

## Guidelines For Liturgy Preparation

In preparing liturgy, it is important to understand and honour the specific purpose and intention of the various liturgical rites, particularly within the Mass. Following is a summarized guideline. It is recommended, however, that time be given to a more detailed instruction as provided in the new **General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** <http://nlo.cccb.ca/images/stories/GIRM.pdf> and in the case of liturgies with children, the **Directory of Masses With Children (DMC)** The DMC, along with other very useful information and important liturgical documents, can be sourced at <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/LOWC/index.shtml>

The recently revised texts of the Roman Missal (for Mass) may be found at <http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Mass-RM3.htm>

### The Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites should gather people into a united community, preparing them to listen and respond to God's Word and, when Mass is celebrated, to take an active part in the Eucharist. The specific elements of the **Introductory Rites** are as follows.

<b>The Entrance Procession &amp; Hymn</b>	<p>This forms the beginning of the celebration and is the first element of the Introductory Rites of the liturgy. As the Presider and ministers enter the Church, moving through the body of the assembly, they focus the attention of the community who has gathered for worship. The hymn, which accompanies the procession, is intended to gather and unify the people in praise of God, and turn their hearts and minds to the celebration's feast or season.</p> <p>It is not a case of singing the community's favourite hymn or the piece of music the organist loves to play. The hymn that is used here needs to honour the liturgical intention of gathering and unifying the community. It is important therefore that the community is familiar with the hymn and is able to sing it well.</p>
<b>The Greeting &amp; Introduction</b>	<p>The Presider greets the community and introduces the Mass of the day, inviting people to enter into the spirit of the liturgy. It is appropriate at times, especially in liturgies with children, to have a brief and concise commentary here, by way of introducing the theme/focus of the Mass.</p>

**The Penitential Act**

There are three possible forms of this rite. The most widely used form consists of three positive statements made to Christ in praise of his redemptive love. Each statement is followed, in turn, by one of the following responses: “Lord, have mercy”; “Christ, have mercy”; “Lord, have mercy”. The rite should focus on the compassionate, saving power of Christ rather than on us, in our sinfulness. This rite is a prayer of praise that calls us to trust in the saving grace of Christ. See your Daily Mass Book (or the above website on revised texts) for practical examples of this pattern.

From time to time, on Sundays, especially during the Easter Season, or for major feasts, it is possible to replace this form of Penitential Rite with the ***Blessing and Sprinkling*** of water, by way of recalling our Baptism.

<b>The Gloria</b>	Ideally this festive hymn should be sung on Sundays and for all major feasts, outside of Lent and Advent.
<b>The Opening Prayer</b>	<p>This element completes the Introductory Rites. It begins with an invitation from the Presider to pray, such as, ‘Let us pray’, or ‘Let us be silent and pray’. There is a silent pause before the actual public communal prayer is proclaimed, so that in this moment of silence, people might centre themselves and pray their personal petitions before these individual prayers are ‘collected’ into one communal prayer. The Opening Prayer, or ‘collect’, has a particular structure. It is best written in four ‘sense lines’ commonly referred to as a <i>You/Who/Do/Through</i> pattern. See example as follows:</p> <p>Addressing God (YOU):                      Compassionate and loving God,  Describing God (WHO):                      You are always ready to hear the one who calls on you.  Asking God        (DO):                      Open our ears to hear and our hearts to give generously to those in need.  Trinitarian ending (THROUGH): We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus and in the power of your Holy Spirit.</p> <p>The community responds with ‘Amen.’</p>

### **The Liturgy of the Word**

The Liturgy of the Word consists of Scripture readings, interspersed by silence, a sung Psalm and a sung Gospel Acclamation. The Gospel is followed by the Homily, the Profession of Faith and the General Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful. Its focus is to celebrate Christ’s Presence in the Word, and the dialogue between God and God’s People, in and through Christ. Christ, who is God’s Word Incarnate, gives himself to us as the living Word, which nourishes us, gives us life and sends us forth transformed. The elements of the Liturgy of the Word are as follows.

<b>Brief Introduction</b>	Following the Presider’s invitation to listen to God’s Word, it may be helpful, particularly with children’s liturgies, to offer a brief introduction on the readings. This can prepare us to listen well to the Scripture and open our hearts and minds to receive God’s Word. It is not intended to be a summary of the forthcoming reading and is more a hindrance to the Liturgy of the Word if it merely does so, or if it moralises or instructs on how we ought to respond to the reading. An introduction is meant to entice and invite our hearts to listen to God’s life-giving Word.
<b>First Reading</b>	<p>For Sunday liturgies and solemn feasts, there are always three scripture readings, including the Gospel. At weekday liturgies there are only two readings, including the Gospel. For liturgies with children the number of readings can be reduced, but the Gospel must always be included. (cf DMC #42)</p> <p>These readings must always be chosen from Scripture. It is ideal to follow the selection for the Day as set out in the Lectionary. There are official children’s Lectionaries, which provide suitable translations of the readings. Use of these</p>

	<p>translations is encouraged for Masses with children. If the readings assigned to the Day or Feast are unsuitable for children and/or too difficult for them to comprehend, it is permissible to choose other readings from the Lectionary or Bible that are relevant to the feast or occasion, although preference should be given to the Lectionary Readings for the particular day (see Ordo). Where there are three readings being used, the first reading usually comes from the Old Testament, or from the Acts of the Apostles during the Easter Season. This reading is usually linked to the Gospel, with the Gospel being the fulfilment of the first reading. The reading is followed by a brief period of silence, to allow people to reflect on the Word that has been proclaimed.</p>
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<p>A psalm is either sung or recited as a response to the first reading. Ideally the entire psalm should be sung, or at least sing the antiphon of the psalm and recite the verses. The words of the psalm always express our response to God, e.g. "I thank you for the wonder of my being..."(Ps 139:14), rather than God's words to us. The Psalms are the ancient songs of Israel but they can rise up just as strongly from our hearts today. It is very important to make sure that one of the 150 Psalms is prayed here, as opposed to a song chosen by the musicians. Usually, the Psalm of the Day (in the Lectionary) makes the perfect complement to the readings for that day. Many of the psalms have been set to music and are easily singable by children if they come from a children's collection. See the reference on the song to see if it is, in fact, a psalm. The first place to look when choosing the readings or the psalm is in the Ordo and the Lectionary!</p>
<b>Second Reading</b>	<p>The second reading comes from the New Testament, drawing on the richness of the writings of the Apostles. The reading is followed by a brief period of silence to allow people to reflect on the Word that has been proclaimed.</p>
<b>Gospel Acclamation</b>	<p>The Gospel acclamation announces Christ present in the Gospel that is about to be proclaimed. It is intended to be sung, and if it is not sung it should be omitted. The "Alleluia" antiphon of the acclamation is not sung during Lent or Advent but is replaced with various texts, such as "Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!" (see Mass book for examples during Lent). The acclamation is followed by a short verse that relates to the Gospel of the Day and then the acclamation is repeated. In Masses with children, the verse could be omitted as long as the acclamation itself is sung. The acclamation is sung immediately before the Gospel and it can also be repeated at the end of the Gospel. The acclamation can be used to accompany a procession of the Word, including candles, and on special occasions, incense.</p>
<b>Gospel</b>	<p>The Gospel is always proclaimed in Mass by an ordained minister, such as a deacon or the Presider or the Mass. We stand for the proclamation of the Gospel, as an expression of our reverence of Christ's presence in the Gospel and as an act of being ready and willing to go out on mission. It is in the Gospel proclamation that we meet Christ!</p>

**Homily**

Normally the homily in Mass is given by a deacon or the Presider. Its purpose is to break open the Word of God for the community, in this time and in this place. It is permissible, however, for a non-ordained person to reflect on the Word of

	God at a Mass with children or in a liturgy (other than the Mass) where there is no priest to preside, such as a Liturgy of the Word.
<b>Creed</b>	The Creed or Profession of Faith, is prayed in the Mass on Sundays and for solemnities. It is a public statement of our communal faith in God and our belief in the elements of the faith to which we adhere as baptised Catholics.
<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>	<p>The Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercessions, forms the final part of the Liturgy of the Word. Having heard the Word proclaimed and having been touched and inspired by it, the community now comes before God, praying not only for themselves and their own needs but also for the needs of the world.</p> <p>The structure of this prayer is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) An invitation by the Presider to the community to express their prayer intentions</li> <li>b) A series of 3-part Intercessory prayers in the following pattern: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Announce the intention</li> <li>2. Allow people to pray in silence</li> <li>3. Invite the response by saying “Lord, hear us” to which the assembly says: “Lord, hear our prayer”</li> </ol> </li> <li>c) At the end of these prayers, the Presider completes the Intercessions with a short concluding prayer.</li> </ol> <p>Intentions always move from ‘general’ to ‘particular’, usually in the following order: the Church and its leaders, World and Civic leaders and the needs of the world, those in difficulty or in need, the needs of the local community, and lastly, an intercession for those who have died.</p> <p>In some situations, spontaneous intercessions can be very appropriate, depending on the group, their circumstances, readiness and the size of the group. In this option, the Presider still invites the community to express their prayers and brings them to closure with a concluding prayer. It is important to be aware of the length of these spontaneous prayers. They must be short! They simply announce the intention, for which everyone prays silently before expressing the more formal communal response.</p>

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

There are three parts – the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion Rite. The ***Preparation of the Gifts*** includes the prayer over the Offerings. This moves into the great prayer of thanks and praise, the ***Eucharistic Prayer***, which begins with the Preface and climaxes in the Great Amen. The quieter and more reverent mood of the ***Communion Rite*** begins with the Lord’s Prayer and proceeds to the Sign of Peace which is followed by the Breaking of the Bread, culminating in the procession to Communion.

The entire Liturgy of the Eucharist encompasses a 4-part action which we ‘do’ as a united assembly, led by our ordained Presider. This 4-part action can be described as TAKE-BLESS-BREAK-SHARE. This is truly the action of Christ – an action that we do in memory of him – an action that transforms us to become the Body of Christ, given and sent out into the world of today!

<p><b>Preparation of the Gifts</b></p> <p><i>Procession of Gifts</i></p> <p><i>Prayer over the Offerings</i></p> <p><i>Invitation to Pray</i></p>	<p>In this first part of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the bread and wine are brought to the altar in procession through the body of the assembly. In this way, the whole community can identify itself with the offering of bread and wine. This procession is sometimes accompanied by a hymn of offering or praise, but quiet music, or even silence, is often more appropriate. The elements are then taken by the Presider and placed on the altar while he prays (aloud or in silence) a blessing prayer over the gifts. The assembly responds: “Blessed be God for ever.”</p> <p>The Presider then continues with a set prayer from the Mass of the Day, asking God to transform this bread and wine (and also this community who will eat and drink this food) into Christ’s Body and Blood for the world of today. He then completes the preparation of the gifts by inviting the assembly to pray that this sacrifice will be acceptable to God.</p>
<p><b>The Eucharistic Prayer</b></p> <p><i>Preface</i></p> <p><i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i></p> <p><i>Eucharistic Prayer</i></p> <p><i>Mystery of Faith</i></p> <p><i>Great Amen</i></p>	<p>The <i>Eucharistic Prayer</i> begins with a ritual dialogue that leads into the <i>Preface</i> from the Mass of the Day. The Preface is a powerful and poetic prayer of praise ending with the sung acclamation: <b>Holy, Holy, Holy.</b></p> <p>There are various <i>Eucharistic Prayers</i> which may be chosen to flow out of the Preface. Choose the most appropriate one (in consultation with your priest) for the liturgical season or the occasion for celebrating this Mass. For Masses with Children, there are also specific choices for the Eucharistic Prayer although the texts of these prayers have not yet been revised. See your current Daily Mass book for examples of the Preface and for the revised texts of the Eucharistic Prayers or visit <a href="http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/EP.htm">http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/EP.htm</a></p> <p>During the Eucharist Prayer, the assembly acclaims the <i>Mystery of Faith</i> by singing one of three set acclamations. At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the assembly responds again (ideally in song) with a resounding <b>Amen.</b></p> <p>The Eucharistic Prayer is the ‘centre and highpoint’ of the Mass. This is Christ’s great prayer of praise to the Father. We unite ourselves with Christ, giving thanks and praise for the great things that God is doing in our midst. We are drawn into the cosmic prayer of Christ through our attentive participation and by actively singing the acclamations.</p>

**The Communion Rite**

This third 'movement' in the Eucharistic Liturgy consists of the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of Peace, the Breaking of the Bread, culminating in the actual receiving of Communion and concluding with the Prayer after Communion.

The Communion Rite begins with the *Lord's Prayer*. This prayer, as taught to us by Jesus, expresses our unity in



<b>The Lord's Prayer</b>	God and our hunger for the bread of life.
<b>Prayer for Peace &amp; Sign of Peace</b>	After a formal <b>Prayer for Peace</b> , we are invited to offer one another a ritual <b>Sign of Peace</b> . This small ritual should be interpreted symbolically rather than literally. Therefore, one can offer peace to the entire world, simply by turning to the person at either side. The Sign of Peace is not meant to be disruptive of the reverent atmosphere that has been ushered in by the Communion Rite. It simply says that we need to be reconciled in our hearts with all people before we can come into communion with the Divine.
<b>Breaking of Bread</b>	The <b>Breaking of the Bread</b> is the third part of the Eucharistic action (Take-Bless-Break-Share). It is a symbol of the breaking open of Christ's life and the pouring out of a love so great that he sacrificed all for us, his beloved ones. This ritual shows us how we also must live for one another. The breaking the bread is accompanied by the "Lamb of God" which ideally should be sung.
<b>Communion</b>	The culmination of the 4-part Eucharistic action is reached when the community makes the 'journey' in procession to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in <b>Communion</b> . It is in this action that we, the community, are more deeply united and transformed into the Body of Christ, ready to be sent back into the everyday world in which we live. As we deliberately move forward to share in this ritual feast, we sing a hymn that reflects and expresses the profound nature of what is taking place within this community. We journey forward in faith to receive the food that will transform us.
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	Following Communion there is a time of quiet reflection. This can be supported by appropriate instrumental music or a hymn to enhance and encourage an intimate period of prayer. However, a short period of silence is preferable at this point. Notices, announcement, collections, etc, should never occur during this time. This is a time for prayerful <b>Thanksgiving</b> .
<b>Prayer after Communion</b>	<p>The <b>Prayer after Communion</b> concludes the Communion Rite. It is a formal way to give voice to our thanks for what we have received and to pray that we may truly benefit from it.</p> <p>Following this prayer, any announcements or notices can be given. Announcements should never be given from the Ambo (the sacred place of the Word).</p> <p>All the elements of the <b>Communion Rite</b> are concerned with highlighting the importance of coming into communion with God and with one another through receiving one bread and one cup, the Body and Blood of Christ. We are drawn into Christ and bound to one another in him – having now become part of him. We (like the bread and wine) have now been transformed.</p>

<p><b>The Concluding Rite</b></p> <p><i>Blessing</i></p> <p><i>Dismissal</i></p>	<p>This Rite consists of the <b><i>Blessing</i></b> and <b><i>Dismissal</i></b>. The Blessing may be a simple blessing, or, depending on the feast or occasion, a more solemn blessing (usually in a Trinitarian pattern with three invocations to the Father, Son and Spirit. We respond with “Amen” to each invocation. Then, in a slightly more formal way, the Presider asks God to bless us in the name of the Trinity while we sign ourselves with the Sign of the Cross.</p> <p>The Blessing is followed immediately by the Dismissal in which the community are sent forth in unity to love and serve one another. There are four inspiring options for the words of Dismissal according to the revised text. See these in your Daily Mass book or at <a href="http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Mass-RM3.htm#Concluding">http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Mass-RM3.htm#Concluding</a></p>
<p><b>The Recessional Procession</b></p>	<p>The liturgy concludes with the Presider and ministers leaving the worship space by processing out through the community, and in this action, drawing the community out into the world as the living body of Christ. This is usually accompanied by an appropriate hymn, but can also be accompanied by silence.</p>

©2013 [www.LiturgyRitualPrayer.com](http://www.LiturgyRitualPrayer.com) & Emmaus Productions