

## Forming A Community To Worship

The purpose of the faithful coming together, is to take the form of a worshipping community and prepares them to listen attentively to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily. (GIRM 46) The Second Vatican Council (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 7) described the ways in which Christ is present in the celebration of the liturgy. Christ is present in the priest-president, in the Word proclaimed, in the Eucharist, and in "the Church that prays and sings." Our coming together for worship is a response to God's initiative and invitation. The oneness of the community in prayer and song more fully manifests the presence of Christ. Therefore *no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.* CSL no. 22(3).

"At the Eucharistic celebration we look forward to ... *the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else...* " (CSL 14).

The *purpose* of the Introductory Rite is to prepare the faithful to hear the Word of God. "When the Scriptures are read in Church, God himself is speaking to his people ...." (GIRM 29, 46)

The Entrance chant is the first Liturgical action of the Eucharist. The Greeting at the Eucharist is Christological and should never be replaced by any priest-celebrant personal greeting. Thus the priest signifies the presence of the Lord to the community gathered together. (GIRM 48)

The current Roman Missal offers the priest-celebrant options for the Penitential Rite. Priest are encouraged to use these options. The liturgical season usually offers a choice. On Sundays, especially in the Season of Easter, we may use the option of *the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.*" (GIRM 51) Kindly do not make lack of time and pastoral reasons the excuse, for not celebrating a meaningful liturgy as per the liturgical season.

The *Gloria* is an ancient text. Its place in the liturgy is so venerable that another hymn or text should not replace it.

The Collect, will require the priest to offer **a moment of silence** to the assembly to pray. Then, he says the Opening Prayer and "collects" the prayers that the faithful make in silence and directs them to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit. (GIRM 54)

Since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Christians have begun the celebration of the Eucharist by proclaiming the Word of God. Today, our lectionary contains a three-year cycle of readings for Sundays and a two-year cycle for weekdays.

The lector proclaims the Word, the faithful respond in the Responsorial Psalm. The lector proclaims the Second Reading, the faithful respond with silence. The deacon or

priest proclaims the gospel, and the homily, creed, and intercessions respond to our encounter with the Word that day.

Christ speaks in the Word Proclaimed (GIRM 55). This would imply that we need to ensure that our lectors and celebrants/deacons need to continue to grow in their love for the Word, their understanding of it, and their capacity to proclaim it. The general instructions of the Lectionary state that there should be a liturgical, biblical and technical training provided. (GIL 55)

The faithful need to grow in their capacity to be ready and willing to listen and heed when Christ speaks to them. *By silence and singing the faithful make God's word their own and they also affirm their adherence to it by the profession of faith. Finally, having been nourished by this word, they pour out their prayers in the general intercessions as per the formula mentioned.* (GIRM 69,70)

In our encounter with the Word we are to be transformed and made new in the image of the Risen One. "The Mass is made up as it were of two parts: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. *These two parts are so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship. ...the faithful may be instructed and nourished/refreshed.*" (GIRM 28; CSL 56)

*By tradition the function of proclaiming the readings is ministerial, not presidential.* Therefore, a lector should proclaim the readings..." (GIRM 59). The primary parts of the Liturgy of the Word are the readings from Scripture and the Responsorial Psalm. The homily, profession of faith, and general intercessions develop and conclude the Liturgy of the Word. (GIRM 55).

The dignity of the Word of God requires the church to have a place suitable for the proclamation of the Word and is a natural focal point for the people during the Liturgy of the Word....(GIRM 309). Pastoral reasons are not to be quoted as excuses for non compliance of proper guidelines during the liturgy of the word.

This would imply that song leading, announcements, and so on, are to be done from another location.

The *General Instructions* emphasizes the importance of silence during the Liturgy of the Word. Silence is required as Christ speaks to us, today! As our life's circumstances change, His Word address, comforts, and challenges us, in different ways. The Risen Christ offers the faithful, His saving word today. This would allow a worshiping community to a more "fuller, active, and conscious participation" in the Eucharist.

*Archdiocesan Liturgy Committee*