

Ars Celebrandi

Diocese of Wollongong
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How we often preside and participate

For many Catholics, the high points of the mass are the consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and the reception of communion. Whether they receive communion from the tabernacle or the altar doesn't matter to them, as long as they are sharing in the gift of the real presence.

Participating as a priest

“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 nature of the liturgy itself, and to which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Peter 2:9; cf. 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.” SC 14.

Give thanks and offer

“In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people of God’s own possession and a royal Priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the unblemished sacrificial Victim not only by means of the hands of the Priest but also together with him and so that they may learn [*discant*] to offer their very selves.” GIRM 95.

The Sacrifice of Christ

“At the Last Supper, Our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, by which the Sacrifice of his Cross is perpetuated until he comes again; and till then he entrusts the memorial of his Death and Resurrection to his beloved spouse, the Church.” SC 47

GIRM 78

The Priest calls upon the people to lift up their hearts towards the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he associates the people with himself in the Prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit



EUCCHARISTIÆ PARTICIPATIONEM

17. In reciting prayers, especially the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest must avoid not only a dry, monotonous style of reading but an overly subjective and emotional manner of speaking and acting as well. As he presides over the function, he must be careful in reading, singing or acting to help the participants form a true community, celebrating and living the memorial of the Lord.

Offering ourselves

“by the mercies of God. . . offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1)

Prayer I: “accept this oblation of our service.”

Prayer III: “make of us an eternal offering to you.”

The Collect

“Next the Priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the Priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of being in God’s presence and may call to mind their intentions.” GIRM 54

The Universal Prayer

“In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal Priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all.” GIRM 69

Praying as priests

Eucharistic Prayer II prays for “the peace and salvation of the world,” the “pilgrim Church on earth,” “this family,” God’s “children scattered throughout the world,” “our departed brothers and sisters,” and even those outside the Christian family who were pleasing to God “at their passing from this life.”

Communion

“It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the cases where this is foreseen, they partake of the chalice (cf. no. 283), so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.” GIRM 85

Breaking bread, GIRM 321

[It] is desirable that the Eucharistic bread... be fashioned in such a way that the Priest at Mass with the people is truly able to break it into parts and distribute these to at least some of the faithful... Moreover, the gesture of the fraction or breaking of bread, which was quite simply the term by which the Eucharist was known in apostolic times, will bring out more clearly the force and importance of the sign of the unity of all in the one bread, and of the sign of charity by the fact that the one bread is distributed...

The tabernacle

“It is preferable that the tabernacle be located, according to the judgment of the Diocesan Bishop: a) either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in an appropriate form and place, not excluding its being positioned on an old altar no longer used for celebration (cf. no. 303); b) or even in some chapel suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful and organically connected to the church and readily noticeable by the Christian faithful.” GIRM 315

OM 98: “He takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, raising both [*elevans parum*], he says: ‘Through him. . . .’”

OM 132 “The Priest genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised [*aliquantulum elevatam*] above the paten or above the chalice, while facing the people, says aloud: ‘Behold the Lamb of God. . . .’”

3 dynamics of the institution narrative

- * Structure
 - * part of the praise we give God while making our petition
 - * one of God's great works is the institution of the eucharist
 - * the command of Jesus explains why we call on the Spirit today

✱ Drama

- ✱ consecratory function of the words
- ✱ taking elements in hand, repeating words of Jesus, enunciating them, lifting eyes and “this precious chalice” in Eucharistic Prayer I

✱ Devotion

- ✱ consecratory result of the words
- ✱ kneeling of the congregation, bowing slightly, genuflections (now reduced in number), showing the elements, optional ringing of bells (not 3 times), optional incense

- * Some add to the drama
 - * Priests looking at the faithful, or breaking the bread
- * Others add to the devotion
 - * Priests extending the showing and genuflections
 - * People bowing their head, striking their breast, whispering “My Lord and my God”

- *Structure, though, is memorial and thanksgiving
- *Restraint in post-conciliar rubrics
- *Choices about eyes, showing, bells, genuflection, incense

The Body and Blood

Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it takes place under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident and clearer expression is given to the divine will by which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the connection between the Eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of the Father (GIRM 281).

Concrete ways to enhance participation

- * Where you sit
- * Candlesticks
- * Dialogues
- * Collect
- * Bows to altar
- * Universal prayer
- * Collection
- * Procession of the gifts
- * Use of corporal
- * Eucharistic prayer
- * Priest breaking bread
- * Size of hosts
- * Tabernacle
- * Both forms

