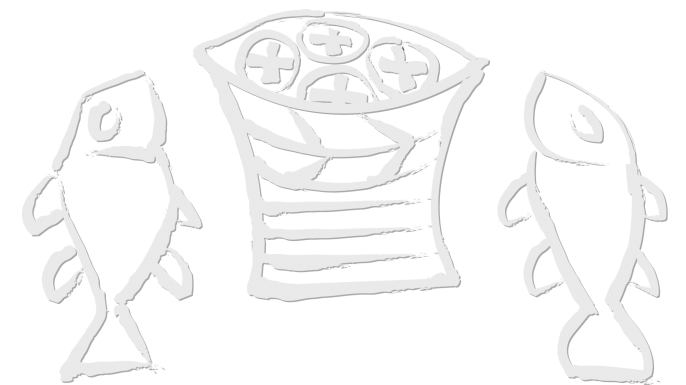


DEPARTMENT FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORSHIP

Guidelines for Concelebration in the Dioceses of England and Wales



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Guidelines for Concelebration in the Dioceses of England and Wales

Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations belonging to the Church, which is the ‘sacrament of unity’, namely the holy people united and ordered under their bishops.

Therefore liturgical services involve the whole Body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they also concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their different orders, offices, and actual participation.

Whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, it is to be stressed that this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and, so to speak, private.

This applies with special force to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and social character.

In liturgical celebrations each one, minister or layperson, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy. (Sacrosanctum Concilium 26-28)

Introduction

1. This document gathers together from the Missal and other liturgical books of the Roman Rite the universal Church’s instruction on how concelebration is to be regulated. This document complements that universal guidance with additional guidance concerning concelebration in the Church in England and Wales.

It should be read alongside the 3rd typical edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the Roman Pontifical and Roman Ritual, and the Ceremonial of Bishops.

General Principles

2. ‘The principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God’s holy people in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers.’¹ Such celebrations demonstrate and enable the particular ecclesial relationship between the Bishop and his Priests which informs the ministry of both.

3. Concelebration of the priests of a diocese together with their Bishop is to be held in high regard.² Concelebration by priests alone, itself provides a witness to and a service of communion not only for the community directly taking part in

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, (SC) 42

² General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 203

the celebration but also for the universal Church, which is always brought into play within the context of the Eucharist.³

4. Priests 'as ministers of the sacred, especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, represent the person of Christ in a particular way. Because of... (this) sign value, it is therefore right that they take part in the Eucharist by exercising the order proper to them, that is, by celebrating or concelebrating the Mass.'⁴

Regulation of Concelebration

5. The regulation of concelebration belongs to the diocesan bishop, accordingly, the bishop may establish diocesan guidelines or norms regarding concelebration.
6. The responsibility for ensuring the integrity of any particular celebration remains with the principal celebrant.⁵

Participation in Concelebration

7. The rites themselves prescribe concelebration at the Ordination of a Bishop and of priests, at the blessing of an abbot, and at the Chrism Mass.

Unless the good of the Christian faithful requires or suggests otherwise, concelebration is also recommended at:

- a. the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper;
- b. the Mass for Councils, meetings of Bishops, Synods and pastoral visitations;
- c. the conventual Mass and the principal Mass in churches and oratories, especially on the more solemn days of the liturgical year;
- d. at celebration of the Holy Founder of a local Church or the Patron of the diocese;
- e. on the Bishop's anniversaries;
- f. Masses at any kind of meeting of priests, either secular or religious.

'Nevertheless, it is permitted for each priest to celebrate the Eucharist individually but not at the same time at which a concelebration is occurring in the same church or oratory. But still it is not permitted to celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper or the Easter Vigil individually.'⁶

8. Visiting priests should be gladly welcomed to concelebrate.⁷

A Priest is to be permitted to concelebrate the Eucharist 'even if he is not known to the rector of the church, provided he presents commendatory letters' (i.e., a *celebret*) not more than a year old from the Holy See or his Ordinary or Superior or unless it can be prudently judged that he is not impeded from celebrating'. Diocesan policies established for the protection of children and vulnerable adults should be observed.⁸

This praying of the Hours in common is distinct from a sacramental concelebration, though it may be joined with a concelebrated Mass.

122. The General Instruction encourages that when a bishop presides, especially in the cathedral, he should be attended by his college of priests and by ministers; the people should take a full and active part.

It is stated that it is proper for a priest or deacon to preside at every celebration with a congregation and that ministers should also be present.⁷⁷

The presiding priest or deacon may wear a stole. A priest may also wear a cope. Other clergy are presumed to be in choir dress, although priests may wear a cope over a surplice or alb, and deacons may wear either a cope or a dalmatic.⁷⁸

123. The presiding priest opens the celebration with the introductory verse, begins the Lord's Prayer, says the concluding prayer, greets the people, blesses and dismisses them.⁷⁹

124. The reading should be read by a lay reader from the ambo, the intercessions should be announced by a deacon (or, in the absence of a deacon, by a lay reader or cantor) from the ambo or some other suitable place.⁸⁰

125. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When a celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is joined to a celebration of Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above).

³ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (RS) 30

⁴ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (EM) 43

⁵ GIRM 111

⁶ GIRM 199, 203

⁷ GIRM 200

⁸ RS 111; Code of Canon Law (CCL) can. 903

⁷⁷ General Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH) 254

⁷⁸ GILH 255, Ceremonial of Bishops 192

⁷⁹ GILH 256

⁸⁰ GILH 259, 260, CB 199, 205

Anointing of the Sick during Mass

114. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above), likewise the principles concerning Mass (see 27–79 above)

Funerals

115. Different priests may preside at the different rites of the Order of Christian Funerals, for example the Vigil, the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal at a Cemetery or Crematorium.

The Rite of Commendation is an integral part of the liturgy of which it forms part, e.g. the Funeral Mass or the Rite of Committal. Consequently it belongs to the principal celebrant as presider at that liturgy.

116. Concelebrating clergy may assist during the celebration of the funeral mass in the usual ways: proclaiming the Gospel, in the absence of a deacon, by preaching the homily or the specified parts of the Eucharistic Prayer..

117. It should be noted that the homilist is encouraged to dwell on God's compassionate love and on the paschal mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. The homilist should also help the members of the assembly to understand that the mystery of God's love and the mystery of Jesus' victorious death and resurrection in the life and death of the deceased and that these mysteries are active in their own lives too. There is never to be a eulogy at this point in the Mass.⁷⁵ If there are to be words specifically in remembrance of the deceased these may be spoken following the Prayer after Communion.⁷⁶

118. At concelebrated funeral rites, it is important that the unity of the priesthood be expressed in the vesture as well as by the words and actions of the concelebrants. All concelebrants should normally wear the same colour vestments as is worn by the principal celebrant, without regard to their normal, individual custom. If there is good reason all concelebrants may wear white chasubles, what ever the colour worn by the principal celebrant. (cf. 19 above).

119. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When the funeral rites are celebrated at Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above)

120. It is particularly appropriate that priests of a particular diocese or religious order gather together with their Ordinary for the funeral liturgy of one of their brothers, commending him to almighty God. Even at clergy funerals however concelebrants should not undertake ministries or functions proper to the lay faithful. Where there are diocesan guidelines for the preparation and celebration of clergy funerals they should be observed.

Liturgy of the Hours

121. Full guidance for the celebration of the Hours in common is found in Chapter V of the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours.

9. Those intending to concelebrate should arrive in good time before the celebration begins and make known their intention to concelebrate at the earliest opportunity. Often there is need for particular guidance or instruction to be given prior to the celebration. No one is ever to be admitted as a concelebrant once Mass has already begun.⁹ Nor should a concelebrant leave the celebration before the end, for example, after giving the homily.

10. Care should be taken that priests' concelebration at the liturgy should not lead to a sense of exclusion on the part, for example, of those lay people present, from the full participation in the liturgy in all the ways proper to them. Concelebration is never an end in itself, and must always be entered into in a spirit of service to God's people.

Consequently careful thought needs to be given to how to ensure the full participation of all the faithful when, for example, the number of concelebrating priests outnumber the number of lay people present, or where it seems likely that the number of concelebrants will obscure the congregation's view of the ambo and altar.

11. Like all liturgical celebrations careful preparation is needed. For a concelebrated Mass attention should be given to the assignment of particular roles and ministries, such as proclamation of the Gospel or parts of the Eucharistic Prayer. The ministers should be informed before the celebration begins.¹⁰

12. When Mass is concelebrated by several Priests, a language known both to all the concelebrating Priests and to the gathered people should be used in the recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer. Where it happens that some of the Priests who are present do not know the language of the celebration and therefore are not capable of pronouncing the parts of the Eucharistic Prayer proper to them, they should not concelebrate, but instead should attend the celebration in choir dress in accordance with the norms.¹¹

Physical Arrangements

13. Concelebrants should be seated together in a distinct area. The Sanctuary area should not be so filled with concelebrants as to impede the liturgical action or cause undue distraction to the faithful. If the space is not large enough to accommodate all the concelebrants appropriately, some are seated in another area that physically and visually unites them with the other concelebrants, and is distinct from that provided for other ministers and the lay faithful.

14. The positioning of the concelebrants should not obscure the fact that only one bishop or one priest presides over the whole celebration.

An official response of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (protocol 1411/99) reinforces the freedom of all priests to concelebrate. No superior may prohibit a priest from concelebrating. The response also notes that "it is laudable that [priests enjoying the faculty of celebrating Mass in the rite in force before the liturgical renewal of Vatican Council 11] concelebrate freely especially for the Mass of the Thursday of Holy Week, with the diocesan bishop presiding The sign of communion inherent in concelebration is so particular that it ought not to be omitted in the Chrism Mass except for grave reasons."

⁹ GIRM 206

¹⁰ GIRM 352, RS 39, 58

¹¹ RS 113, GIRM 114

⁷⁵ Order of Christian Funerals (OCF) 27

⁷⁶ OCF 181

15. The positioning of the concelebrants should not usurp the positions or limit the functioning of other liturgical ministers.
16. Where the church's vesting space is not sufficiently large enough to accommodate concelebrants and other liturgical ministers another suitable space will need to be allocated. The space should be of suitable size, adjacent to the church and secure.

Vesture

17. Vestments are part of the ritual experience and the festive character of a liturgical celebration. Their colour and form, and their difference from everyday clothing call attention to the liturgical role of the priest concelebrants. Directives for the colour of liturgical vestments are provided in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.¹²
18. Where concelebrants wear vestments that differ in size, shape, colour and ornamentation these can obscure unity, emphasize individualism, and detract from the presidential role of the presiding priest. Every effort should be made to ensure that concelebrants be provided with vestments coordinated to those of the principal celebrant.
19. At Mass the principal celebrant is to wear the alb with a stole and chasuble.¹³

Concelebrants also should wear a chasuble. If chasubles are worn by all the concelebrants, they should be simpler in their decoration than that of the principal celebrant. The chasubles may be white, out of necessity. Only for good reason, (e.g. a large number of concelebrants or a lack of vestments) should concelebrants wear simply a stole over the alb.¹⁴

At other liturgies too the vesture of the principal celebrant and concelebrants should observe the requirements established in the *praenotandae* of those rites.
20. Priests may not concelebrate wearing secular attire, ordinary non-liturgical clerical dress or by wearing the stole over the cassock. Nor may priests of religious institutes concelebrate merely by placing a stole over the monastic cowl or habit.¹⁵

Texts

21. The texts (and musical settings) of prayers that are to be sung or said by concelebrants should, where necessary, be provided to them in printed form. The texts should be provided in separate texts for concelebrants, rather than included in the participation aids provided for the rest of the congregation.

Where musical notation is provided in the liturgical rites for those texts which are common to all concelebrants it is a praiseworthy practice for these to be sung.¹⁶

¹² GIRM 346

¹³ GIRM 209, 337

¹⁴ GIRM 209. RS 124

¹⁵ *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, September 5, 1970, no.8c. RS 126

¹⁶ GIRM 218

worthiness for ordination.⁷⁴ Those priests present concelebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the Bishop.

- d. The vesting of newly ordained deacons is performed by a deacon or another minister. The vesting of a newly ordained priest is performed by an assisting priest.
105. At all ordinations it is presumed that the gospel will be proclaimed by a deacon.
106. Each concelebrant should take care that he acts in no way, particularly during these key liturgical 'moments' in the Rites of Ordination, which would detract from the important actions in which he participates. The role of the principal celebrant has pre-eminence.
107. As far as possible, the liturgical space for concelebrants should be arranged to allow for ease of movement, especially regarding the Laying on of hands and the Kiss of Peace (at the ordination of priests), as well as the possibility of kneeling for the Litany of Saints, as is proper except on Sundays and during the season of Easter.
108. The identity of the Presbyterate as a body of priests sharing in the same ministry is enhanced by uniformity in the liturgical dress worn by concelebrants. It is recommended that priests of a diocese or a religious order should wear the vestments proper to their diocese or order. Visiting priests may be provided with similar vestments. The communication of a priestly identity shared within the Presbyterate may also be enhanced by newly-ordained priests being vested in a stole and chasuble matching those of the diocesan or religious priests.
109. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). The guidance provided above for concelebrants at Mass should be followed. (see 27–79 above)

Marriage

110. During the rite of marriage, there is an important relationship between the presiding minister and the couple. It is he who formally witnesses to their vows on behalf of the Church, and who, again on behalf of the Church, declares them to be husband and wife.
111. There is a unity between the consent, the questioning of the couple and the exchange of vows which means that a single minister should preside over these elements which are central to the marriage rite. The presence and actions of concelebrants at a marriage should not disturb this unity.
112. However, other elements in the celebration may be given to one or more of the concelebrants as appropriate: the Gospel, the homily and the Nuptial Blessing.
113. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When the Marriage Rite is celebrated within Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above)

⁷⁴ Ordination of Deacons 186

Penance

99. Additional priests may assist the Priest celebrant at a celebration of the communal rite of penance (Rite II) in a variety of ways – in the proclamation of the Gospel, in preaching the homily and in leading the faithful in an examination of conscience.
100. Priests concelebrating should, where possible, wear vestments in keeping with the principal celebrant.
101. It is recommended that those priests who will hear the individual confessions and minister absolution which follow should be visibly present for the whole liturgy: the Liturgy of the Word and the shared examination of conscience that precedes those confessions.
102. When individual Confessions have been completed, all those priests and people who have been part of the celebration should gather together again, to sing a hymn of praise to God for his grace and goodness.
103. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above).

Ordination

104. The rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests and of Deacons include specific mention of the role of concelebrating priests.
 - a. At the ordination of Bishop two priests of the diocese for which the Bishop-elect is being ordained assist him in the celebration of his Ordination and, in the name of the local Church, one of these priests requests the principal ordaining Bishop to confer Ordination on the Bishop-elect. Along with the Bishop ordained in this celebration and the other Bishops, these two priests and, to the extent possible, even other priests, particularly those of the same diocese, concelebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist.⁷¹
 - b. At the ordination of priests it is a priest who, in the name of the local Church, asks the Bishop to ordain the candidates to the responsibility of the priesthood, and testifies to their worthiness for ordination. At the laying on of hands priests come forward to join with the Bishop in this action, because of the common spirit they share as priests.⁷² The priests lay on hands in silence, and then return to their places. Only the Bishop keeps his hands extended during this time. Some of the priests present assist in vesting the newly Ordained. Insofar as possible, the priests present greet their newly ordained brothers with the fraternal kiss as a sign of reception into the presbyterate, and along with the Bishop and the newly Ordained, concelebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist.⁷³
 - c. At the ordination of deacons it is a priest who, in the name of the local Church, asks the Bishop to ordain the candidates, and confirms their

⁷¹ Ordination of Bishops 17

⁷² Ordination of Priests 105

⁷³ Ordination of Priests 106

Gestures

22. The role of the principal celebrant should never be obscured by the manner of participation of the concelebrants. Whenever particular rites require gestures of concelebrants (and it should be noted that certain gestures belong to the principal celebrant only) these should be performed in a modest and uniform way which does not detract from the gestures of the principal celebrant but quietly complements them.

The Principal Celebrant

23. The prominence and ministry of the principal celebrant should never be compromised by the placing, actions, or voices of concelebrants.

Deacons

24. Only those deacons with particular functions to perform at a celebration should be vested. These deacons should ordinarily be seated separately from concelebrating priests.
25. For a liturgical celebration at which the bishop presides, the two deacons stand on either side near the chair. If no deacons are present, two concelebrating priests serve in their place.¹⁷
26. If a deacon is not present, his proper duties are to be carried out by some of the concelebrants, e.g. the proclamation of the Gospel and assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion.¹⁸

In the absence also of other ministers, their proper parts may be entrusted to other suitable members of the faithful; otherwise, they are carried out by some of the concelebrants.¹⁹

Order of Mass — Concelebration of the Eucharist

27. Concelebration of the Eucharist is the practice by which ‘many priests act together with one will and one voice in virtue of the same priesthood and in the person of the one High Priest. Together they bring about and offer the single sacrifice by their single sacramental act and together they share in the sacrifice.’²⁰
28. From the earliest days of the Church concelebration, while taking a variety of forms, has been celebrated for ‘much more than merely practical considerations.’²¹ Concelebration at Mass gives appropriate expression to the unity of the priesthood, of the Sacrifice and also of the whole people of God, gathered as the Church.²²
29. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council recommended concelebration as an expression of ‘the unity of the priesthood’ and chose to give permission, at first, for the practice to a number of particular instances, for example at the Chrism

¹⁷ Ceremonial of Bishops (CB) 131

¹⁸ GIRM 171

¹⁹ GIRM 208

²⁰ *Ecclesiae semper* Promulgation of the Rites of Concelebration and of Communion Under Both Kinds March 7, 1965 (ES)

²¹ ES (as above)

²² GIRM 199

Mass and the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, and granting the bishop of each diocese the authority to decide when concelebration was opportune at other times when a number of priests might be able to join together in a single celebration.²³

Entrance Procession

30. The Procession takes place in the following order:

- thurifer, carrying a thurible with burning incense
- an acolyte carrying the cross, with the image to the front, walking between at least two, but up to seven other acolytes carrying candlesticks with lighted candles
- clergy attending in choir dress
- the deacon (or, in the absence of a deacon, a lay minister of the word) carrying the *Book of the Gospels*
- other deacons (if present) two by two
- concelebrating priests, two by two
- the bishop, walking alone, wearing the mitre, and carrying the pastoral staff
- a little behind the bishop, the two deacons assisting him
- the ministers who assist with the book, mitre and pastoral staff.

Reverence to the Altar

31. The principal celebrant and deacon, together with concelebrants and other ministers in the procession, bow to the altar on arrival as a sign of reverence. If a tabernacle containing the Most Blessed Sacrament is behind or near the altar, they genuflect instead of bowing.²⁴ The principal celebrant and the deacon(s), then reverence the altar with a kiss.²⁵ Concelebrants also should reverence the altar with a kiss. When the liturgical space and circumstances do not permit this concelebrants reverence to the altar by a profound bow.

The Gospel

32. When there is no deacon present, a concelebrant reads the Gospel.²⁶

33. If the principal celebrant is a bishop, the concelebrant asks for and receives a blessing from the bishop, and proclaims the gospel reading in the usual way.

When the principal celebrant is not a bishop, the concelebrant simply bows before the altar and prays inaudibly, *Almighty God, cleanse my heart ...* and proclaims the gospel reading in the usual way.²⁷

The deacon or concelebrating priest proclaiming the Gospel always says the greeting *The Lord be with you* with joined hands.²⁸

²³ SC 57

²⁴ GIRM 274

²⁵ GIRM 49, 211

²⁶ GIRM 208, 212

²⁷ Lectionary for Mass (LM) 17, GIRM 212, CB 173

²⁸ GIRM 134, 175

and assembly – which is best maintained by these being led by the principal celebrant.

88. There are other responsibilities in the rite which are proper to others in the assembly than a concelebrant, or which are at least best performed by them – for example the proclamation of non-gospel passages from the scriptures, the leading of the Prayer of the Faithful and the Litany, the dressing of the newly baptised child in the white garment, and the lighting of the baptismal candle.
89. However a concelebrant may be invited to proclaim the Gospel, or to preach a short homily.
90. If there is little room near to the font any concelebrating clergy should be ready to stand back from the font to allow better access to those who need to be there, most especially the principal celebrant, the parents and godparents.
91. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When baptism is celebrated within Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above)

Confirmation

92. It is permitted that all priest concelebrants at a Rite of Confirmation share in the gesture of the Laying on of hands. If delegated so to do, they may also assist the presiding minister in the anointing with Holy Chrism.
93. In the absence of a deacon a concelebrant should proclaim the Gospel.
94. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When Confirmation is celebrated at Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above)

First Holy Communion

95. Like all celebrations of the rites of Initiation this celebration is of particular significance to the life of the parish, not only in the lives of individuals and their families and friends. In general it is most appropriate for the principal celebrant to be the Bishop of the diocese⁷⁰, or one of the parish clergy.
96. Because of the parochial significance of the First Holy Communion celebration it is most appropriate that the homily be preached by the principal celebrant.
97. As a Sacrament of Initiation the priest celebrant should administer the Body of Christ to those receiving Holy Communion for the first time. Unless there are other priests of the parish present who might assist in the distribution of Holy Communion it is better for visiting concelebrants to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion by ministering the chalice. It is not appropriate for a concelebrant or any other minister to specially minister communion only to one particular person – for example to a member of his family and no one else.
98. In other respects the guidance provided above for concelebrants at Mass should be followed.

⁷⁰ CB 404

Priests' participation at other Sacramental Celebrations, Funerals and Liturgy of the Hours.

80. The practice of concelebration is not confined to celebrations of the Eucharist. There are other occasions when the rites of the Church especially encourage priests to join in common celebration with their bishop.
81. Such occasions include the rites of Ordination⁶⁸, but perhaps most commonly present themselves when a Bishop visits a parish, for example, to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation⁶⁹: it is entirely proper that the priest(s) appointed to the parish by the Bishop should concelebrate with him in the celebration of the sacrament.
82. There are further occasions when a number of priests gather together and the opportunity for concelebration is there. These would include times when priests gather for the wedding or funeral of family members or friends; at the First Holy Communion of a godchild, family member or friend. In these circumstances too the presence of a number of priests at the celebrations indicates the unity of the priesthood which is at the service of the Church.
83. However it is important to ensure that the presence of concelebrants does not compromise the unity of the celebration. Concelebrants participate first as members of the assembly.
84. The rites of the Church indicate where it is proper for concelebrants to be directly associated with the ministering of a sacrament, for example at Confirmation joining with the bishop in the laying on of hands. They also indicate where responsibilities may be delegated to a concelebrant, the preaching of a homily, or where it should be delegated, for example the proclamation of the gospel when there is no deacon present. It is rarely proper or wise to go beyond what is indicated in the rites as this is likely to lead to an undue focussing on the particular minister at the expense of participation by all in the rite itself.
85. The General Principles concerning concelebration will always apply (see 2–26 above). When these rites are celebrated at Mass the principles concerning Mass also apply (see 27–79 above)

Baptism of Infants

86. During the various stages of the rite of baptism, there is an important relationship between the presiding minister (representing the community of the Church), the parents and the child. The presence of concelebrant(s) at a baptism should not disturb this.
87. There is a unity too between the principal elements of the baptismal rite itself—the welcoming of the parents and their child; the praying of the prayer of exorcism and anointing with oil of catechumens; the invitation to renewal of baptismal promises, the washing with water and the anointing with chrism; the gathering at the altar to pray the Lord's Prayer and the final blessing of parents

34. When a bishop is presiding the minister who proclaims the gospel may, at the end of the proclamation, take the gospel book to him to be revered.²⁹ When a Bishop is presiding, and the occasion suggests it, the Bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the *Book of the Gospels*. The gospel book should be then returned to ambo, or taken to the credence table or another appropriate and dignified place.³⁰

The Homily

35. The principal celebrant should ordinarily give the homily. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to the deacon. In particular cases and for a just cause, the Homily may even be given by a Bishop or priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate.³¹

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

36. The rites for the Preparation of the Gifts are carried out by the principal celebrant; the other concelebrants remain in their places.³²

Eucharistic Prayer

37. The principal celebrant stands at the centre of the altar throughout the Eucharistic Prayer.

After the Prayer over the Offerings has been said by the principal celebrant, the concelebrants approach the altar and stand around it. Where the number of concelebrants present makes this impossible or impractical, for example because they would interfere with the execution of the rites, or the faithful's clear view of the sacred action, a representative few of the concelebrants may be invited to approach the altar and stand around it, while others remain at their seats.

38. Concelebrants should be in place before the praying of the Eucharistic Prayer begins, that is before the Preface dialogue, so as to avoid any distracting movement on their part in order to proclaim the part of the Eucharistic Prayer allocated to them.
39. Concelebrants standing at the altar should not obstruct the deacon's access to the altar to assist with the chalice and the Missal. Nevertheless, insofar as possible, the deacon stands slightly back, behind the concelebrating priests, who stand together around the principal celebrant.³³

Choice of Eucharistic Prayer

40. The Eucharistic Prayer should be chosen prior to the celebration, from any of the approved texts.³⁴ Specific guidance is given in the Missal for the appropriate use of Eucharistic Prayers I–IV³⁵ and for the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses of Reconciliation I–II, the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children and the

⁶⁸ GIRM 199

⁶⁹ Rite of Confirmation 13. CB 456

²⁹ CB 141, GIRM 175

³⁰ GIRM 175

³¹ GIRM 66, 213

³² GIRM 214

³³ GIRM 215

³⁴ GIRM, 365. Celebrating the Mass (CTM) 188

³⁵ GIRM 219–234

Eucharistic Prayers for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions.³⁶ (See 11 above concerning the language of the Eucharistic Prayer)

Singing of the Eucharistic Prayer

41. Singing the Eucharistic Prayer is a very solemn form of its proclamation. It is recommended for occasions when the Bishop and priests of a diocese gather for the celebration of Mass. It is especially appropriate that those parts prayed in common should be sung.³⁷ A sung setting of the Eucharistic Prayer should be established for diocesan use.
42. In order to ensure the worthy proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer, care should be taken to ensure that the principal Celebrant and the concelebrants are familiar with the setting used and able to sing it well. Care should be taken that any musical accompaniment of the singing allows the words of the prayer to be heard clearly. Musical settings of the Eucharistic Prayer should combine the ability for them to be sung simply, with a manifestation of the worthiness appropriate to this important part of the Mass.

Proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer

43. When it is not sung, the Eucharistic Prayer should be proclaimed by the principal celebrant in a loud and clear voice. Concelebrating priests should recite the epiclesis, words of consecration, anamnesis, and post-consecratory epiclesis with the principal celebrant, but in a quieter voice. The collective voice of the concelebrants should not overwhelm the voice of the celebrant, ensuring that the congregation is able to hear the text without difficulty.³⁸ It is preferable that concelebrants recite the common parts of the Eucharistic Prayer from memory rather than by reading them from cards or books. (c.f. 47 below)
44. Thought should be given to providing necessary amplification for those priests offering the intercessions. Where it is possible only to offer amplification to the presiding priest, it is better that he should offer the intercessory sections himself.
45. The concelebrants listen in silence during those parts appropriate to the principal celebrant and individual concelebrants.

Gestures

46. The principal gestures which are part of the articulation of the Eucharistic Prayer are made by the principal celebrant. Those accompanying gestures proper to the concelebrants should be performed in a modest and uniform way which does not detract from the gestures of the principal celebrant but quietly complements them.

Only where there are fewer deacons than there are chalices being ministered should other ordinary ministers administer the chalice.⁶³

74. Deacons are always to receive Holy Communion under both kinds. Where they are assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion they receive Communion before doing so.⁶⁴

Extraordinary (commissioned) ministers receive the Body and Blood of Christ after the priests have received. They then process with the priests to their stations to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.

75. In the exceptional circumstances when Holy Communion cannot be administered under both kinds to the whole congregation it is to be administered under one kind to any extraordinary (commissioned) ministers of communion as well.

Purification of Sacred Vessels

76. The purification of sacred vessels should not lengthen unduly the celebration of Mass.

If the purification cannot be carried out in a timely fashion during Mass, it should be delayed until after Mass.

77. At a concelebrated Mass it is more appropriate for vessels to be purified at a side table rather than at the altar. After communion, the deacon, priest, or instituted acolyte purifies the sacred vessels at the side table or, after the Mass has concluded, in the sacristy. In the latter case, the deacon covers the vessels and leaves them on a corporal on the side table to be cleansed after Mass.⁶⁵ It is still fitting that the Precious Blood be consumed immediately.

The Concluding Blessing

78. The blessing is reserved to the principal celebrant in the usual way.⁶⁶

Reverence to the Altar

79. Before leaving the altar, the concelebrants make a profound bow to the altar. For his part the principal celebrant reverences the altar with a kiss in the usual way.

If the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary, the priests, deacons and other ministers genuflect in the usual way before departing.⁶⁷

³⁶ The guidance for these prayers is given in a brief rubrical section immediately before each prayer in the 3rd typical edition of the Roman Missal (English translation in preparation).

³⁷ GIRM 218

³⁸ GIRM 218

⁶³ GIRM 182

⁶⁴ The instruction given in previous editions of GIRM that deacons receive after distribution from the chalice after distribution has been superseded in the 3rd edition.

⁶⁵ GIRM 183, 279

⁶⁶ GIRM 167, 250

⁶⁷ GIRM 251, 274

Invitation to Holy Communion

66. Only the principal celebrant shows the Body of Christ to the people, holding it slightly raised above the paten or chalice, as he proclaims, *This is the Lamb of God...* Concelebrants do not elevate the Body of Christ, showing it to the people; rather they continue to reverently hold the Body of Christ.

Receiving the Body of the Lord

67. After the invitation to communion, the principal celebrant says in a lower voice, *May the Body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.* He then consumes the Body of Christ. Concelebrants consume the Body of Christ at this same time, unless for reason of numbers present they receive communion during the same time as the lay faithful. Where this occurs the concelebrants approach the altar, genuflect, receive the Body of the Lord, and then receive the Blood of the Lord from the chalice.⁵⁷
68. The processional chant is begun during the principal celebrant's reception of Holy Communion.⁵⁸
69. The deacon(s) next receive Holy Communion under both kinds, from the principal celebrant.⁵⁹

Receiving the Precious Blood

70. The Precious Blood may be received in one of the following manners:
- the concelebrants approach the altar, genuflect and then drink from the chalice; or
 - the concelebrants remain in their places and the deacon or one of the concelebrants may offer the chalice to each without saying the formula, 'The Blood of Christ.'
 - Alternatively, the chalice may be passed among the concelebrants.⁶⁰

Distribution of Holy Communion

71. If there are many concelebrating priests, the distribution of Holy Communion to the assembly should not be delayed until after all the priests have received, but begin as soon as those who will be distributing Holy Communion can get into position so to do. Concelebrants must have received Holy Communion before they assist with the distribution.⁶¹
72. Even at a concelebrated Mass it may often be necessary for extraordinary (commissioned) ministers of Holy Communion to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. However such ministers should only be used where there are insufficient ordinary ministers, i.e. Bishops, priests and deacons.⁶²
73. The tradition of the Church associates Deacons with the ministering of the Precious Blood. Where Holy Communion is being distributed under both kinds, the deacons assisting at the Mass should administer the Precious Blood.

⁵⁷ GIRM 244, 248

⁵⁸ GIRM 86

⁵⁹ GIRM 244

⁶⁰ GIRM 246.

⁶¹ RS 97

⁶² GIRM 162, 284. CTM 38

Epiclesis

47. During the praying of the Epiclesis concelebrating priests stretch out both their hands toward the elements, adopting the same gesture as the principal celebrant.³⁹

Where it is necessary for concelebrants to hold the text (e.g. for a musical setting) it is better that they stretch out a single hand towards the elements.

Institution Narrative

48. During the narrative of the Institution of the Eucharist, each concelebrant extends his right hand, with the palm facing to the side, toward the bread and the chalice. All make a profound bow when the celebrant genuflects after the consecration of the elements.⁴⁰

Anamnesis and Post-consecratory Epiclesis

49. The concelebrants hold their hands outstretched in an *orans* position during the anamnesis and the post-consecratory epiclesis, but not during the other parts of the Eucharistic Prayer. The extension of the hands by the concelebrants should not restrict the movement of the presiding minister.⁴¹

Where it is necessary for concelebrants to hold the text (e.g. for a musical setting) it is better that they refrain from making the gesture.

Additional Gestures in the Roman Canon

50. When praying Eucharistic Prayer I (the Roman Canon), concelebrants make two additional gestures. From *Almighty God, we pray to ...the Sacred Body and Blood of your Son* inclusive, they bow with hands joined; then they stand upright and cross themselves at the words, *let us be filled...*⁴² At the words *Though we are sinners*, each concelebrant strikes his breast.⁴³

Intercessions

51. The principal celebrant may say the intercessions by himself or they may be allocated to particular concelebrants in the way indicated in the Missal. The priest says them with hands extended in the *orans position*.⁴⁴ The same posture is to be adopted for the *Memento* and *Communicantes* section of the Roman Canon.

It is best to avoid moving the *Roman Missal* on the altar from one concelebrant to another. Where concelebrants are unable to easily read their allocated text from the Missal they should be provided with the text separately. If they need to hold the text it is better that they refrain from adopting the *orans position*.

52. Concelebrants invited to offer the intercessions within the Eucharistic Prayer should seek to do so in a way which complements the principal celebrant's proclamation of the rest of the Prayer. A sudden and striking contrast in the

³⁹ GIRM 222a, 227a, 230a, 233a.

⁴⁰ GIRM 222c, 227c, 230c 233c

⁴¹ GIRM 222d, 227d, 230d, 233d

⁴² GIRM 222e

⁴³ GIRM 224

⁴⁴ GIRM 223, 228, 231, 234

‘style’ of prayer is more likely to draw attention to the priest praying, rather than the prayer itself.

Doxology

53. During the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer only a single paten and chalice are raised. When a deacon assists, the principal concelebrant elevates the paten with the host, and the deacon raises the chalice⁴⁵
54. All the concelebrants may join in the singing or recitation of the doxology or it may be sung or recited by the principal celebrant alone.⁴⁶ If the doxology is sung and accompanied, the concelebrants sing the whole doxology together with the priest. If it is being sung unaccompanied, or said, it is preferable for the euphony of the prayer that the concelebrants join in after the ‘Through him’ phrase. Whichever option is to be followed should be indicated before the celebration begins.
55. Only priests should participate in the saying or singing of the Doxology, as the culmination of the Eucharistic Prayer. The assembly responds *Amen*.

The Lord’s Prayer

56. The principal celebrant, ‘with hands joined, introduces the Lord’s Prayer; with hands outstretched, he then says [or sings] this prayer itself with the other concelebrants and the congregation’.⁴⁷ The concelebrants likewise hold their hands outstretched in an *orans* position during the singing or recitation of the Lord’s Prayer itself.
57. Only the principal celebrant maintains the *orans* posture for the *Deliver us, Lord, from every evil...* The concelebrants together with the congregation make the final acclamation: *For the kingdom...*⁴⁸

Prayers during the Communion Rite

58. The principal celebrant alone says the celebrant’s parts of the communion rite. They may not be distributed for recitation by the concelebrants. Nor may they be recited by the concelebrants together with the principal celebrant.⁴⁹

The Sign of Peace

59. After the deacon or, when no deacon is present, one of the concelebrants says the invitation *Let us offer each other the sign of peace*, all exchange the sign of peace with one another. The principal celebrant offers the sign of peace to those concelebrants nearest to him, before offering the sign of peace to the deacon.⁵⁰

The Fraction

60. The Lamb of God begins only after the sign of peace is completed, and should finish only when the fraction rite is completed, and the Body of the Lord has been distributed to all concelebrants.

⁴⁵ GIRM 180

⁴⁶ GIRM 236

⁴⁷ GIRM 237

⁴⁸ GIRM 238

⁴⁹ GIRM 238

⁵⁰ GIRM 239, 154

During this litany the deacons or some of the concelebrants may assist the principal celebrant in the Fraction, breaking the Body of the Lord, in preparation for the communion of the Concelebrants and for the rest of the congregation.⁵¹

61. After the commingling the principal celebrant alone, with hands joined, quietly says the prayer *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God* or *Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy*.⁵²

Communion

62. When this prayer before Communion is finished, the concelebrants may then take the Body of Christ. Their taking the Body of Christ may be accomplished in one of three ways.
 - a. Firstly they might come forward to the middle of the altar, genuflect, and reverently take the Body of Christ from the altar. Then holding the Eucharistic bread in the right hand, with the left hand under it, they return to their places.
 - b. Secondly they might remain in their places and take the Body of Christ from the paten presented to them by the principal celebrant, or by one or more of the concelebrants.
 - c. Thirdly from the paten as it is passed from one to another.⁵³
63. In all cases, since the concelebrant takes the Body of the Lord rather than it being ministered to him, the formula *The Body of Christ: Amen* is not spoken.⁵⁴
64. If there is a great number of concelebrants, they may receive Holy Communion during the time when Holy Communion is being distributed to the assembly.

In this case, a paten containing the Body of the Lord is left in the middle of the altar and a chalice placed on a corporal at the side of the altar. The concelebrants come forward to the middle of the altar one after another, genuflect, and communicate the Body of the Lord; then they go to the side of the altar and partake of the Blood of the Lord following the rite for Communion from the chalice observed by the principal celebrant. Sometimes the number of concelebrants will mean that more than a single paten and chalice have to be used. Where this is so, local circumstances will determine how they are best placed on the altar⁵⁵
65. Concelebrants at Mass must always receive Holy Communion from elements consecrated at the same Mass they are concelebrating, and not from the Sacrament reserved from a previous celebration. It is most desirable that the faithful also receive Holy Communion consecrated at this same Mass so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.⁵⁶

⁵¹ GIRM 240

⁵² GIRM 241

⁵³ GIRM 242

⁵⁴ RS 98

⁵⁵ GIRM 248

⁵⁶ GIRM 85. RS 98