of purple or black as a symbol of the resurrection and of hope. When white is used for funerals, it may be appropriate to have a simple and distinctive set of vestments set aside only for this purpose, so as not to appear festive and offensive to sorrow.

---

<sup>63</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 346-347; GIRM 307-310. Cf. M. McCance, ed., “Liturgical Colours”, in Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, vol. II, 2003, Gale, p. 645-646.

In practice, ivory, cream or a similar shade may replace white, but surely not grey, which has no festive associations. Cloth of gold or silver may also replace white. Except where the Spanish privilege is permitted, blue is not used for Our Lady, but it may be customary to use white vestments adorned with blue for her feasts.

## RED

Red is worn for Pentecost, on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, at votive Masses of the Holy Spirit, the Precious Blood and the Passion, for feasts of the apostles and evangelists (except John and the Conversion of St. Paul)<sup>64</sup> and for feasts of martyrs. It symbolises the blood of the martyrs as well as the fire of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the vestments of Pentecost and the feasts of the apostles are distinguished by the symbols on the vestments, for instance when they depict flames of fire or the dove. Strictly speaking this is not the vestment to be used on the feasts of martyrs when it is the symbol of blood that is called for.

## GREEN

Green is used during the Ordinary Time of the year, as a symbol of growth. Where a parish can afford it servers too can change colours according to the season or feast day. Or at least if they use albs, the colours of the cinctures, which they use to tie them, should be appropriate to the liturgical colour.

## VIOLET (PURPLE)

Violet or purple is used for Lent and Advent. It may also be used in offices and Masses for the dead. It is also worn during the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. It is good practice for a priest to move about with a small purple stole in the case of the appropriate celebration of this sacrament.

---

<sup>64</sup> GIRM 308

## ROSE



The colour rose is rarely used today. It may be used on the third Sunday of Advent and on the fourth Sunday of Lent; Sundays called “*Gaudete*” and “*Lactare*” (meaning: Rejoice) respectively.<sup>65</sup> It is expressive of Christian joy even in the middle of a penitential season, for the very reason of penance is positive: for the growth and gaining of mastery of the soul.

## BLACK

Black was formerly the liturgical colour for funerals and for the office of the dead. It may still be used for funerals, for requiem Masses, and for All Souls’ Day,<sup>66</sup> for those cultures where black is symbolic of death. Some African Liturgists find it offensive for black to symbolise death. It is permissible where this is the case to use an alternative colour.<sup>67</sup>

On special occasions distinctive noble vestments may be used, even when not of the liturgical colour of the day.<sup>68</sup> It is important to remember that liturgical colours are meant to serve not to rule the liturgy. They are a kind of accepted convention. In fact there was a time in the history of the Church when they were not used. In the middle ages there was great flexibility in the use of liturgical colours, with each Church having its own specific colours for different occasions. However, the use of different colours from the colour of the day should be done with much restraint and with pastoral sensitivity. Above all it should not be an excuse for not buying the proper liturgical colours.

---

<sup>65</sup> GIRM 308

<sup>66</sup> GIRM 308 § e

<sup>67</sup> It declares that funeral rites should “correspond more closely to the circumstances and traditions found in the various regions. This also applies to the liturgical colours.” SC 81.

<sup>68</sup> GIRM 309

## CHOIR DRESS

A distinction ought to be made between the double meaning of choir. There is a choir which is a singing group that leads the rest of the congregation in liturgical music. There is also the word choir, more often applied to monastic groups. The choir is a chamber in a monastic chapel where the monks that do not officiate sit.<sup>69</sup> The nave would then be left to the rest of the congregation that does not form part of the monastic community.

The term “choir dress” must then be understood in reference to the two meanings of the word “choir”. In reference to monks, on solemn liturgical occasions they would use a habit different from the one in which they perform their ordinary tasks. This is what is called choir dress. By extension many congregations of religious life have a particular habit for liturgy, even if they do not sit in a particular section of the church. Many congregations of nuns prefer to have a festive white habit for the liturgy, different from the colour they ordinarily wear. Some clergy, canons, honorary prelates, chaplains of His Holiness, monsignors, etc., may wear choir dress when not personally officiating. Seminarians’ cassocks at liturgical functions are the equivalent of choir dress. Those of the faithful who are without official choir dress should at least dress decently during the liturgy. What is considered decent dress may differ from area to area. A person needs to know the standards of the community or society in which they are. One needs to avoid wearing at the liturgy clothes that are too casual, provocative or showy. Even one who is poor can try at least to be clean, neat and tidy at the liturgy.

As regards choral groups, it is recommended to wear a choir dress, at least on solemn occasions. Such dress should be characterised, like everything else, by noble simplicity. Choir dress should be kept clean and pressed. Old choir dress should be replaced in time. Choir dress should be uniform for all, apart from the cases where the conduct has a dress slightly distinct from the rest. As to whether the

---

<sup>69</sup> See Choir (Architectural) in J.G. Davis, *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, London, SCM Press Ltd, 1986. P. 163.



choir dress is worn over the ordinary clothes or on its own is a matter of choice (and probably of income) of the choir.

## **THE MATTER OF THE SACRAMENTS**

IN GENERAL.....	66
BREAD .....	67
WINE.....	69
OILS .....	71
WATER.....	73
INCENSE.....	74

### IN GENERAL

You will have attended Masses that began with the rite of sprinkling. The celebrant deeps the sprinkler in the container, barely touching the water, and they sprinkle careful not to wet the people too much. He does not deep the sprinkler again until about half way the chapel. During that time he is practically sprinkling with an empty sprinkler. The people make the sign of the cross when he passes them by, although they feel, a little disappointedly, that no drop of the holy water has fallen on them. Or it may happen with the incense. The celebrant puts the incense in an all but extinguished fire in the thurible. He scratches a little with the spoon with not much success, and resignedly adds more incense, almost extinguishing the little fire there is. He then begins incensing with a little flicker of the smoke, hardly visible. Another anoints a child during baptism, and immediately afterwards cleans the oil off the front or chest of the child for fear of smearing the clothes.

It is true that symbols point to a spiritual reality. A person is blessed even if the water does not touch their body. The intention was there, and it is all that matters. The smoke from the incense does not have to cover every part of the gifts being incensed, to make the gifts acceptable to God. Nor does the oil have to flow all over the anointed to make effective the prayer that accompanies the anointing. Nonetheless it is important that the matter of the sacraments (and sacramentals) is used abundantly in order to bring out its full symbolism. Certainly one does not need to use buckets

of water for “sprinkling”, thus drenching the congregation and the hymnbooks. But a little bit of wetting does no one any harm, as long as the water is clean. Clothes get dry. Do not be unduly worried if the child begins to cry after the first pouring of water during baptism, thus reducing it for the Son and the Holy Spirit. After all, it is being baptised into Christ, dying with him in order to rise with him to new life. The book of Leviticus talks not just of smoke from incense but “clouds of incense”.<sup>70</sup>

### BREAD<sup>71</sup>

Bread is food for the nourishment of the body. In the same way that we cannot do without food, so too do we constantly need spiritual nourishment.<sup>72</sup> Thus bread is an appropriate symbol for



spiritual nourishment. Its use in the sacrament of the Eucharist, however, is not symbolical. Hear we talk of the “Real Presence:”

*So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. (John 6:52-56).*

The bread used for the Eucharist should be unleavened, purely of wheat, and recently made so that there is no danger of

---

<sup>70</sup> Leviticus 16:13 “...and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the covenant, or he will die”.

<sup>71</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 319-324.

<sup>72</sup> “Your fathers ate Manna and died, I am the living bread that endures to eternal life...”

decomposition.<sup>73</sup> It follows therefore that bread made from another substance, even if it is grain, or if it is mixed with another substance different from wheat to such an extent that it would not commonly be considered wheat bread, does not constitute valid matter for confecting the Sacrifice and the Eucharistic Sacrament. It is a grave abuse to introduce other substances, such as fruit or sugar or honey, into the bread for confecting the Eucharist. Hosts should obviously be made by those who are not only distinguished by their integrity, but also skilled in making them and furnished with suitable tools.<sup>74</sup> Bread for the Eucharist should be carefully baked so as to be neither too hard, nor half-cooked, nor crispy and crumbling. A pastor needn't feel obliged for the sake of supporting diocesan organs, to buy hosts from the diocesan procure if the hosts are crispy and substandard, and if there is some other place where he can get better quality. If the diocesan host makers want to sell, it is they that need to rise up to standard. No priest may use doubtful matter for the Eucharist.

Traditionally the shape of the host is rounded,<sup>75</sup> about seven centimetres diameter; made in a standard form that fits the lunette of the monstrance. It is customarily presented with some sacred image or symbol, and made with a groove that allows it to be breakable into two equal parts, with a side piece to the left for mixing with the wine.

A larger host to be broken into fragments may conveniently have a diameter of between 15 to 20 cm. (about 6 to 8 inches), depending on the number sharing in the "one Bread" and taking into account the dimensions of the large patent. Such a host should be marked before Mass so that it may be broken easily at the fraction. It should not be of exaggerated proportions, which could cause ridicule and obvious inconvenience. On certain occasions it may be preferable to use several large hosts.

---

<sup>73</sup> Can 924 §2, 926; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 320, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 48.

<sup>74</sup> S. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Dominus Salvator noster*, 26 March 1929, n. 1: AAS 21 (1929) pp. 631-642. Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 48.

<sup>75</sup> GIRM 283, *Inestimabile donum* 8

When people's hosts are used, it seems preferable that they should be of substantial texture and of reasonable proportions (3.5 cm. or 1-3/8 inches in diameter in Rome), not the small particles used in some places (about 2 cm. or 3/4 of an inch). In some places these hosts are made with a sealed edge to solve the problem of fragments when the Eucharist is placed in the hand.

The bread for the Eucharist should always be fresh. It is strongly favoured that the people receive particles consecrated at the Mass in which they participate. Moreover, care should be taken to renew the particles in the tabernacle at least every two weeks, preferably more frequently. In the Roman Rite there is no provision for reserving intincted hosts, that is, Hosts which have been dipped in the Precious Blood.

## WINE

Just as bread is ordinarily used as food so is wine a drink that "brings joy to the heart of man" Ps. 104:15. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine in order to save the happy couple from embarrassment, and to give them gladness at their wedding. St. Paul recommends wine to Titus, both as a digestive and medicine.<sup>76</sup> But scripture abundantly warns that wine must be taken with moderation.<sup>77</sup> In fact sometimes it is necessary, particularly for religious reasons, to abstain from wine entirely. Such was the case for instance for Levites<sup>78</sup> and for Nazarites.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> "No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." (Titus 5:23).

<sup>77</sup> Wine is very life to human beings if taken in moderation. What is life to one who is without wine? It has been created to make people happy. Wine drunk at the proper time and in moderation is rejoicing of heart and gladness of soul. Wine drunk to excess leads to bitterness of spirit, to quarrels and stumbling.

<sup>78</sup> And the LORD spoke to Aaron: Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. (Leviticus 10: 8-9).

<sup>79</sup> Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When either men or women make a special vow, the vow of a nazirite, to separate themselves to the LORD, they shall separate themselves from wine and strong drink; they

In the Eucharist we recall what happened at the Last Supper, that Jesus taking the cup of wine and offering it to the apostle, said that that was his blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. In the same way the wine, through the words and symbolic actions of the priest is transformed into the blood of Jesus. Again as in the case of bread wine in this case is not just a symbol of Christ's blood for he did not say that: "this represents my blood". And since blood was a symbol of life, the offering of his blood was the offering of his own life and his love. For there is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friends.

The colour of the wine to be used for the Eucharist is a matter of choice. Red wine is more symbolical of the blood of Christ.



However, it more easily stains lines. Dry wine might be preferable in certain places if the sweet wine goes a little too fast for the parish or community budget. The amount to be consecrated should not be exaggerated. It is not as if the more wine consecrated the greater quantity of the Lord partaken. However, again in keeping with the

meaningfulness of symbols, it is appropriate not to consecrate a few drops, unless one is constrained for medical reasons to take very little wine. He did not tell them to take and sip or dip, but to take and drink.

The wine for the Eucharistic celebration must be from the fruit of the grapevine cf. Luke 22:18).<sup>80</sup> Only wine authorised by the bishop according should be used. Usually this wine is marked as "altar wine". Some commercial wines may not be natural and pure grape wine.

---

shall drink no wine vinegar or other vinegar, and shall not drink any grape juice or eat grapes, fresh or dried. (Leviticus 6: 2-3).

<sup>80</sup> *General Instruction* 2002, no. 322. Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 50.

Wine should be stored in a cool place, preferably in the sacristy. It should never be used if it turns into vinegar. It is important to check the condition of the wine from time to time.<sup>81</sup> The sacristan is particularly responsible for this.

The Precious Blood may only be reserved in the tabernacle to give Communion to a sick person who cannot swallow the Host. A convenient sealed vessel should be used for this purpose, preferably made of glass or of unleaded crystal. Because the Species of wine may deteriorate, this exceptional mode of reservation should be only for a short time.

Other drinks of whatever kind are not considered valid matter for the Eucharist and must not be used. The fact for instance that a certain priest for some reason does not take alcoholic drinks is not excuse to use grape juice or some other drink as a substitute for wine.<sup>82</sup>

## OILS

In the bible, besides its use in flavouring human food oil, was widely used for healing<sup>83</sup> as well as for lighting in lamps.<sup>84</sup> Oil was also used as ointment for the body, to make it shine and look beautiful.<sup>85</sup> It was also used in the anointing of priests,<sup>86</sup> and kings,<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Can 924 §3; GIRM 285

<sup>82</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 50.

<sup>83</sup> "He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them..."

<sup>84</sup> When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. (Matthew 25: 3-4).

<sup>85</sup> "But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face..." (Matthew 6:17).

<sup>86</sup> You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water... You shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him.

<sup>87</sup> Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on [Saul's] head, and kissed him; he said, "The LORD has anointed you ruler over his people Israel. (1Samuel 16:13). There the priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. (1Kings 1:39).

as well as for the consecration of objects for worship such as priestly garments<sup>88</sup> and the tabernacle.<sup>89</sup>

In the liturgy oil was used in the first place for lighting, particularly for lighting the lamp that was to remain perpetually burning before the tabernacle.<sup>90</sup> It was also used for healing of the sick, not as medicine in itself, but symbolising the healing power of the Lord.<sup>91</sup>

In the present liturgy oil is used at baptism in which there is the pre-baptismal anointing done with the oil of catechumens on the chest, and the post-baptismal anointing with the oil of Chrism on the crown or forehead. Anointing is made also at confirmation (on the forehead), for the sick (in the palm and on the forehead or some other part of the body), at ordinations of priests (in the hands) and bishops (on the head). At its dedication an altar is also anointed with oil.

The Sacred Oils<sup>92</sup> are made of pure olive oil or another pure vegetable oil when this cannot be procured easily. In the making of Chrism, before or during the rite of consecration, some fragrant balsam or a fine perfume essence is added to the oil and carefully blended to produce a symbolic fragrance. The distinctive fragrance also helps to identify Chrism in the pastoral situation. In the case of necessity with regard to the anointing of the sick the it is permissible to use some other plant oil, to bless and use it for that occasion, and to destroy it afterwards.

---

<sup>88</sup> Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his vestments and on his sons and his sons' vestments with him; then he and his vestments shall be holy, as well as his sons and his sons' vestments. Exodus 29:21.

<sup>89</sup> Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it shall become holy. (Exodus 40: 9).

<sup>90</sup> You shall further command the Israelites to bring you pure oil of beaten olives for the light, so that a lamp may be set up to burn regularly. (Exodus 27:20).

<sup>91</sup> "They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them..." (Mark 6:13).

<sup>92</sup> For a short history and theology of liturgical oils see Peter E. Finks, *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 896.



The priest in charge of the oils should see that they are renewed annually, soon after the Chrism Mass. The oils from the previous year should be burned. Larger quantities may be consumed in one of the lamps. The validity of sacramental anointing is in no way affected if oils from an earlier year are used, but this should only happen in case of necessity.<sup>93</sup> At the celebration of Christian Initiation at Easter, it is obviously of deeper significance to use the Chrism that has been recently consecrated by the bishop.

## WATER

It is hardly necessary to describe the indispensability of water in our physical life. We need water, to drink and quench our thirst, to wash and bathe with, plus a whole host of other uses. Plants animals, and fish all need water to grow.

A beautiful synthesis on the use of water in the history of salvation is found in the prayer of blessing of holy water at the Easter Vigil. It is worthwhile to quote the entire passage:

*“Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs, which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power. In baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol of the grace you give us in this sacrament. At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness. The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of baptism that made an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness. Through the waters of the Red Sea you led Israel out of slavery, to be an image of God’s holy people, set free from sin by baptism. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptised by John and anointed with the Spirit. Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross. After his resurrection he told his disciples: ‘Go out and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’”*

In the liturgy water is used at the Eucharist when it is mixed with the wine with the words “by the mystery of this water and wine may share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity. It is also used for the washing of the hands of the priest after offertory as a symbol of cleansing from his own sins. Besides it

---

<sup>93</sup> Can 847 § 2

is always a recommended practice that, like a surgeon about to get into business, a priest about to celebrate Mass should make a thorough washing of his hands, in the sacristy or at home. This is out of respect for the sacrament, as well as for the good of those who receive it from his hands.

Water is used at baptism as a symbol of our rebirth for “unless a man is born in water and the Holy Spirit he cannot enter into eternal life. Those who have already been baptised are constantly sprinkled with water as reminder of the baptismal promises they made. The water used as a matter for the sacraments should be pure in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, not necessarily distilled. It should be natural that is, not gaseous for instance. Necessity does not permit the use of some other liquid merely because it contains water. You may not baptise with Coca-Cola or milk, for lack of water.

#### INCENSE<sup>94</sup>

The use of incense is an expression of reverence and of prayer, as is signified in Sacred Scripture (Psalm 141 [140]:2, Revelation 8:3).<sup>95</sup> The substance placed in the censer should be pure sweet-scented incense alone or at least in larger proportion than any additive mixed with the incense.<sup>96</sup>

Other material for sacraments and sacramentals include wax, charcoal, palms, coal, etc. whatever is used should be characterised by quality.

---

<sup>94</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 276. For further biblical references see: Incense as holy perfume: *Exodus* 30:35; 37:37; *Sirach* 24:15; 39:14; 49:1. It was extracted from various plants: *Revelation* 18:13. Incense was offered to God: *Malachi* 1:11; *Luke* 1:9-11. It accompanied the prayers of the worshippers: *Wisdom* 18:21. *Revelation* 5:8; 8:3-4. Incense was offered also to pagan gods: *Hosea* 2:13; 11:2. It is a ritual which could be abused and become an offence to God: *Leviticus* 10:1; *Proverbs* 27: 9.

<sup>96</sup> *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 84.

## LITURGICAL BOOKS<sup>97</sup>

DEFINITION OF A LITURGICAL BOOK.....	75
TYPICAL EDITION.....	76
CONTENTS OF THE LITURGICAL BOOKS.....	77
<i>Decrees</i> .....	77
<i>Apostolic letters</i> .....	77
<i>The Praenotanda</i> .....	77
<i>The Rites</i> .....	78
DIFFERENT KINDS OF LITURGICAL BOOKS .....	80
<i>The Sacramentary</i> .....	80
<i>The Lectionary (GILM, 35-37)</i> .....	81
<i>The Book of the Gospels</i> .....	82
<i>The Missal</i> .....	83
<i>The Roman Ritual</i> .....	85
<i>The Roman Pontifical</i> .....	86
<i>The Breviary (Divine Office)</i> .....	87
<i>Importance of acquiring liturgical books</i> .....	87

### DEFINITION OF A LITURGICAL BOOK

By “liturgical book” is not meant any book on the liturgy. It is not even any book that contains some official teaching on the liturgy. The term is used to refer specifically to an official book used in the actual execution of liturgical functions. Students are quite familiar with the more common liturgical books such as the missal, the lectionary and the breviary. Many more will be studied in this topic

Some of the usual distinguishing marks of a liturgical book are the following: liturgical books are made in a format easy to open, in such a way that when the book is opened at any page it remains

---

<sup>97</sup> For a historical treatise see Cassian Folsom, “Liturgical Books of the Roman Rite”, in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. I: *Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 315-327. See also *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. II p. 638-641.

open without one having to hold it in this state with one hand. This enables a minister to use gestures with both his hands while reading from the book. Liturgical books are usually set in larger print than usual, with the exception of the breviary which is unique in a sense, since it is not meant specifically for a presider at the liturgy. Where necessary certain texts of greater importance are set in still larger print or in bold. Instructions which are not meant to be read aloud but only to guide the minister are set in red and referred to as rubrics, a term originating from the colour of the font. These books are also normally furnished with thread markers or protruding finger markers, for the more important texts, such as found in missals to indicate the different Eucharistic prayers. The overall appearance of a liturgical book is one of beauty and dignity.

These characteristics are not essential to a liturgical book. They do not make it what it is. A liturgical book may lack any of them in order to minimise on cost. Essential is that it is a book meant to be used in the actual exercise of the liturgy.

#### TYPICAL EDITION

A typical edition is a liturgical book in the official form in which it is published by the Apostolic See.<sup>98</sup> Traditionally typical editions are issued in Latin. This is understandable if we consider that they are meant to be used in the entire Catholic Church. That is why they are given in the official language of the Church, to be later translated in the different international languages as well as vernaculars. The task of translating of typical editions belongs to international bodies set up for that purpose (such as the ICEL for the English Speaking world) as well as Episcopal Conferences.<sup>99</sup> Translations of typical editions usually also contain adaptations which are already foreseen in the typical edition. It is also usual to have translations in more than one volume. The lectionary is a good example of this. The typical edition, which principally contains

---

<sup>98</sup> See "Publication of Liturgical Books" in DOL, 134-140. Cf. 846 §1.

<sup>99</sup> See Anscar J. Chupungco, "The Translation of Liturgical Texts", in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. I: *Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 381-397.

biblical references to the readings in necessarily a much smaller volumes. However, when these biblical references and expanded into the actual text of the scriptures such as one finds in the lectionary used for Mass then one needs a lot more space.

## CONTENTS OF THE LITURGICAL BOOKS

### *Decrees*

Decrees are Promulgations from the Congregation for Divine Worship, that dycastery of the Apostolic See that deals with liturgical matters. In normally contains a brief description of the rite contained in the book. It may mention the areas on which the revision of the rite focused. In the decree is stated the exact date on which the new rite officially comes into use and the subsequent abrogation of the old rite it replaces. It is then signed by the Prefect and Secretary of the Congregation. The date of the issue of the decree is also give.

### *Apostolic letters*

The typical edition quite often contains also an apostolic letter from the pope. This letter may also give a summery of the rite. It bears the signature of the pope and the date of its promulgation.

### *The Praenotanda*

A most important component of the typical edition is the Praenotanda.<sup>100</sup> This is an official introduction or instruction the

---

<sup>100</sup> “The professor must carefully provide the students with an explanation of the General Instructions found as preliminaries in the Roman Missal and the Liturgy of the Hours. This also applies to the Introductions found at the beginning of each major section of the Roman Missal. These documents provide the theological doctrine, the pastoral rationale, and the spiritual aspect not only of the rites in general but also of their individual components. These documents, moreover, often propose a variety of ways of carrying out the same rite. The professor should therefore develop the judgement off the students in a way that will give them the ability later to know how to make a choice among the various options according to different circumstances. He should also help them to understand why the

rite. It is usually set at the beginning of the respective liturgical book. The Praenotanda contains a description of the theology and meaning of the rite, the offices and ministers responsible for the execution of the rite and their respective role, the time and place of celebration, the different modes of celebration, the structure of the rite and the areas of adaptation if any. This latter usually demarcates the adaptations that are reserved to Episcopal conferences, those that can be made by local ordinaries, and the adaptations that may be made by individual pastors.

### *The Rites*

The most important component of the liturgical books of course are the rites themselves. They are set out in such a way that they can be followed during the celebration of the liturgy. The rites include in the first place the text itself which is to be read out. Some texts may be emphasised in bold, for instance the words of consecration in the Roman Missal. Or again the text that form the “form” of the rite in the celebration of sacraments. Other texts may be set out in “sense lines” rather than continuous prose. A reader should not read sense lines as if they were complete sentences, for then the meaning of the text might be distorted. Rather the sense lines make the text manageable and allow the reader to make pauses at points that do not distort the meaning.

Secondly there are the rubrics. There is a famous saying that the difference between a liturgist and a terrorist is that with a terrorist one can negotiate! Liturgical experts are viewed by some as unbending. Their strictness in matters of worship is supposed to be expressed in the rubrics.

They are meant to serve as instructions for the proper conducting of the rite. They therefore state what to do, when to do it, what possible alternatives there are, who says what, what is the appropriate accompanying gesture, when is silence

---

rubrics often use the terms *as a rule, according to circumstances, it is commendable to do this or that, etc.*” Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries*, 46.

to be observed, etc. Rubrics may also serve as cross-references, pointing to other areas in the book where alternative texts may be found. Rubrics, as noted before, are usually in red. Yet some liturgical books may have them written in italics but otherwise in the same font colour as the rest of the text.

Rubrics are never meant to be read aloud, nor are they meant to be ignored either, unless of course the rite is so familiar that you no longer need them. It is best to study the rubrics ahead of the actual execution of the liturgy, for usually there is no time to read and understand them while conducting the liturgy at the same time. Such pauses are noticeable to the people and are upsetting, showing that you are not sure of what you are doing.

Many people have the feeling that rubrics are rigid rules that make the liturgy dry and unintelligible. Consequently they ignore them and go on to make their own improvising with the inevitable resultant errors. But in fact the rubrics of the revised liturgy, while safeguarding the authenticity of the rites, at the same time they give great freedom for creativity. Consider for instance the following two rubrics from the rite of Anointing, and the Rite of Penance respectively:

*“...The following litany may be said here, or after the anointing, or even, according to circumstances, at some other point. The priest may adapt or shorten the text”* (PCS, 73). Within this rubric the minister is given four options.

*“When the penitent comes to confess his sins, the priest welcomes him warmly and greets him with kindness”* (RP, 41). There is no prescribed format by which a priest welcomes a penitent. The rubric makes it possible for him either to use the words suggested in the rite, or to use his own words appropriate to the situation.

The purpose of rubrics then is to guide and to ensure authenticity in the celebration of the liturgy. In this way they safeguard the unity of Catholic worship. At the same time they propose variety, such that liturgy is not always celebrated in the same monotonous fashion.

Ignoring of rubrics in cases where one actually needs them results in boring rigid liturgies or misguided and erroneous experimentation.

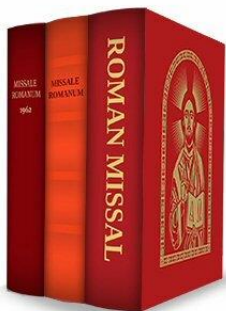
It is recommended in the typical editions that translations of liturgical books into vernaculars include music setting for the singable parts of the rites. Where such music is available the minister does well to use it particularly on more solemn occasions. One is free of course to use some other music that the people can respond to with ease.

Often a liturgical text is provided with headings for the different parts to guide the minister on what follows and where he is. Headings are not meant to be read as, a mistake that is frequently made.

Liturgical books usually have an appendix as well. This may include alternative common readings and responsorial psalms, alternative prayers, litanies and intercessions; solemn blessings, sample rites, indices, etc.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF LITURGICAL BOOKS

### *The Sacramentary*<sup>101</sup>



In many places the term “Sacramentary”<sup>102</sup> is hardly used today. We more often use the term Missal to refer to what is properly or at least originally was referred to as Sacramentary. It is the book that contains all the texts that are proper for a priest celebrating Mass. That includes the texts for those sacraments and sacramentals that are celebrated in the context of Mass such

<sup>101</sup> See H. Ashworth and J. M. Pierce, *Sacramentaries, History of*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 12, (2002), p. 48ff; M. Barba, regarding the third edition of the Roman Missal: *Congregatio de Culto Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum*, “La Genesi Istituzionale dell’”Editio typica Tertia” del “Missale Romanum”, *Notitiae*, 414-415, Jan-Feb 2001 Vol. XXXVII, Citta’ del Vaticano, pp. 56-62. *Notitiae*, 419-420, Jun-July 2001 Vol. 37, 452-463.

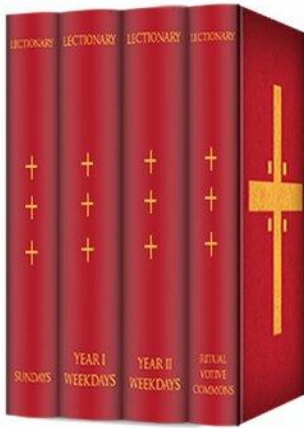
<sup>102</sup> GIRM 80, 100.



as, baptism, confirmation, funerals, etc. It's probably because of its use in the celebration of sacraments that it acquired the name "Sacramentary".

*The Lectionary (GILM, 35-37)*

A lectionary is the official book from which scripture readings are taken at liturgical functions. Different components of the lectionary are published as separate books to be used at specific occasions in the actual celebration of the liturgy. Besides reducing the size, ensures that the lectionary does not suffer the tear and wear too quickly as it would if it were a single volume used throughout the year. Thus one may have a Sunday and Feast day lectionary, a Weekday Lectionary, a Lectionary for Advent and Christmas, for Lent and Eastertide, etc; depending on the publisher's decision as to how to divide the typical edition.



Besides containing the word of God the lectionary symbolises it as well. Thus it ought to be treated with appropriate dignity. It should not ordinarily be replaced with missalettes for instance.

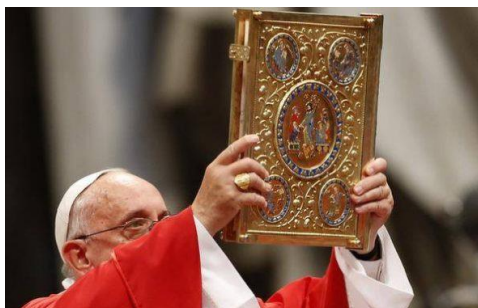
Apart from special occasions the bible should not replace the lectionary during the liturgy. It is not a question of which is more important, for obviously the bible is the word of God from which the lectionary draws. It is simply that the lectionary is carefully prepared for use in the liturgy while the bible is not. a pericope taken from Acts 13: 16-17, if taken directly from the bible would read: "Paul stood up, held up a hand for silence and began to speak: 'Men of Israel, and fearers of God, listen!...'” This does not tell the listener where Paul said this. To bring out the context and this happened at Antioch in Pisidia would require one to add verses that unnecessary prolong the reading. In the lectionary the readings has been modified to add the context without distorting the meaning of

the sacred text thus: “When Paul reached Antioch in Pisidia, he stood up in the synagogue, held up his had for silence and began to speak: ‘Men of Israel, and fearers o God, listen!...’” Quite often a pericope taken directly from the bible would have to start with the word “and” or with a pronoun without mentioning the name to which the pronoun refers. To include the name would require adding several verses that come before the desired pericope. In the lectionary the pronoun is replaced by the name and the word “and” excluded.

Another reason why a lectionary is used instead of a lectionary is that readings are often not continuous blocks from the bible, but “patches” carefully chosen without distorting the meaning. It would be cumbersome to do the patching directly from the bible. The lectionary also provides formulas to which the congregation is quite familiar and can respond, such as “a reading from the holy Gospel according to...”, “this is the word of the Lord...”. People might find themselves a little at a loss if these formulas are suddenly changed to what is an familiar, e.g. “this is what Matthew wrote” or even “this is the end of the reading”. A secondary school student, entirely unfamiliar with reading at the liturgy once concluded the reading by declaring: “I have finished!” thus both confusing and amusing the congregation.

### *The Book of the Gospels*<sup>103</sup>

When possible a separate lectionary for the gospel pericopes may be acquired. The book of the Gospels is found



mainly in major churches and cathedrals. This is the one to be used on more solemn occasions at which it is carried in procession. Its cover may be embellished in a

special way, and it is usually quite substantial in volume. Where

---

<sup>103</sup> GIRM 82, 84, 128-129, 148-149, 232; LM 36, 113.

possible there are several covers for the book of the gospels that can be switched according to the liturgical colour of the day. It is normally the book handed to the newly ordained in the rite of ordination. It is also a symbol of the prominence of the gospel among other scriptural readings, as the word of the Son of God through whom the Father speaks more directly to mankind (Hebrews 1:1).

“In a special way, care must be taken that the liturgical books, particularly the Book of the Gospels and the Lectionary, which are intended for the proclamation of the word of God and hence enjoy special veneration, really serve in a liturgical action as sings and symbols of heavenly realities and hence are truly worthy, dignified, and beautiful.”<sup>104</sup>

### *The Missal*

The missal, as the word suggests, contains all the texts for the celebration of Mass. That includes those contained in the sacramentary, namely the eucharistical texts; as well as those contained in the lectionary, that is the readings. It also contains texts that formally were found in the *Antiphonale Missarum*, a book that contained all the sang texts of the Mass. Today the term is more loosely used to refer to the Sacramentary, even in official terminology. For instance, the Roman Missal does not contain readings and strictly speaking should be referred to as a sacramentary rather than a missal.

There are many factors that contribute to undermine the honour due to the Word of God. The very study of scripture itself can be one of them, particularly if it is shallow and not accompanied with a sound spirituality. The student discovers for instance the human element that is embedded in the inspired word; the borrowing of legends which one in his early encounters with scripture considered literary true. The many erroneous beliefs about scripture that in the light of modern science have been exposed as such; the story of

---

<sup>104</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 349.

creation against the theory of evolution, the exorcisms in the light of modern psychiatry, the idea of a third of the stars falling on the earth being astronomically untenable. Within the bible one finds sentiments that are simply unchristian: the idea of the harem or what in modern terms would be called ethnic cleansing, the polygamy of Israel kings, the cursing psalms and revenge. At times there are cultural elements that are considered outdated by modern society: the attitude towards women. Then there are literal difficulties such as different accounts of the same event. The story of the first witnesses to the resurrection. There other biblical stories that sound legendary, such as holding the halting the sun still in the sky by raised hands, dividing the Red Sea in two, being carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, walking on water. The student cannot help but ask why do these things no longer exist today. The very experience of fervent prayer not answered, at least not in the way we asked and hoped may undermine our attitude to the word.

All these have a convincing explanation to one who both seeks an answer with assiduous study and at the same time with faith. But in the hearts of many others they create a kind of attitude of eroded faith in the word of God, an attitude that no believer is ready to own, at least not in public. Consequently the ritual honours given to the word of God, for instance those mentioned in connection to the book of the gospels become somewhat a farce. There is a lack of that attitude of absolute commitment to the word of God that we read in the sayings and the life of the Lord. He considered the word his food: his food is to do the will of the one who sent him, he told his disciples when they asked him whether he was not hungry, after the encounter with the Samaritan woman. Indeed he had responded to the tempter in the desert that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. To the incredulous disciples after the discourse on the bread of life which is his flesh he said that the word that he spoke to them were spirit and life. To accept them is to have life. Perhaps the most amazing statement are made about the word of God was with regard to its endurance. Heaven and earth will pass away but not even an iota or a comma will be removed from the word. He was ready to endure the extremes of sorrow and pain, and indeed he did so, rather than transgress the slightest command of the word

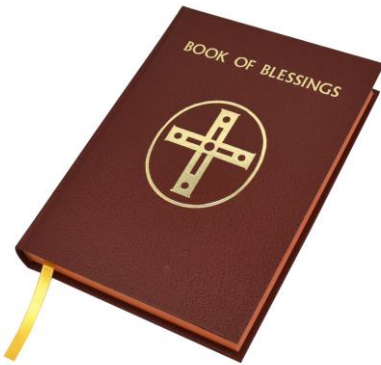
of God. Quite often he would say that "it is written...", implying that what is written in the scriptures is immutable. His very last statement recorded by the evangelist is that it is accomplished, meaning the word.

Does the ritual honour help to build in us that absolute love and total commitment to the Word of God in spite of the manifold factors that contribute to undermine our attitude to it? Does it evoke in the worshiper a sense of respect for the word of God? A sense of love and trust for this is the message, which if obeyed, surely conducts to eternal life? A sense of awe and wonder for this is the word that the reality which will outlive the heavens and the earth? A sense of holy fear for this is the command that must be obeyed. Unless we obey it we shall surely die?

*The Roman Ritual*<sup>105</sup>

In actual practice the Roman Ritual is a collection of several liturgical books for the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals that are normally performed by a priest. These include the Rite of Adult Christian Initiation, the Rite of Infant Baptism, the Rite of

Penance, the Rite of anointing of the Sick, the Rite of Matrimony, the Order of Christian Funerals and the Book of Blessings. It would be far too bulky to have all these rites placed in one volume. When one opens any one of them one is likely to find some thing like this:



---

<sup>105</sup> For a distinction between the Pontifical and the Ritual see Jounel, P. "The Pontifical and the Ritual", in A.G. Martimort (ed.), *The Church at Prayer*, vol. III. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1986. Pp. 1. Jounel goes on to expound the detailed history of each.

# THE ROMAN RITUAL

Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and  
Published by Authority of Pope John Paul II

## BOOK OF BLESSINGS

This shows the reader that the Book of Blessings therefore is a sub-category of the Roman Ritual.

### *The Roman Pontifical*

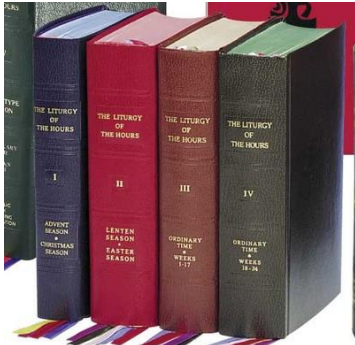
Like the Roman Ritual, the Roman Pontifical is a collection of several other books. It contains those rites that are normally performed by the bishop, or anyone of higher rank. This the rites the constitute the Roman Pontifical are the Rite of Confirmation<sup>106</sup>, the Rite of Installation of Acolytes and Lectors, the Rite of Ordination of deacons, priests and bishops, Rite of Dedication of Churches and Altars, Rite of Consecration of Virgins, Rite of Blessing of Abbots and Abbesses.

---

<sup>106</sup> Perfomed by the bishop for the fuller significance of the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles who later imparted Him on others through the laying on of hands. See CB, 455.

## *The Liturgy of Hours (Breviary, Divine Office)*

The breviary is a liturgical book in as far as it too is used in the actual execution of liturgical activities. However, it differs from the rest of the liturgical books in the sense that others are more often used in the ministering of the liturgy for others. With regard to the breviary all those who participate use the book. That is all that need be said about the breviary here. A more detailed study is made of it under the topic “Liturgy of the Hours”.



### *Importance of acquiring liturgical books*

In budgeting one's often-meagre personal book allowance, a future minister does well to include some liturgical books as a matter of priority. They are books that a minister cannot do without in his priestly service to the people. It is true in many pastoral situations such books may be found in parishes. However, there will be other situations away from the parish when one needs quick reference to some liturgical book. They are used in order to conduct the rites appropriately. They also serve as a source of reference in case of doubt. Often one who has a personal ritual has the liberty to study the different possibilities available for celebration ahead of time. Even when one does not have the answers at hand to all matters pertaining to liturgy, the possession of the liturgical books provide a sense of security, knowing that the answers are readily available. For certain rituals it is also possible to acquire a kind of “liturgical cover” in which missalettes or some other booklets, loose papers or pamphlets can be inserted to give them a more dignified appearance during the celebration of the liturgy.

When funds can allow it is more convenient to use books published in a liturgical format. They are made in such a way that they remain open at any page without one having to hold them with one hand. This enables one to freely use the hands to perform the necessary

liturgical gestures. It is an awkward and inconvenient task to have to say “the Lord be with you” with one hand while with the other one is holding the missal. It is even once when one uses both hands to perform the gesture only to find that one has lost the page on which one was and must flip through the pages with the congregation watching uneasily. A book in the liturgical format is also furnished with the instructions in red (or rubrics) in such a way that one cannot mistake them for the text to be read aloud. The print is usually large enough to be seen with normal vision, without having to bend over or to hold the book close to the face. There are ribbons that can be used to mark it, rather than cards that can fly out of the book leading to a loss of the page. Books in the liturgical format also often have music setting, for those who can use it.



## LITURGICAL MINISTRIES<sup>107</sup>

INTRODUCTION.....	90
THE CONGREGATION.....	91
USHERS AND DOORKEEPERS .....	93
MONEY GATHERERS .....	94
CHOIR .....	94
CHOIR MASTER .....	95
INSTRUMENTALISTS .....	96
SACRISTAN .....	97
SERVERS.....	98
MASTER OF CEREMONIES.....	100
<i>Sample of Preparation Notes of the MC.....</i>	<i>102</i>
COMMENTATOR.....	107
LECTOR .....	108
<i>Volume .....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Speed.....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Articulation and Pronunciation.....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Phrasing.....</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>Eye-contact.....</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Use of the public address system.....</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Posture, gait and dress of the lector.....</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>The Lector's Preparation .....</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>Specific Duties at Mass .....</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Ministry of Reading in the Absence of an Official Lector .....</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Practical Considerations for those who Guide Readers .....</i>	<i>115</i>
ACOLYTE.....	116
<i>Vestments .....</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Services at the Altar .....</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>As Minister of Communion.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>In the Absence of a Deacon.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Precedence over the Catechist .....</i>	<i>119</i>
<i>Acolytes at Pastoral Work.....</i>	<i>119</i>
<i>Training of Other Servers .....</i>	<i>119</i>
DEACON .....	119
PRIEST .....	120
BISHOP .....	125

---

<sup>107</sup> Eucharistic ministers HLS 24-26, 29-38.

Bibliographical References:

“Functions and Ministries in the Mass”, in SCDW, *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, nos. 58-73.

Thomas A. Krosnicki, “Liturgical Ministries”, in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*. Vol. II, *Fundamental Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegetown: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 161-171.

“Ministries”, in *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite*, 56-68.

Marsili, “Liturgia e sacerdozio commune”, in *Anamnesis* vol I, pp. 127ff.

Functions of ministers SC 28-29; GIRM 58, 72, 297-303, 313; CB 18-41; EACW 68-70 lay people as ministers: GIRM 70-71; GIRM 51-55; DMC 24; HLS 24, 29-38; EACW 30, 37.

## INTRODUCTION

The rich variety of orders and ministries expresses the dynamic hierarchy of one people. These constitute the worshipping body of Christ. Each distinctive role is to be respected and promoted. Priests should not assume what ministries properly belongs to the lay faithful, unless circumstances demand it. For instance it is not proper for the priest to lead the songs, take all the readings, play instruments while saying Mass, or do the lighting of candles; when there are people in the congregation that can take on these ministries. Exceptions can be made of course. In a children Mass it is not out of place to play an instrument, if no body else can do it. The congregation may be such that the priest must lead the hymns

or take all the readings, etc. On the other hand lay members should not take on roles that properly belong to the clergy<sup>108</sup>, such as the indiscriminate sharing of the recitation of the Eucharistic prayer, or the practice of unqualified and unauthorised lay members giving homilies. Nor should it be the norm that the lay Eucharistic ministers give out communion while the priests does not, even when he is quite capable of doing it. It is part of the pastor's duties to encourage lay members to carry out their roles.

## THE CONGREGATION

In certain church communities people have the rather disconcerting practice of sitting as far back from the sanctuary as possible, even when they are very few attending the liturgy. The minister may invite them to come closer once or twice, but it becomes cumbersome when he has to do so too many times. This practice depicts a mentality of going to church almost like a spectator; taking an entirely passive role. That is contrary to the mind of Vatican Council II which requires that: "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Peter 2:9, 4-5) have a right and an obligation by reason of their baptism." SC 14)<sup>109</sup>

To achieve this full participation, the people are to be able to respond and sing in their own language. But they also participate actively through ceremonial. Common postures and actions express the unity of the congregation. They are meant to observe the rules of the Episcopal conference concerning standing, kneeling and sitting during celebrations. As part of a continuous liturgical catechesis, they should be reminded of signs and actions specific to parts of the Mass or the liturgy of a day or season. Local custom

---

<sup>108</sup> Inestimabile Donum, Forward.

<sup>109</sup> See also Anna Kai-Yung Chan, "Participation in the Liturgy", in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*. Vol. II, *Fundamental Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 145-159.

and culture is embodied in other devout practices and music. However, the Roman liturgy should also express the universality of the Church; thus the people are meant to be able "to recite or sing together not only in the vernacular but also in Latin the parts of the order of Mass that pertain to them".

Active participation also requires that people listen attentively to what is said and done. It includes making the effort to come in time and to participate throughout the whole Mass. Even the announcements made after the Mass are intended for the worshipping community. This means that those that make the announcement should also make an effort not to prolong the ceremony unnecessarily. Active participation includes the effort to read the notice board, to attend regularly, to respond clearly and audibly, not just to oneself. Their participation is rendered more conscious if they go through the readings before. They should also avoid carrying out personal pious activities while a common liturgy is in progress. They also have the obligation to contribute generously to the various appeals.

During the liturgy people should avoid distracting others such as by whispering or talking privately while the liturgy proceeds, or refusing to budge and take a crying child outside. Even sneezing and coughing loudly and constantly can be a distraction. Sometimes one cannot help it, but as much as possible one should make an effort not to sneeze at particular moments, for instance when the reader mentions the response to the responsorial psalm. Certain shoes, particularly for ladies may be a distraction on the flow of the church, and should be avoided at liturgical functions, or one should make sure to come early into the church. In the modern culture of mobile phones it is particularly important for all participants at the liturgy to avoid coming to the church with their phones switched on. There are indeed some who can do that just for the pleasure of attracting attention. Others may do it out of forgetfulness. Whatever the motives or reasons, mobile phones are a great distraction to the whole congregation at worship. They show carelessness, even irreverence at times. It would be better even not to carry a vibrating phone, for even in the act of rushing out to catch your phone you distract not only those closest to you but

yourself as well. If you have decided to give this moment to God, give it to him entirely. We very soon create a feeling that we cannot do without phone communication, forgetting that there are many people who live perfectly normal lives without these phones, or that we have not always had them, and life went on very well. Have the courage to put away your phone for 40 minutes.

#### USHERS AND DOORKEEPERS<sup>110</sup>

Ushers and doorkeepers see to it that people are well seated. They should not impose their services unless these services are required. Ushers are particularly helpful on big occasions. They should help those who are timid or embarrassed to take places when all are already seated. They guide children to their places where these have reserved sections. While they carry out their duty they should not forget that they too are at prayer

The ushers or doorkeepers should carry out their duties among the people with good manners and discretion. While these men and women have the role of maintaining order as well as of welcoming and assisting people, they must never "organise" Holy Communion in such a way as to oblige people to approach the altar row by row. Except for disabled or frail folk and official guests on special occasions, they do not reserve seats for specific persons.<sup>111</sup> The only exception to this requirement is distinctions arising from liturgical function or civil honours. In the case of the latter, however, such reserved places should not be in the sanctuary facing the people. Ushers care for the table of the gifts, the customary collections, the distribution of hymnbooks or other books for the liturgy, and they ensure that processions are not impeded. Again they should avoid unnecessary movement that may distract others.

---

<sup>110</sup> GIRM 49, 68; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 105 d.

<sup>111</sup> GIRM 273; SC 32.

## MONEY GATHERERS

### CHOIR<sup>112</sup>

The choir or schola plays an indispensable role within the liturgical assembly by helping the people to sing. This does not mean that the choir does all the singing for the congregation. The choir should make an effort to select hymns that the rest of the people can also sing. However, the "full, conscious and active participation" of the people does not mean that the congregation must sing everything. The ministry of a skilled choir, drawing on the wide repertoire of liturgical music can deepen participation, as it "sings the different parts proper to it".

The choir should be located according to the acoustics of the church, but never in a place which would distract the people from the sacred action at the altar. "The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation."<sup>113</sup>

A good choir is an attraction to the church. People can come to a particular liturgy or choose to have their wedding or some other occasion on account of the choir of that church. It can be an attraction to the youth who would like to be identified by it. They are proud of being members.

However, good choirs do not just happen. There is much that goes into making a good choir. In the first place the pastor must be actively supportive. He might have to initiate where there has not been any choir before. He encourages those that have chosen to belong to it. He invites others to join through announcements and through personal contact. It is helpful if he can sing as well. He might have to look around for qualified people to coach the choir. A good choir needs money to buy the materials they need, the musical instruments, choir uniform, etc. That money might have to be part of the parish budget. Choir members have their spiritual problems and need someone to attend to those as well.

---

<sup>112</sup> *Musica Sacram*, 19. *General Instruction 2002*, no. 103, 312-313.

<sup>113</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 294.

## CHOIR MASTER

The choirmaster should direct without becoming a distraction. Some common hymns may be sung without the need of a choir conductor. It is useful also when the choirmaster can intone songs in the proper key, especially where there is no organ or other intoning instrument. The choirmaster collaborates with the Main Celebrant in the selection of hymns. His preparation of the singing sometimes should include the singing of the responsorial psalm. He or she should also strive to see that the congregation also participates in the singing where they can. He does this both by availing and announcing hymns, and by including the congregation in his conducting where appropriate. A good choirmaster does not need to lead the people with his voice, singing louder than the choir or singing right into the microphone. This is particularly objectionable when a man sings in a soprano voice to “help” the female voices. Choir members ought to be made to feel that their voices are valuable.

Some of the basic skills required by a choir master are the ability to read music, ability to conduct, fair knowledge of the liturgy, the ability to co-ordinate with all the others involved in the singing: the presider, the singers, instrumentalists, cantors and readers. His roles include selection of hymns to be sung, conducting, summoning the members to practice before the actual singing, seeing to the orderliness of the choir, unless someone else is appointed for this role. He may also assume the immediate discipline of the choir.

When selecting hymns to be sung the choir master should consider their suitability for the respective part of the liturgy, for the occasion being celebrated, for their harmony with the present liturgical season, and that they are in harmony with the whole liturgical function. He should consider the length of the hymns: that they do not disproportionately prolong a particular part of the liturgy, or that they are sufficiently long to cover the respective part. For instance offertory hymns should ideally last the duration of offertory, the “Lamb of God” should cover the breaking of bread, a communion hymn should cover the time of communion.<sup>114</sup> But

---

<sup>114</sup> GILM 17, 56, 119; MCW 48, 62, 72; LMT 18.

where it is necessary another hymn may be chosen to supplement a shorter hymn for the same liturgical part. In selecting of hymns the choir master should also consider the competence of his singers. Difficult hymns should not be chosen for people who cannot sing them. The choirmaster must also take into consideration the degree of solemnity.<sup>115</sup> The choir master should also give room for silence where appropriate.<sup>116</sup>

When conducting the choir master should avoid showing off, or distracting the congregation. His role is to guide the choir and not to entertain. Certainly it is good to see a choir master who conducts with skill and art, even style. But even all that should be used solely for the purpose of guiding the choir not entertaining the congregation. The number of verses to be sung can be indicated on the music board. Alternatively the parts to be sung can also be included in the announcement. For the recession open “We Pray and sing to the Lord” hymn 60, stanza 3 and 5...” A good choir master is able to change the key if a wrong one has been intoned. He should regulate the instruments when necessary, indicate clearly and deliberately when to stop, watch the presider and not prolong some parts unnecessarily, etc.

#### INSTRUMENTALISTS<sup>117</sup>

Care should be taken that instruments accompany rather than overlay or compete with the singing of the people. Some cultural instruments like Adungu or xylophones are best played without the organ, thus bringing out fully their particular richness. Some particularly slow songs are best played without drums.

With regard to the nature of instruments there are really no instruments that are per se sacred or profane. The piano and the guitar were once regarded as profane instruments. It is now accepted that the suitability of an instrument in the liturgy depends very much on the capability of the player to adapted it for the

---

<sup>115</sup> Musicam Sacram, 29-31.

<sup>116</sup> Musicam Sacram, 17.

<sup>117</sup> SC 120; GIRM 275; CB 39-41; DMC 32; MCW e7-38; LMT 56-59; EACW 83.



liturgy. One should judge what kind of music to play on an instrument. Regarding keyboards, automatic rhythms should be used with restraint, for it is more meaningful if music is natural and played by the people.<sup>118</sup> Some popular beats are better suited for disco than for liturgy. The playing of natural drums with automatic rhythms requires a certain amount of expertise, for it is not easy to harmonise natural rhythms with those that are factory-made.

### SACRISTAN<sup>119</sup>

The responsibilities of a sacristan may be categorised under two groups: there are those that regard the remote preparation for the liturgy. These include washing, ironing and mending of vestments and linens, cleaning of vessels, etc. They also include seeing to it that the necessary materials are in stock, such as holy water, candles, hosts both large and small, charcoal, incense, vestments of the appropriate colour for the day, vestments of the appropriate size for the celebrant(s), etc. The sacristan also sees to the sweeping, mopping and dusting of the floor and the pews. Thus the sacristan sees to the general order in the sacristy. Secondly his or her task regards the immediate preparation for the liturgy. This involves the lighting and extinguishing of candles, preparation of the credence table, checking whether a suitable amount of hosts is prepared<sup>120</sup>, reminding the celebrant when the host for adoration is due for changing.

The duties of the sacristan are carried out under the general direction of the pastor. However, for each specific celebration, the sacristan is responsible to the master of ceremonies.<sup>121</sup> In some places there is a team of sacristans, but there should always be a chief sacristan to whom others are answerable, and who deals more directly with the pastor. It is practical however, for sacristans and

---

<sup>118</sup> For the same reason that artificial flowers and electric lights are less preferable to the natural.

<sup>119</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 105 a.

<sup>120</sup> If necessary the sacristan may look also into the tabernacle.

<sup>121</sup> CB 37

Masters of Ceremony to divide and share their roles. It is also commendable to have a rota by which they serve in turns.

### SERVERS<sup>122</sup>

The "ministers" or servers are those whose role is derived from that of the instituted acolyte. They assist in the sanctuary. Their ceremonial duties are essential to good liturgy. However, the proper exercise of their ministry at the altar depends on regular training and discipline, together with spiritual formation and encouragement. As



noted above, they wear an alb, or cassock and surplice, or some other approved vestment, but not secular dress.<sup>123</sup> They sit in the sanctuary.

The specific roles of the servers are as follow:

The thurifer must be trained in the art of using the thurible: how to assist efficiently when incense is prepared, how to incense people and things and how to use the thurible in processions. The thurifer comes first, in procession, in front of the cross. A boat bearer may assist, on the left of the thurifer. The thurifer must also know how to prepare, maintain and extinguish the thurible.

The cross bearer carries the cross so that the figure of the crucifix always faces forward. The cross should be held firmly, reasonably high. The staff should be held away from the body. The lower part of the staff is held by the left hand; the upper part held by the right hand, preferably at eye level. The cross bearer places the cross in its

---

<sup>122</sup> See DOL, 338, pp. 904ff.

<sup>123</sup> Traditionally the servers' dress was a red alb with a white surplice and red shoulder cloth. In many places today the red alb is substituted with one with the liturgical colour of the day. A white alb with a sincture of the colour of the day is also a good alternative.

bracket or stand and never leaves it leaning against a wall. If necessary, the cross bearer may also be the book bearer.

The two candle bearers, as they are described in this book, are also known as "acolytes", or the first and second server. They assist at the altar and credence table. They sit near the credence table. They carry their candlesticks with both hands, the inside hand holding the base, the outside hand holding the knob or a midpoint of the candlestick.<sup>14</sup> The dish for collecting wax is best kept at eye level. They move with co-ordination and thus should be trained to bear the candles at the same level, and to take them up and put them down at the same time. These candles remain burning throughout the liturgy.

The book bearer plays an important role in all celebrations, particularly at the presidential chair or bishop's cathedra. The missal or other book is carried in both hands, resting flat against the chest. When a book is held open, the level is adjusted to help the celebrant to read the text.

Other servers may assist at a solemn Mass and act as torch bearers during the Eucharistic Prayer. However, servers without a specific role are superfluous. At Masses on Sundays and other major occasions, at least two or three should assist, dividing or combining their roles as thurifer, cross bearer, candle bearers, book bearer and ministering together at the credence table. At a weekday Mass, one well-trained server is adequate, acting as book bearer at the chair, then ministering at the credence table, however, others may carry out the duties of cross bearer (book bearer) and candle bearers according to the nature of the occasion.

A mitre bearer and, usually, a crosier bearer assist the bishop. Their hands are covered with a white veil, or "vimpa", when they hold the mitre or crosier. This is in order both to keep the mitre clean (for it is difficult and expensive to wash) and out of respect for these insignia, which are symbolical of the bishop's authority. Together with the book bearer, they are the immediate attendants of the bishop, walking behind him in procession. Their seats should be located conveniently near his cathedra. It is best if these two servers are not required to perform other functions apart from that of bearing the mitre and crosier.

Servers should preferably be people who receive communion, i.e.: either children who have already received first Holy Communion or older children and adults who are not interdicted from the sacraments. In carrying out their duty they should be prompt and not enter into the church after the Mass has already begun. Their own grooming should also be good, particularly with regard to hair, clothes, shoes, fingernails, etc. a good supply of servers that work according to a schedule is recommended.

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

It is appropriate, at least in cathedrals and in larger churches, to have some competent minister, that is to say a master of ceremonies, to oversee the proper planning of sacred actions and their being carried out by the sacred ministers and the lay faithful with decorum, order, and devotion.<sup>124</sup>

Not only every diocese but each parish should have a trained master of ceremonies (M.C.). He must know the laws and details of ceremonial and the history and traditions of the Roman Rite. He



should study the sources and be familiar with liturgical texts. But he should also be "well-versed in pastoral science", so as to plan celebrations "in a way that encourages fruitful participation by the people and enhances

the beauty of the rites".

Whether priest, deacon or layman, he should gain the confidence of the clergy, who then will welcome his services and accept his directions cheerfully during celebrations. He works closely with musicians, servers and clergy, and especially with the sacristans before and after each celebration. However he must be assured of

---

<sup>124</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 106.

authority over ministers during, before and after a celebration. In a complicated ceremony, such as an ordination, two or more MCs are useful. Therefore, it is appropriate to have assistant masters of ceremonies in training for this skilled work.

The good M.C. is unobtrusive, calm and dignified. He should avoid that frequent habit of MCs being all over the place. He moves without haste. He has great freedom of movement so as to attend to all details, but he never abuses this freedom by distracting behaviour during readings or sacred actions. He directs discreetly, without obvious gestures or comments, nor does he take the place of the deacon beside the celebrant. If he has to discipline misbehaviour, he acts with restraint, at least while walking in procession or working in the sanctuary. He should train his servers to watch him in case of having to issue directions to them during the service. Such directions are then given with the slightest use of gesture and with no unnecessary distraction to the congregation.

He must know what everyone is supposed to do and where all are meant to be at each moment of the liturgy. Therefore, much of his skill depends on the ability to see ahead: (a) he must be aware of variations in the ceremonial or text of a particular celebration; (b) he must know exactly what happens next, anticipating the movements of servers so that they are prompt with the book, incense, etc. He should be a person who can keep fine details in his mind while being aware of the "shape" and unity of a liturgical celebration.

The M.C. may wear an alb, but choir dress may seem preferable, to distinguish him from servers. A priest or deacon acting as the M.C. wears a stole only when receiving Communion or during duty at the tabernacle. A seminarian may wear a cassock alone or a cassock and surplice on more solemn occasions.

The following are notes that were made by the MC for his preparation during the celebration of a seminary day at Kinyamasika National Seminary.

*Sample of Preparation Notes of the MC*

- { The occasion celebrated
  - { Seminary Day at Kinyamasika Seminary (12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2000)
  - { Main Celebrant is the Papal Nuncio to Uganda
  - { There are two concelebrating bishops
- { The following were the notes for the preparation of the ceremony.

Procedure of the Liturgy

Remote preparation

- { Before the liturgy committee student MC should gather ideas from the students
- { One meeting with the liturgy committee preceding the staff meeting
  - { Read the minutes of last year's seminary day
  - { Gather proposals and contributions from the students
- { Make a report to the staff during staff meeting
- { Gather comments to give to MC to pass on to those concerned

Immediate Preparation

- { MC vestments
  - { Black cassock (have to iron it)
  - { White surplice (see sister sacristan to have it prepared)
- { See Nuncio
  - { Whether he has a personal MC
  - { Whether he carries a crosier
  - { Whether he has personal vestments
  - { Brief him about the procedure
  - { Give him a copy of the adapted rite for the blessing of the new dormitory
  - { Also find out how many other bishops will concelebrate
  - { Inform him that there is no commentary during the Mass
  - { Inquire from him whether he needs the Missal at the very beginning of the ceremony
  - { Brief him about the intercessions
    - { They will be presented by selected individuals in the community

The opening and closing formulas have been prepared for him

See sacristans

- { To prepare the two chalices
- { To prepare the appropriate cruets
- { To prepare wine and hosts in the place where other gifts will be placed at entrance

See student MCs

- { To prepare the vesting place
- { Table laid with cloth
- { Another table in the porch of the new building with
  - { Appropriate table cloth
  - { Candle (preferably the millennium candle)
  - { Holy water and sprinkler
  - { Rite for the blessing of the new building
  - { scissors for cutting the ribbon to the door of the new building
  - { Key for opening the new building
- { Put out enough vestments for concelebrants
- { Prepare extra places for concelebrants and congregation
- { To allocate ushers and brief them about their job
  - { One to direct the congregation
  - { Another to direct the concelebrants
- { To prepare the gifts to be brought in procession and appropriate place for them
- { To appoint the commentator and send him to me for briefing
- { To arrange the time for practice for all the servers
- { To choose and brief those people who will carry out the gifts in procession

See leader of the procession dance about what plans they have in mind

See readers

- { The lector and deacon responsible to practice the readings
- { The cantor to practice the responsorial psalm
- { Use the usual psalm sang in the liturgy of the hours (oh praise the lord all you nations)

Use what is given as response as the part the cantor will sing<sup>125</sup>

See deacons

- { About the intricacies of the mitre and crosier
- { About what they have to do at the blessing of the new house

Brief the staff about the procedures they need to know

Procession

Vesting

- { Nuncio's vestments be laid out at the table near Rector's office where procession begins
- { Inquire whether he carries his own vestments, or prepare those from the sacristy
- { Inquire how many other bishops are concelebrating. Their vestments next to Nuncio's
- { Deacon's dalmatics and other vestments in the place where other concelebrants dress
- { Other concelebrants to dress in student's parlour (next room)
- { After deacons have vested they should assist presider at vesting
- { The MC is to assist the Nuncio at vesting

Beginning of procession

- { The commentator will
  - { Tell the people the main aim of today's gathering
    - { To celebrate the seminary day
    - { To celebrate the millennium jubilee as a seminary
    - { Privilege of having the Apostolic Nuncio as presider
    - { This is also the occasion for the blessing of the Millennium House
  - { Announce the order of procession
    - { Cross bearer
    - { Incense boat bearer and thurifer

---

<sup>125</sup> The cantor will intone "Oh praise the Lord all you nations". The congregation will sing it with the familiar tune. Then the cantor will sing "go out to the whole world, proclaim the good news" with the melody: MMMFSS FMRDRM. Then the congregation will sing again "Oh praise the Lord all you nations".



Choir  
Congregation  
Seminarians  
Religious  
Others of the faithful  
Servers  
Concelebrating priests  
MC  
Papal Night  
Concelebrating bishops  
Deacons  
Presider  
Mitre and crosier bearer (need not tell  
people about these)

Announce the whole thing again in Rutoro

As the commentator concludes

{ Incense boat bearer and thurifer approach the  
Main celebrant  
After mixing incense choir begins hymn  
Procession begins immediately

At the altar

{ Deacon on the left takes the crosier  
Deacon on the right takes the mitre  
Together with the presider they genuflect  
They then kiss the altar with the tabernacle to their back  
The deacon of the Eucharist hands the thurible to the  
bishop  
Both deacons flank the presider at the incensing  
If necessary a deacon of the word directs the Presider to  
the presidential chair  
The server with the missal approaches immediately with  
the book (presider wishes it so)

Liturgy of the word

{ Get to know which alternative first reading the Nuncio  
will have<sup>126</sup>  
Brief the choir master that there is no second reading<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> The occasion celebrated was the Conversion of St. Paul, the patron of the seminary (even though this had passed already. By the 25<sup>th</sup> January the students are still on vacation). The missal gives two alternative first readings.

The deacon of the word ought to practice the reading before hand

Check on those who are to take the intercessions

- { Examine the content of the intercessions as prepared by MCs
- { Make sure that the order is known to the those who are to read them

Check with choir master which tune to sing in response

Advise him: to keep to the same tune for all the intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- { Check on those who will carry out the offertory procession at the time of intercessions

{ At the appropriate time the deacon is to invite the presider to go down for the gifts

The two deacons should be aware of their respective roles at the altar

At communion

- { Bishops and deacons will communicate from the altar
- { The hosts and wine will be taken to the concelebrants in their places by deacons

{ The presider deacon will give out communion in two columns (to avoid congestion)

{ Commentator to tell people not to go back through the central isle after communion

After communion the deacons will do the ablution in the sacristy

After cleansing of vessels moment of silence

Final blessing

Blessing of the new dormitory

- { At post-communion assistant MC to see to the placing of sound system at new house

{ Commentator to inform people of the procedure to the new dormitory

After commentator choir begins immediately. Bow, genuflection and procedure

Planting of tree (follows immediately after final blessing)

Choir may sing some appropriate hymn

---

<sup>127</sup> So that he may not wait before intoning the Alleluia.

Photographs with the various groups after the planting of the tree  
The investing in the sitting room of the new building  
Deacons to assist the Nuncio in the investing  
MC to assist the other deacons at their investing

At next liturgy meeting

{ To evaluate the liturgy with leaders of all those involved  
{ Secretary to take down the notes for future reference

### COMMENTATOR<sup>128</sup>

In a community that regularly celebrates the liturgy together there may not be any need for a commentator. Everyone knows what is done, what to respond, what follows, etc. To add a commentary when it is not necessary is to prolong the liturgy and tire the congregation without good cause. On certain occasion such as when the liturgical minister wants to introduce an unfamiliar element, or when many of the congregation are outsiders to the community, it may be necessary to have a commentator.

The purpose of the commentator is to promote full and active participation, by assisting the congregation to understand the procedure and the meaning of the different parts during the celebration. The commentator should be brief and precise. It is important to prepare the commentary and have it in writing rather than create it spontaneously on the spot. He or she should avoid making comments that overlap with the singing. A commentator with a sense of humour adds colour to the ceremony. But it is important to understand that his or her primary purpose is to inform and not to amuse, or to sound interesting. Sometimes a joke may misfire and sound banal or even offensive to some people. Some commentators have the habit of singing along with the choir in a sporadic and incomplete way, at times trying to harmonise one octave lower than the other singers. And since the commentator has

---

<sup>128</sup> SC 29; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 105 b, GILM 57.

the advantage of the microphone, he may overpower the voices of the choir with his which may not even be something to brag about. Liturgy is then turned into a theatrical.

A commentator must use his or her imagination to help the people understand the message. For instance it might be useful to open the liturgy of the Word with part of a psalm or a short hymn, an acclamation or a moment of silence. That will often be worth all the introductions that one could do. People become aware of what we are about to do.<sup>129</sup>

### LECTOR<sup>130</sup>

A lector is a man or woman<sup>131</sup> who officially proclaims the word of God at Mass and other liturgical functions. Under normal circumstances the lector takes any other scriptural reading apart from the gospel which reserved to the ordained minister when present. The lector may also take the general intercessions as well as carry the book of the gospels in procession in the absence of a deacon.

A good lector has to seek to gain the techniques of good reading and not assume that these come to him or her naturally. These skills include volume of voice, speed of reading, confidence, tone of voice, articulation and pronunciation, phrasing and eye contact. They also include adequate preparation, knowledge of the use of public address systems as well as gait and posture. Each of these skills is expounded below.

---

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Rinaldo Ronzani, *Celebrating the Eucharist: Practical Guidelines for the Sunday Mass*, p. 25.

<sup>130</sup> SC 29; GIRM 34, 66, 89, 91, 148-152; GILM 14, 49-55; CB 30-32; Ray Lonergan, *A well Trained Tongue: Workbook for Lectors*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1982; James A. Wallace, *The Ministry of Lectors* Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1981; Cosmas Lee, *Proclamation of the Word: A Guide for Readers and Commentators*, Pax Liturgical Commission, 1978.

<sup>131</sup> Generally female voices carry further than those of men. Moreover, since women may not serve as priests, it is only fair that they are not deprived of roles which they rightfully share with men.

### *Volume*

The reader should be loud enough to be heard by the entire congregation. His projection should be made in particular towards those that are furthest from the lectern and those that may have difficulty in hearing. It is very easy to assume that one is loud enough if one does not check one's loudness with listeners at the back pews. Moreover one has to remember that if one's voice carries up to the last pew during the practice before an individual listener, the reader has still to be louder when the church is full of worshippers with all the little noises that they make.

Even the soft-spoken must make an effort to be heard. If in spite of effort made one's voice does not carry enough, that is an indication that a person is not fit to read to this particular congregation, and ought to be replaced. For the proclaimed word of God is meant to be heard.

At the same time one's volume should not be too loud to be irritating to the listeners. This is particularly the case in very small communities. A person should regulate the voice according to the size of the church or the congregation if it does not fill the church.

### *Speed*

Reading can be fast or slow. The nearly always weakness is being too fast. Few for many there is an imperceptible fear of silence before the crowd when they are the focus of attention. We rather hear our own voice than tolerate a second of silence. Those who are in charge of reading practice should continually check the speed of readers. Fast reading, even when understood, is always unsatisfactory. Words, phrases and sentences are not given the chance to sink any depth into people's hearts.

However, it is also possible to exaggerate the slowness of reading. Particularly when one has a long reading to go through the speed should be moderate, not so boringly slow.

### *Articulation and Pronunciation*

The reader must seek to pronounce every word clearly, putting the stresses in the proper place. A well-articulated word is the result of a

genuine effort to produce a clear sound of the vowels and consonants. We must move our tongue and our lips to shape the sounds as clearly as possible. People should not be left guessing at what is the precise word we read. It is better to exaggerate a little with articulation than to under-articulate in public reading.

While articulation deals with clearness of vowels and consonants in a word, pronunciation deals with the correctness of the sound the word as standardised and accepted in the dictionary. On the one hand one does not expect people for whom English is a second language to pronounce in the same way as those for whom it is the mother tongue. Some people, while trying to imitate an American or British accent, only succeed in putting off the listeners who consider them showy, for they speak at the ambo in an accent we know to be different from the one in which they speak everyday. On the other hand, it is a commendable thing to learn to speak a language as well as one possibly can. The more we say words as they ought to be said, the greater the likelihood to be understood by more people, particularly those who do not share our mother tongues. When one is not sure of how a word ought to be pronounced, one can always humbly ask one who is more knowledgeable or check for the word from the dictionary.

### *Phrasing*

The total meaning of a passage is conveyed to us through a building-up of lesser ideas and these through intelligent and logical grouping of words. A good reader is able to break, by periods of pausing, words into their logical groupings. Obvious pauses are indicated by printed paragraphs, full-stops, colon, semi-colons, question marks, exclamation marks, commas etc., but these are often not sufficient. The reader, over and above what is indicated by punctuation marks, must add breaks to the reading to make it more easily understood, especially when the sentence or phrasing is too long.

Often many readers make the mistake of reading all pauses as if they were full stops. Their voices fall at a comma, semi-colon, or sense phrase, as if that were the end of the sentence. That distorts the meaning of the whole sentence.

The remedy towards good phrasing is familiarity with the meaning of the text one is reading. This is achieved by prior reading of the text over and over again. It also helps to reflect on the meaning of what one is reading. One who simply reads without reflecting on the meaning of the text, not only is not nourished by the text as he should be, like all the others. He also can make very simple mistakes of reading words differently from the way they are, without being aware of the mistakes at all.

### *Eye-contact*

Eye contact makes reading more personal and gives the impression that the reader knows what he is reading, and has prepared himself well. For some people eye contact may lead to the loss of the line where they were, for which it may be helpful to keep a finger at the line while one looks up, and to make sure that the finger does not slide to a different line! However, we should not exaggerate eye contact in the proclamation of scripture. Too much eye contact could promote a 'chit-chat' attitude thereby diminishing the solemnity of the occasion.

### *Use of the public address system*

Even a good reader could be hampered by the improper use of a microphone. Many of these systems differ from each other so that one may not use the same in the same way. Even where two systems are the same, the different acoustic arrangement of a particular church or place of worship may create all the difference, thus demanding a different handling of the system. The best way to check one's use of the system is to practice before hand with someone or some people listening to you from different places in the church and telling you your performance.

Other things to consider is the regulation of the voice to march the public address system. Sometimes people may trust too much to the microphone and lower their voice to the extent that even with it they are not clearly heard. On the other hand shouting in the microphone may be irritating to the people who hear you. Talking too close into the microphone may give "Ps" an explosive sound, while keeping the microphone too far may reduce its effectiveness.

Trying to keep eye contact, or in the case of preaching, constant movement may take you away from the microphone such that some phrases are not heard. Before using the microphone one should avoid the irritating habit of tapping on it or blowing in it to "test" even when this is not called for. Again moving the microphone about can create a lot of unwanted noise. Where possible first switch the microphone off before transferring or adjusting it.

#### *Posture, gait and dress of the lector*

What we are and how we feel can be expressed by the way we move, place our hands, hold our head or stand. There is such a thing as a lazy, impolite, purposeless, unconvincing posture. When we approach the lectern or stand behind it, we should move and stand in a way fitting to the speaker of God, with dignity, seriousness and solemnity. Avoid standing akimbo, first on one leg and then on the other. It is helpful towards reduction of nervousness if the reader holds both hands on the side of the ambo.

The lector should also take proper care of what he wears. One should be neat and presentable while reading. At the same time one ought to be modest in dress. This particularly applies to ladies who read. Do not dress in a spectacular and eye-catching or provocative manner. The speaker of God is not there to draw attention to self but to the word of God.

#### *The Lector's Preparation*

The Lector is the official reader of the scriptural lessons during the Liturgy apart from the gospel reading which is reserved to ordained ministers.<sup>132</sup>

It is clear from what has been said about techniques that it is impossible to read well without preparation *well in advance*. It helps at least for the beginning to ask people how they feel about the volume, speed, tone and pitch of our reading. Humility is needed to ask for the pronunciation of certain words.

---

<sup>132</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 63.



Many people who are otherwise very good readers can become confused with the pronunciation of unfamiliar biblical terms and names. Terms like "phylacteries" and names like "Ahasuerus" do not form part of ordinary vocabulary.

A certain head of government who was by virtue of office also chancellor of the national university once had to confer degrees on the granduants. Each head of faculty read the names of the granduants at the end of which the chancellor stood up to confer the degree. He stood up at the end of one such list and solemnly declared as he had done before "by virtue of my authority as chancellor, I confer upon you the Bachelor of Science degree in... (pause), obtes... obstre... osbte... whatever!" Those who were conferred with a degree in "whatever" should have actually graduated with a bachelor of science in obstetrics, if His Excellency had taken the trouble to go through his papers.

Preparation also involves a meditative reflection on the reading so that it has meaning for the reader. That way he or she can proclaim it in a manner that is meaningful, colourful and convincing without being affected. This may require reading the text several times or even studying it. It may require prayerful meditation on it.

For some people who are not familiar with reading it may be necessary to find out the proper formulas for beginning and ending of a reading. In certain lectionaries, particularly with regard to readings given in portable missals, the full formulas may not be given. One can easily find indicated simply "Jud. 3: 1-5," or "Jas. 4: 2-7". In the former case one who is not prepared, even when familiar with abbreviation of biblical books may be at a loss to decide whether the reading is from the book of Judges, or of Judith; or from the letter of St. Jude. In the latter case one who is not familiar with biblical abbreviation may not easily know that "Jas" in this case is the short form for "James". Nor may he know that James wrote an epistle, or a gospel, or whether he is one of the prophets! That of course sounds ridiculous to one for whom biblical readings are familiar, but it may not be obvious to many people, if they are not prepared.

Again it may not be necessary to announce chapter and verse, in Catholic reading. Usually the congregation is not prepared to note

these down as they are read out, so it is unnecessary to read them. At the same time many people who are not prepared get confused as to what constitutes the chapter and verse, particularly where the reading is a parchment of several units of verses.

### *Specific Duties at Mass*

The following description of the duties of the Lector at Mass are directly taken from the General Instruction 2002, nos. 194-198.

#### Introductory Rites

194. In coming to the altar, when no deacon is present, the lector, wearing approved attire, may carry the Book of the Gospels, which is to be slightly elevated. In that case, the lector walks in front of the priest but otherwise along with the other ministers.

195. Upon reaching the altar, the lector makes a profound bow with the others. If he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he approaches the altar and places the Book of the Gospels upon it. Then the lector takes his own place in the sanctuary with the other ministers.

#### The Liturgy of the Word

196. The lector reads from the ambo the readings that precede the Gospel. If there is no psalmist, the lector may also proclaim the responsorial Psalm after the first reading.

197. When no deacon is present, the lector, after the introduction by the priest, may announce from the ambo the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful.

198. If there is no singing at the Entrance or at Communion and the antiphons in the Missal are not recited by the faithful, the lector may read them at the appropriate time (cf. above, nos. 48, 87).

### *Ministry of Reading in the Absence of an Official Lector*

In the absence of an instituted lector, other laypersons may be commissioned to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture. They should be truly suited to perform this function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture.<sup>133</sup> It may not be an exaggeration to say

---

<sup>133</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 101.

that in the majority of cases readers at Eucharistic celebrations are of this kind: that is, lay people who have not officially been instated as lectors. All that is said of the instituted lector also applies to these readers, apart from the official institution itself.

*Practical Considerations for those who Guide Readers*

- Be humble, polite and respectful towards those whom you guide in reading. For most of us it is not easy to take correction. No one wants to know that they read badly. Do not humble readers any more than you need to. Do not make unnecessary and exaggerated corrections. If a reader needs no correction, do not make any. Complement where complements are due.
- At the same time be firm. Do not feel intimidated. Remember that you are carrying out an important liturgical ministry. Carry it out to the best of your ability. Point out the necessary corrections.
- Focus on what is read and not on the reader. It is better for the reader to hear: “that word is pronounced: ‘sin’ and not ‘seen’ or ‘scene” than that “you have a poor pronunciation” or that “I can’t understand your accent”
- Go through the readings yourself before hand. That you can identify mistakes more easily makes when they are made.
- Carry out the practice in the very place where the reading will be made, unless for some reason this is not possible.
- Be punctual. Do not make readers wait for you. Be in the church at the appointed time.
- Sit at the furthest possible place in the church while listening to the reader. This is to make sure that even those who of the congregation who sit furthest will be able to hear. Bear in mind that while the practice is usually made in an empty church, the actual reading takes place when the church is occupied. When the church is full of people some of the sound waves are absorbed by the actual presence of

the people. Some are muffled by the noise people make: coughs, shifting in their seats, opening books, etc.

- If possible make your corrections and comments only at the end of the reading. Let the lector read to the end without being interrupted. But if you feel that you will not be able to recall the corrections, then make them as the reader goes on. Stop them to make the corrections.
- Correct:
  - Loudness
  - Speed of reading
  - Articulation
  - Pronunciation
  - Meaning: e.g. does the reader make pauses when not necessary, or ignore pauses where they should be, thus distorting the meaning? Does he/she ignore punctuation: question marks, commas, full stops, etc.?
  - Posture

## ACOLYTE

The Acolyte<sup>134</sup> is the official server at the altar. By institution, he is authorised to serve at the altar, assisting the deacon and ministering to the priest, especially by preparing the altar and vessels. He may distribute Holy Communion, taking precedence over other extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.<sup>135</sup> He may also take precedence over servers in acting as cross bearer, thurifer, etc. At a solemn Mass, his role is similar to that of a sub-deacon in the old liturgy. The chief server could be an instituted acolyte. The acolyte wears an alb, but, if he acts as M.C., choir dress may seem preferable.

---

<sup>134</sup> See DOL, 341 pp. 911ff, GIRM 65, 68, 142-147, 209-231; CB 27-29. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 44.

<sup>135</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 98.

In the seminary seminarians who are instituted as acolytes usually take the role of ordinary servers. In parishes they may work along with other young servers whom they train and direct. The assignment of their duties at the altar depends very much on the pastor under whom they serve.

In the recent past it has become customary to have girl servers as well, and indeed in some areas they form the majority. However, like all new practices, in areas where their service is not the norm, its introduction ought to be made with due precaution.<sup>136</sup>

### *Vestments*

#### *Services at the Altar*

The duties of the acolyte at the altar are taken directly from the *General Instruction 2002* nos. 187-193:

187. The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

#### *The Introductory Rites*

188. In the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

189. Through the entire celebration, the acolyte is to approach the priest or the deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

#### *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

190. If no deacon is present, after the Prayer of the Faithful is concluded and while the priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if

---

<sup>136</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 47.

necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the priest. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

191. A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary minister, may, if necessary, assist the priest in giving Communion to the people.<sup>100</sup> If Communion is given under both kinds, when no deacon is present, the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants or holds the chalice if Communion is given by intinction.

192. Likewise, when the distribution of Communion is completed, a duly instituted acolyte helps the priest or deacon to purify and arrange the sacred vessels. When no deacon is present, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes, and arranges them in the usual way.

193. After the celebration of Mass, the acolyte and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy, together with the deacon and the priest in the same way and order in which they entered.

### *As Minister of Communion*

#### *In the Absence of a Deacon*

In the absence of a deacon the acolyte may assume some of the functions of the deacon as minister of the altar. He "...arranges the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal upon the altar."<sup>137</sup> But he does not pour the water into the wine, for this is the function of the priest who carries out the gesture with the appropriate words.<sup>138</sup> Nor does he stay around to open the book as the deacon does. He kneels together with the rest of the congregation at the moments of kneeling.

---

<sup>137</sup> *General Instruction*, no. 139.

<sup>138</sup> *General Instruction* no. 142.

*Precedence over the Catechist*

*Acolytes at Pastoral Work*

*Training of Other Servers*

## DEACON<sup>139</sup>

After the priest, the deacon, in virtue of the sacred ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the Eucharistic Celebration. For the sacred Order of the diaconate has been held in high honour in the Church even from the time of the Apostles. At Mass the deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, in preaching God's word from time to time, in announcing the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful, in ministering to the priest, in preparing the altar and serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and sometimes in giving directions regarding the people's gestures and posture.<sup>140</sup>

A deacon's primary liturgical duty is to assist the bishop. He also assists a priest who is the main celebrant. This he does by reading the gospel and preaching on it when required,<sup>141</sup> ministering at the altar and distribution of communion, guiding the assembly with the liturgical announcement and proclamations of the intentions of the faithful (if other lay members do not assume this role). The deacon does not take the parts of the priest, such as at the Eucharistic prayer. But he does not kneel at the consecration, like the rest of the servers and the congregation. In the absence of other lower ministers a deacon takes their part. Thus according to necessity, he may serve as lector and acolyte.

Normally the deacon stands to the right of the celebrant. He may have to change sides during the celebration according to necessity. For instance at the liturgy of the Eucharist he should be to the left

---

<sup>139</sup> SC 35; *General Instruction* 2002, no. 171-186; *General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, no. 49-50, 53-54; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 23-26.

<sup>140</sup> *General Instruction* 2002, no. 94.

<sup>141</sup> The ministry of preaching may also be imparted to lay people under certain circumstances. See DOL, 344, pp. 914ff.

and attend to the opening of the missal or sacramentary. When he brings the ciborium from the tabernacle he normally places it to the right of the main celebrant. When the deacon passes across the altar it is preferable that he does so in front rather than behind the main celebrant. Such is when for instance he distributes communion to the other concelebrants. The main celebrant needs to step back a little and give him space to cross over. If the main celebrant forgets to step back however, the deacon need not nudge him. He may pass behind in order not to draw unnecessary attention. In a procession the deacon walks to the right of the celebrant. However, when he carries the book of the gospels he should walk in the middle of the procession.

The deacon also carries out many liturgical functions in his own capacity and without being assistant to someone else. He can for instance preside over the liturgy of the hours, or Sunday communion service in the absence of a priest, or even at funerals, baptisms and marriages. He also carries communion to the sick.

When a deacon is present during the celebration of the Eucharist he should not sit among the rest of the congregation, unless there is one serving. Rather he should be given the chance to exercise his ministry.<sup>142</sup>

### PRIEST<sup>143</sup>

A priest also, who possesses within the Church the power of Holy Orders to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ, stands for this reason at the head of the faithful people gathered together here and now, presides over their prayer, proclaims the message of salvation to them, associates the people with himself in the offering of sacrifice through Christ in the Holy Spirit to God the Father, gives his brothers and sisters the Bread of eternal life, and partakes of it with them. When he celebrates the Eucharist, therefore, he must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he says the divine

---

<sup>142</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 115.

<sup>143</sup> Priest as preacher FYH 1-12, 18-39, 77. As presider GIRM 10-13, 48, 54, 60; GILM 38-43; DMC 23; MCW 21-22; LMT 67; EACW 60.



words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ.<sup>144</sup>

Most of what is written in this work aims at assisting priests in their liturgical ministry; whether those that are already in that ministry or those that are preparing to embrace it. A discussion of the liturgical ministry of the priest is therefore one of paramount importance. But it is important to see that what is said of that ministry here is only a small part of the comprehensive picture which the whole work covers.

The three-fold ministry of Christ in which a priest participates namely the sanctifying (priestly)<sup>145</sup>, teaching (prophetic)<sup>146</sup> and shepherding (kingly)<sup>147</sup> is a well-known doctrine. Of these three roles the priestly is the one of our immediate concern. The prophetic comes in with regard to his role of preaching within the sanctifying ministry. The priest carries out his role of sanctifying by presiding over liturgical functions as well as by animating others to assume their own liturgical responsibilities. In his ministering he represents Christ, while at the same time he works in union with the whole Church<sup>148</sup>: with other priests especially when they unite with him in concelebration<sup>149</sup>; with the diocesan bishop for whom he prays at every Eucharistic sacrifice.

The priest should thus pay attention to three areas namely: preparation, presiding and animation. Preparation in turn takes on two aspects. In the first place there is the spiritual preparation of oneself for the mysteries about to be celebrated. One should “slide” or “glide”, not “jump” or “bump” into Mass. That happens for instance when one wakes up only five minutes before Mass and

---

<sup>144</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 93.

<sup>145</sup> PO, 4.

<sup>146</sup> PO, 5.

<sup>147</sup> PO, 6.

<sup>148</sup> This union is brought out in his prayer for the head of the Church on earth, the Pope, at every Eucharistic sacrifice.

<sup>149</sup> Occasions for Concelebration SC 57; GIRM 153-158, regulations governing Concelebration GIRM 154-155, 158, special rites for Concelebration SC 58, GIRM 161, 208, HLS 30, 32, types of Concelebration GIRM 59, 74, 76, 153-154, 157.

hurries to wash up and get dressed. Or when one rushes from one activity to Mass or some other liturgical celebration with no moment of pause and reflection on what one is about to do. It is good always to allow some time to compose oneself, and to focus on what one is about to do. One way to do that is to make it a habit to come in church at a fixed time before the actual celebration. Spiritual preparation also includes regular reception of the sacrament of reconciliation at suitable intervals. Often a priest may not have the freedom to receive confession as often as he needs to. This happens particularly when one is alone in a parish. At the same time he must continue to celebrate for the people of God and to receive communion. That is why there should be regularity in the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation. This does not exonerate one from receiving the sacrament in between the set periods, if there is need and opportunity for it. Spiritual preparation also includes spiritual reading, personal prayer and celebration of the liturgy of the hours, preferably before Mass. That this makes liturgical celebration meaningful both for the celebrant and for the people for whom he celebrates.

Then there is the preparation of the rite to be celebrated. No one wants to attend Mass at which the minister preaches a homily in such a way that it is obvious that he is saying whatever comes to mind. Nor would anyone want to see a priest who takes three minutes flipping through the pages to find the right one. Sometimes lack of adequate preparation of the rite results in such things as baptising without the oils because they have been forgotten at home, or using the wrong vestments. Preparation of the rite includes consulting the *Ordo* to note the particular celebration and the readings. The only way to avoid occasional but painful surprises of preparing a homily based on the wrong readings, or forgetting a major feast or solemnity and getting aware of it just before the time for celebration, is always to consult the *Ordo*. This means that it is important to have a personal *Ordo*, which one can carry with. Sometimes it is necessary to go through the readings several times. On other occasions it is helpful to consult some other commentary on them as well. If it is a feast day for some saint, it is helpful to consult some good book of the lives of the saints, besides the short note given in the missal or breviary. The celebration of other

sacraments and sacramentals may necessitate going through the rubrics and making suitable choices of prayers and formularies where such option is provided. Preparation of the rite involves availing and marking the book of the rite, procuring the right vestments, oils, water, ashes; as the case may be. It also involves checking with the MC or whoever is responsible, to see that everything is in order.

The success of the celebration owes much to this preparation. One who has prepared well the rite can celebrate with self-confidence; one who has taken time to prepare spiritually can convey conviction, reverence, faith. The combination of the two forms of preparation makes the liturgy beautiful as well as meaningful to the lives of the participants. One needs to add that it is also good for the priest to remain sometime in prayer of thanksgiving and reflection on the mysteries just celebrated. The priest above all else should feel challenged by his own homily, for the people soon notice a life that contradicts one's preaching.

In animating others to carry out their liturgical duties the priest should in the first place pray for them. He should remember that we can only do the planting and the weeding; only God makes the plants grow. Pray for the people in response to their constant petition for one's prayers, and in keeping that promise to pray for them that we make too easily. Pray for their intentions badly offered at the Eucharistic sacrifice. Pray with faith the mandatory Mass intention on the part of pastors for their people every Sunday. Animation more directly concerns giving the people a proper catechesis on the meaning of what they celebrate. A Christian recently asked me why do some priests make the sign of the cross at the Confeor and others do not. She was confused about what they the faithful ought to do on their part. She wondered whether it is a sign of irreverence on the part of those who do not make that sign or a sign of ignorance on those who make the sign. When also wanted to know why many of the signs that were made during Mass before the Second Vatican Council are not made today. Was the Mass badly celebrated then or now? For what reason were the changes? Some of the faithful will have the courage to ask. Others will simply go along without knowing why they do what. It is

incumbent on the minister to make them celebrate fully, actively and consciously. The priest should also encourage the people to take on their proper roles such as joining the choir, taking readings, becoming Eucharistic ministers, servers, catechists, etc.

One and the same priest celebrant must always exercise the presidential office in all of its parts, except for those parts which are proper to a Mass at which the Bishop is present.<sup>150</sup>

Finally a word needs to be said about certain “styles” of presiding that ought to be avoided.<sup>151</sup> There is the ‘robot presider’ who goes through the prayers, readings, etc as if there was no difference between these texts; everything is read in the same way, with the same lack of interest. The gestures of the robot presider are purely and formal and unnatural. Then there is the ‘casual presider’. This one arrives at the altar late, carelessly dressed, does not seem to know what kind of celebration he is presiding. He uses the altar as a table for his glasses, handkerchief, keys, etc. he does everything himself, and rushes through the celebration in record time. Thirdly there is the ‘preacher-presider’ who fills in every moment of the celebration with short (?) homilies! Everything he does is prefaced by an explanation. At first people are interested, after a while they get bored. None of these three is to be imitated.

It is not uncommon to find, in communities with a large number of priests, that only a few concelebrate and the rest regularly join the congregation. In other places all may ‘concelebrate’ while seated in the pews and in their ordinary clothes. The only gesture that shows that they are concelebrating is their taking part in the Eucharistic prayer. Neither of these practices is commendable. The General Instruction stipulates that: “...it is preferable that priests, who are present at a Eucharistic Celebration, unless excused for a good reason, should as a rule exercise the office proper to their Order and hence take part as concelebrants, wearing the sacred vestments.

---

<sup>150</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 108. See also no 92 for those parts which a bishop who attends the Mass may take.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Rinaldo Ronzani, *Celebrating the Eucharist: Practical Guidelines for the Sunday Mass*, p. 12.

Otherwise, they wear their proper choir dress or a surplice over a cassock.”<sup>152</sup>

## BISHOP<sup>153</sup>

92. Every legitimate celebration of the Eucharist is directed by the Bishop, either in person or through priests who are his helpers. Whenever the Bishop is present at a Mass where the people are gathered, it is most fitting that he himself celebrate the Eucharist and associate priests with himself as concelebrants in the sacred action. This is done not to add external solemnity to the rite but to express in a clearer light the mystery of the Church, "the sacrament of unity. Even if the Bishop does not celebrate the Eucharist but has assigned someone else to do this, it is appropriate that he should preside over the Liturgy of the Word, wearing the pectoral cross, stole, and cope over an alb, and that he give the blessing at the end of Mass.<sup>154</sup>

All that has been said regarding a priestly liturgical ministry applies to a bishop in a superlative way, for the bishop manifests the fullness of the priesthood when he celebrates. “The sanctifying office is exercised principally by bishops, who are the high priests, the principle dispensers of the mysteries of God and the moderators, promoters and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the Churches entrusted to their care.”<sup>155</sup> For that reason it is appropriate that the bishop presides even whether there are other priests who could take on the role of main celebrant. It is also fitting that priests concelebrate at an Episcopal Mass. When the bishop takes part at a Mass at which a priest presides, the bishop takes all that which is taken by the presider regarding the liturgy of the word.<sup>156</sup> He also blesses the people at the end of the Mass. Besides his principle role at celebration the bishop also always down

---

<sup>152</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 114.

<sup>153</sup> CB 1-41, SC 41-42.

<sup>154</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 92.

<sup>155</sup> Can. 835 §1

<sup>156</sup> The details of how such a Mass ought to be conducted are laid down in the Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 171-186.

liturgical regulations within his limits.<sup>157</sup> He should set the example in following the liturgical regulations in the diocese.

### NON-LITURGICAL PERSONAGES

Another category of people about whom something needs to be said with regard to the liturgy are those that may be termed “non-liturgical personages”. They play a role that is socially but not liturgically required. An example is that of photographic and video camera men. They should strive to pray as well if they are Catholics. One often sees them moving about so engrossed in their business and quite oblivious of the fact that people are praying. Even those who are non-Catholic can at least show respect and reverence for the sacred mysteries being celebrated. They should all avoid being a distraction for instance by taking only pictures that are required. Liturgy is not an occasion for showing off. Occasionally it is even necessary to restrict or even forbid photographers.

Secondly, there are those invited to give speeches. They should be brief. Such invitations should be limited. Care should be taken that religious functions are not used for political propaganda. A pastor should not feel obliged to put on the list of speakers all the politicians of the area. Nor should there be any fear of cutting down on protocol in speeches during liturgical functions. “It is not permissible to link the celebration of Mass to political or secular events, nor to situations that are not fully consistent with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church...”<sup>158</sup>

In particular it is worthy to note that one who gives the homily is not required to observe protocol at the beginning by naming all the various dignitaries by name and title. A homily must be differentiated from a speech. It is the expounding of the word of God. The homily is addressed to the children of God, and as such we are all equal. Out of courtesy the preacher may make an exception, but he should be carefully not to unduly prolong the homily with protocol.

---

<sup>157</sup> Can. 836 §4

<sup>158</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 78.

Wherever possible it is preferable that speeches are given after the conclusion of the liturgy. Ministers may then be given the opportunity to remove the liturgical vestments.

Yet another category of people is that of disturbers. These include lunatics, drunkards, people who may go into an epileptic fit, mothers with wailing babies, and so on. In these cases the help of the faithful near the incident of disturbance is quite handy. It is certainly much better that those around the source of disturbance deal with it rather than the minister shouts down the isle from the altar. He might even cause greater distraction including those who had not even noticed the disturbance. Sometimes it is inevitable that he intervenes. He may do so by observing a pause while the cause of the disturbance is being solved. He may also have to invite some members of the congregation to help.

## **CEREMONIAL ACTIONS**

**Error! No table of contents entries found.**

### Bibliographical References

Martimort, “Postures, Gestures, Actions”, in Martimort, *The Church at Prayer*, vol. I. Pp. 178-187.

Peter J. Elliott, “Ceremonial Actions” in *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite*, pp. 69-84.

“The Liturgy as a Complexus of Sensible Signs” in Cyprian Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1976, pp. 32-82.

B.I. Mullay, M.P. Ellenbracht, “Liturgical Gestures”, in Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, vol. II, 2003, Gale, p. 646-650.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Meaning of Ceremonial Actions*

By Ceremonial Actions here are meant all the gestures and postures, all the bodily actions made in the liturgy. This includes those actions made by the movement of the limbs, as well as by the eyes and the voice. All ceremonial actions should reflect reverence and devotion.

In the performance of these actions two extremes ought to be avoided. On the one hand one ought to avoid carelessness and lack of reverence. On the other gestures and postures should not be performed to attract attention or to impress others. They should not depict pomp and sanctimony.

### *Why we use Gestures and Postures in the Liturgy*

The human being is both spiritual and corporal. We use gestures and postures in the liturgy in the first place because we cannot do otherwise. Our mode of communication reflects and is determined by our nature. And our nature in the present earthly state is that of body and soul. With our minds we think, reflect, love, feel sorry, experience awe, etc. With our bodies we express to others what we feel: we embrace, kneel and ask for pardon, clap our hands in gladness, shake hands in thankfulness or well wishing, and so on. Similarly in the liturgy we communicate through sensible bodily movements. Gestures are the outward expressions of a spiritual-material being. "In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God."<sup>159</sup>

It is true that God who sees in the heart does not need gestures to understand what we mean. But it is equally true that in the liturgy we communicate with him not as individuals but as a worshipping community. We need to know what we are communicating together. We need to use the same gestures and postures to

---

<sup>159</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1146.



communicate the same thing at the same time. A pure spiritual liturgy is therefore not possible. “A common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the Sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants.”<sup>160</sup>

In Deuteronomy 6: 5 we read: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and *with all your strength.*” Whereas to love God with all our hearts and souls regards our spiritual nature; to love him with all our strength implies our material nature as well. And so like David who danced without shame before the Ark of the Lord who had chosen him in place of Saul to lead his people,<sup>161</sup> we too use our bodily movement to honour him who gave us our limbs and all the things we possess. The omission of gestures in worship should therefore not be done lightly.

Another reason why we use gestures is that we acknowledge the importance of our bodies. The body is destined to a glorious resurrection, as we profess in the Creeds. It became the temple of the Holy Spirit at our baptism. It is upon the body that sacraments are performed to nourish the soul. We partake of the body and blood of the Lord by eating him in the form of bread and wine. We receive anointing by being smeared with oil. We are baptised through water poured on us.

Gestures and postures enhance human communication.<sup>162</sup> The language of words is made more intelligible through gestures. We are so used to applying gestures in talking that it is not unusual to find a person gesticulating during a telephone conversation! People are more united in thought by being united in action. Watch people sawing away at a huge piece of log. They often sing in order to continue with the arduous and monotonous work which requires unison of activity. The same is done by those rowing at sea.

---

<sup>160</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 42.

<sup>161</sup> 2 Samuel 6: 12-15.

<sup>162</sup> SC 30; GIRM 20-22, 62; CB 68-83; EACW 56-58.

Our use of gestures in the liturgy is in imitation of the Lord himself. He healed many by touch when he could have done so at a distance, as he did in the case of the centurion's servant for instance. He did not need to apply saliva on the eyes of the blind man or spittle on the ears and mouth of the deaf and dumb. He gave the Spirit to the apostles by blowing on them. Similarly the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove at Christ's baptism, and in tongues of fire at Pentecost. This is not because he is constituted in any of these material shapes, but for the sake of those who perceive only through the senses. He does not need to be heard like a mighty sound of wind.

### *Conditions for Liturgical Gestures to be Effective*

In order to be effective gestures and postures must be uniform. Occasionally in particular liturgies people gesticulate each according to the way they are moved by the Spirit. But generally in the traditional liturgy that is described here gestures and postures are in unison, as far as possible. We all sit at listening to a homily. We stand to welcome the gospel. We respond in the acclamations with one voice. Certainly there can be exceptions. One who has a bad knee need not kneel with the rest. Nor must everyone sing including those who cannot tell one key from another. Some may prefer to kneel a little longer after communion. The minister does not need to clap at every song, particularly if at the same time he must bless the deacon who is about to read the gospel, or if he has to offer the gifts brought at the altar. But generally gestures of a united congregation should be done in unison as much as possible. For this reason it is necessary to have a certain constancy in the use of gestures. A constant proposal of new gestures may upset the people who cannot cope with the new changes. We now examine some of the gestures individually.

## STANDING

The faithful should stand from the beginning of the Entrance chant, or while the priest approaches the altar, until the end of the Collect; from the Alleluia chant before the Gospel; while the Gospel itself is proclaimed; during the Profession of Faith and the Prayer of the Faithful; from the invitation, *Orate, fratres (Pray,*

*brethren*), before the prayer over the offerings until the end of Mass, except at the places indicated below...<sup>163</sup>

Standing is a sign of respect. People stand in the presence of one they wish to honour. They stand when an important person enters a hall. Those in court stand at the entrance of the judge. Soldiers stand at attention during a Guard of Honour. In the same way in the liturgy we stand at the entrance of the main celebrant and the other ministers that accompany him. We again stand at their departure from the sanctuary, and we do not sit or start walking out until they have all left. This is to honour, not the main celebrant as a person, but the one he represents; Christ himself.

The faithful stand not only to honour the Lord present in the person of his minister, but also in his word. They stand at the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>164</sup> In fact standing promotes attention more than sitting does. Standing is also a posture of attentive prayer. The faithful stand during the Eucharistic prayer.

Standing is also the proper posture of the minister who offers at the altar.<sup>165</sup> In fact the minister does more standing than anyone else during the liturgy does. He stands to give the homily while others are seated. He stands throughout the entire Eucharistic prayer.

In the Eastern rite standing is a posture symbolic of the resurrection, of the awaiting of the Parousia. For that reason there is no kneeling on the Lord's Day, nor in the Easter season. This is to show that we are respectful before the sacred mysteries; but we are no longer slaves.

Liturgical standing should be dignified. One should avoid standing akimbo, on one leg. While standing one should avoid turning

---

<sup>163</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, 43, Cf. EACW 52.

<sup>164</sup> "Then the people stood at a distance, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was." (Exodus 20: 21). "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up." (Nehemiah 8:5).

<sup>165</sup> "When [Simon son of Onias] received the portions from the hands of the priests, as he stood by the hearth of the altar with a garland of brothers around him, he was like a young cedar on Lebanon surrounded by the trunks of palm trees." (Sir 50: 12).

around too often. It is good also to avoid folding one's hands across the chest or leaning on the pew unless there is some good reason to do so.

### KNEELING<sup>166</sup>

Kneeling is a sign of humility and a posture of prayer, particularly of prayer that is penitential. It is also a sign of great reverence for instance appropriate at the time of consecration. In many places kneeling is the traditional posture for private prayer. Kneeling also has the psychological advantage of keeping a person alert. Unfortunately, in some churches people have erroneously excluded the possibility of kneeling by making no provision of kneelers. It is not proper to deprive those of the faithful who would wish to show reverence to God by this posture. Those who prefer to kneel at the reception of Holy Communion should also be treated with respect and understanding for their sentiments.<sup>167</sup>

### SITTING

[The faithful should] sit while the readings before the Gospel and the responsorial Psalm are Proclaimed and for the homily and while the Preparation of the Gifts at the Offertory is taking place, and, as circumstances allow, they may sit or kneel while the period of sacred silence after Communion is observed.<sup>168</sup>

Sitting is the posture taken by a teacher who instructs and a leader who presides. It was the usual posture of a rabbi instructing his disciples. It is also the posture of the bishop when he teaches or preaches from his cathedra.

---

<sup>166</sup> GIRM 21; Giapp 21; EACW 57

<sup>167</sup> It would be desirable of course that all the receive the Lord under the same posture. Sometimes where the congregation is big those who kneel for communion may create some inconvenience. However, these are no good reasons to offend their sense of piety and respect for the Eucharistic Lord, unless they in turn look down on those who do not kneel as irreverent.

<sup>168</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, 43.

Sitting is also the posture proper to listeners. The disciples would sit around their master and listen to him. In the same way the congregation sits to hear the homily. It is the most comfortable posture, and prayer and concentration require a certain amount of comfort. That is why even when the rest of the congregation takes on a different posture such as standing or kneeling some members out of necessity may remain seated. The feeble need not be constrained to stand or to kneel if this costs them so much. However, comfort should not be exaggerated as to cause distraction. A sofa is not the best seat during liturgical prayer.

When facilities are not conducive to kneeling the congregation may stand or sit. This may be the case where Mass is said out of doors, or where the floor is too dusty or muddy. Still those who wish to kneel should not be prevented or made to feel out of place.

#### BOWING<sup>169</sup>

Bowing is a sign of reverence. In the liturgy bowing is made at different occasions such as at the pronouncement of the name of the Trinity in the Glory be to the Father...<sup>170</sup>, when one passes in front of the main celebrant, as a substitute to kissing the altar or the book of the gospels, when a solemn blessing is being imparted. We also bow to the altar where there is no tabernacle directly behind the altar<sup>171</sup>, at the mention of the incarnation during the praying of the creed (at the words “by the power of the Holy Spirit he was made man”), at the prayer “Lord God we ask you to receive us and be pleased...”, before and after incensation. A deacon also bows to receive a blessing before proclaiming the gospel. Servers bow to the main celebrant after serving him. It is courteous for him to bow to them in return.

A bow may be simple or solemn, depending on the its object. It may be a bow with a slight bend of the head, or it may be a deep

---

<sup>169</sup> GIRM 84, 232-234.

<sup>170</sup> At least in some monastic communities.

<sup>171</sup> CB 72

bow of the upper part of the body, bending at the waste.<sup>172</sup> A bow should not be too hasty or shy. The bow of the head should not look like an abrupt node.

## PROSTRATION



Prostration is a rare posture that is done at the reception of a definitive consecration to God performed by a bishop. It is made during the singing of the litany of the saints.

Deacons, priests and bishops prostrate at their consecration. Virgins also prostrate at their consecration. Abbots and abbesses may also prostrate when they are being blessed to take on those offices. However, in this case it is not a total consecration to God, which they made already. That is why the posture is optional. Religious also prostrate at the making of their final vows. It does not seem appropriate to have them prostrate at the making of interim vows, even though some congregations do it. To reserve the prostration only for the making of perpetual vows adds solemnity and weight to that most serious commitment.

Priests and deacons also prostrate at the beginning of the Good Friday liturgy. In this case the significance of the prostration is different. Here it is a sign of solemn prayer filled with reverent awe.

---

<sup>172</sup> CB 68: “A bow signifies reverence and honour toward persons or toward objects that represent persons. There are two kinds of bows, a bow of the head and a bow of the body: a bow of the head is made at the name of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints in whose honour the Mass or the liturgy of the hours is being celebrated; a bow of the body, or deep bow is made, to the altar if there is no tabernacle with the blessed sacrament on the altar; to the bishop, before and after incensation, as indicated in no. 91; wherever it is expressly called for by the rubrics of the various liturgical books. (See GIRM 234).

We have several examples of such prayer in the bible.<sup>173</sup> We revere the prodigy of the infinite love of God that submits to death on the cross in order to redeem mankind.

In the liturgy it is wise not to simply "fall to the ground" as is reported in many of the cases of prostration in scripture. One might break a nose or a tooth. A possible procedure is that first one kneels, then extends the right hand, bowing forward to rest the head on it at the same time bringing the left hand under it. Placing the forehead on both hands gives one breathing space for the interval of the litany of the saints. One should avoid spreading the hands while prostrated. This is not only to give oneself room for breathing, but also to allow space for others. After the prostration one should first come to a kneeling posture, pause then stand. It is also practical to get oneself a pair of good shoes with a sole that is still in good shape and with no mud sticking on the shoe. Thus you may avoid distracting those kneeling behind you.

#### SILENCE

Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. Its purpose, however, depends on the time

---

<sup>173</sup> Genesis 17:3-4: Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations." Deuteronomy 9:18: Then I lay prostrate before the LORD as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin you had committed, provoking the LORD by doing what was evil in his sight. Tobit 12:15-17, I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord." The two of them were shaken; they fell face down, for they were afraid. But he said to them, "Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God forevermore. Matthew 17:5-6 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. Revelation 4:10-11 the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts. Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.<sup>174</sup>

The effectiveness of all prayer depends on the extent to which it comes from the heart. Meaningful silence is an element in celebration which must be given its due place. The meaning varies according to the point in the celebration at which it occurs. Below we examine the different moments during Mass where silence can be observed, and the respective meaning of each of these moments of silence.

#### *Before Mass*

During the preparation for Mass one needs a moment of silence to reflect on God's presence.<sup>175</sup>

It is not uncommon to see priests habitually coming into the sacristy at the last minute, breathless and wiping perspiration, with no time for reflection. It is a good habit to set one's time for entry into the church for Mass much earlier than the actual time for starting. This is not only helpful for the celebrant, but also edifying to the congregation.

It is important to focus on what one is about to do, to recall the great mysteries one is about to approach. This evokes an attitude of humility and a sense of gratitude towards them. The same effort should be made through the celebration to focus attention on what one is doing, so that the words do not simply flow through the lips as it were. This focus of attention is made more real if one recalls

---

<sup>174</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 45.

<sup>175</sup> See “**Error! Reference source not found.**” on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**



that he is required to imitate what one celebrates and to model his life on it.<sup>176</sup>

### *Penitential Rite*

At the Penitential rite the people are invited to reflect on their sinfulness and need of God's mercy.<sup>177</sup> The short period of silence made before the penitential act is a call to focusing, to concentration of thought, to contemplation of the immensity of the mystery we are about to approach and our own unworthiness aggravated by our sinfulness. The period of silence should not be too prolonged as if to allow room for a full examination of conscience, which is properly made during the sacrament of reconciliation. Rather it is a call to recognition of our unworthiness, and the mercy of God that offers himself to us in spite of that unworthiness. At the same time it should not be too brief as to be pre-empted of its meaning.

### *Before the Collect*

At the pause before the Collect the people should turn their thoughts within themselves, composing themselves and placing themselves in the presence of God. The brief silence also serves for the people to present their intentions to God, whatever these may be – thanksgiving, petition, sorrow, joys, adoration, etc. The presentation of individual intentions to God contributes to the relevance of the particular Mass for the individual. The main celebrant too can use the moment of silence to present personal and communal intentions. This is also a suitable moment to introduce mentally the special intention of the Mass for which he may be taking a stipend. However, this is not the moment for the main celebrant to introduce vocally to the congregation the intention of the Mass. That would destroy the moment of silence.

---

<sup>176</sup> *Rite of Ordination of a Priest*, no. 14, 26: “know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate, make every effort to die to sin and to walk in the new life of Christ...imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross.”

<sup>177</sup> See “**Error! Reference source not found.**” on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The intention and special needs of the community may be presented in the Introduction of the Mass, if not confined to the Prayers of the Faithful.

*At the Liturgy of the Word*

The liturgy of the word should be celebrated in a way that favours meditation. Any kind of haste is to be avoided, for it impedes recollection. Dialogue between God and his people, with the help of the Holy Spirit, requires short periods of silence, adjusted to the assembly, during which the heart opens to the word of God and a prayerful response takes shape. Such moments of silence can be appropriately observed just before the commencement of the liturgy of the word, for example, after the first and second reading and after the homily.<sup>178</sup>

However, in order to be meaningful, moments of silence need to be explained, at least when they are used with a particular congregation for the first time. In many places it might be customary to observe a moment of silence after the readings when there is no homily, but it may be unusual to have silence preceding the readings. If some visiting priest introduced it for a change the congregation might spend the period of silence wondering whether there is no one to take the readings, and looking at the usual readers thinking that they are on strike or something.

*Thanksgiving after Communion*

“When the distribution of Communion is finished, as circumstances suggest, the priest and the faithful spend some time praying privately...”<sup>179</sup>

*...with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God... (Colossians 3:16).*

After communion a period of silence can be observed in gratitude for what has just been received. Gratitude is a most important virtue in ordinary life.

It is very hurtful when you have gone at great lengths to please

---

<sup>178</sup> GILM, 28

<sup>179</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 88.

someone, and when the favour is taken for granted. Quite often all that is needed is the word “thank you”, a gesture of appreciation. The donor who recognises gratitude in the heart and behaviour of the recipient is more ready to impart further favours. But when favours are bestowed on one who lacks gratitude, this often erodes the generosity of the giver. This does not apply only in human relationships but also in the relationship between us and God. Jesus was amazed at the ingratitude of the nine lepers who went off like a goat that has broken a pot; as if they had paid for the cure, and that was restoring physical health which he effected merely by his command. But in the Eucharist there is a gift that cost him his life.

And so we can understand the recommendation that each one who has been refreshed by communion should remain in prayer for a period of time, so that they may continue more easily in the thanksgiving which is offered to God in an excellent manner through the Mass.<sup>180</sup>

The individual thanksgiving after communion may take on different forms. It may be a brief period of silence, reflecting on what has been received. It may be some prayer formulated in one’s own words, or some proposed prayer of thanksgiving in print.

#### *After Mass*

It is helpful for the faithful to remain in the church for sometime in prayerful silence after the Mass has ended and the final hymn is concluded. Similarly, the ministers do not have to start talking away in the sacristy and then walk out of it without a short moment of prayerful silence in the church. That moment might be used to reflect on how this particular Eucharistic celebration is going to be lived throughout the day. It may be the opportunity moment to ask the Lord who is present in the tabernacle, for the strength to carry out what he has just commissioned us to do.

---

<sup>180</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 35. Cf. *Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 25.

## WALKING IN PROCESSION

Liturgical processions might be grouped in two categories. There are ordinary processions such as the entrance procession<sup>181</sup>, the gospel procession<sup>182</sup>, the offertory procession<sup>183</sup> and the communion procession.<sup>184</sup> There are also extra ordinary processions such as the procession made on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord (Corpus Christi), on Palm Sunday, during a Eucharistic congress and during pilgrimages.

Each procession has its norms of procedure.<sup>185</sup> But whatever the kind of procession the movement of the people should be prayerful and dignified. It is good not to talk to each other on profane matters during a procession. In a procession one should avoid greeting acquaintances among those outside the procession, waving to people one knows or just to wander with one one's eyes. At the same time one need not exaggerate or affect solemnity. If people one knows try hard to capture one's attention one should respond kindly, perhaps with a little smile of recognition and greeting.

In ordinary processions it is customary to keep two by two in the course of the procession, apart from some individuals with special roles such as the cross-bearer, the deacon or other person carrying the book of the gospels and the bishop or some other main celebrant at the end of the procession. If one person in a procession stands out as an odd number he can join some two people to make three walking together, or move in the middle like a deacon carrying the book. It is preferable that people with special roles such as the Master of Ceremonies take that odd position. A procession should neither be too fast nor too slow. People who are singing during a procession should make an extra effort to listen to each other so that voices are in unison. The difference in distance tends to make uniform singing particularly difficult. For that reason, where possible a portable microphone is useful to carry along during a

---

<sup>181</sup> GIRM 82, 127-128, 142-143, 148, 162, 235; CB 54; dMC 34.

<sup>182</sup> GIRM 94.

<sup>183</sup> GIRM 49, 101, 133, 147.

<sup>184</sup> GIRM 119, 137, 206, 210.

<sup>185</sup> GIRM 22

procession so that the voices of the soloist or leading choir can be heard and followed by everyone.

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The sign of the cross is a sign of belonging to Christ. Originally it was performed in rites of exorcism. Eventually it also became a sign of blessing. Today it is the usual form of beginning and ending of a liturgical action. It is also made at the beginning of a gospel text read in the liturgy. This is the case when we sign ourselves on the forehead, lips and chest before the reading of the gospel - that the word to be read may be understood by our minds, proclaimed by our lips and loved with our hearts.<sup>186</sup> We also sign ourselves at the beginning of gospel canticles such as the Magnificat, the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimittis.<sup>187</sup>

The sign of the cross should be made boldly with the words clearly pronounced. One should “Avoid making the sign of the cross as if you were chasing flies away from your face and trying to catch one in front of your chest.”<sup>188</sup> Within the present Roman Missal there are three signs of the cross made during Mass: at the beginning before the greeting, over the gifts in the Eucharistic prayer before the words of the institution narrative, and in the concluding rite before the dismissal. Other minor signs are the blessing of a deacon before he reads the gospel and when the celebrant and concelebrants sign themselves during the first Eucharistic prayer. There are other signs of the cross made by many priests out of routine and habit. These are mainly vestiges of the Tridentine Missal. Such signs include the

---

<sup>186</sup> “The marking of the forehead, lips and heart with small signs of the cross by the thumb was a medieval development expressing a desire to open the mind to the word of God, to speak the Good News and to hold it carefully in the heart.” Ferome Overbeck, “Cross”, in the *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*.

<sup>187</sup> “The Gospel canticles, the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc dimittis*, should be accorded the same solemnity and dignity as is usual for the hearing of the Gospel.” GILH, 138.

<sup>188</sup> Dennis C. Smolarski, *How not to Say Mass: A Guidebook for All Concerned about Authentic Worship*, New York: Paulist Press, 1986. P. 38.

one made at the Confiteor, before and after the homily, with the piece of host at the commingling, with the chalice before the celebrant communicates and before giving communion to others.

## GENUFLECTION

Placing prostration apart, genuflection is the supreme and most common act of reverence in the Roman rite. It is made at the adoration of Jesus in the reserved Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. He is also revered by genuflection in the consecrated Eucharistic species at the altar, whether this is during Mass or during exposition in a monstrance or ciborium. Genuflection is also made before the crucifix, but this is done only on Good Friday when the cross is set out for veneration.<sup>189</sup> Traditionally genuflection is also made when a relic of the Holy Cross is exposed for veneration. This of course is limited to those few places where such authentic relic is reserved.

They are two types of genuflections. There is the one-knee genuflection made with the back and the head straight. The right knee touches or almost touches the floor.<sup>190</sup> There is also the genuflection with both knees touching the ground followed with a deep bow. Traditionally the latter was reserved for the exposed Blessed Sacrament. This is no longer required, unless the bishops of the territory have chosen to retain the posture. For Lord remains as present when the Eucharist is exposed as when it is covered, in the same way as he was unhampered by closed doors at the apparition

---

<sup>189</sup> CB 69: “A genuflection, made by bending only the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and is therefore reserved for the blessed sacrament, whether exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, and for the holy cross from the time of the solemn adoration in the liturgical celebration of Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.”

<sup>190</sup> In this and other liturgical gesture it seems proper that a left-handed person learns the “right” way. For all its kindness and understanding, the world will always be taken aback to see one signing or blessing with the left hand, or reversing the direction of the sign of the cross to suit one’s bodily constitution. And with little practice a left-handed person learns the “right” way in such a way that it becomes as easy as to a right-handed. Incidentally this is asserted out of experience, not heresy.

to the twelve after his resurrection. However, for pastoral sensitivity it is better not to upset the faith of the people if they are used to the former posture and before the change is explained and made understandable to them.

During the celebration of Mass genuflection is made after the elevation of the Eucharistic bread, after elevation of the Eucharistic chalice and before communion of the celebrant. When there is a tabernacle in the sanctuary, it is made before and after mass and whenever one crosses in front of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>191</sup> The exception is those carrying a thurible, cross, candles, book of the gospel, etc. In a procession passing in front of a shrine or altar where the Eucharist is reserved, people are not required to genuflect.

## PURIFICATION

Whenever a particle of the Eucharistic bread adheres to his fingers, especially after the breaking of bread or the communion of the people, the priest cleanses his fingers over the paten or, if necessary, washes them. He also gathers any particles that may fall outside the paten, puts them into the chalice, adds water to it and carefully shakes it to allow them to be suspended in the water then drinks it. If necessary he may add more water before cleaning and drying the chalice. The usual and obvious way of cleaning the sacred vessels after communion is by use of water alone. It is permissible, however, to use wine and water.<sup>192</sup> The use of wine should not be abused or made in such a way as to scandalise the faithful.

If the Eucharistic bread or any particle of it should fall, it is to be picked up reverently. If any of the precious blood spills, the area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>191</sup> GIRM 233

<sup>192</sup> GIRM 238.

<sup>193</sup> GIRM, 239.

## STRIKING OF THE BREAST

Striking the breast is a gesture of contrition and humility. "...the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'" (Luke 18:13). "When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts." (Luke 23:47-48).

In the celebration of the Eucharist it is often the practice to strike the breast at during the penitential rite and at the recitation of "Lamb of God...". However, this gesture is not prescribed in the rubrics.

## LIFTING THE EYES TO HEAVEN

Lifting up the eyes to heaven is attributed to Jesus in the Roman canon: "The day before he suffered he took bread in his sacred hands, and looking up to heaven to you, his Almighty Father, he gave you thanks and praise...". But none of the four accounts of the Institution in the New Testament mention this gesture. However, the gospels attribute it to him on other occasions such as at the multiplication of loaves, At the beginning of the proclamation of the beatitudes and before the raising of Lazarus.<sup>194</sup>

In the Tridentine Missal the gesture was prescribed at various places. Today it is not prescribed at all. Some priests continue using it, either out of habit (for those who celebrated the pre-Vatican II Mass) or out of imitation. While it does no harm, at times it may appear feigned and pretentious.

---

<sup>194</sup> Matthew 14: 19, Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. Luke 6: 20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. John 11:41, So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me.



## ELEVATION AND EXTENSION OF THE HANDS<sup>195</sup>

Elevation of the hands has always been used by the celebrant, for instance during the presidential prayers and at principal consecratory actions. Traditionally it was not a gesture exclusive to the main celebrant. Rather it was used by all the congregation in the early Church. This is attested to in the ancient liturgical texts and from iconography. The gesture was also widely used at Jewish worship.<sup>196</sup>

Today the gesture is used quite often by Charismatic groups. It has a particular liturgical value, namely of that of increasing the active participation of the assembly. However, it must not be exaggerated. It seems advisable not to apply it where it is not prescribed in the liturgical books.

## IMPOSITION OF HANDS

The imposition of hands can be the rite for transmitting grace or a charism, (Hebrews 6:2), or it can be the gesture used when blessing, (Matthew 19:15)<sup>197</sup>, or curing, (Matthew 9:18p);<sup>198</sup> or imparting the

---

<sup>195</sup> Cf. CB, 104-109.

<sup>196</sup> Exodus 9:29 Moses said to [Pharaoh], "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. Exodus 17: 9-12, Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the sun set. Psalms 28:2, Hear the voice of my supplication, as I cry to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary. Isaiah 1:15, When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Lamentations 3:41, Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.

<sup>197</sup> "People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer... Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way."

<sup>198</sup> "While he was speaking to them, up came one of the officials, who bowed low in front of him and said, 'My daughter has just died, but come

Holy Spirit to the newly baptised, (Acts 1:5+) It can also be the rite for consecrating a person for a particular public function, (Acts 6:6; 13:3)<sup>199</sup> During the liturgy the imposition of hands can be used in sanctification and giving of blessings, at the Epiclesis during Mass, for the reconciliation of sinners in the sacrament of Penance, at the anointing of the sick and at Confirmation. It is also made over the assembly at solemn blessings. The gesture may be done with hands resting on the head or simply above it, depending on the circumstances and the object of imposition.

Other liturgical uses of hands include the joining of hands, for instance at “let us pray” before the Opening Prayer. There is also the extended hands for greeting, opening them towards the people, e.g. at the words “the Lord be with you”. This is similar to the gesture one would make before embracing another.

## INCENSING<sup>200</sup>

### *Significance*

Incensing is made to a deity. In that case the rising smoke is symbolic of the rising of supplications to God. It is a sign of reverence and of prayer, as is clear from Psalm 141 (140):<sup>201</sup> and Revelation 8:3.<sup>202</sup> It is also made to honour a person or an object that represents someone. In this case incensing as symbolic of honour to the person, real or represented.

---

and lay your hands on her and her life will be saved.’ See also Mk 6:5; 7:32; 8:23-25; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:12; 17; 28:8.

<sup>199</sup> “They presented [the newly elected deacons] to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them.” See also 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22+; 2 Timothy 1:6. Since the day on which he received the impositions of hands, Timothy had a permanent charism (grace-gift) that consecrated him to his ministry.

<sup>200</sup> GIRM 85, 105, 235-236; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 276-277; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, nos. 84-98.

<sup>201</sup> Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.

<sup>202</sup> Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne.

### *What may be incensed*

The objects incensed in the liturgy include the tabernacle containing the Blessed Eucharist at Consecration or exposition with a monstrance, the altar, the gifts on the altar, the cross, the Easter Candle, the Christmas Crib, statues on a particular occasion when the memory of that saint is celebrated. People are also incensed: the main celebrant, the concelebrants, present bishops whether concelebration or not, the congregation<sup>203</sup>, a coffin, etc.

### *When to Incense*

In the first place it is important to know that “the use of incense is optional in any form of Mass.”<sup>204</sup>

Apart from the usual moments of incensation during a stationary Mass of the bishop or some other important occasion,<sup>205</sup> incense is also used as indicated in the liturgical books, in the rite of dedication of a church or altar; in the rite of the blessings of oils and consecration of Chrism, at exposition of the Blessed Sacrament when the monstrance is used and at funerals.

In addition, incense should as a rule<sup>206</sup> be used during the procession for the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Passion

---

<sup>203</sup> Formally the deacon was incensed by the acolyte after the deacon had incensed the main celebrant and concelebrants. This is still the practice in many areas. However, it is no longer required to incense the deacon. He and not the acolyte incenses the people after he has incensed the concelebrants, and then hands over the thurible without further ado. The Ceremonial of Bishops no. 96 states: “lastly, the deacon incenses the people from the place most convenient...”

<sup>204</sup> GIRM, 235.

<sup>205</sup> “During the entrance procession; at the beginning of Mass to incense the altar; at the gospel, in the procession and at the proclamation of the gospel reading; at the presentation of the gifts, to incense the gifts, the altar, the cross, the bishop [or other main celebrant], the concelebrants and the people; at the elevation of the consecrated bread and cup after their consecration...” CB, 86.

<sup>206</sup> This “as a rule” which is mentioned in the Ceremonial of Bishops would seem to contradict the fact already stated in the General

Sunday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Easter Vigil and the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. At the solemn celebration of morning or evening prayer the altar, the main celebrant and the people may be incensed during the singing of the gospel canticle.<sup>207</sup>

The use of incense is not limited to solemn occasions. It can be used, if desirable in any form of Mass, including private Masses.<sup>208</sup>

### *Manner of Incensing*

If the bishop puts incense into the censer at his chair (cathedra) or another chair, he remains seated; otherwise he puts in the incense while standing. The deacon or acolyte(s) presents the incense boat and the bishop, after placing incense into the censer blesses the incense with the sign of the cross, saying nothing.<sup>209</sup> If it is a priest celebration he does the same.<sup>210</sup>

The censer is swung back and forth three times for the incensation of: the blessed sacrament, a relic of the true cross and images of the Lord solemnly exposed, the gifts on the altar, the altar cross, the book of the Gospels, the Easter candle, the bishop or presbyter who is celebrant, a representative of the civil authority in official attendance at a liturgical celebration<sup>211</sup>, the choir and people, the body of a deceased person.



The censer is swung back and forth twice for the

introduction to the Roman Missal, namely that incense is optional in any form of Mass.”

<sup>207</sup> CB, 87-89.

<sup>208</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 276.

<sup>209</sup> CB, 90.

<sup>210</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, 120.

<sup>211</sup> Only in places where it is customary to do so (see CB, 96).

incensation of relics and images of the saints exposed for public veneration.<sup>212</sup>

At the incensing of the gifts during offertory it is important to take care not to knock the chalices over. The swinging of the thurible over the sacred vessels might require some practice on empty vessels by the amateur.

### THE LITURGICAL KISS<sup>213</sup>

The altar<sup>214</sup> is kissed because it is a permanent sign of Jesus' presence among his people. It is kissed by the celebrant, assisting deacon and concelebrants at the beginning of the celebration. At the end it is kissed only by the celebrant and assisting deacon(s). It is also kissed at the beginning and end of solemn vespers.<sup>215</sup> The book of the gospels is kissed by the priest or deacon who reads the gospel. The kiss is customarily placed at the beginning of the gospel pericope.<sup>216</sup> If a bishop is the celebrant he kisses the book after a priest<sup>217</sup> or deacon reads. On Good Friday the cross set out for veneration is kissed by the clergy, the servers and at least some of the faithful. In some areas people give each the sign of peace with a *liturgical* kiss.

The gesture of kissing may be substituted in cultures that consider kissing as inappropriate in the liturgy. A bow (with regard to the

---

<sup>212</sup> CB, 92-93. It is noteworthy that the phrase "swung back and forth three times" may still leave a question in the mind of the reader. It would be clearer if one specified whether the swings should be one times three, two times three or three times three. Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite mentions that the number of swings are a question of custom. Three times three for the more important objects of incensation and two times three for the less important appears reasonable.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. CB, 99-103.

<sup>214</sup> GIRM 85, 125, 232; CB 72-74.

<sup>215</sup> GIRM 208 CB 73

<sup>216</sup> CB, 74.

<sup>217</sup> In the case of a priest reading this is not required but preferable CB 141, 173

altar, book of the gospels, etc) or a hug or handshake (for wishing each other a sign of peace) may replace kissing. Such changes, however are the prerogatives of episcopal conferences, not individuals or individual communities. They are then approved by the Holy See.<sup>218</sup>

## THE EYES

The eyes of one leading the liturgy should not be timid before the people. One need not look at the ceiling all the time, keep the eyes always in the book or at the floor or closed. Nor should they rove all over the place as if looking for someone to devour, or stare at particular people. One needs to make an effort to avoid constant eye contact with acquaintances or a few individuals, as well as with people who might induce him to laughter, or for some reason or other feel that the priest is criticising them. Such might be the case if one is preaching about a matter related to someone else's confession recently made to the same priest. Some experts on public speaking suggest that one should look at the people in the last pews. That way eye contact is maintained, while at the same time one does not seem to stare at anybody in particular. In general the rule should be to concentrate on the liturgy, on the words and the mysteries celebrated, and on the fact that you are communicating, not with an empty wall, but with individuals here present before you. The eyes will then take care of themselves.

## HANDS

In general gestures made by the hands should be smooth, unhurried and not abrupt. They should not be overly expansive, such as the recitation of the "Our Father". The space of the other should be respected, also in the liturgy.

A word needs to be said to people who by nature are left handed. A difficulty often comes to them, one which those who are right-handed never think of: which hand to use when officiating over liturgical functions. Can one make the sign of the cross, bless, give

---

<sup>218</sup> GIRM 235, CB 73

out communion, impose the hand, etc., with the left hand. For them it would be the natural thing to do, but immediately others notice that there is something that is not the usual. In the same way they may wonder whether they can genuflect with the left knee, which is the spontaneous thing for them. Unfortunately for them this is a world of the right-handed. They win by sheer majority vote. There is nothing profane or unholy about the left hand. He who made the right hand also made the left one.

It is true that certain scriptural texts would seem to suggest that the left hand is unholy. Jesus ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. On the Last Judgement he will separate the blessed from the accursed and place the good on his right, and the bad on his left. Such texts provoke a mentality that suits those who are right handed. But one should know that it is not to any one's merit to be right-handed, nor is it anyone's fault to be left-handed. God are the days (hopefully) when children were punished for being left-handed, forcing them to use the right hand.

Nonetheless, it is a world, earlier mentioned, that is dominated by the right handed. Many things are made for the right hand. A left handed person may be at pains to find a shop that sells scissors for the left handed. He might have to make do with a pair with which he places the four fingers in the smaller hole and the thumb alone in the larger hole! Or if he wanted to learn to play the guitar he would do well to learn the "right" way right from the beginning. And this is possible with a bit of practice.<sup>219</sup> In the same way it is good to apply oneself right from the beginning, to perform liturgical functions with the right hand. Then that too becomes habitual so that one does not have to think or get mixed up.

## CONCLUSION

In general all ceremonial actions should reflect the inner sentiments or else they are an empty show. The fact that gestures and postures are given meaning only by what is inner an spiritual also explains why they can be varied from place to place or why they can be

---

<sup>219</sup> The writer himself is left-handed but has learnt to do many things with the right hand. So he talks out of experience.

changed with the passing of time. The unchangeable finds new expression according to time and place.





## **LITURGICAL HYGIENE**

The hygienic status of the liturgical minister has a great effect on those who take part at the act of worship. Quite often they do not have the courage to tell him about what they find distasteful or offensive. Some might have to endure what they resent. Others who have the possibility may look for other places to pray from, or seek out particular ministers who are whose conduct is more agreeable. It is therefore important for a successful liturgical ministry, to take pay much attention to one's personal grooming and the cleanliness of the things one uses at the liturgy.

### **PERSONAL GROOMING**

The overall manner of dress of a priest or any other person who has an important liturgical role should be respectable. One need not dress in expensive suits all the time. It is good enough that a person is clean and tidy. Certainly even a pastor can do gardening, or repair of one thing or another, or he may perspire after a long bicycle ride, if that is the only means of transport available to him. But as much as possible he should seek to be neat and presentable before liturgical functions. The clothes he wears should be washed and pressed. Shoes should be free from mud and polished, as far as this is possible. Needless to say, it is important also to change one's socks and underwear everyday, in order not to give off offensive bodily odours.

Quite often it is not sufficient just to brush one's teeth once a day. In order to eliminate foul breath it is sometimes necessary to brush every after a meal, or even to make use of mouth breath fresheners. Obviously all this should be guided by common sense. If one is out in an outstation it might appear exaggerated to insist on brushing one's teeth immediately after a meal. Bad breath is particularly to be guarded against when one is about to hear confession. An offensive breath also comes from one who has just taken alcoholic drinks or one who is a smoker.

The vestments that one wears at liturgical functions should also be in good condition. They should not be tattered, creased or dirty.

### CONTACT WITH ONE'S BODY

One should take good care of the hands that serve at the altar of the Lord. Fingernails should be kept short and clean. One should avoid unnecessary touching of oneself during liturgical functions: wiping the mouth or the brow with the palm, poking fingers into the nostrils or ears; running them through the hair, scratching oneself wherever there is an itch, etc. In case of a cold one should be equipped with sufficient clean handkerchiefs. Few people are unaffected by watching a priest give a loud sneeze in both hands, rubbing the hands together, and with the same hands elevate the host and declare: "this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, happy are those...". Even the very pious ones might for once prefer not be counted among those happy ones. The same applies to one who, after using the hands for a handkerchief, extends the same hand, still wet, to wish another a sign of peace. Those who use perfume, after-shave lotion, deodorants etc, need to take good care to wash the hands clean of the perfume before celebrating. Few people might want to receive a "scented Lord". Some might in fact be allergic to perfume.

### COMMUNION

Because one is going to hand sacred things and to feed other with what one has handled, it is important to wash one's hands before beginning the celebration. Doctors do the same as a matter of principle before operation.

When there is concelebration it is important that one thoroughly wipes the chalice with the purificator before passing it on to the other. Some may even want to turn it slightly so that the next to communicate is not constrained out of politeness to drink from the same spot where the previous communicant drank. Again it is important to avoid leaving stuck to the chalice the piece of the host that is dropped in the chalice. It is disconcerting for one who later has to clean the chalice to have take it. Either who should avoid it

or drink it with the wine. One who has a cold should, out of charity to other concelebrants communicate by intinction rather than by drinking from the chalice. In some places it is the practice to have individual purificators, in case of concelebrated Masses. In such cases the concelebrant may feel at liberty to wipe the mouth with the personal purificator. Otherwise it is better not done with a shared purificator.

It is not out of place for the main celebrant to wash the hands after the exchange of the sign of peace and before communion, particularly if he has shaken hands with many people. This is also for the good of the congregation. One may, in the name of hygiene, prefer not to shake hands with too many people before giving out communion. When giving out communion to others avoid as much as possible to touch their tongues and to transfer saliva from one mouth to another. If a host falls down in the course of giving out communion, someone might do well to eat it rather than to give it out. At least he may put it aside and not give it to the person who was the next in line, as if by punishment.

When a fly or some other dirt falls in the consecrated wine, the Main Celebrant should remove it with the corner of a purificator, unless he feels pious enough to gobble it down. To avoid that inconvenience it is important to keep the chalice covered as much as possible with the pall.

## OTHER SACRAMENTS

During anointing of the sick, one should wash with soap the oils out of the hands before giving out communion. At least he should clean them with clean cotton wool after anointing the sick. It is also good to wash hands after administering a sacrament that involves the laying on of hands, particularly if there are many hands including those with hair that is treated with palm or some other oily substances. During baptism of several children the rite of Ephphata is better left out, since the minister is given this option by the rubrics. Or it may be performed without him touching the mouths of the candidates.

## **LITURGICAL ACCIDENTS**

Adequate preparation, attentiveness, being relaxed as well as carefulness can help reduce accidents. But in spite of all these precautions, sometimes accidents occur. How then must one handle these liturgical accidents? An earthquake breaks out at the celebration of the Eucharist, you accidentally trip over the wire of the microphone and the ciborium spills its contents, you cough at the reception of communion, a reader takes the wrong reading, you accidentally consecrate water instead of wine, you go for anointing and discover that you have forgotten the oils... the list is endless, and so there is no possibility of giving a solution to all the possible situations that can occur. What is given below are a few general guidelines plus a few specific examples.

- In the first place, make an effort to avoid mistakes. Avoid haste. Try to concentrate. Prepare well. Be cautious. You do not have to swing the censor over the gifts from in circles from left to right, and from right to left. It is alright even if the smoke does not get to every part of the gifts. If you are giving out communion in a crowded place where there is jostling and pushing, say on a pilgrimage, hold the sacred species firmly in your hands. Do not give communion to a sick person who can hardly swallow or who vomits constantly. Place communion at the tip of the tongue where the saliva gland is stronger, particularly if you notice that the communicant's tongue is rather dry.
- Do not panic. When someone becomes nervous and panics because of some mishap, that is followed by reduced focus on what one is doing. The likelihood is for one to make another mistake, sometimes one which is even more noticeable. Try to be calm, it is only an accident.
- Try not to draw attention to the mistake if this is avoidable. If it is avoidable for the people to notice so much the better.

- Learn from your mistakes. If you notice that you have forgotten the oils on going to an outstation, make it a point to keep the oils in your Mass kit. Try not to make the same mistakes over and over again.
- Recall that unintended mistakes do not upset God as much as we might think. God is hurt much more by our actions made through knowledge and will that are contrary to his will, or by our culpable omissions.
- Deal with the mishap in as dignified and reverent a manner as you can.

### A HOST FALLING AT GIVING COMMUNION

When communion is given on the tongue, usually the saliva “If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently.”<sup>220</sup> The General Instruction does not explain what then to do with it. Should the minister give it to the person who was receiving communion? This might be disconcerting to the person who might feel blamed and punished for the accident. Should it be put aside for disposal? Not unless it would be extremely dangerous to health or inconvenient to consume it. Should it be put back among the other hosts? That is not kind to the people standing in the queue awaiting to receive communion. Everyone of them who has seen your action will go back wondering whether it is they that have taken the fallen host. The most charitable – and heroic – thing to do is for the minister to consume the fallen host himself, and then continue with giving out communion.

### SPILLING CONSECRATED WINE

What about in the unpleasant event of spilling an entire chalice of consecrated wine? This can happen for instance if there are concelebrants sharing one missal, and the main celebrant carelessly moves the missal from one side of the altar to the other and in the process topples the chalice over. “If any of the Precious Blood is

---

<sup>220</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 280.

spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy.”<sup>221</sup>

### CONSECRATION OF WATER

“If the priest notices after the consecration or as he receives Communion that not wine but only water was poured into the chalice, he pours the water into some container, then pours wine with water into the chalice and consecrates it. He says only the part of the institution narrative related to the consecration of the chalice, without being obliged to consecrate the bread again.”<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 280.

<sup>222</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 324.

