

DOCUMENTATION

† The Reformed "Ordo Missae" †

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On May 3, 1969 the Holy Father issued the Apostolic Constitution "Missale Romanum." In addition to lengthy, introductory guidelines it gives us the new "Ordo Missae" of the reformed Roman Missal. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent 1969, all have to observe the new Mass rite. Besides the rite of Mass with the people, there is a second one for Masses that are said with a server only, without a congregation.

During the months of the "vacatio legis" the clergy has to study the new rite in order to get a thorough understanding. It would be tragic if priests would only change the rites, but fail to offer their people a meaningful introduction that leads to a full and conscious participation in holy Mass, the center of our holy religion.

Here follows now an attempt to explain the rites and texts, as far as this can be done on a few pages.

A. Prerequisites for holy Mass

The "Institutio generalis" of the Missal replaces the present Missal's introductory documents, especially the "Ritus servandus." These guidelines are arranged in eight chapters of which the fifth contains a set of directives for the arrangement of the church, and especially the sanctuary, as the place of celebration. Chapter six reviews what is needed for the sacred action, the furniture, the sacred vessels and vestments.

I. Layout of the Sanctuary and the Nave of the Church

For the faithful and the choir (schola cantorum) places should be arranged in such a way that they can more easily and actively participate in holy Mass; the latter should have easy access to holy Com-

munion. In order to show his position in the hierarchy of the Church, the priest takes his place in the sanctuary. There he presides over the prayers, announces the word of God and serves the altar. It is advisable that the sanctuary be distinguished from the nave of the church. This can be achieved by a certain elevation of the sanctuary, by its special structure and adornment. A separating rail is not necessary and not even advisable. The sanctuary should be large enough that the sacred rites can be performed worthily and conveniently.

New rules have been given for the construction of altars. Natural stones are not necessary, even for fixed altars, nor do they need one single slab as mensa. A movable altar does not need any more an altar stone. Much liberalized are the conditions for the consecration of an altar. Only if relics, i.e., authentic ones—which may be of martyrs or any other saints—are available, they are to be included into the altar that is being consecrated. If no relics can be had, the altar may be consecrated notwithstanding.

In addition to the corporal there should be at least one cloth on the altar for the celebration of holy Mass. Not only linen (or in the Philippines ramie) may be used for altar cloths and sacred vestments, etc.; according to a decision of the respective episcopal conference also other fibers, natural, or artificial, may be used for the liturgical services.

The candlesticks for holy Mass may be placed on the altar or also *next to* it. They should be arranged in such a way that the sanctuary appears to be well-ordered and beautiful; the people's view should not be obstructed by them. The place for the crucifix is to be selected according to the same principle. Only one crucifix is needed; it may be placed on the altar, *above* the altar (hanging), on the *side* of the altar or on the *rear wall* of the sanctuary. No second crucifix is needed on the altar for the priest to look at during the celebration of holy Mass. No reference is made in the new guidelines to the altarcards so that their use is in future optional.

During the first part of the Mass, up to the preparation of the gifts, the celebrant's place is at his seat. His task to preside over the entire community of the faithful must be made manifest in the position of the seat. It should be so placed that the priest faces the congregation

(not the side wall of the sanctuary) and can be easily seen and heard by all. As a consequence, the ideal place of the presidential seat will be frequently the center of the apse of the church. But if this place would separate the priest too much from the people so that a real communication between them would become difficult—as in the case of a large church—another location should be sought for the seat which would facilitate the active participation of the people, eventually at the side of the altar, closer to the people, in about the position, formerly the faldstool had when the bishop celebrated Mass at the faldstool.

Both the seat of the priest and the cathedra of the bishop should avoid the form of a throne. At the seat the priest has, during the first part of the Mass, the Missal, which will most probably take the form of an orationale or sacramentary. Except for the candles, eventually placed on the altar, there should be nothing on the altar during the first part of the Mass. Only the Gospel book, of which we come to speak soon, may be allowed on the altar.

For the proclamation of the word of God in the readings and the homilies there should be a permanent ambo in the church, and not a simple and movable lectern. From the ambo the lessons are to be proclaimed, the responsorial psalm is to be recited or sung, the homily preached and the Prayer of the Faithful to be led. Therefore, it should have such a location that the ministers can be seen and heard well, preferably close to the end of the sanctuary area. The ambo should not be used as the place for the commentator, for the chanter or the choir leader.

It is not advisable to have the eucharistic tabernacle on an altar where holy Mass is celebrated habitually for a congregation. It is strongly recommended that the tabernacle be placed in a chapel distinct from the middle or central part of the church. If this should be impossible because of the general structure of the church, it should find its place on a side altar or outside an altar in some other part of the church, which, however, should be really worthy and properly equipped.

II. Sacred Vessels and Vestments

Sacred vestments serve a double purpose: they indicate the position of the different ministers in the hierarchy during the liturgical cele-

brations and contribute to the beauty of the sacred rites. Common for all ministers, from the lowest (i.e., also the simple servers) to the highest (i.e., the bishop) is the alb. Only if the form of the alb makes it in future, necessary the priest needs the amice and the cincture. If the length of the alb will demand that it needs to be fastened up, the cincture is to be used to adjust the length of the alb. If the neck of the alb is rather low it may also in future be better to use the amice. The reference to shows and cassock (*"calceatus pedibus"* and *"indutus vestibus... quarum exteriora saltem talem pedis attingat"*) disappeared from the rubrics. Consequently, there is no need for the priest, when he vests for Mass, to have a cassock beneath. But if the alb is transparent, especially in its lower part, it would be advisable that the priest continue wearing the cassock underneath. When wearing the alb (not only when he uses the surplice) the priest does not cross the stole over his breast.

The color code also has been changed for the sacred vestments on some occasions of which the concessions seems to be worth mentioning; that on more solemn liturgical days one may use, without any special permission, the best vestments one has, even if they are not in the color of the day.

Radical changes have been introduced concerning the form and the material of the sacred vessels, thus implementing the statement of the Constitution on the Liturgy: "The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own. She has admitted styles from every period according to the natural dispositions and circumstances of her peoples, and the needs of the various times" (art. 123).

The "cuppa" of the chalice need not be gold-plated; its material need not be even of metal: precious wood (covered eventually with laquer on the inside), ivory or a modern kind of more noble plastic will do; one should, however, adopt material that does not absorb liquid and does not easily break. This condition would usually rule out simple glass.

If a priest consecrates host for the communion of the people — which should be done in each Mass with a congregation — he does not need any more a paten of his own. He may place his own host with those destined for the people in the ciborium, now called "patena"

by the rubrics, an indication, that it does not need have the form of a chalice. Artists are free in choosing the form of the sacred vessels. They should only ask themselves whether the vessels they create are serviceable ("sint apta").

Right from the beginning of the Mass the chalice has its place on the credence table in the sanctuary. It should be covered with a veil, which, however, may always be white. The use of the palla for the chalice is optional.

B. The Mass Rites

I. Introductory Rites

1. **When the people are assembled, the priest and the ministers go to the altar while the entrance song is being sung.**

The first words of the new "Ordo Missae" refer purposely to the people assembled for holy Mass, and not to the priest, as did the former "Ritus servandus" that started with the words "Sacerdos celebraturus Missam . . ."

While priest and servers are on their way to the altar, the entrance song is to be sung. This statement contains two points worth mentioning: the new prefers definitely the sung Mass. As much as possible the Mass with the people should be sung. In a sung Mass of this type not everything that had to be sung in the former "Missa cantata" must now be rendered by the choir or people by singing, because different degrees are to be distinguished in a sung Mass, as stated by the Instruction on Sacred Music of March 5, 1967.

Instead of the Introit of the old Roman Missal one may now freely sing the antiphon and psalm of the Graduale Simplex, both in Latin or in the vernacular. Any popular hymn suited either to the part of the Mass, the feast or the liturgical season may also take the place of the Introit of the Missal so that this part of the Missal may be simply omitted. But one condition must be fulfilled concerning these hymns: their texts (not melodies) must have the approval of the episcopal conference.

People are not able to sing at Mass everywhere. In these cases, if no chant accompanies the entrance of the priest, the Introit of the

Missal must be recited: either by the faithful in common, or by a prayer leader, or, in the case of need, by the celebrant himself, after he has greeted the people. The Introit of the new Missal will not be the one found in the present Roman Missal; it will be a word of introduction to the Mass, most often taken from sacred Scripture, a kind of motto for the Mass of the day or occasion.

2. As goes up to the altar, priest and minister make the customary reverence. The celebrant kisses the altar, and (if incense is being used) incenses it. Then, with the ministers, he goes to his seat. When the entrance chant is ended, the priest and the faithful stand and cross themselves as the priest says:
"In the name of the Father, and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit."

On arrival at the altar the celebrant and the servers make the customary reverence, i.e., if the Bl. Sacrament is in the sanctuary, a genuflection, if not, a deep bow of the body. If the priest entered in a more solemn procession with processional cross, candle sticks and lector carrying the Gospel book, the processional cross may be used as altar cross, to be placed near the altar; the candle sticks may also find their place near the altar and thus serve as altar candles; but they may also be placed on the credence table. The Gospel book is then placed on the altar, to be taken away only for the reading of the Gospel at the ambo.

According to an ancient liturgical usage the veneration shown to the altar (and the Gospel book) is performed with a kiss. However, it is everywhere that a kiss is understood and accepted by the people. In these regions the episcopal conference may decide on another sign of veneration, and inform the Apostolic See of the decision taken. Some countries of asia use as substitute for the genuflection a deep bow of the body. Instead of kissing the Missal or Gospel book the minister (priest or deacon) in Japan raises the sacred book to his forehead, in the style of the Filipino *mano po*.

According to the rules laid down, incense may be used in any Mass with the people; its use is therefore not restricted to a more solemn form of the Mass.

After these preliminary rites the priest goes with the ministers to his seat. There he will stay until the rites, connected with the preparation of the gifts, except when he has to read the Gospel himself. There should be a clear separation, also in the location, between the two parts of which the Mass consists: the Liturgy of the Word is to be performed at the presidential seat and at the ambo; the proper place for the Eucharistic celebration is the altar.

When the chant of the Introit has come to an end the celebrant (at his seat) makes the sign of the cross together with the people. All give their answer with "Amen." Mass is offered to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit; hence it begins fittingly in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

Then the priest faces the people, extends his hands and greets them, saying:

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

The people answer:

"And with your spirit."

This greeting at the beginning of the Mass is something new in the Roman rite; heretofore, in a solemn Mass the first word which the congregation usually heard of the celebrant, was the beginning of the Gloria, or otherwise the "Dominus vobiscum" before the collect, which marked the end of all the introductory rites.

Certain formularies of greetings, derived from St. Paul's letters can be used. In addition to the formula mentioned above (2 Cor 13, 13) the appendix of the new "Ordo Missae" contains two optional texts for greeting the people, among them also the customary "Dominus vobiscum." The answer of the people may always be "Et cum spiritu tuo." As was his privilege before, the bishop may continue to use "Pax vobis," which however is not restricted any more to Masses with Gloria.

3. The priest or the deacon or some other suitable minister may comment in a very few words on the Mass of the day.

It has been said frequently, especially during recent years while the reform of the Mass rite was under way, that everything in the Mass

was stereo-typed and nothing left to the personal initiative of the priest. Now things have changed, as we shall see in the course of this commentary of the Mass rite. One of the first occasions when priests may give something of their own, is after the greeting of the people when the priest may say a few words to the faithful by way of introduction to the Mass of the day. These few words will vary according to the season of the liturgical year, the feast or the special occasion, as e.g., in a wedding Mass). A priest can give this introduction only if he has prepared himself by going through the different texts of the prayers, by meditating on the readings of the Mass. If he wants to make the celebration of holy Mass more meaningful for his parishioners, he has to look into the liturgical books beforehand. This is actually not a few burden placed on the shoulders of the priest, because also the old rubrics contained a similar exhortation for the priest saying Mass.

There are more occasions when the priest may address the people during the Mass, e.g., before the readings begin, after the prayer over the gifts and before the Eucharistic Prayer. The principal place for addressing the people is and remains, however, the homily after the Gospel. If announcements cannot be avoided during the Mass, they should not be made during the time set aside for the homily. Their proper place is now after the postcommunion and before the dismissal of the congregation. As priests we should take advantage of these opportunities to speak to the people in a prudent and wise manner.

Then follows the act of penance. The priest invites the people to repent:

"My brothers and sisters, to fit ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries let us confess our sins."

A short silence follows. Then all make their confession together:

**"I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned all too often
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have left undone."**

They strike their breasts and continue:

**I blame myself
by my fault, by my fault, by my great fault.**

And I ask the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin,
all the Angels and saints
and you, by brothers and sisters
to pray Lord our God."

The priest's absolution follows:

"May almighty God have mercy on us
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life."

The people respond:

"Amen."

After the short introduction into the general theme of the day or the Mass, there follows the act of penance. We are all sinners and need to be reconciled with God and one another. In a short recollection and examination of conscience we may first reflect on our sins. Following the words of St. James (5, 16) we then confess our faults before one another. The same was already done by the Church of the post-apostolic age. The Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostoles prescribed: "On Sundays come together, break the bread and give thanks, after you have confessed your sins" (14. 1). This is the most fitting way to get ready to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

The public confession, the Confiteor, has been shortened considerably. It is now said only once, by priest and people together. Among the sins confessed are now also the "peccata omissionis," those committed negligence and carelessness. Absolution is then given by the celebrant. Its role in this context, especially in view of the recent discussion on general absolution, remains unclear.

Other forms for the act of penance are offered in the appendix of the new Missal.

4. The invocations— Lord, have — follow, unless they have already been used in one of the forms of the act of penance.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Kyrie is consequently sung or recited in a double, and not, as we were used to, in a triple form. But because we possess a wealth of

melodies wherein the Kyrie is used in a triple form, permission is given continue in these cases the triple form.

Into certain parts of the Mass and also into the Kyrie the Middle Ages inserted "tropes", or phrases of which we find still remnants in the titles given to the Gregorian Masses of the Kyriale, e.g., "Lux et origo," or "Fons bonitatis." A similar practice may now be revived, both in Latin and in the vernacular, i.e., in hymns which paraphrase the Kyrie.

If the Kyrie has been inserted into the penitential rite, it is not repeated afterwards in its proper place but simply omitted, because according to a principle established in the Constitution on the Liturgy, useless repetition are to be avoided (art. 34).

5. **Then, when it is prescribed, is said or sung:**
"Glory to God in the highest ..."

On Sundays, outside Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, i.e., on the former feasts of first and second class, and on the occasion of some other more solemn celebrations, the Gloria is sung or said. Memoriae, both obligatory and optional ones, i.e., the present third class feast of saints, have no Gloria any more. This means a considerable reduction of the occasions when this great doxology is to be said or sung.

According to the rubrics, hitherto valid, the priest had to say or sing the first words of this hymn. Now, however, the Gloria may be begun by the priest, by the whole congregation together, by the choir or by a single cantor. This is a real help for the priest who found it difficult to hit the right tune.

6. **When the "Glory to God" is ended, the priest, with hands joined, says:**
"Let us pray."

All with the priest pray silently for a while. Then the priest extends his hands and says the Prayer; at the end of which the people respond:

"Amen."

The collect of the Mass is now introduced by a simple "Let us pray." During the Mass the use of the "Dominus vobiscum" has been reduced considerably; it need only be said before the Gospel, before

the preface and before the blessing. As was mentioned earlier, it *may* be used a fourth time, for greeting the people at the beginning of Mass.

After the invitation to pray, all pray first in silence, recollecting themselves and becoming aware that they stand in the presence, of God. Then the priest sums up these prayers in the "collect", directing it to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the "Amen" the people give their assent.

Every Mass has only *one single* oration; even the prayers to be said "under one conclusion" have been abolished. Normally the prayers proper to the respective Mass are to be said. At the Masses of "memoriae" however, one may freely select either the proper collect of the Mass or that of the Common. The prayer over the gifts and the post-communion (if they are not proper) may either be taken from the Common or from the ferial day, that is to say, most often from the Mass of the previous Sunday.

On ferial days throughout the year one may take the prayers of the previous Sunday or those of any other Sunday throughout the year. A set from among the "orationes ad diversa" may also be used on these days. One may take the collect alone from a set of "orationes ad diversa" and retain the prayer over the gifts and the postcommunion of the previous Sunday.

This freedom of selection has been granted only for the days mentioned. Those liturgical seasons of the year, which have prayers of their own for every day, oblige the celebrant to say these prayers.

Only the collect in the future will be concluded with the lengthy trinitarian conclusion "Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirits, God, for ever and ever." The prayer over the gifts and the postcommunion are concluded with the short conclusion "Through Christ our Lord. — Amen."

Throughout these introductory rites, which come to a close with the collect, the people are supposed to stand. Only at the beginning of the Service of the Word are we allowed to sit down.