

Principle Seven: **Liturgy Requires the Faithful to Have Proper Dispositions and Pastors to Realize the Law Is Not Enough.** ⁶⁵

Liturgy is the public celebration of divine worship. It is holy action. In its ancient Greek form, the word described public work or some service done by citizens for the benefit of the state and the people. “In Christian tradition, it means the participation of the People of God in ‘the work of God.’” ⁶⁶ Liturgy, therefore, has no audience. Much is required of each one who takes part.

Adequate preparation is perhaps the first step toward achieving the proper disposition the constitution and the resulting liturgical reform seek. This preparation can include praying with Missal texts, Lectionary readings, and Scripture commentaries prior to Mass. Ask, what will I bring to Mass and what will I do after because of it rather than what will I get out of it. ⁶⁷ Preparation enhances the full, conscious, and active participation of singing, listening, and responding called for in the liturgy. This helps priest and people make full use of the offices and ministries authorized by the Church by acting through, with, and in Christ who is redeemer and high priest. ⁶⁸

Good Practices to Foster

Saint Margaret Parish makes it easy for parishioners to receive or purchase material that helps them prepare for Sunday Mass and the liturgical year. Annual books are available in November. ⁶⁹ Other items are placed in the bulletin or mailed to homes as the year progresses. ⁷⁰

The pastor of Saint Marceline Parish believes that good preparation helps ensure good celebration. To that end, he participates in every rehearsal for catechumenate rites, marriage, and the many special liturgies that occur each year. The key ministers (pastor, liturgist, musician, catechist, etc.) meet briefly in the week prior to rehearsal to consider optional elements, ritual choreography, and places for music. They also attend to the needs of disability, age, comprehension, season, and culture. Even though the liturgist or master of ceremonies may run the rehearsal, the pastor as a central minister, helps lead prayer, offers advice and encouragement, and is part of any last minute decisions. This proximate preparation also helps shape his presiding and preaching for the rite.

Saint Martha Parish put in place a 30 minute “fallow time” to precede and follow every liturgy and devotion celebrated in the church. This means that nothing extraneous takes place in the public spaces during these times. Everything needed for the celebration (vessels, books, microphones, lighted candles, etc.) is in place one half hour before the start time. The musicians set up early and warm up elsewhere. Final minister instruction takes place in the sacristy and not in the sanctuary or narthex. The

⁶⁵ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 11.

⁶⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1069.

⁶⁷ Bishop George J. Lucas, *Catholic Times*, Official Newspaper of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, 2 January 2005 [109:1], page 2.

⁶⁸ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 2; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1069.

⁶⁹ Some available items are: *At Home with the Word* (Liturgy Training Publications); *A Simple Guide to the Daily Mass Readings* (Liturgy Training Publications); *Living the Word* (World Library Publications); *Palabra de Dios* (Liturgy Training Publications); and the Cultural World series on the lectionary texts by John Pilch (Liturgical Press).

⁷⁰ Some available items are: *Amazing Days* Handouts (Liturgy Training Publications); *Clip Notes for Church Bulletins*, Volumes 1-3 (Liturgy Training Publications); *Modern Liturgy's Bulletin Inserts* by Paul Turner (Resource Publications); *Paschal Mission: Lent, Triduum and Eastertide* (Liturgy Training Publications); and *Welcome, Yule!* (Liturgy Training Publications).

faithful know they can come early and stay late for private prayer and for conversation with friends and colleagues. Although individuals are encouraged to pray before and after liturgy, there is no communal praying of rosary, stations, or novena during the fallow time.

For diocesan liturgy, no two celebrations of Holy Orders or Confirmation or election are exactly the same. Because those who are the focus of the rite are different each time, the celebration attends to faithfulness both in the ritual and toward those who gather to take part in it. As an example, over the years the bishop has accomplished his duty to celebrate an annual Mass with neophytes⁷¹ in differing ways. Although it usually falls on the afternoon of the third Sunday in May, it has also been included with the Confirmation of Catholic adults on Pentecost, the regional pilgrimages to the seven deaneries on the Sundays of the Easter season, and the field Mass at the state fairgrounds in midsummer during the diocesan jubilee.

Dangers to Avoid

Ministers cannot show up mere minutes before the start time for liturgy and expect to be composed and ready to lead or assist the faithful in prayer.

Technology makes it easy to create and print a presider's book that includes everything needed for a given liturgy and excludes options that will not be needed. The danger is to return to this adapted text the next time rather than return to the full array of possibilities the ritual text affords.

What Is at Stake

Above all else the vision and integrity of the Church's liturgy must be fostered and upheld. Ministers must have an intimate knowledge and comfort with the Roman Rite and the many separate ritual books.

Adaptation, inculturation, and choice of options cannot be seen as exceptional or rare occurrences but the way the business of liturgy is faithfully done. The introduction of each ritual book states the competency of the conference of bishops, the diocesan bishop, and the minister of the rite concerning appropriate adaptations.⁷² Further, the rubrics of a given rite will indicate the choices for a text spoken or sung "in these or similar words," a specific psalm or "another appropriate liturgical song" that may be sung, or more than one way to do or say something. Full and intelligent use by ministers of options and adaptations found in the ritual books and the broader tradition can ensure faithful celebration.

⁷¹ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, no. 251.

⁷² *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, nos. 37-40; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 352-367 and 386-399; *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 30-35; *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, nos. 32-35; *Rite of Baptism for Children*, nos. 23-31; *Rite of Confirmation*, nos. 16-18; *Rite of Penance*, nos. 38-40; *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, no. 12; *Rite of Marriage*, nos. 8-18; *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, nos. 38-41; *Order of Christian Funerals*, nos. 43-49.

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- Read the preceding two pages.
- In silence, write down additional (1) good practices to foster and (2) dangers to avoid. Do this either as homework to prepare for the meeting or during some silence provided during the meeting.
- Share this individual work in the large group.

(1) – More Good Practices to Foster

(2) – More Dangers to Avoid

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- In silence, (3) assess the current parish practice concerning this principle for good liturgy.
- Then listen to the assessing of current parish practice each person has done respecting any differences expressed while at the same time testing each assessment with the values and principles of Roman Catholic liturgy. Affirm the good practices of the parish.
- Brainstorm (4) dreams for the parish to improve the celebration of liturgy.

(3) – Assessing Current Parish Practice

(4) – Dreams for Parish Improvement