



# THE ORDER OF MASS

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal/GIRM  
2011 Canadian Edition*

## Mass with a Congregation

The rubrics assume that the celebration of Mass will take place in a church (288) with a freestanding altar (299), an ambo for proclaiming God's Word (309), and a presidential chair used by the priest at certain points during the celebration (310).

Although the tabernacle may be located in the sanctuary (315b), all the rubrics assume that it is located in a chapel apart from the sanctuary since they make no reference to it when describing the actions of the priest celebrant and other ministers during Mass. If, however, the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary, all the ministers genuflect to it only when they first approach the altar and when they leave the sanctuary but not during the celebration of Mass itself (274).

## PREPARATIONS

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- ❖ Before the entrance procession, the altar is covered with a white cloth (304); lit candles are placed near or on the altar (117, 307); the *Lectionary* is at the ambo (118b); the *Roman Missal* is near the presidential chair (118a); and the chalice, corporal, purificator, water and bowl for washing hands, additional communion chalices and ciboria are on the side table (118c).
  
- ❖ The chalice may be covered with a veil if desired (118c). Elsewhere in the church, bread and wine to be carried in procession at the presentation of the gifts are placed. The *Book of the Gospels* may be placed on the altar before the celebration or carried in the entrance procession (117) by the deacon when he is present or, in his absence, by the lector.
  
- ❖ Nothing else (306), including flowers (305), should be placed on the altar. If the blessing and sprinkling of water occurs, the vessel containing the water and sprinkler should also be available in the sanctuary (118c).

# INTRODUCTORY RITES

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- ❖ During the entrance procession, if incense is used, the censer bearer leads, followed by the cross bearer between two ministers with candles, then the readers, followed by the deacon who carries the *Book of the Gospels* slightly elevated, then any concelebrants and finally the priest celebrant (120, 172). (One of the readers may carry the *Book of the Gospels* if there is no deacon.) The assembly joins in singing during this procession, an activity meant to unite those gathered (47-48).
  
- ❖ When the procession arrives at the sanctuary, everyone bows before the altar, and the priests and deacon kiss the altar. If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary, the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself (274).
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant incenses the cross and the altar (49, 123). Afterward, the priest celebrant goes to the chair where he leads the rest of the *Introductory Rites* (50, 124).
  
- ❖ There he makes the sign of the cross, greets the people, briefly introduces the liturgy of the day, and leads them in the *Penitential Rite* (50, 51, 124).
  
- ❖ On Sundays during the season of Easter, in place of the penitential rite, it is particularly appropriate to bless water and sprinkle all with it as a reminder of their baptism (51).
  
- ❖ When prescribed, the *Gloria* is sung or said, begun by the priest celebrant, cantor, or choir (53, 126). The *Opening Prayer* concludes the *Introductory Rites* (54, 127). Whenever he invites the people to pray (“Let us pray”), the priest celebrant does so with his hands joined; but while pronouncing the words of the prayer to God, he holds his hands outstretched (127).

# LITURGY OF THE WORD

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- ❖ The readings are always proclaimed at the ambo (58, 260), each reading from the *Lectionary for Mass* proclaimed by a different reader (59, 109). The psalmist may sing the responsorial psalm at the ambo or another suitable place (61, 309).
  
- ❖ If a deacon or another priest is present, he, rather than the priest celebrant, should proclaim the Gospel (59). Before the Gospel, all stand to sing the Alleluia [or Lenten acclamation] (62, 131) during which incense is prepared, if used.
  
- ❖ During the Gospel acclamation, a deacon asks for a blessing from the priest celebrant (or, in the absence of a deacon, a concelebrating priest from a bishop) (175, 212). Otherwise the priest (or a concelebrant) prepares himself to proclaim the Gospel by a silent prayer (132, 212).
  
- ❖ After each of the readings and the homily, a period of silence is appropriate (45, 56).
  
- ❖ After the Gospel proclamation, the priest celebrant preaches the *Homily* (66). He may do this standing at the chair, at the ambo, or at some other suitable place (136).
  
- ❖ After a period of silence, all stand for the *Profession of Faith* (67-68, 137), begun by the priest (or, if sung, by the cantor or choir).
  
- ❖ Then, at the chair, the priest celebrant introduces the *General Intercessions* by inviting the people to pray (71, 138). The deacon, or in his absence, another minister, announces the intentions from the ambo or another suitable place (71, 138, 309), and the priest celebrant

concludes the *General Intercessions* with a prayer (71, 138). After the concluding prayer to the *General Intercessions* all sit (139).

- ❖ The series of intentions is usually to be:
  - a) For the needs of the Church;
  - b) For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
  - c) For those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
  - d) For the local community.

Nevertheless, in any particular celebration such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion (70).

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

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- ❖ It is appropriate that a collection be taken up at this time. The money collected may be brought to the sanctuary as part of the procession with the gifts (73).
  
- ❖ The preparation begins with the ministers placing the corporal, purificator, chalice, and *Roman Missal* on the altar (73, 139). *Only what is required for the celebration of the Mass may be placed on the mensa of the altar: namely, from the beginning of the celebration until the proclamation of the Gospel, the Book of the Gospels; then from the Presentation of the Gifts until the purification of the vessels, the chalice with the paten, a ciborium, if necessary, and, finally, the corporal, the purificator, the pall, and the Missal (306).*
  
- ❖ Then the faithful bring the bread and wine forward (along with monetary offerings).
  
- ❖ These are received by the priest celebrant or deacon but are put at an appropriate place away from the eucharistic table, (73, 140, 178).

- ❖ The priest celebrant says the prescribed prayer while holding the vessel with Eucharistic bread slightly above the altar (141) and only then places it on the altar. Meanwhile the deacon pours wine and water into the chalice (178) and hands the chalice to the priest celebrant. He then says the appropriate prayer while holding the chalice slightly above the altar (142) and only then places it on the altar.
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant bows to say the next prayer silently (143). He then prepares the incense, if used, incensing the gifts with three swings of the censer or a simple sign of the cross (75, 144, 277), followed by incensing the cross and altar. The people are incensed by the deacon or another minister (75).
  
- ❖ Afterward, the priest celebrant washes his hands at the side of the altar (76, 145). The prayers of the priest celebrant and deacon during the preparation of the gifts are to be said inaudibly (141-145). When there is no singing, it is permitted (but not required) for the priest celebrant to say the “Blessed are you...” prayers aloud (142).
  
- ❖ At the centre of the altar, the priest celebrant then greets the people, inviting all to pray. After the people stand and respond, the priest celebrant says the *Prayer Over the Gifts* (77, 146).
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant then begins the *Eucharistic Prayer*, the “centre and summit of the entire celebration” (78, 147). It is appropriate for the priest celebrant to sing parts of the prayer (147); the people should also sing the various acclamations that are part of the prayer.
  
- ❖ Incense may be used during the consecration when the host and the chalice are shown to the assembly (150, 179, 276e). During the final doxology, the priest celebrant elevates the paten with the host on it and the deacon elevates the chalice [in the absence of a deacon, the priest celebrant elevates both elements by himself] (151, 180).

- ❖ After the *Eucharistic Prayer*, all pray the *Lord's Prayer* (81, 152).
  
- ❖ After the prayer for peace (82, 154), the deacon invites all to exchange a sign of peace which everyone immediately shares with those nearby (82, 154). So as not to disturb the celebration, the priest celebrant normally remains in the sanctuary (154). However, for pastoral reasons the priest celebrant may extend a sign of peace to some members of the liturgical assembly near the sanctuary, for example, in the case of a funeral or wedding or when civic leaders are present.
  
- ❖ The *Agnus Dei* begins, during which the priest celebrant breaks the host (83, 155). The host used by the priest celebrant should be large enough so that at least some particles from it can be distributed to some of the people (321). The priest celebrant may be assisted by some of the concelebrants and the deacon as he distributes the consecrated hosts into other vessels.
  
- ❖ After, the priest celebrant places a small piece of the host into the chalice while he recites the accompanying prayer for the commingling (83, 155). Then, he prepares himself for Communion by reciting *inaudibly* one of the preparation prayers found in the *Roman Missal* (84).
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant genuflects and then shows the faithful the host held above the chalice (or above the paten) and invites them to communion (84, 157, 243, 268). After all recite, "Lord, I am not worthy ..." the priest celebrant receives communion upon which the singing of the communion song begins immediately (86, 157-59).
  
- ❖ It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from host consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the cases where this is foreseen, they partake of the chalice (283), so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.

- ❖ The priest celebrant then gives communion to the deacon (182), to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (162), and to the other liturgical ministers.
  
- ❖ The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may enter the sanctuary but should not approach the altar before the priest's communion. They always receive the appropriate vessels containing the consecrated species from the priest and do not take them themselves (162). After the faithful receive Communion, the extra Precious Blood is consumed immediately by either the priest or the deacon (163, 182).
  
- ❖ The excess consecrated hosts are either consumed by the priest or brought to the place of reservation (163). The sacred vessels can be cleansed at this time or be brought to the side table and cleansed immediately after Mass (163, 279). They may be cleansed by a priest, deacon or an instituted acolyte (279).
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant then returns to the chair and, with the assembly, observes a period of silence (45, 88, 164). If desired, a hymn of praise may be sung (88, 164).

To conclude the *Communion Rite*, all stand to pray. The priest celebrant invites the assembly to join him in prayer and then prays the *Prayer After Communion* (89, 165).

## CONCLUDING RITES

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- ❖ Brief announcements may be made after the *Prayer After Communion* (90a, 166, 184). No announcements should be made prior to this time, e.g., in the period of silence after Holy Communion.
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant next greets the people. If a “Solemn Blessing” or “Prayer Over the People” is used, the deacon (or in his absence, the priest celebrant) invites the assembly to ask for God’s blessing.
  
- ❖ The priest celebrant then recites the formula of blessing after which the deacon dismisses the people (90b-c, 167-68, 185). The priest celebrant and deacon kiss the altar, and they, along with all the other ministers make a profound bow to the altar (90d, 169, 186) and leave in the manner prescribed for the entrance procession (186, 193).