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Word on Worship

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“CliffsNotes.” Most American students know the meaning of that term, and most have used “CliffsNotes” at one time or another in their academic careers.

“CliffsNotes” provide summaries of classic and modern literary works. When students have little time to read a particular literary work for class, they reach for “CliffsNotes.” Through them, they learn something of the plot, the major characters, and the main literary themes present in an assigned work. “CliffsNotes” are a lifesaver for busy students overwhelmed with assignments and often with obligations outside of class.

It may seem odd to be writing about “CliffsNotes” in a publication dealing with liturgy, but there is a reason. It’s this - what is true for students can also be true for priests, deacons, liturgy committee members, liturgical ministers and others involved in preparing and celebrating the worship of God.

Such people want to remain current with developments in liturgy. They want to read the latest Church documents dealing with the topic. But often such people just don’t have the time. They purchase the latest documents and place them next to their favorite chair, or put them on their desk, or add them to their “in-box,” and there they sit, waiting to be read as soon as time permits. But time never permits.

Perhaps such busy people might benefit from “CliffsNotes,” or perhaps as they might be titled “DocNotes.” This article is an attempt to provide such “DocNotes” for the latest edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* published by the Holy See and recently made available in an official English translation by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

These “DocNotes” are no substitute for reading the entire document, anymore than reading the “CliffsNotes” are equivalent to reading a literary classic. But these “DocNotes” can provide a summary of the newest edition of *General*

Instruction of the Roman Missal. And perhaps they may even inspire the reader to read and study the actual document.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (hereafter referred to as GIRM) is the English title of *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (sometimes referred to as IGMR). This document, which is part of the Roman Missal, provides “general instructions” dealing with the celebration of the Mass in the Roman Rite.

The first GIRM was published in 1970. It was revised and published in a second edition in 1975. A third edition was authorized by the Pope John Paul II in 2000, and in 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved an English translation of this document. This translation, after confirmation by the Congregation of Divine Worship, was published in 2003. Besides containing the official English translation, the new GIRM also contains adaptations of these general instructions for the Dioceses of the United States.

All titles, references, and quotations are taken from the official English translation of the Third Edition of the GIRM published by the authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, © 2002 International Committee on English in the Liturgy.

Sections in bold, italic print indicate something new to the 2002 GIRM that may be of particular interest to the reader.

PREAMBLE

The Preamble, which includes sections 1 through 15, states that this third edition of the GIRM is in continuity with the first edition published in 1970, and with the second edition published in 1975. It also states that the renewal of the liturgy called for by the Second Vatican Council, and incorporated into the GIRM, is a logical development from the Council of Trent. “The liturgical norms of the Council of Trent have certainly been completed and perfected in many respects by those of the Second Vatican Council.” (15)

The Preamble discusses two developments of the liturgy that the Council of Trent felt unable to promote because of the circumstances of its day, namely, the celebration of the Mass in the vernacular and the reception of the Eucharist under both forms. In light of liturgical and theological developments during the last four centuries, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council strongly endorsed both concepts.

The Preamble also asserts the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the critical importance of the ministerial priesthood, and the

“DOCNOTES” FOR GIRM 2002

priesthood of all the laity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Chapter One, which includes sections 16 through 26, proclaims that for the individual Christian, for the local Church, and for the Universal Church, the celebration of the Mass is the “center of the whole Christian life.” Through the Mass, God sanctifies the world and humanity offers worship and praise to God. In the Mass, the mysteries of redemption are celebrated and made present. (16)

Because of the central importance of the Mass, it should be arranged in such a way that the faithful may participate fully in its celebration in a conscious and active way. This is their baptismal responsibility and their right. In arranging the celebration, forms and elements should be chosen that “more effectively foster the active and full participation” of the people and respond to their spiritual needs. (20)

This chapter also recommends that, if possible, priests celebrate Mass on a daily basis, even if the faithful may not be present, since the Mass is always the action of Christ and Church. The chapter concludes by highlighting the responsibility of the diocesan Bishop for the liturgical life of the local church and reminding priests that as “servants of the sacred Liturgy,” they are not permitted “to add, remove or change anything in the celebration of the Mass.” (24)

CHAPTER TWO

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS, ITS ELEMENTS AND ITS PARTS

This chapter, which includes sections 27 through 90, includes the following major divisions, I. The General Structure of the Mass, II. The Different Elements of the Mass, and III. The Individual Parts of the Mass.

I. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE MASS

This section emphasizes that Christ is present in different ways in the celebration of the Mass. Christ is present in the gathered liturgical assembly, in the person of the minister, in his word, and “indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.” (27).

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist make up the Mass, but these parts are so connected and related that they form one act of worship. In addition there are also rites that open and close the liturgical celebration.

II. THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE MASS

The following elements belong to the Mass:

Reading and Explaining the Word of God

During the readings at Mass, God speaks to his people, while Christ proclaims his word in the Gospel. The homily, which fosters a greater appreciation of that word, is part of the liturgical action. (29)

The Prayers and Other Parts Pertaining to the Priest

The Eucharistic Prayer, the highpoint of the entire liturgy, is the most important prayer assigned to the priest. Next in importance are the three orations, which are also referred to as “presidential prayers” since the priest, as the one presiding, prays them in the name of the Church and the assembled community.

The priest also exercises his office of presiding by offering certain explanations and comments during the course of the liturgy. While these words may be adapted to suit the assembly, they should be in harmony with the sense of the liturgy expressed in the Missal. Times for such presidential comments are after the greeting and before the Act of Penitence, before the readings, before the Eucharistic Prayer, and before the dismissal.

There are also words of prayer that the priest says quietly in order to seek God’s help in what he is doing. Such private prayers occur before the Gospel, at the Preparation of the Gifts, and before and after his reception of Holy Communion.

The Other Formulas in the Celebration

Since the Mass is by its very nature “communitarian,” there are dialogues between the priest and people; acclamations and responses by the people to his words; parts assigned to all members of the liturgical assembly (such as the Act of Penitence, Profession of Faith, Prayer of the Faithful, and Lord’s Prayer); chants by the assembly that accompany the entrance, the presentation of the gifts, and the communion rite; as well as the Gloria, responsorial Psalm, Alleluia, Sanctus, and Memorial Acclamation.

The Vocal Expression of the Different Texts

The minister’s vocal expression and whether or not a particular text is sung, said, or proclaimed, should be appropriate to the nature of the text, the form and solemnity of the celebration, and the language and culture of the people.

The Importance of Singing

Singing should be part of celebrations that occur on Sundays and holy days of obligation, and should also be present to some degree at weekday Masses. In choosing what to sing, preference should be given to those parts of greater importance as well as those that involve the priest and people.

Gregorian chant “holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy.” (41) Since people of different languages sometimes celebrate Mass together, there is a value to all people knowing some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin.

Movements and Postures

Common postures during the liturgy show the unity of the assembled Christian community. Those present should follow the posture indicated in the GIRM and not their “private inclination or arbitrary choice.” (42).

Standing takes place from the beginning of the Mass until the end of the Collect. The faithful sit for the readings before the

Gospel and for the responsorial Psalm. They stand during the verse before the Gospel and during the Gospel itself. They sit for the homily. They stand during the Profession of Faith and Prayer of the Faithful. They sit during the Preparation of the Gifts. ***They stand following the invitation “Pray, brethren that our sacrifice...”*** to the end of the Sanctus. In the United States, the people kneel following the Sanctus until after the Great Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, unless prevented on occasion for some good reason. They stand following the Great Amen. ***“The faithful kneel after the Agnus Dei unless the diocesan Bishop determines otherwise.”*** (43) In other words, during the invitation to Communion (“Behold the Lamb of God...”) the people may kneel or stand depending upon the decision of the Bishop. They stand for Communion. They may sit or kneel during the silence that follows the distribution of Holy Communion. They stand for the Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass.

Silence

Silence is part of the celebration and should be observed at the times designated during the Mass.

III. THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS OF THE MASS

This section deals in detail with the individual parts of the Mass.

A. The Introductory Rites which precede the Liturgy of the Word, “have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.” (46)

The Introductory Rites begin with the Entrance chant. The singing at this time can be alternately by the choir or cantor and the people, by the people alone, or by the choir alone. In the United States there are four options for this Entrance chant, namely, 1) the antiphon from the Roman Missal or the Roman Gradual, 2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the Simple Gradual, 3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop, or 4) a suitable liturgical song approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop. (48)

If there is no singing, the entrance antiphon in the Missal is recited by the people, by the lector, or by the priest himself who may incorporate it as part of an introductory comment following the greeting. Such an introduction may also be given by the deacon or by a lay minister.

The Penitential Rite that follows is now referred to as the Act of Penitence. The GIRM 2002 makes it clear that the priest’s absolution that concludes this rite “lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance.” (51) This Act of Penitence may be replaced, especially on the Sundays of the Easter Season, with the blessing and sprinkling of water.

The *Kyrie Eleison* follows the Act of Penitence unless it was used within it. If required by the liturgy, the Gloria then

follows. It should ordinarily be sung and may not be replaced with another text.

The Collect, formerly referred to as the Opening Prayer, brings the Introductory Rite to its conclusion. There is only one Collect at any Mass. A time of silence should follow the priest’s invitation to prayer which precedes the Collect.

B. The Liturgy of the Word

This part of the Mass is composed of the readings from Scripture, the chants between them, the homily, the Profession of Faith, and the Prayer of the Faithful. It also should include periods of silent meditation that may occur before this part of the Mass begins, after the first and second readings, and following the homily.

The readings, which are “always proclaimed from the ambo,” may not be replaced by non-biblical texts. (57, 58) The Gospel, which is the high point of this part of the Mass, should ideally be proclaimed by a deacon or concelebrant since proclaiming the readings is, by tradition, non-presidential.

The responsorial Psalm “is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word” and must not be replaced by songs or hymns. The people’s response should preferably be sung. The verses of the Psalm ought to be sung by a psalmist or cantor from the ambo or from “another suitable place.”

In place of the proper Psalm assigned in the Lectionary, the following may be used in the United States, namely, a musical setting of the proper or seasonal Psalm as found in the *Roman Gradual* or the *Simple Gradual*; or an antiphon and Psalm from another collection of psalms and antiphons, including psalms arranged metrically, provided they have been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or by the diocesan Bishop. (61)

The Acclamation before the Gospel is sung by all while standing. It may be omitted if not sung. (63)

The homily is required on Sunday and holy days of obligation and it is recommended on other days. It should be given by the priest celebrant himself. It may also be given by a concelebrant or a deacon, ***but never by a lay person.*** (66).

The Profession of Faith is required on Sundays and Solemnities. It may be recited by all, or by two parts of the assembly in alternating style. If sung, it may be sung by all or by the assembly alternating with the choir. (68)

The Prayer of the Faithful should be part of all Masses with a congregation, for by it the people exercise their baptismal priesthood. The intentions may be announced by a deacon, a cantor, a lector or one of the faithful from the ambo or from another suitable place. (71)

C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist corresponds to the actions of Christ at the Last Supper. Jesus took the bread and chalice (Preparation of the Gifts), he gave thanks (Eucharistic Prayer), and he broke and gave (fraction through Communion.)

During the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and wine should be presented by the people. Money and other gifts for the poor may also be presented, but they are to be placed “away from the Eucharistic Table.” (73).

The procession with the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory chant, which should continue at least until the gifts are placed on the altar. There may be singing at this part of the Mass even if there is no procession with the gifts. The instructions for the Offertory chant are same as those for the Entrance chant.

The Prayer over the Offerings, previously called the Prayer over the Gifts, concludes the preparation of the gifts and prepares for the Eucharistic Prayer, “the center and summit of the entire celebration.” (78)

The Eucharistic Prayer includes the following:

- Thanksgiving, particularly seen in the preface;
- the Sanctus acclamation sung or said by all;
- the epiclesis that invokes the power of the Spirit upon the gifts and upon those who receive them;
- the institution narrative and consecration; the anamnesis in which the Church recalls the saving action of Christ;
- the offering whereby the Church offers the sacrifice of Christ to the Father and prays that the faithful may learn to offer themselves as well;
- the intercessions for all the Church;
- the final doxology that is confirmed by the “Amen” of the people. (79)

The Lord’s Prayer and Rite of Peace prepare for Communion. ***The sign of peace should be offered only to those “who are nearest and in a sober manner.”*** (82)

The breaking of the bread, or fraction, that follows the rite of peace, is reserved to the priest and deacon. The *Agnus Dei* is sung until this rite is completed.

During the invitation to communion, the priest shows the Eucharistic Bread to the people. He may hold the Bread over the paten, or above the chalice. (84) The mention of the chalice is new to the GIRM 2002 and certainly is fitting when Communion is given under both forms.

The GIRM makes it very clear that the people should receive the Lord’s Body and Blood from elements consecrated at the Mass actually being celebrated. “It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they partake of the chalice, so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.” (85)

The Communion chant (song) highlights the “communitarian” nature of the procession to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The chant should continue throughout the administration of Communion. The instructions given for the Communion chant mirror those given for the Entrance chant.

If there is no singing, the Communion antiphon in the Missal is recited by the people or by the lector, or by the priest himself after he has received Communion.

After Communion, there is a time of private prayer or a hymn of praise may be sung by the people. The Prayer after Communion concludes the Communion Rite.

D. The Concluding Rites

The concluding rites include necessary announcements, the priest’s greeting, and blessing, the dismissal of the people and a reverence of the altar. It should be noted that a closing song is not mentioned.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DUTIES AND MINISTRIES IN THE MASS

This chapter, which includes sections 91 through 111, deals with the ministry of the ordained and non-ordained during the Eucharist.

In the celebration of the Mass, ordained ministers and the faithful should carry out the offices and duties which belong to them. Every lawful celebration of the Mass is directed by the Bishop himself or by the priests who are “his helpers.” In celebrating the Eucharist, the priest should strive to convey the “living presence of Christ” to the people. After the priest, the deacon holds the first place among the ministers of the Mass.

In the celebration of Mass, the people of God should avoid any appearance of individualism or division, but they should show their unity in prayer and song, in sharing at the Lord’s table, and by their common gesture and posture. They should also exhibit a willingness to fulfill particular ministries during the celebration.

These particular ministries include those of acolyte, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, lector, psalmist, member of the choir, cantor, sacristan, commentator, collector, greeter, and master of ceremonies. These liturgical duties may be entrusted by a liturgical blessing or temporary deputation to suitable lay persons chosen by the pastor.

Only one priest can exercise the presidential function at a Mass. However, if there are several persons who are able to exercise one of the particular ministries at Mass, including that of deacon, they may distribute that particular ministry among themselves. For example, the readings may be distributed among several lectors. ***However, one and the same reading, except for the Passion, may not be read in parts by several readers.*** (108, 109)

CHAPTER FOUR THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF CELEBRATING MASS

This chapter, which includes sections 112 through 287, includes the following major divisions, namely, I. Mass with a Congregation, which is subdivided further into (A) Mass without a Deacon, (B) Mass with a Deacon, (C) The Duties of the Acolyte, (D) Duties of the Lector; II. Concelebrated Mass; III. Mass at Which Only One Minister Participates; and IV. Some General Norms for All Forms of Mass.

In the local Church, the most important Mass is that at which a Bishop presides surrounded by his priests, deacons, lay ministers, and the people of God. Next in importance, is the Sunday celebration of the parish community “as it represents the universal Church gathered at a given time and place.” (113)

I. MASS WITH A CONGREGATION

The term “Mass with a congregation” means Mass celebrated with the participation of the people; it may or may not include a deacon. Especially on Sundays and holy days of obligation, such Masses should include singing and the particular ministers described in Chapter Three.

In preparation for Mass, **there should be at least one white cloth on the altar** and at least two lighted candles on or near the altar. There may be four or six candles, and there should be seven if the diocesan Bishop celebrates. **A cross with the figure of Christ crucified should be placed near or on the altar. The Book of the Gospels should be placed on the altar.** The cross, candles and Book of the Gospels may also be brought forward in the Entrance Procession. **The requirement that the cross have a figure of the crucified Christ is new to the GIRM 2002.**

The Missal should be near the priest’s chair. The Lectionary should be placed on the ambo. On the credence table should be placed the chalice, corporal, purificator, paten, additional ciboria if needed, bread for the Communion of ministers and people, cruets with wine and water, and items for the washing of hands. If, as they should be, the bread and wine are carried forward by the people during the Preparation of the Gifts, they are not placed on the credence table. Additional chalices and purificators would need to be prepared for Communion under both forms. If appropriate, there may be a pall for the chalice, which may be covered with a veil that can be white or the color of the day. The proper vestments should be prepared for the priest and deacon, and if required, for the other ministers. (118)

(A) Mass Without a Deacon

This subdivision of Chapter Four includes sections 120 to 170, and describes a Mass celebrated without the presence of a deacon.

The procession to the altar takes place in the following order: ministers with lighted candles flanking the minister with the cross; other ministers; lector carrying the Book of the Gospels, and the priest celebrant.

If incense is used, before the procession begins the priest puts

some into the thurible and **blessees it with the Sign of the Cross without saying anything.** (120). This blessing was not mentioned in previous editions of the GIRM. The thurifer with the burning incense leads the procession.

If there already is a cross in the sanctuary, then the cross used in the procession is put in a dignified place away from the altar. If incense is being used, then after bowing and venerating the altar, the priest incenses the cross and altar.

When the Entrance chant is concluded, the priest makes the Sign of the Cross and then greets the people. The Act of Penitence, Kyrie, Gloria, and Collect then follow. There should be a time of silence during the Act of Penitence and after the invitation to pray before the Collect.

The priest may then introduce the Liturgy of the Word to the people. The readings, responsorial Psalm, acclamation, Gospel, homily, Profession of Faith, Prayer of the Faithful, and the appropriate periods of silence then follow.

During the Acclamation, The Book of the Gospels may be escorted to the ambo by ministers carrying candles and thurible. **People should face the ambo during the proclamation of the Gospel.** (133)

According to this edition of the GIRM, the priest may give the homily standing at the ambo or at the chair or “when appropriate in another suitable place.” (136) After the Profession of Faith (Creed), which may be said or sung, the priest introduces the Prayer of the Faithful with hands joined. He then concludes the petitions with a prayer that he says with hands extended. (138) **The instruction concerning places for the homily as well as the position of the hands of the priest during the Prayer of the Faith are new to the GIRM 2002.**

The Offertory chant follows the Prayer of the Faithful. During it, the appropriate minister sets the altar with the Missal, corporal, purificator, pall, and chalice. The bread and wine and other gifts for the Church and poor are presented, but only the bread and wine are placed upon the altar.

During the presentation of the bread and wine, the priest says the appropriate prayers quietly. He may say them aloud if there is no chant or music.

When water is mixed with the wine to be consecrated, a sign of the cross is not made over the water. (145) After the washing of hands, the priest standing at the middle of the altar extends and joins his hands, saying “Pray, brethren...” When the priest concludes, the people stand and respond by saying, “May the Lord accept...” The priest then says the Prayer over the Offerings. (146). **There is a change in the posture of the people and in the name given the prayer over the gifts. Previously, the people stood after their response to the priest’s invitation to prayer.**

The Eucharistic Prayer is said only by the priest in virtue of his ordination. The people have various responses within it. There are various rubrics proper to each Eucharistic Prayer. 21

According to the GIRM a bell may be rung before the consecration and as the priest shows the host and the chalice. Incense may also be used during the showing of the host and chalice. (150). ***The priest, not the deacon, says “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.”*** (151)

Following the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest with hands joined invites the people to pray the Lord’s Prayer. The priest, with hands extended, says the prayer with the people and then continues with the embolism.

The priest offers the sign of peace to those in the sanctuary, but in the dioceses of the United States, he may on special occasions and for a good reason, offer the sign of peace to some of the faithful near the sanctuary. Such might be the case at a wedding or funeral, or when civic leaders are present. (154)

While the *Agnus Dei* is sung, the priest breaks the host and places a small piece in the chalice. The broken host is never placed on the corporal. He then quietly says his personal prayer of preparation before Communion. He then genuflects and holding the host consecrated at the same Mass above the paten ***or chalice***, he says, “This is the Lamb of God...” Only one piece of the broken host is shown. He then quietly says “May the Body/ Blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life” and consumes the consecrated bread and wine. The Communion chant begins at this time.

The people then approach in procession to receive Communion. Because of its importance, the method of receiving Holy Communion is quoted below in its entirety.

“The faithful are not permitted to take the consecrated bread or the sacred chalice by themselves, and still less, to hand them from one to another. ***The norm for reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing.*** Communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reason for this norm. ***When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament*** as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.” (160)

The priest celebrant may be assisted in giving Communion by other priests who happen to be present, by extraordinary ministers, and “in case of necessity the priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion.” (162).

Extraordinary ministers “are not to approach the altar before the priest has received Communion, and they are always to receive from the hands of the priest celebrant the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful.” (162)

After the distribution of Communion, the priest immediately consumes any remaining consecrated wine and hosts at the altar. The remaining consecrated hosts may also be placed in the tabernacle. The sacred vessels used for Communion may be purified at this time either at the altar or the credence table, or such vessels may be placed at the credence table and purified after Mass. (163)

A period of sacred silence is then observed. A Psalm, canticle, or song of praise may be sung at this time. The Prayer after Communion is then prayed by the priest.

The Concluding Rites then quickly bring the liturgy to a close. These rites include: brief announcements to the people, a greeting by the priest, the blessing of the people, and the dismissal. The priest venerates the altar, then he and the other ministers bow and leave. The *Book of the Gospels* is not carried out. No mention is made of a closing song.

(B) Mass With a Deacon

This subdivision of Chapter Four includes sections 171 to 186, and describes a Mass celebrated with a deacon. When a deacon is present at Mass, he should exercise his ministry. Mass with a deacon is celebrated as described above with the following differences noted below.

During the Introductory Rites, the deacon carries the Book of the Gospels as he walks before the priest in the opening procession. He places the book on the altar, and then kisses the altar with the priest. If incense is used, he assists the priest in placing the incense into the thurible and in incensing the cross and altar. When the priest goes to the presidential chair, the deacon takes his place at the side of the priest.

During the Liturgy of the Word, if incense is used, the deacon assists the priest in placing incense into the thurible. The deacon then makes a profound bow before the priest and seeks his blessing. He then makes the Sign of the Cross and responds Amen to the words of the priest. The deacon then bows to the altar, takes up the Book of the Gospels and carries it to the ambo. Having positioned the book, the deacon, with hands joined, greets the people, announces the reading, signs the book with his thumb, and then signs his forehead, lips, and breast. He then incenses the book and proclaims the Gospel reading.

If the deacon is assisting the Bishop, rather than kissing the book, the deacon may bring it to the Bishop to be kissed. The Bishop may impart a blessing to the people using the Book of the Gospels. (175) The deacon then brings the book to a suitable place.

After the introduction of the Prayer of the Faithful by the priest, the deacon announces the intentions from the ambo (177) or from another suitable place. (71)

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the deacon prepares the altar, in particular the sacred vessels, and assists the priest in receiving the gifts. He pours wine and water into the chalice while quietly saying the appropriate prayer and then hands the chalice to the priest. If incense is used, the deacon assists the

priest during the incensation of the gifts, cross, and altar. The deacon, or acolyte, then incenses the priest and people.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon stands near the priest but slightly behind so if needed he can assist the priest with the Missal or chalice. "From the epiclesis until the priest shows the chalice, the deacon normally remains kneeling."

(179) If another deacon is present, he may place incense into the thurible and incense the host and chalice as the priest shows them to the people. The deacon elevates the chalice as the priest elevates the host for the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer.

At the Rite of Peace, the deacon invites the people to exchange the sign of peace. During the Communion Rite, the deacon receives under both forms and then he helps to distribute Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both forms, the deacon administers the chalice.

After Communion, the deacon goes to the altar where he consumes what remains of the Blood of Christ. He then brings the sacred vessels to the credence table where he purifies them, or he places them at the table for purification after Mass.

During the Concluding Rites, "once the prayer after Communion has been said, the deacon makes brief announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the priest prefers to do this himself." (184) If a solemn blessing is to be given by the priest, the deacon invites the people to "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing." After the blessing by the priest, the deacon dismisses the people. He and the priest then venerate the altar with a kiss, bow, and leave.

(C) Duties of the Acolyte

This subdivision of Chapter Four includes sections 187 to 193 and describes the duties of the instituted acolyte. These duties may be distributed among several such ministers. When no instituted acolytes are present, their duties may be given to other laypersons. (100)

During the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross. Since he approaches the priest or deacon with the Missal, he should occupy a place that is easily accessible to the chair and altar.

If no deacon is present, the acolyte prepares the altar after the Prayer of the Faithful is completed. He also assists the priest in receiving the gifts. He likewise may assist the priest during any incensations in the same manner as a deacon.

An instituted acolyte may function as an extraordinary minister of Communion. After the distribution of Communion, he may perform the functions described above for a deacon during this part of the Mass. He recesses from the altar area in the same manner as he entered.

(D) Duties of the Lector

This subdivision of Chapter Four includes sections 194 to 198 and describes the duties of the instituted lector. These duties may be distributed among several such ministers. When no

instituted lectors are present, their duties may be given to other laypersons. (101)

If no deacon is present, the lector carries the Book of the Gospels in the procession to the altar. The lector walks before the priest. Upon reaching the altar, he places the *Book of the Gospels* in the center on the altar.

The lector proclaims the readings before the Gospel from the ambo. He may, if needed, proclaim the responsorial Psalm. If no deacon is present, he announces from the ambo the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful.

"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 times." (198)

II. CONCELEBRATED MASS

This section of Chapter Four, which includes sections 199 to 251, is concerned with a Concelebrated Mass.

Concelebration is prescribed by the rite itself for the Ordination of a Bishop, the Ordination of Priests, the blessing of an Abbot, and the Chrism Mass. It is also recommended at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper; at Masses during Councils, Bishops' Meetings, and synods, at conventual Masses and the principal Masses in churches and oratories; at Masses during meetings of priests, at stational Masses celebrated by the Bishop, and whenever priests gather with their Bishop. The Bishop has the duty of regulating concelebration in his diocese. (199-203)

A concelebrated Mass takes place as described in the earlier parts of Chapter Four with the following additions noted below:

Deacons and other ministers are to carry out their appropriate roles. If they are not present, their duties are to be carried out by some of the concelebrants.

Concelebrants wear the same vestments they would wear if celebrating individually. However, for a good reason, concelebrants, other than the main celebrant, may simply wear the stole over the alb. (209)

During the Introductory Rites, the concelebrating priests walk before the principal celebrant. On reaching the altar, they bow, venerate the altar with a kiss, and then go to their designated places.

During the Liturgy of the Word, if there is no deacon, a concelebrant proclaims the Gospel. This concelebrant seeks the blessing of the Bishop. If the principal celebrant is a priest, then the concelebrant does not request or receive the blessing before proclaiming the Gospel. (212) The homily is usually given by the principal celebrant.

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, after the Prayer over the Offerings has been said by the principal celebrant, the concelebrants come forward and stand around the altar. However, their positions should not hinder the liturgical action or the ministry of the deacon, nor obstruct the view of the faithful.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the concelebrants make only the gestures specifically indicated to be made by them, and they say only those parts indicated to be said by them. These parts are said “in a very low voice” so “that the principal celebrant’s voice be clearly heard. In this way the words can be better understood by the people.” (218)

In sections 219 to 235, the gestures proper to each of the Eucharistic Prayers and the sections that may be assigned to the concelebrants are indicated. These sections indicate that as they say the epiclesis the concelebrants extend their hands toward the offerings. While speaking the words of the Lord during the institution narrative each concelebrant extends his right hand toward the bread and the chalice, if this seems appropriate. As the host and chalice are shown by the principal celebrant, the concelebrants look toward them and afterwards bow profoundly as the principal celebrant genuflects.

The concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer may be said only by the principal celebrant or together with the concelebrants, but never by the faithful, whose role it is to respond, Amen. (236)

The Communion of the concelebrants may be arranged in the following ways. After the *Agnus Dei*,

- They may come forward to the altar, genuflect, then take the Body of Christ, and return to their places. They hold the Body of Christ in their right hand until the principal celebrant has received.
- They may remain in their places and take the Body of Christ from the paten as it is brought to them by the principal celebrant, by a concelebrant, or deacons or as it is passed from priest to priest.
- After receiving the Body of Christ, the concelebrants come to the altar, genuflect, and then receive the Blood of Christ from a chalice or chalices placed on the altar.
- They may remain in their places and take the Blood of Christ from a chalice that is brought to them by a deacon, by a concelebrant, or as it is passed from priest to priest.
- They may also receive the Body of Christ and then immediately receive the Blood of Christ. In this case, after the principal celebrant has received, the concelebrants approach the altar, they genuflect, and then take the Body of Christ at the middle of the altar; they then go to the side of the altar and consume the Blood of Christ.

During the Concluding Rites, the concelebrants make a profound bow to the altar before leaving. The principal celebrant, with the deacon, venerates the altar with a kiss.

III. MASS AT WHICH ONLY ONE MINISTER PARTICIPATES

This section of Chapter Four, which includes sections 252

to 272, describes a Mass celebrated by a priest with only one minister.

“Mass should not be celebrated without a minister or at least one of the faithful, except for a just and reasonable cause. In this case, the greetings, the introductory or explanatory remarks, and the blessing at the end of Mass are omitted.” (254)

Mass is celebrated as described earlier in Chapter Four with the following differences.

During the Introductory Rites, the priest may remain at the altar.

During the Liturgy of the Word, the readings should be proclaimed from the ambo. The minister present should proclaim the readings before the Gospel. The priest reads the Gospel.

The Prayer of the Faithful “may be said even in this form of Mass. The priest introduces and concludes it, with the minister announcing the intentions.” (264)

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Rite of Peace concludes with the minister saying, “And also with you;” then the priest gives the sign of peace to the minister, without saying anything. (266) During the invitation to communion, if the minister is to receive, the priest holds the host over the paten or chalice while facing the minister and says “This is the Lamb of God...” If the minister is not to receive, the priest omits the words “This is the Lamb of God...” and simply says quietly, “Lord, I am not worthy...” (268)

During the Concluding Rites, the dismissal formula is omitted. (272)

IV. SOME GENERAL NORMS FOR ALL FORMS OF MASS

Some actions which occur in all celebrations of the Mass are discussed in this subdivision.

Veneration of the Altar and the Book of the Gospels

The altar and *Book of the Gospels* are venerated with a kiss.

Genuflections and Bows

A genuflection shows adoration and is reserved for the Blessed Sacrament and for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration of Good Friday until the start of the Easter Vigil. There are three genuflections during Mass, namely, after showing the host, after showing the chalice, and before Communion. *If a tabernacle is present in the sanctuary, the ministers only genuflect to it when they first approach the altar and when they depart from the Mass.* (274)

Bows signify reverence and honor. A bow of the head is made at the mention of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, at the name of Jesus, at the name of Mary, and at the name of the Saint whose memorial or feast is being celebrated.

A bow of the body is made to the altar, during the prayer before the Gospel (*Almighty God, cleanse my heart*), during

the Creed, during the preparation of the gifts before the washing of hands, and during the Roman Canon at the words (*Almighty God, we pray that your angel*). The priest makes a slight bow when speaking the words of consecration.

Incensation

Incensation is a sign of reverence and prayer. It may be used in any form of Mass during the times indicated.

After placing incense into the thurible, the priest then blesses it with the Sign of Cross without saying anything. (277)

Before and after a person or object is incensed, a profound bow is made to that person or object, except for the incensation of the altar and of the gifts placed upon it. Section 277 goes into very specific detail regarding incensation.

The Purification

The sacred vessels should be purified “insofar as possible at the credence table.” (279) The purification of the chalice is done with water alone, or with wine and water, which is consumed by the person purifying. A paten is purified by being wiped with a purificator.

If a host should fall, it should be picked up reverently. If the Precious Blood should spill, the area should be washed with water and this water should be poured into the sacrarium.

Communion Under Both Kinds

“Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds...The faithful should be encouraged to seek participation more eagerly in this sacred rite, by which the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is made more fully evident.” (281-282)

The Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Forms in the Dioceses of the United States are to be followed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ARRANGEMENT AND FURNISHING OF CHURCHES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

This chapter, which includes sections 288 through 318, includes the following major divisions, namely, I. General Principles, II. The Arrangement of the Sanctuary for the Sacred Synaxis (Eucharistic Assembly), and III. The Arrangement of the Church.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPALS

Churches and other places used for liturgy “should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should, moreover, be truly worthy and beautiful and be signs of heavenly realities.” (288) All churches should be dedicated or at least blessed.

The diocesan Bishop and his commission on the sacred Liturgy and sacred art should be involved in the construction, restoration, or remodeling of sacred buildings. Attention should

not only be given to sacred liturgy that will be celebrated within the building, but consideration should also be given to “those things conducive to the appropriate comfort of the faithful that are normally forthcoming in places where people regularly gather.” (293)

The ordering and structure of a church for worship should convey the image of a united, gathered assembly, yet it should convey the difference in roles and ministries of those gathered, as well as the hierarchical nature of the Church.

II. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SANCTUARY FOR THE SACRED SYNAXIS (Eucharistic Assembly)

The sanctuary, where the altar and ambo are located and where the ministers exercise their function, should be marked off from the body of the church in some way. The major items in the sanctuary are discussed in this subdivision.

The Altar and Its Appointments

There should be a fixed altar, that is, an altar attached to the floor, in every church “since it more clearly and permanently signifies Christ Jesus, the living stone.” In other places, the altar may be movable. (298)

The altar should be free standing, apart from the wall, so that Mass can be celebrated facing the people. It should also be centrally located so as to be the focal point of the building.

The table of a fixed altar is to be made of natural stone. In the United States, “wood which is worthy, solid and well-crafted” may also be used. (301) Authenticated relics may continue to be placed under the altar. Relics are not to be placed in the altar table. (302)

At least one white cloth is to be placed upon the altar. In the dioceses of the United States, clothes of other colors may be used, “provided that the uppermost cloth covering the mensa (i.e., the altar cloth itself) is always white in color.” (304)

Floral decorations are not to be placed on the table of the altar. Only that which is required for Mass is to be placed upon the altar table. No flowers are to be used during Lent, and used with moderation during Advent.

There is to be a cross with the figure of Christ crucified visible to the congregation. Such a cross may be near or on the altar.

The Ambo

Just as a church should have a fixed altar, it should also have a stationary ambo suitable for the proclamation of God’s word. The ambo should be used only for the readings, the responsorial Psalm, the Easter Proclamation, the homily, and the intentions of the Prayers of Faithful. *“The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should go up to it.”* (309)

The Chair for the Priest Celebrant and Other Seats

The chair used by the priest celebrant should be in keeping with his office of presiding over the assembly of the faithful and directing their prayer. The chair for the deacon should be near that of the celebrant. The location and design of the chairs for other ministers should show they are distinct from the clergy, yet allow them to easily fulfill their duties.

III. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CHURCH

This subdivision deals with the area of the church outside of the sanctuary.

Places for the Faithful

Places for the faithful should allow them to freely participate in the liturgy. Such places should allow for visibility, access, changes in posture, etc.

The Place for the Choir and the Musical Instruments

The place of the choir should make it evident that it is part of the gathered assembly and “allow each choir member full, sacramental participation in the Mass.” (312)

The organ and other approved instruments are to be located where they can sustain the singing of the choir and congregation. During Lent, musical instruments may be used only to support the singing of the faithful. In Advent, they are to be used with moderation.

The Place for the Reservation of the Most Holy Eucharist

There should be only one, immovable, non-transparent, secure, lockable tabernacle in the church. The Eucharist is not to be reserved on an altar on which Mass is celebrated. (315)

According to the judgment of the diocesan Bishop the tabernacle may be located either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, or it may be located in a chapel suitable for private prayer and adoration, provided that such a chapel is connected in some way to the church and visible to the faithful. (315) A lamp, fueled by wax or oil, is to burn near the tabernacle.

Sacred Images

Sacred images are reminders of those who now participate in the heavenly liturgy. Such images should not distract from the celebration of the Mass, Ordinarily there should not be more than one image of any given saint in a church.

CHAPTER SIX

THE REQUISITES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

This chapter, which includes sections 319 through 351, includes the following major divisions, namely, I. The Bread and Wine for Celebrating the Eucharist, II. Sacred Furnishings in General, III. Sacred Vessels, IV. Sacred Vestments, and V. Other Things Intended for Church Use.

I. THE BREAD AND WINE FOR CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST

The bread for the Eucharist must be made only from wheat and

be unleavened. The bread should be able to be broken into parts for at least some of the faithful. The wine must be from the grapevine, natural, and without extraneous substances. (320, 321)

II. SACRED FURNISHINGS IN GENERAL

The sacred furnishings may be of various artistic styles, provided such styles fit the purpose for which the object is intended. A “noble simplicity” is encouraged. Traditional materials and non-traditional materials may be used. In the dioceses of the United States “these materials may include wood, stone, or metal which are solid and appropriate to the purpose for which they are employed.” (326)

III. SACRED VESSELS

Sacred vessels, especially the chalice and paten, are to be made from precious metals. In the dioceses of the United States such vessels may also be made of other solid materials that are considered precious, such as ebony, or other hard woods. (329) Vessels for the Blood of the Lord are to have an interior that is non-absorbent. It is appropriate to use a paten or vessel large enough to contain all the bread needed for the Mass. Sacred vessels should be blessed.

“The practice is to be kept of building a sacarium in the sacristy.” (334)

IV. SACRED VESTMENTS

“The variety of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments.” (335) Vestments should be blessed before being used.

The alb is the sacred garment common to all ministers of whatever rank. The surplice may not replace the alb. In the dioceses of the United States “acolytes, altar servers, lectors, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other suitable vesture or other appropriate and dignified clothing.” (339)

The beauty of the vestment is to be found not in abundant ornamentation but from the natural fabrics used and from its design. Section 346 carefully explains the colors of vestments to be used during the liturgical year.

V. OTHER THINGS INTENDED FOR CHURCH USE.

All furnishings used in a church should be “worthy and suited to their particular purpose.” (348). The liturgical books, in particular the Lectionaries and *Book of the Gospels*, must be “worthy, dignified, and beautiful.” (349)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHOICE OF THE MASS AND ITS PARTS

This chapter, which includes sections 352 through 367, includes the following major divisions, namely, I. The Choice of the Mass and II. The Choice of Mass Texts.

This chapter begins by stating that a Mass will be of greater

pastoral effectiveness if the readings, prayers, and liturgical songs are related to the needs and situation of the people. Therefore, the priest and those working with him in preparing the liturgy should make use of the various options provided them. The priest should not be solely guided by “his own inclinations” but he should keep in mind the spiritual good of the people he serves. (352)

I. THE CHOICE OF THE MASS

On solemnities, Sundays, on the weekdays of the Advent, Christmas, Lenten, and Easter Seasons, as well as on feasts and obligatory memorials, the priest is to follow the calendar of the local Church. (353, 354)

Optional memorials may be celebrated on the weekdays of Ordinary Time, on the weekdays of the Easter Season, on the weekdays of Advent before December 17, and on the weekdays of the Christmas Season from January 2. (355)

The readings assigned for the day in the Lectionary should be used so that the people can benefit from what the Church has provided at the table of God’s word. (355)

I. THE CHOICE OF MASS TEXTS

The following norms should be followed concerning the choice of texts.

The Readings

On Sunday and solemnities, three readings are assigned. They should be strictly followed. On feasts, two readings are assigned. On the memorials of Saints, the readings assigned for the weekday are to be used, unless “strictly proper readings are given.” (357)

In Masses with special groups celebrated on a weekday, the priest may choose texts more suited to the situation, provided they are taken from an approved Lectionary. (348)

The Orations

“In any Mass the orations proper to that Mass are used.” (363)

The Eucharistic Prayer

- Eucharistic Prayer I, the Roman Canon, may always be used. It is particularly appropriate on those days for which there is a proper text or for the celebration of Saints mentioned within it.
- Eucharistic Prayer II, which may be used with its own preface or another preface, is particularly appropriate for weekdays.
- Eucharistic Prayer III, which may be used with any preface, is particularly appropriate on Sundays and feasts.
- Eucharistic Prayer IV, which has a fixed preface, is particularly appropriate for Sundays in Ordinary Time or when a Mass has no Preface of its own.

The Chants

The chants found in the Order of Mass, for example, the *Agnus Dei*, may not be replaced. The chants between the readings, and at the Entrance, Offertory, and Communion, are to follow the norms already indicated in the GIRM.

CHAPTER EIGHT MASSES AND PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES AND MASSES FOR THE DEAD

This chapter, which includes sections 368 through 385, includes the following major divisions, namely, I. Masses and Prayers for Various Circumstances and II. Masses for the Dead.

I. MASSES AND PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Masses for various circumstances “should be used in moderation, that is, when the occasion truly requires.” (369). The assigned weekday readings may be used.

Ritual Masses, which are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals are not permitted on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, Easter, on solemnities, on the days within the Octave of Easter, on All Souls’ Day, on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week.

In the dioceses of the United States, “January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of legal guarantees of the right to life. The Mass For Peace and Justice (#22 of the Masses for Various Needs) should be celebrated with violet vestments.” (373)

II. MASSES FOR THE DEAD

The Funeral Mass holds the first place among Masses for the dead. A Funeral Mass may be celebrated on any day except solemnities that are holy days of obligation, on Holy Thursday, during the Easter Triduum, and on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter.

“At a Funeral Mass there should, as a rule be a short homily, but never a eulogy of any kind.” (382)

CHAPTER NINE ADAPTATIONS WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF BISHOPS AND BISHOPS CONFERENCES

This final chapter, which includes sections 386 to 399, deals with the role of the diocesan Bishop and Bishops’ Conferences in relationship to the GIRM.

The diocesan Bishop, as the high priest of his flock, “must promote, regulate, and be vigilant over the liturgical life in his diocese.” (387). The GIRM gives him the responsibility of regulating concelebration, of establishing norms for ministers who assist the priest, of regulating the distribution of Holy Communion under both forms, of seeing to the proper construction of churches for sacred worship, and of fostering “the spirit of the sacred Liturgy in the priests, deacons, and faithful.” (387)

The Conferences of Bishops have the responsibility of preparing and approving an edition of the Roman Missal in their liturgical languages. The Conferences may also decide upon adaptations where indicated in the GIRM. When these adaptations have been recognized by the Apostolic See, they are to be placed into the Missal itself.

With the prior approval of the Apostolic See, Conferences of Bishops may add Directories and pastoral instructions to the *Roman Missal*.

This chapter also instructs Conferences of Bishops on the preparation of translations of the biblical and other texts used in the celebration of the Mass. Such translations must be suitable for proclamation during the liturgy, they must respect the character of the vernacular language, and at the same time they must also respect and faithfully render the meaning of the Latin text.

All musical settings of the people's responses and acclamations in the Mass are to be submitted to the Secretariat for the Liturgy of USCCB for review and approval.

While the organ has "pride of place" other instruments may be used in the liturgy in the dioceses of the United States, "provided they are truly apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt." (393)

The Conference of Bishops should prepare a calendar for its area. Each diocese should have its own calendar. In preparing such calendars, the Lord's Day is to be honored and respected as the "primordial holy day." (394)

Conferences of Bishops may propose variations and adaptations in the liturgy to the Apostolic See.

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