

*Celebrations
of the Word
& Communion*

FOR SUNDAY
& WEEKDAY CELEBRATIONS
IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST

CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD & COMMUNION

Approved for interim use from Advent 1996 by the Department for Christian Life & Worship of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales.

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Celebrations of the Word & Communion

INTRODUCTION

1. It is becoming a more frequent feature of parish life in this country for the community to gather and celebrate the word of God and distribute holy communion in the absence of a priest. At present these celebrations of word and communion are rare on Sundays. Our Bishops' Conference is preparing a ritual book for these celebrations in the light of the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (Rome 1988).
2. The word of God is integral to these celebrations and holy communion may not be distributed without a liturgy of the word.
3. Liturgical and spiritual formation is of the utmost importance for the parish and the particular ministers involved. In particular, those who will lead these liturgies should be chosen with care, be recognised by and acceptable to the parish, and be well prepared. A leader will be assisted by other ministers such as a reader, minister of communion, musician. It is recommended that the leader does not exercise several ministries within one liturgy. Where the leader is not a commissioned minister of communion, a minister of communion leads the prayer from the Lord's Prayer (18) until the song of thanksgiving (23). The vesture and gestures of the leader are not distinctive lest this celebration be confused with the Mass. It should also be noted that the leader does not preside from the ambo and altar.
4. Where these celebrations are already well established in parish life local practice which accords with the general direction of this document may be continued. Some possibilities for variation, the use of a Proclamation of Praise and the position of the Sign of Peace, are indicated in the main body of the text.
5. The preparation of the whole parish for these celebrations is of vital importance. Proper and advance notice of the celebrations should be given.
6. Where the community has the service of a deacon, who has been ordained for the nurture and increase of the people of God, he will preside at these liturgies. The deacon proclaims the gospel, preaches the homily, and ministers holy communion. Lay members of the community proclaim the scripture readings before the gospel. They may also announce the intentions for prayer in the general intercessions, and, as necessary, they assist in distributing holy communion.

CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD & COMMUNION

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Opening Song
Greeting
Introduction
Penitential Rite
Gloria
Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reading
Psalm
Reading
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel
Reflection
Silence
Profession of Faith
General Intercessions

LITURGY OF COMMUNION

Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament
The Lord's Prayer
Sign of Peace
Communion
Silence
Thanksgiving

CONCLUDING RITE

Concluding Prayer
Blessing
Dismissal

italic Element included on Sundays and Solemnities.

ORDER OF CELEBRATION

PREPARATION

Before you lead the celebration you should prepare the following:

1. *Check the Ordo (calendar) for your diocese to see if the day is a memorial, feast, or solemnity.*
2. *Set the lectionary for the readings of the day. On Sundays, only very occasionally is the cycle of readings interrupted by a special feast and your diocesan ordo will indicate this. On weekdays, you will follow the cycle of readings unless the day is a feast or solemnity; only exceptionally does a memorial have its own (proper) reading and you will find this clearly indicated in the lectionary (e.g. 29 July).*
3. *Check the Roman Missal (Sacramentary) to see if an opening prayer is assigned to the particular day. Note that you will need to rephrase or replace an opening prayer if it suggests that the liturgy being celebrated is Mass.*
4. *Prepare anything you will say in the celebration that is not scripted, for instance, introductory remarks, reflection on the readings, intercessions, concluding announcements.*

MUSIC

The priorities for singing are: gospel acclamation, song of thanksgiving, psalm.

Other elements that may be sung are listed in the text.

Singing an opening song can be a helpful way to begin the liturgy and establish an atmosphere of prayer. If one is sung, it should reflect the season of the year or feast, or the themes of the scripture readings. A song as communion is distributed can be an effective way of affirming our unity in the body of Christ.

SILENCE

Silence is an integral element of liturgy. The whole way in which liturgy is celebrated should foster reflectiveness. In addition, the dialogue between God and his people which happens through the power of the Holy Spirit requires short intervals of silence.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

OPENING SONG

1 *An opening song may be sung. All stand.*

GREETING

2 *All remain standing as the leader says:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R **Amen.**

The leader greets all present with one of the following forms:

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

R **And also with you.**

B The grace of God,
so rich in mercy and boundless in compassion,
be with you all.

R **And also with you.**

INTRODUCTION

3 *The leader introduces the celebration in these or similar words.*

Once again we gather to be the Church of Christ.

Christ is with us, as he promised:
present in this assembly of his people,
in the proclamation of God's word,
and in the communion of his body and blood.

As our priest cannot be with us
we are unable to celebrate the eucharist.
Let us reflect on the word and pray together
and then share Christ's body and blood
consecrated for us at a previous eucharist.

[Today we celebrate ...

(name the saint of the day/feast, in a sentence prepared beforehand.)]

PENITENTIAL RITE

4 *One of the two following forms is used: A (p. 7) or B (p. 8).*

A *The leader says:*

Gathered together in Christ,
let us ask for forgiveness with confidence,
for God is full of gentleness and compassion.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

R I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The leader says:

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

R Amen.

B *The leader says:*

Rich in mercy is our Saviour
and great in kindness.
Praise the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two examples of texts are given, other texts may be taken from the Roman Missal (Sacramentary). The invocations may be sung or said by a cantor, or a reader.

- i Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations
 into the peace of God's kingdom:
 Lord have mercy.

R **Lord have mercy.**

You come in word and spirit to strengthen us in holiness:
Christ have mercy.

R **Christ have mercy.**

You will come in glory with salvation for your people:
Lord have mercy.

R **Lord have mercy.**

- ii You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:
 Lord have mercy.

R **Lord have mercy.**

You bring pardon and peace to the sinner:
Christ have mercy.

R **Christ have mercy.**

You bring light to those in darkness:
Lord have mercy.

R **Lord have mercy.**

GLORIA

5 *When indicated in the Ordo, the Gloria is sung or said.*

OPENING PRAYER

6 *The leader says the opening prayer.*

The prayer assigned to the day in the Roman Missal (Sacramentary) is normally used. Two examples are given. Other texts may be taken from the Roman Missal (Sacramentary).

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer.

- A Almighty God,
fix our hearts on what is right and true,
that we may please you always
by observing your will in both word and deed.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

R Amen.

- B O God,
creator and ruler of all that is,
look kindly upon the prayers of your servants:
grant that we may serve you with undivided hearts
and so experience the power of your mercy.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

R Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

7 *All sit. After each reading a brief silence is observed.*

READING

8 *The scripture is proclaimed by a reader.*

PSALM

SECOND READING

9 *On Sundays and Solemnities.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

10 *All stand as the gospel acclamation is sung.*

GOSPEL

11 *The gospel is read by another reader or, if necessary, by the leader. A lay reader does not say “The Lord be with you.” but begins with “A reading from the holy gospel according to...”.*

REFLECTION

12 *The leader may read a homily prepared by the priest; or may give a short reflection on the scripture readings of the day.*

SILENCE

PROFESSION OF FAITH

13 *When indicated in the Ordo the profession of faith is said.*

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

14 After an introduction by the leader, petitions are offered for the whole church and for the world, as well as for the local community and other needs. The following order is a model:

- for the needs of the Church;
- for the public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- for those oppressed by any need;
- for the local community.

Texts may be found in Appendix III of the Roman Missal (Sacramentary). An extra petition may be added for all who exercise ministry and particularly for vocations.

Introduction

The leader begins by saying:

Let us pray for the needs of the Church and the world.

Intentions

The intentions are announced by a reader.

The final petition is followed by a time of silent prayer. The leader concludes the intercessions with the following, or another suitable prayer.

Merciful God,

hear the prayers of your people, spoken and unspoken.

Give us what we need to follow faithfully the call of the Gospel.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

15 This may be exchanged here where it is customary to do so.

PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE

16 Where this is approved diocesan practice.

LITURGY OF COMMUNION

TRANSFER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

17 *A minister of communion brings the Sacrament to the altar from the place where it is reserved. (cf. p.3 note 3) The leader goes to the altar, genuflects and introduces the Lord's Prayer.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

18 *The leader says:*

Taught by our Saviour's command,
and formed by the word of God, we dare to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

The leader continues:

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,
and grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy keep us free from sin
and protect us from all anxiety
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

R For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.

SIGN OF PEACE

19 *The leader invites all to exchange peace in these or similar words unless this has already taken place.*

As children of the God of peace,
let us offer one another
a sign of reconciliation and peace.

All exchange a sign of peace.

COMMUNION

20 *All prepare in silence to receive holy communion. Any additional vessels required for the distribution of communion are brought to the altar and prepared. The leader takes some of the consecrated bread and, extending it towards the people, says one of the following invitations:*

- A Behold the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those called to the banquet of the Lamb.
- B God's holy gifts for God's holy people:
draw near to receive them with praise and thanksgiving.
- R Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

21 *During the distribution of communion, a suitable song may be sung.*

*If the leader receives communion, he or she says inaudibly:
May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.*

Ministers of communion go to the communicants. They take a piece of consecrated bread for each one, raise it a little, and show it, saying:

The body of Christ.

*The communicant receives communion answering:
Amen.*

Any consecrated bread remaining after the distribution is returned to the place where it is reserved. Vessels used for the distribution are left covered on a side table and cleansed after the liturgy has concluded.

SILENCE

22 *After the distribution, a period of silence is most appropriate so that, in communion, all may praise God in silent prayer.*

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

23 *All stand.*

One of the following songs of thanksgiving is sung or said: Benedictus, Magnificat, or Gloria. Texts are available in hymnbooks. If the Gloria has been used already in the celebration or it is the season of Lent or Advent one of the other texts is used. The leader says one of the following invitations.

A Benedictus

With people everywhere
let us bless the God of Israel.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel...

B Magnificat

Let us glorify the Lord
whose mercy is from age to age.
My soul glorifies the Lord...

C Gloria

With all the voices of heaven,
let us sing praise and honour and glory to God.
Glory to God in the highest...

CONCLUDING RITE

CONCLUDING PRAYER

24 *The leader says the concluding prayer using one of the following:*

- A God of mercy,
pour forth upon us your spirit of love,
that we who have been nourished
by the one bread from heaven
may be one in mind and heart.
Grant this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

R Amen.

- B Complete within us, Lord,
the healing work of your mercy,
and by your grace transform and strengthen us,
that we may please you in all that we do.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

25 *Any necessary announcements are made at this point.*

BLESSING

26 *The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross while saying the following:*
May almighty God bless us,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R Amen.

DISMISSAL

27 *The leader dismisses the people. Two examples are given. Other texts may be taken from the Roman Missal (Sacramentary).*

- A Let us go in the peace of Christ.
B Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
R Thanks be to God.

28 *On Sundays a collection is taken as people leave.*

