



## The Revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal:*

### Order of Mass

#### Part I: Introductory Rites Liturgy of the Word

The 2002 publication of the third edition of the *Roman Missal* with its revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (*GIRM*) introduced several new liturgical practices into the celebration of the Church's worship. While a few of the norms are new for the Roman Rite, most are more properly considered refinements or codifications of liturgical norms found in other Church rituals.

The revised *GIRM* permits episcopal conferences to make adaptations to the universal norms for their own regions. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved several adaptations for the dioceses of the United States in November 2001. After confirmation by the Apostolic See, the adaptations took effect on 25 April 2002.

The diocesan bishop also has the competence to make liturgical adaptations for his own diocesan Church. The Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire, Bishop of Stockton, after consulting with the Liturgical Commission and Presbyteral Council, has decreed several adaptations for the celebration of the Eucharist in the Diocese of Stockton.

This final series of bulletin inserts on the implementation of the revised *GIRM* will focus on the order of Mass. Where universal or particular law (either national or diocesan) has changed, these modifications will be noted.

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#### **Introductory Rites**

While the two major parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Mass begins with the Introductory Rites. The Introductory Rites function as a transition "to ensure that the faithful

who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily" (*GIRM*, 46).

The entrance song, which accompanies the procession of the ministers and priest, promotes "the unity of those who have been gathered [and] introduce[s] their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity" (*GIRM*, 47).

Upon reaching the sanctuary, the priest and ministers make a profound bow to the altar (*GIRM*, 49). Only if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle in the sanctuary do the priest and ministers genuflect to it (*GIRM*, 274). It should be noted that ministers carrying cross, candles, etc. make a bow with the head in place of a genuflection. No other genuflections are made by the ministers or the people during Mass (*GIRM*, 274).

After venerating the altar with a kiss, the priest may incense the altar and cross. At the presider's chair, the priest blesses himself and declares the Lord's presence to the assembly. Nothing should replace or supplement these ritual texts. "After the greeting of the people, the priest, the deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day" (*GIRM*, 50).

*Act of Penitence.* Three forms of the Act of Penitence rite are found in the *Roman Missal*. If Form 1 is used, the assembly prays the *Confiteor* ("I confess") after a period of silence (*GIRM*, 51). The *Kyrie* ("Lord, have mercy") immediately follows.

If the *Kyrie* is used as the Act of Penitence (Form 3), then a trope affirming some aspect of Christ's Lordship is inserted before each acclamation, e.g., "Lord Jesus, you bring light to those in darkness." The tropes are addressed to Christ and acclaim his mercy and goodness.

The Act of Penitence may be replaced on Sundays, and especially during the Easter season, with the blessing and sprinkling of water. This rite recalls for the assembly its baptism into the saving death and resurrection of Jesus.

*Gloria.* In the *Gloria*, the Church praises the Triune God. This ancient hymn cannot be replaced with any other text (*GIRM*, 53). The *Gloria* is to be sung or recited on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and on more solemn occasions.

The *Collect*. The priest invites the people to pray. After a period of silence, the presider extends his hands in the *orans* position and chants or says the *collect*, also known as the opening prayer, because it collects all the silent prayers of the faithful into the one prayer of the Church. The faithful respond Amen, affirming what the priest has prayed on their behalf.

The assembly, now fully aware of itself as a community God has gathered together, sits to hear the story of salvation in the Liturgy of the Word.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church proclaims and hears the story of salvation. In the proclamation of the Scriptures, God speaks to his people (*GIRM*, 55). The assembly sits to listen to the readings before the Gospel.

*Readings.* On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts of the Lord, three readings are proclaimed. The first reading comes from the Old Testament and has some connection to the Gospel of the day.

The assembly responds to God's word with the psalm, usually done in a responsorial fashion, i.e., the people sing a refrain and the cantor sings the verses. Like all the Scriptural readings (*GIRM*, 58), the psalm is proclaimed, preferably in song, from the ambo (*Lectionary for Mass: Introduction*, 22 and 33).

The second reading is taken from one of the books of the New Testament outside the Gospels. Silent reflection is the assembly's response to the second reading.

The readings before the Gospel are proclaimed by a trained lay person. More is required of lectors than simply the ability to read aloud and enunciate the words correctly. Understanding the biblical context and spending time in prayer with God's word enables the reader to proclaim—not just read—the sacred text.

*Gospel.* The proclamation of the Gospel is accorded special honor, because in it the assembly hears the words and deeds of Jesus the Lord. For this reason, the assembly stands as a sign of the presence of the Risen

Lord in its midst and sings the Alleluia (outside of the Lenten season). An ordained minister, preferably a deacon or concelebrating priest, proclaims the Gospel. The text of the reading comes from its own book, which may be honored with incense and, after the proclamation, a kiss.

*Homily.* The homily, given by the presiding celebrant, a concelebrating priest, or a deacon (*GIRM*, 66), and which is based on the Scripture readings or a liturgical text, "should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners" (*GIRM*, 65).

*Profession of Faith.* On Sundays and solemnities, the profession of faith follows the homily (*GIRM*, 67). During the Profession of Faith, and to commemorate the Incarnation of the Lord, the assembly makes a profound bow during the words "by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man." On the solemnities of the Annunciation and Christmas, kneeling replaces the profound bow during these words.

*General Intercessions.* "In the Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in a certain way to the word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all" (*GIRM*, 69). Speaking to the assembly, the presiding celebrant introduces the general intercessions from the chair (*GIRM*, 71). As the first of the ministers and the one especially concerned with the needs of the community, the deacon most properly announces the intercessions. In his absence, a cantor, lector, or other lay minister may speak the petitions.

The intercessions are general. That is, in five or six brief and sober intercessions, the assembly prays for the needs of the Church, public authorities, those who are burdened, and the local community. Petitions of thanksgiving and unspecified "special intentions" are not appropriate at this time.

After each intercession is announced, the assembly may respond with silent prayer or a sung or spoken response.

The general intercessions conclude with a prayer addressed to God the Father, which the presiding celebrant prays with his hands in the *orans* position.

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Bishop of Stockton

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