

The Eucharist is the vital centre of all that the Church is and does. At its heart is the real presence of the crucified, risen and glorified Lord, who continues his saving work among us. The Second Vatican Council reminded us: ‘the most holy Eucharist holds within itself the whole spiritual treasure of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Passover and our living bread’. (cf. *One Bread One Body* 3)

All who exercise a liturgical ministry need a proper preparation for their responsibilities. They are to have the competence to perform the particular ministry with which they have been entrusted. (cf. *Celebrating the Mass* 29)



This leaflet is one of a series of leaflets prepared for liturgical ministers to help them refresh their understanding of their role at Mass. The series draws on the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and *Celebrating the Mass*, a document of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

It is one of the collection of resources produced by the Liturgy Office to assist the work of liturgical renewal in England and Wales.

What the Church says about...

The choice of the Mass and its parts.

The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be truly heightened if the texts of the readings, the prayers, and the liturgical songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, spiritual preparation, and capacity of participants.

In planning the celebration of Mass, then, the priest, should pay attention to the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than his own inclinations. He should also remember that choices are to be made in consultation with those who perform some part in the celebration, including the faithful in regard to the parts that more directly belong to them.

Since, indeed, a variety of options is provided for the different parts of the Mass, it is necessary for the deacon, the readers, the psalmist, the cantor, the commentator, and the choir to be completely sure before the celebration of those texts for which each is responsible is to be used and that nothing be improvised. Harmonious planning and carrying out of the rites will, to a great extent, help dispose the hearts and minds of the faithful to participate in the Eucharist.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal 352.

Adaptation of the Liturgy

The celebration of the Eucharist, like the entire Liturgy, is carried out through perceptible signs that nourish, strengthen, and express faith. Thus, the utmost care must be taken to choose and to arrange those forms

and elements provided by the Church that, in view of the circumstances of the people and the place, will more effectively foster active and full participation and more properly respond to the spiritual needs of the faithful.

The General Instruction and the Order of Mass specify certain accommodations and adaptations to enable celebrations of Mass to correspond more fully to the prescriptions and spirit of the Sacred Liturgy, and to increase their pastoral effectiveness.

Celebrating the Mass 127–128

Ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity aimed at allowing each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to the established liturgical norms. In the songs, the melodies, the choice of prayers and readings, the giving of the homily, the preparation of the prayer of the faithful, the occasional explanatory remarks, and the decoration of the Church building according to the various seasons, there is ample possibility for introducing into each celebration a certain variety by which the riches of the liturgical tradition will also be more clearly evident, and so, in keeping with pastoral requirements, the celebration will be carefully imbued with those particular features that will foster the recollection of the participants.

Redemptionis Sacramentum 39

Preparing the Liturgy

The regular preparation of the Sunday either week by week or over a liturgical season should bring together the different liturgical ministers responsible for the worthy celebration of the liturgy.

The following process is tried and tested.

Before the meeting all attending are invited to reflect on the texts of the liturgy: the readings and the prayers.

1. Opening Prayer
2. The Gospel is read twice, by different people, with three minutes of silence between and after the readings. Group members listen to the reading.
3. Group members share briefly their response to the question: What word or phrase strikes you and why? Other members listen to these echoes of the word. The group considers how does this speak to this community?
4. The group consider what choices are available and make appropriate decisions.
5. The group identify who needs to be informed of the choices it has made and whether any formation is necessary.

The overall aim of the group should be to enable the assembly to listen to the word of God and celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

COLOSSIANS 3:16–17



Kee your Church alert in faith
to the signs of the times
and eager to accept the challenge
of the gospel.

Open our hearts
to the needs of all humanity,
so that sharing their grief and anguish,
their joy and hope,
we may faithfully bring them
the good news of salvation
and advance together on the way
to your kingdom.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR MASSES
FOR VARIOUS NEEDS AND OCCASIONS

**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

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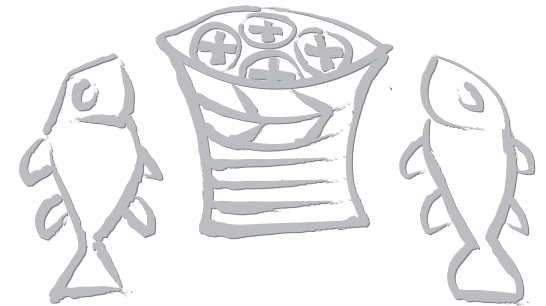
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Liturgy Preparation Groups and Mass



The entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity.

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