

Liturgy and Issues of Inclusion/Exclusion

Having a special care for preserving and deepening the unity of the one body of Christ, his Church, a unity in love and in truth, in unity and in mission

Flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful. Because of their equality they all contribute, each according to his/her own condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ.

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.

It is the duty of pastors, in particular, to promote dignified celebrations, paying the proper attention to the different categories of persons: children, young people, adults, the elderly, the disabled. They must all feel welcome at our gatherings, so that they may breathe the atmosphere of the first community of believers who "devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers".

CODE OF CANON LAW 208; CELEBRATING THE MASS 127; SPIRITUS ET SPONSA 12

Some Questions

- Are there groups or individuals who you know do not find acceptance and a ready welcome in the parish and at its liturgy?
- What introductory (catechetical/participation) materials do you have available for individuals with particular needs?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal
17, 91, 105b, 352

Lectionary for Mass: Introduction
15, 19, 24, 28, 38–43

Spiritus et Sponsa 12

Directory for Masses with Children

Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism 92–160

One Bread One Body 10–22, 42–43

Valuing Difference: People with disabilities in the life and mission of the Church

Celebrating the Mass
11–17, 21, 23–24, 36–37, 127–129,
135–138, 143, 160, 167–169, 220

Practical Points

- An audit of local church life will reveal how open the church and parish activities are to those with disabilities
- Careful explanation before hand of reasons why, for example, ecumenical guests or guests of other faiths, cannot take full part in Catholic sacramental celebration will avoid confusion.
- Care about hospitality can ease feelings of exclusion any present may feel.
- Availability of large print service sheets/hymnbooks/newsletters should be clearly indicated on notice boards and on service sheets/hymnbooks
- Guidance about participation aids is provided in 'Guidelines for the Production of one-off Service sheets' – Liturgy Office Website (Documents)

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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?