



# Word on Worship

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Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

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- The two authored articles in this issue are adapted from presentations given by the Worship Office of the Archdiocese of Newark in late 2003.
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**S***acrosanctum Concilium* is, of course, the title of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) promulgated by the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, the Liturgy Constitution was the first fruits of the Council opening the door for a spiritual renewal of the Church. The *Institutio Generalis*, sometimes called GIRM – not a disease! – stands for the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. A little background information may be helpful.

It is not every day or every year that the Church reforms her liturgy. It was only in 1570 that the first Roman Missal, destined for the universal Church, was published, the Missal of Pius V. This attempt at uniformity was mandated by the Council of Trent, sore beset with countering the Protestant challenges to such Catholic doctrines as the eucharistic real presence and the sacrificial nature of the Mass. Many Church historians feel these doctrines were impugned because of the poor quality of liturgical practices of the day.

In 1587 Pope Sixtus V established the Sacred Congregation of Rites as the supreme agency “for protecting the sacred rites.” The seven volumes containing approximately 5000 decrees issued by the agency down to our time witness to the desire for a single form of prayer for the entire church. The following 400 years are sometimes referred to as the age of rubricism.

In 1969-70 the first General Instruction and the new Roman Missal of Paul VI were published. This came about as the result of a mandate from another ecumenical council which decreed: “The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.” (CSL, 50)

In 1975 the second edition of the Roman Missal with some minor changes appeared. This is the Sacramentary currently in use. In 2002 came the publication of the third edition of the Roman Missal with the revised GIRM, which brings us to where we are now. The Missal itself exists in the Latin typical edition waiting to be translated. You might say this is the what of the revision: among the changes are a re-ordering of prefaces, eight new Masses from the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and 18 new formularies

for saints. The why and indeed the how of the revision is the concern of the GIRM and the purpose of this study day.

Archbishop Annibale Bugnini may be remembered as the apostolic pro-nuncio to Iran who helped mediate the release of the American hostages. His enduring legacy, however, is that he served as secretary of all the major Roman commissions entrusted with the renewal. He alone was in a position to tell the complete story of the reform of the Roman liturgy from 1948-1975. His account was published posthumously in 1990. Bugnini listed six guiding principles of the liturgical reform. (Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*. Liturgical Press, 1990):

- The Liturgy is “An Exercise of the Priestly Office of Jesus Christ”
- The Liturgy as “Summit and Fount” of the Church’s Life
- Full, Conscious, Active Participation
- Manifestation of the Church
- “Substantial Unity,” Not “Rigid Uniformity”
- “Sound Tradition” and “Legitimate Progress.”

My task is to briefly demonstrate the continuity of the liturgical principles of Vatican II with the revised GIRM.

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## THE THEOLOGICAL VISION OF *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIIUM* AND THE *INSTITUTIO GENERALIS*

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## THE LITURGY IS "AN EXERCISE OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE OF JESUS CHRIST."

Early on the CSL speaks of the centrality of the paschal mystery of Christ crucified and risen, which constitutes our salvation and gave birth to the Church. It is into this mystery that Christians are engrafted at baptism, dying and rising with Christ. The paschal mystery of the crucified and risen Lord is the mystery we celebrate in the sacraments and recall and make present at every Mass. We come close to a definition of the liturgy in the Constitution:

The liturgy, then, is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In its full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. (CSL, 7)

Everything is there: the liturgy is an action of the church, the symbolic activity of the sacraments, the dialogue of God's grace and our response of worship. The Christocentric focus is paramount. Our actions are centered on Christ, we become his living Body, and the Eucharist is a banquet with the Trinity.

These three themes are found throughout the GIRM. The Instruction opens with a quotation from the ancient Sacramentary of Verona: "As often as the commemoration of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is carried out." The Trinitarian perspective is highlighted in

the doxological conclusions to the presidential prayers addressed to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. (GIRM, 54) In a wonderful summary the GIRM teaches us at once the meaning of the Eucharist as the sacrifice of Jesus and as our own sacrifice as well:

The Church's intention (at Mass) ... is that the faithful not only offer this spotless Victim but also learn to offer themselves, and so day by day to be consummated, through Christ the Mediator, into unity with God and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all. (79F)

## THE LITURGY AS "SUMMIT AND FOUNT" OF THE CHURCH'S LIFE

This insight was already articulated by St. Pius X who declared that the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of a true Christian spirit. While admitting that the sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the church and the need for prior evangelization and conversion, "...every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree." (CSL, 7) This conviction is reinforced "...the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; is also the fount from which all her power flows." (CSL, 10)

The primacy of liturgy in the life of the church finds resonance in the very title of Chapter I of the GIRM: "The Importance and Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration." This could not be more direct:

The celebration of Mass, as

the action of Christ and the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the mysteries of redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of Christian life are bound up with, flow from it, and are ordered to it. (GIRM, 16)

All this is enfolded in the GIRM's consideration of the Liturgy of the Word, the observance of sacred silence as a liturgical function, the call for musical liturgy (sing the Mass!), the insistence on the reception of communion consecrated at the same Mass, and the provision made for communion under both kinds.

## FULL, CONSCIOUS, ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

This liturgical principle, grounded in the liturgical assembly's participation in the general priesthood of Jesus Christ through baptism, is the norm to be considered before all else:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, "a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Peter 2:9, 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.

All this is spelled out more fully in paragraph 48 where the positive experience of interior and exterior participation is contrasted with a lack of engagement by the worshipper in the liturgy.

When *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated, many thought this call for "full, conscious, active participation" on the part of the faithful was revolutionary. Immediately prior to the Council the experience of most of the laity was one of apparent passivity, as though they were what the Council called "outsider or onlookers" to the sacramental mysteries. Liturgy was considered the responsibility of the ordained clergy who were set aside for sacred functions.

As has been noted by a commentary from the Harrisburg Diocese, in the GIRM this notion of participation taken from the Council is evident in many places as the undergirding of ritual action. Often, when the GIRM mentions the participation of the faithful, it does so by linking the ritual action to the baptismal theology which grounds it, as in the offering of the general intercession (69), in which "the people respond in some way to the Word of God which they have welcomed in faith, and exercise the office of their baptismal priesthood, offering prayers to God for the salvation of all." The same can be true even of the smallest rubric, in which lay, baptismal participation is clearly understood and respected, as in the act of incensation (75) at the

preparation of the gifts: "Next, the priest, on account of his sacred ministry, and the people because of their baptismal dignity, may be incensed by the deacon or another lay minister." More broadly, the GIRM often speaks of full participation by the faithful as the motive and goal for the revision of the various parts of the Roman rite. Perhaps nowhere is this theology of participation more dramatically stated than in GIRM 78, describing the eucharistic prayer: "The meaning of the prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful joins itself to Christ in acknowledging the great things God has done in and offering the sacrifice."

#### MANIFESTATION OF THE CHURCH

Paragraph 26 of the CSL is succinctly summarized by Archbishop Bugnini. The celebration of the liturgy – when the whole people of God gathers for full and active participation the same action, around the same altar, in the unity of prayer – is the supreme manifestation of the Church. And because the Church is the "sacrament of unity," liturgical actions belong to the whole Body of Christ. Communal celebration is therefore always to be preferred to individual celebration. Communal celebrations show forth the nature of the church as a hierarchically organized community; all play a part, but each member has his or her tasks, depending on the ministry received, the nature of the rite, and principles of liturgy (see 27-30).

This principle finds expression in chapter III of the GIRM, "The Duties and Ministries in the Mass," and in chapter IV, "the Different Forms of

Celebrating Mass." Particularly telling is paragraph 91:

The Eucharistic celebration is an action of Christ and the Church, namely, the holy people united and ordered under the Bishop. It therefore pertains to the whole Body of the Church, manifests it, and has its effect upon it. It also affects the individual members of the church in different ways, according to their different orders, offices, and actual participation. In this way, the Christian people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people," express its cohesion and its hierarchical ordering. All, therefore, whether they are ordained ministers of lay Christian faithful, in fulfilling their office or their duty, should carry out solely but completely that which pertains to them.

#### "SUBSTANTIAL UNITY," NOT "RIGID UNIFORMITY"

For centuries the Church willed that all worship in the Roman Rite should everywhere show perfect uniformity. This principle represents a momentous departure from past practice. Even in the liturgy the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not affect the faith or the good of the whole community; rather the church respects and fosters the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. (CSL, 37)

The door is thus opened for legitimate adaptation and inculturation. The next paragraph goes on to say: Provision shall also be made... for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples,

especially in mission lands, provided the substantial unity of the Roman Rite is preserved; this should be borne in mind when rites are drawn up and rubrics revised (CSL, 38).

As Bugnini comments, the complete centralization effected by the Council of Trent now makes way, in matters liturgical, to three levels of authority: the Holy See, episcopal conferences, and diocesan bishops.

The GIRM acknowledges this principle by the inclusion of a whole new chapter IX not found in the previous General Instructions: "Adaptations Within the Competence of Bishops and Bishops' Conferences." The diocesan bishop is regarded as the high priest of his flock who oversees the liturgical life of the diocese. Adaptations that call for a wider degree of coordination – such as vernacular translation, gestures and postures, and material for the altar and furnishings, especially sacred vestments – are to be decided by the Conferences of Bishops.

#### "SOUND TRADITION" AND "LEGITIMATE PROGRESS"

The liturgy feeds the Church's life; it must therefore remain dynamic and not be allowed to stagnate or become petrified. Pius XII said as much in *Mediator Dei*: "The liturgy is something lasting and alive." And in the words of John XXIII who convened the Second Vatican Council: "The liturgy must not become a relic in a museum but remain the living prayer of the Church." Paragraph 23 of the CSL deserves to be quoted in full:

In order that sound tradition be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate

progress, a careful investigation – theological, historical, and pastoral – should always be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. Furthermore the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults granted to various places.

This last liturgical principle – sound tradition and legitimate progress – brings us to the very reason for the third edition of the Roman Missal and its General Instruction. In general, one notes three summary characteristics: organizational change, philosophical, and theological emphases. Organizational change: there are more paragraphs (an increase from 340 to 399); it is also easier to follow, thanks in part to a helpful index. Philosophically: there is a subtle shift in language describing holy things in a holy world: for example, "chalice" instead of "cup," blessings of liturgical objects along with a useful explanation of their symbolism, capitalization of "Eucharist" and other parts of the Mass. Theologically: concern is given to the identity of the priest and the hierarchical ordering of the liturgy with attention paid to the rights and responsibilities of the people.

Look back to where we have come from in the past forty years! Before the Vatican II reforms, the Mass was pretty much the action of the priest. Altar boys represented the assembly by answering the responses in a Latin language they could barely pronounce

and even less understand e.g. *Suscipiat* prayer. If you were lucky, a choir might sing at the Mass you attended. Ushers took up the collection. With the post-conciliar reforms we have a participatory vernacular liturgy. We have experienced an expansion of ministries. The permanent diaconate has been restored; the GIRM specifically details the ceremonies for Mass with or without a deacon. Readers proclaim the Scriptures from a Lectionary providing a much fuller and richer selection of readings that has not been experienced since patristic times. Extraordinary ministers, as they are now officially called, make possible communion under both kinds and a more frequent reception by the homebound. We now speak not so much of liturgical music, but of musical liturgy in which cantors and leaders of song are essential. Ushers have been reconstituted into ministers of hospitality. Servers may be male or female, and not just children. The priest presiding *in persona Christi capitis* has a whole new vision of his ministry in terms of presidential style and leadership.

The new Roman Missal, already on our doorstep with the publication of the GIRM gives us another opportunity to incarnate these six liturgical principles of Vatican II so that the liturgy may become still more what it is called to be, the work of the people (*laos ergon*), the whole people of God.

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## Sacred Silence

The INSTITUTIO GENERALIS MISSALIS ROMANI 2002 (GIRM) underscores the importance of silence in the Liturgy and gives instruction on the appropriate times for silence

1. Silence is, as in all communication, a most important element in the communication between God and the community of faith. Its purpose is to allow the voice of the Holy Spirit to be heard in the hearts of the People of God and to enable them to unite personal prayer more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the Church. During liturgical silence, all respond in their own way: recollecting themselves, pondering what has been heard, petitioning and praising God in their inmost spirit.

2. Liturgical silence is not merely an absence of words, a pause, or an interlude. Rather, it is a stillness, a quieting of spirits, a taking of time and leisure to hear, assimilate, and respond. Any haste that hinders reflectiveness should be avoided. The dialogue between God and the community of faith taking place through the Holy Spirit requires intervals of silence, suited to the congregation, so that all can take to heart the word of God and respond to it in prayer.

3. Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence [formerly known as the Penitential Rite] and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts.

Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.

### Remember

Liturgical silence is a corporate activity which is shared by all present and in which all support and sustain each other in profound prayerful solidarity. It demands a stillness and prayerful concentration, which the priest celebrant and everyone can help to create.

For more information see Silence in the Liturgy at <http://www.rcan.org/worship/guidelinesnotesindex.htm>

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# PRACTICAL CHANGES IN THE 2002 GIRM

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The appearance of the new *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (GIRM) has brought about much speculation about the changes that we will see in the Mass. This is in part because the new GIRM appeared in Latin in spring 2000 before any official translation was available and before its effective date. In a very slightly emended edition it did take effect in March 2002 with the promulgation of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal (the translation of which we still await). Nevertheless, we had to wait until spring 2003 for an official English translation of the GIRM. In the meanwhile the United States bishops worked out *Adaptations of the GIRM for U.S. dioceses and Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds* for the U.S. dioceses. There has been confusion and conjecture. This has been compounded by the appearance in 2001 of a new Vatican document on translation, *Liturgiam authenticam*, and speculation about how its implementation will affect the translations of the texts of the Mass that we have known for the past thirty years. Moreover, very recently word of leaks of a draft of the implementation document for Pope John Paul II's Encyclical on the Eucharist in Its Relation to the Church, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, of Holy Thursday 2003 has entered the mix. It might also be added that the work that the U.S. bishops

were doing throughout the 1990s in preparation for a new edition of the Sacramentary adapted specifically for the U.S.A. is superseded by the new typical edition of the missal.

The new GIRM, however, is in fact a fine tuning of the General Instruction that we have known since the liturgical renewal of Vatican II. It is no more than that, and although we do not know the extent to which the English translation of the new typical edition of the Roman Missal will alter familiar texts or rubrics, the new General Instruction gives us no grounds for thinking that the celebration of Mass as we know it is undergoing significant alterations.

The appearance of the new GIRM gives us an opportunity not only to review what is new in it but also to deepen our appreciation of what has lain unnoticed during these past years. The new GIRM in fact underlines much of what was included in its older editions.

In general it can be said that the new GIRM is better organized. Sometimes it was very hard to locate items in the 1975 GIRM even when we knew they were there! It should be considerably easier to find what we are looking for now. The adaptations for the United States are now included in the text of the GIRM instead of relegated to an Appendix. (The text usually – but not always – makes it clear

when directives are specific to the U.S.) The roles of the different ministers at Mass are presented with greater clarity. This, too, makes the new GIRM easier to use.

The new GIRM's organization of its discussion of the priest, deacon and other ministers at Mass betrays not only a concern for organization but a renewed emphasis on the distinction of ministerial roles as called for in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) 28. This has been a recent point of emphasis; one thinks especially of the 1997 Vatican "Interdicasterial Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests." Certainly such a concern underlies the changes in procedures in the distribution of Holy Communion for which the new GIRM calls, changes which are undoubtedly the most noticeable and the most taxing in terms of implementation. The new GIRM seeks to prevent any blurring of the identity of the ministerial priest with that of the lay Christian faithful in their baptismal priesthood.

Another emphasis of the new GIRM, one which in some ways dovetails with this, is a concern for the sacred. The new GIRM in its translation uses words that connote the sacred character of Christian worship where the 1975 edition employed more common language.

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

Right from the beginning the new GIRM underscores the importance of silence. This is by no means new, but the new GIRM gives us an opportunity to assess how we have done with silence and calls us to a deeper appreciation of it.<sup>1</sup> If perhaps we have not always given people quite enough of the sense of the transcendent for which we thirst, silence is built right into the Roman liturgy in order to help us. Especially now that more of our churches have gathering spaces we have a renewed opportunity to cultivate quiet in church before Mass. The new GIRM speaks of observing silence insofar as possible in the sacristy before Mass.<sup>2</sup>

What the 1975 GIRM called the Penitential Rite<sup>3</sup> is now called the "Act of Penitence"<sup>4</sup> and the new GIRM, no doubt recognizing the decline in recourse to the Sacrament of Penance, underlines the fact that this rite is no substitute for that Sacrament.<sup>5</sup> There is a good opportunity for silence in this part of the Introductory Rites.<sup>6</sup>

The new GIRM uses the term "collect"<sup>7</sup> where the 1975 GIRM was content to call the collect the "Opening Prayer."<sup>8</sup> Here again there is an important opportunity for silence after the invitation "Let us pray." It is good to think of this presidential prayer as

collecting the prayers the people form during this silence. Here and at all the presidential prayers, the people's "Amen" in turn helps "make the prayer their own."<sup>10</sup>

#### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

There is little that is new in the 2002 GIRM with respect to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. Again, I underscore the importance of silence, which is called for after the First Reading, after the Second Reading and after the Homily.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the new GIRM, like the old, indicates that the Prayer of the Faithful may incorporate brief periods of silence instead of a response such as "Lord, hear our prayer."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to respect for this silence, the way that the readers comport themselves indicates the importance of the Scripture being proclaimed.<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, technical expertise and respect for the Word come together in an important way in good proclamation. It should be added that only the *Book of the Gospels* (also called by the new GIRM the Evangelary) is carried in procession, and only at the beginning of Mass, not at the end, when it should be left at the ambo or "the credence table" or "another appropriate and dignified place."<sup>14</sup> A parish without a *Book of the Gospels* ought to acquire one; it is not permissible to carry the Lectionary in procession.<sup>15</sup> A deacon, if present, carries the *Book of the Gospels*, slightly elevated, immediately in front of the priest or priests.<sup>16</sup> In a deacon's absence the lector carries the *Book of the Gospels*.<sup>17</sup> (The Lectionary would already be placed on the ambo.<sup>18</sup>) The *Book of the*

*Gospels* is ideally placed flat on the altar and then is carried in procession to the ambo by the deacon (or, in his absence, a concelebrant or, if necessary, the presider) during the Gospel Acclamation. In this way, the *Book of the Gospels* is made especially prominent precisely as it is employed, when the deacon lifts it from the altar to carry it in procession. This movement is best coordinated carefully with the music. For example, the one who proclaims the Gospel might lift the book from the altar either as the first "Alleluia" is begun or as the verse is begun. The *Book of the Gospels* is ordinarily left at the ambo, either on the stand or perhaps enthroned on the ambo.<sup>19</sup> After the Second Reading, the lector should place the Lectionary in a reverent place to make room for the *Book of the Gospels* at the ambo.

The presider may give the homily "at the ambo," "standing at the chair," or "when appropriate, in another suitable place."<sup>20</sup> The new GIRM specifies that if a priest preaches from the chair, he does so standing;<sup>21</sup> the 1975 GIRM only indicated that he could preach "at the chair."<sup>22</sup> (The *Ceremonial of Bishops* specifies that ordinarily at a stational Mass a bishop would preach "seated from the chair.") Preaching is ordinarily a presidential function but may be fulfilled by the deacon or a concelebrant.<sup>23</sup> The new GIRM goes beyond the 1975 GIRM insofar as we are now specifically authorized to preach "in another suitable place," such as perhaps the head of the main aisle.

The Prayer of the Faithful, introduced as an invitation to the people by the priest with hands joined and concluded by him in a prayer with hands

extended, may be read by the deacon or, in his absence, a reader.<sup>24</sup> Although a deacon might well remain at the priest's side, a reader could proclaim the petitions from the ambo or another place such as a cantor's stand.<sup>25</sup> (Although the ambo is to be reserved for the reading of the Word of God and reflection upon it, it is also the place for the proclamation of the Easter *Exsultet* and one of the places, indeed the primary place according to the GIRM, from which the Prayer of the Faithful may be proclaimed.<sup>26</sup>)

#### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Here a minor shift in directives for posture occurs, though it will be a noticeable one for a period of transition. Where the 1975 GIRM asked the people to stand after their response to the *Orate fratres*,<sup>27</sup> the new GIRM specifies that **the people stand after the priest says, "Pray, brethren," and before their response,** "May the Lord accept the sacrifice..."<sup>28</sup> Needless to say, it will take a while for the congregation to become accustomed to this. I would recommend a word of explanation in the form of an announcement at the end of Mass one weekend and in the parish bulletin for some weeks, together with, for a time of transition, a subtle gesture on the part of the priest or deacon such as we often use at funerals and weddings, until the people have developed this habit. This seems to me clearly to be preferable to interrupting this exchange with the words, "Please stand," during this time of transition.

I might add that the GIRM asks us presiders neither to say "Amen" to the people's words here nor to add, "Let us pray,"

afterwards. Rather, the Prayer over the Offerings (called by the 1975 GIRM the Prayer over the Gifts<sup>29</sup>) follows immediately, and the people say, "Amen," to this.<sup>30</sup>

During the Preparation of the Gifts there is another opportunity for silence, especially insofar as a number of the priest's prayers are to be said inaudibly. If the priest says the prayers accompanying the placement of the gifts on the altar in silence, this effect is increased. The new General Instruction indicates that the altar table ought to be clear until this time of the Mass.<sup>31</sup> If instrumental music is employed, opportunity for quiet reflection remains. Of course, only if there is no music should the priest say aloud the prayers, "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation..."<sup>32</sup> During a procession with the offerings on Sundays it is of course best to employ music. The Preparation of the Gifts reminds the people that they participate precisely in the offering of the Mass at which they are assembled.<sup>33</sup>

#### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

By limiting myself to a couple of technical comments on the Eucharistic Prayer, I do not mean to detract in any way from its immense importance. The Sacramentary indicates that it is the priest, not the deacon, who sings "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith,"<sup>34</sup> though it is understandable, given our present translation of *Mysterium fidei* as an instruction, that deacons have sometimes assumed this role. Still, the Sacramentary does not accord a role to the deacon here, and future translations of *Mysterium fidei* will likely render these words quite

literally in the form of an acclamation, not in the manner of an instruction to the people.

The new GIRM also calls for the deacon normally to kneel from shortly after the *Sanctus*, specifically from the Epiclesis, until this acclamation of the people.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes the condition of a deacon's knee or his health generally or simply his age, or the architecture of the sanctuary, or the number of concelebrants in relation to the space available, may make this impracticable – either in the sense of being painful for the deacon, dangerous for others, or odd in appearance. It remains the norm, however, and we ought to implement this where we can.

#### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: THE COMMUNION RITE

The impact of the new GIRM will certainly be felt most of all in the Communion Rite. Uniformity of posture in the Communion Rite receives an emphasis that prompted the U.S. bishops to specify posture and the act of reverence called for prior to reception of Communion.<sup>36</sup> Here in the U.S. people are to stand for the reception of Communion and are to make a bow of the head before the reception of each species.<sup>37</sup> (Although standing is our norm, no one is to be denied Communion because he or she might kneel; however, an opportunity for catechesis should be sought.<sup>38</sup>) In the U.S., during the Eucharistic Prayer, the people kneel from after the *Sanctus* through the Great Amen.<sup>39</sup> They are to kneel again at the invitation to Communion – unless the diocesan bishop directs that they stand at that time.<sup>40</sup>

The sign of peace should be a simple gesture made only to those nearby. The United

States has happily received permission for the celebrant to exchange this sign with people outside but near the sanctuary at occasions such as weddings and funerals.<sup>41</sup>

Although here in the U.S.A. some will experience the new GIRM as rather restrictive with what it legislates about the Communion Rite, it should be noted that it really opens Communion under Both Kinds to the universal Church in a new way.<sup>42</sup>

The new GIRM insists, as did the 1975 version, and following the CSL itself, that insofar as possible all should receive Eucharist consecrated at the Mass in which they participate, as indeed the priest must do.<sup>43</sup> Thus it is silent on the question of who can “go to the Tabernacle,” as will no doubt be asked often as we implement what it says about Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. The GIRM presumes that it will not be necessary to go to the Tabernacle for Communion. Let me suggest, first, that we renew efforts to follow Vatican II here and, second, that when on occasion it may still be necessary, ministers of Holy Communion – ordinary or extraordinary – who discover that they need more Hosts for distribution as the Communion line moves up the aisles simply go to the Tabernacle as they might need to do so. (I should add that the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy's pastoral resource entitled *Introduction to the Order of Mass* suggests that in such a case when the need to distribute the reserved Sacrament is foreseen, a priest or deacon might bring a ciborium from the Tabernacle to the altar,<sup>44</sup> but this pastoral *Introduction* is not entirely clear here.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the pastoral *Introduction* lacks –

by its own admission – juridical authority.<sup>46</sup>)

The new GIRM's insistence on the distinction of ministers comes to the fore here. To be especially avoided is anything that might create the appearance that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are quasi-concelebrants. The new GIRM in fact makes its own the experience of the Church in the United States, where we have made extensive use of such lay ministers and have developed procedures for their functioning at Mass, but its implementation will mean some concrete changes in procedure for most of our parishes.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion do not approach the altar until the time when they are needed for the distribution of Communion, that is, when the priest himself has received Communion.<sup>47</sup> Depending on the size and configuration of the sanctuary and church, this may very well mean that they should remain outside the sanctuary until this point but in any case they would not approach the altar table until now. They receive Communion from the priest and deacon and they also receive the vessels from which they will distribute Communion from the priest or deacon.<sup>48</sup> They may not assist in the Breaking of the Bread or the pouring of the Precious Blood into the chalices.<sup>49</sup> (This happily makes it easier for this important gesture more clearly to be seen by the assembly.) Although the universal law does not permit them to help in the purification of the sacred vessels after Communion but restricts this task to priests, deacons and instituted acolytes,<sup>50</sup> an indult has been given to the United States for three years that does

allow this – during Mass (at a side table) or immediately afterwards.

After the Communion Song there should be a period of silent reflection, either before or after the invitation “Let us pray” for the Prayer after Communion,<sup>51</sup> which closes the Communion Rite.

The invitation to Communion may now be given with the Host held over the paten or the chalice.<sup>52</sup> (The 1975 edition of the GIRM actually authorized only the former.<sup>53</sup>) It would seem fitting that the Host be held over the chalice when Communion is distributed under both kinds.

#### CONCLUDING RITES

Announcements come **after** the Prayer after Communion<sup>54</sup> so as to preserve the integrity of the Communion Rite. The GIRM indicates that it is ordinarily the deacon who would make them, though the celebrant may do so if he wishes.<sup>55</sup> Announcements should be used only as necessary and they should certainly be brief.<sup>56</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The implementation of the new GIRM demands some work of us, yes, and in some places it may introduce a bit of tension, but we do best to look on it as an opportunity. It represents the fruit of twenty-five years of experience with the 1975 GIRM. The changes for which it calls are really minor adjustments, many if not most of which many of our parishes have incorporated into the Mass long before this document's appearance. The new GIRM does create the opportunity for liturgical catechesis, not only of the adjustments but of the very

heart and spirit of the Liturgy. It also offers us the opportunity to take stock of how we have been celebrating Liturgy and to seize the moment to renew our celebration of "the source and summit of Christian life."<sup>57</sup> We would do well to examine the quality of our participation, internal and external, with our voices, our bodies, our senses, our minds, and our hearts. Are our hearts and lives transformed by our participation in the Eucharist? Have we settled for anything less than "full, conscious and active participation"<sup>58</sup> Now is the time to intensify our participation in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ by inviting the Holy Spirit to deepen our identity as members of the Church, making our very own the Council's words: "...the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the

Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows."<sup>59</sup>

Rev. Gerard H. McCarren, S.T.D.  
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<sup>1</sup> E.g., compare 2002 GIRM, 51 with 1975 GIRM, 29, and 2002 GIRM, 55-56 with 1975 GIRM, 33.

<sup>2</sup> GIRM, 45.

<sup>3</sup> GIRM, 29.

<sup>4</sup> GIRM, 51.

<sup>5</sup> GIRM, 51.

<sup>6</sup> GIRM, 51.

<sup>7</sup> GIRM, 54.

<sup>8</sup> GIRM, 32.

<sup>9</sup> GIRM, 54.

<sup>10</sup> GIRM, 54.

<sup>11</sup> GIRM, 55, 56, 66, 128, 130 and 136.

<sup>12</sup> GIRM, 37.

<sup>13</sup> GIRM, 101; see also Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum*

*Concilium*, art. 29.

<sup>14</sup> GIRM, 117, 118, 120, 122, 169, 175, 177, 186, 194 and 195.

<sup>15</sup> GIRM, 120.

<sup>16</sup> GIRM, 172.

<sup>17</sup> GIRM, 194.

<sup>18</sup> GIRM, 118.

<sup>19</sup> GIRM, 175.

<sup>20</sup> GIRM, 136.

<sup>21</sup> GIRM, 136.

<sup>22</sup> GIRM, 97.

<sup>23</sup> GIRM, 66 and 213.

<sup>24</sup> GIRM, 71 and 177.

<sup>25</sup> GIRM, 71, 138 and 197.

<sup>26</sup> GIRM, 71, 138 and 197.

<sup>27</sup> GIRM, 21.

<sup>28</sup> GIRM, 43 and 146.

<sup>29</sup> GIRM, 10, 53 and 107.

<sup>30</sup> GIRM, 30, 77 and 146.

<sup>31</sup> GIRM, 139 and 306.

<sup>32</sup> GIRM, 141 and 142.

<sup>33</sup> GIRM, 141 and 142.

<sup>34</sup> See GIRM, 151 and 179-180.

<sup>35</sup> GIRM, 179.

<sup>36</sup> GIRM, 42 and 160.

<sup>37</sup> GIRM, 160.

<sup>38</sup> GIRM, 160.

<sup>39</sup> GIRM, 43.

<sup>40</sup> GIRM, 43.

<sup>41</sup> GIRM, 154.

<sup>42</sup> GIRM, 283; 1975 GIRM, 242.

<sup>43</sup> GIRM, 85; Vatican II,

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 55.

<sup>44</sup> *Introduction*, no. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Introduction*, no. 131.

<sup>46</sup> *Introduction*, introductory section.

<sup>47</sup> GIRM, 162; U.S. *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, no. 38.

<sup>48</sup> GIRM, 162; U.S. *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, no. 38.

<sup>49</sup> GIRM, 240; U.S. *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, no. 37.

<sup>50</sup> GIRM, 192.

<sup>51</sup> GIRM, 164 and 165.

<sup>52</sup> GIRM, 157.

<sup>53</sup> GIRM, 115.

<sup>54</sup> GIRM, 166 and 184.

<sup>55</sup> GIRM, 154.

<sup>56</sup> GIRM, 166 and 184.

<sup>57</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> CSL, 14.

<sup>59</sup> CSL, 10.



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