

Formation for the Assembly

The entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity.

With zeal and patience pastors must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and their stage of religious development. By doing so, pastors will be fulfilling one of their chief duties as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God; and in this matter they must lead their flock not only by word but also by example.

Within the one body of Christ there are many gifts and responsibilities. But just as each organ and limb is necessary for the sound functioning of the body (see 1 Corinthians 12), so every member of the assembly has a part to play in the action of the whole. It is therefore of the greatest importance that in all circumstances and on every occasion the celebration be so organised that priest, ministers, and faithful may all take their own part. The participation of all is demanded by the nature of the liturgy, and, for the faithful, is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

GIRM 20, SC 19, CTM 21

Some Questions

- What is level of liturgical formation of the parish community?
- What opportunities for formation are available in the deanery or diocese?
- When considering formation for lay liturgical ministers or preparing for liturgical change what consideration is given to assembly formation?
- Who else in the parish can assist with this formation?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal
5, 18, 91, 95-97

Celebrating the Mass
1-24, 26

Redemptionis Sacramentum
32, 37, 39-41

Practical Points

- The primary purpose of liturgical formation for the assembly is to enable greater participation in the liturgy.
- Liturgy well celebrated can be a better form of formation than commentaries on the celebration.
- Ensuring that the formation of liturgical ministers includes reflection on being members of the assembly when not exercising their ministry.
- Many of the resources prepared to accompany the publication of the *General Instruction* are intended for the formation of the assembly. In particular — *With Hearts and Minds* and *In Communion with Christ*.

**Liturgy
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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?