

Participating in the Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and summit of the entire celebration... The meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice.

In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people whom God has made his own, a royal priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the spotless Victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, and so that they may learn to offer themselves. They should, moreover, endeavour to make this clear by their deep religious sense and their charity toward brothers and sisters who participate with them in the same celebration.

Thus, they are to shun any appearance of individualism or division, keeping before their eyes that they have only one Father in heaven and accordingly are all brothers and sisters to each other.

Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord's table. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful.

GIRM 78, 95–6

Some Questions

- What care is taken to allow the congregation to participate fully in the Liturgy of the Eucharist? For example to settle after *Sanctus* before the priest begins the Prayer.
- Are the acclamations sung?
- Are Prefaces and Prayer chosen to complement the readings or the Day?

Further References

Celebrating the Mass: 24–25, 54–67, 78–79, 126–127, 174–199
Ecclesia de Eucharistia: 11–20
Redemptionis Sacramentum: 36–42
One Bread One Body: 27–44

Practical Points

- Taking care about the authenticity of the symbols of bread and wine and other gifts in the Presentation of the Gifts can raise awareness of the connection between the assembly and the rite.
- The voice, gestures and stance of the priest praying the Eucharistic Prayer can help convey the importance of the assembly's participation in the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.
- In addition to the four Eucharistic Prayers in the Missal, the following are also approved for use: Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions; for Reconciliation; for Masses with Children; for Masses with Deaf People.

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Questions for Groups

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

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

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

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

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

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