



Celebration of the Eucharist when the Bishop Presides

Introduction

1. "The office of Bishop as teacher, sanctifier, and Pastor of his Church shines forth most clearly in a liturgy that he celebrates with his people....Hence liturgical celebrations in which the Bishop presides manifest the mystery of the Church as that mystery involves Christ's presence; such celebrations, then, are not a mere display of ceremony....These gatherings should be occasions for the faithful to grow in their love for the entire Church and to heighten their desire to serve the Gospel and their neighbor" (CB, p. 20).
2. "For the Diocesan Bishop, the prime steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care, is the moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole of liturgical life. In celebrations that take place with the Bishop presiding, and especially in the celebration of the Eucharist by the Bishop himself with the Presbyterate, the Deacons, and the people taking part, the mystery of the Church is manifest. Hence, solemn celebrations of Mass of this sort must be exemplary for the entire diocese" (GIRM, 22).
3. The Bishop is assisted in his task as "the moderator, promoter and guardian of the whole of the liturgical life" by the Diocesan Office of Liturgy and the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies. The Bishop's Master of Ceremonies has the final say in the preparation and carrying out of any liturgical event involving the Bishop.
4. Simplicity is an important element in planning liturgies at which the Bishop is present. As the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states: "The Rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity" (SC, 34). All effort should be made that nothing unnecessarily adds to the length or complexity of a ceremony.
5. Music is an integral element in liturgy. It is important to remember, however, that it is one element. Excess music can detract from the liturgy and unnecessarily add to its length. Silence, it should be remembered, is also an important element of the liturgy, wherever it is recommended.
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7. Incense should normally be used unless the Master of Ceremonies indicates otherwise. If possible, one server should be assigned as thurifer with no other duties.
8. The readings used at the liturgy at which the Bishop celebrates will be the readings of the day.

Arrival and Preparation of the Bishop

9. The Bishop will arrive roughly half hour before the ceremony. A convenient parking space should be reserved for him.
10. The Bishop will vest in the Sacristy.
11. The Bishop will bring his own alb and chasuble. Please check the ordo for the proper color for concelebrants. The Pastor should always wear a chasuble. Other concelebrating Priests may wear just an alb and stole if chasubles are not available for them. It is appropriate for a Deacon to wear a Dalmatic if one is available.
12. If the Church or sanctuary tends to be particularly warm, please make provisions for adequate ventilation in the sanctuary or even a small fan.
13. Provide a small bottle of drinking water for the Bishop.

Pre-liturgical Processions

14. The liturgical procession proper includes only those who are coming forward to enter the sanctuary. In the absence of a Deacon, it would also include a lay reader who may carry the Book of the Gospels. It does not include Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist, those to be confirmed, graduates, etc. These should enter the Church prior to the liturgical procession. They may either be seated before the liturgical procession or they may process in before the liturgical procession. This pre-liturgical procession, if needed, should be timed in such a way such that everyone is seated at least five minutes before the time Mass is scheduled to begin.

Introductory Rites

15. The order of procession is: thurifer (if incense is used), the cross bearer, two candle bearers on either side of the cross if possible, other altar servers, if present, Deacon with the Book of the Gospels, concelebrating Priests, Pastor, the Master of Ceremonies, the Bishop, Deacon chaplain(s), if present, and miter and crosier bearers (if used).
16. Please note – the Book of the Gospels is never carried out in procession.
17. The purpose of the entrance hymn is “to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers” (GIRM, #47). As such the entrance hymn should come to a close as, or shortly after the Bishop reaches the presidential chair.

18. If the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary, then the normal reverence upon reaching the entrance to the sanctuary is a genuflection. Those carrying the cross, candles and Book of the Gospels do not genuflect, but indicate a reverence by a simple bow of the head. Depending on the physical ability of the ministers present, it may be determined that a bow instead of a genuflection is called for even when the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary. This should be discussed and decided before the entrance procession begins. If the tabernacle is not located in the sanctuary, then a profound bow to the altar is the appropriate sign of reverence.
19. During the incensation of the altar the Bishop will incense the altar by himself and prefers not to have any attendant.
20. During the Easter season the Bishop will usually use the rite of blessing and sprinkling water. A Deacon, if present, or an altar server may carry the vessel of holy water for the Bishop, if the size of the aisles makes that feasible.
21. If the Church is large, the Bishop may be assisted in sprinkling the people by the pastor and/or other priests. Coordinate with the Master of Ceremonies about this before Mass begins.
22. If the day requires a Gloria, the Gloria is to be sung. If the day does not require a Gloria, one should not be added. Please check the ordo.

Liturgy of the Word

23. The readings are taken from the readings of the day.
24. It is always preferable to sing the responsorial psalm.
25. During the singing of the Alleluia, all but the Bishop stand. If incense is used, the thurifer kneels before the Bishop so the Bishop may place incense in the thurible. For practical reasons, the thurifer may simply stand in front of the seated Bishop.
26. If a Deacon is present, the Deacon may proclaim the gospel. If not, it is preferable that the Pastor proclaim the gospel.
27. The person who is to proclaim the gospel goes to the Bishop to receive his blessing. The Deacon or Priest bows profoundly to receive this blessing depending on their ability. He then proceeds to the Ambo to proclaim the gospel.
28. The Bishop will preach, unless otherwise arranged.
29. After the homily, the Bishop will introduce the Creed if the rubrics of the day call for one. Otherwise he will move directly to the Universal Prayer.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

30. The offertory procession is to take place in a simple manner, with the cross bearer leading the procession, if this is the custom of the parish. Those presenting gifts walk down the center aisle into the sanctuary and directly to the Bishop at the presidential chair. The Bishop may opt to receive the gifts at the entrance to the sanctuary. The gifts may also be received by the Deacon(s) at the entrance to the sanctuary if the situation requires.
31. The bishop prefers that only the bread and wine be brought up in the offertory procession in order to expedite the preparation of the gifts.
32. This procession should start as soon as the ushers have finished the collection from the congregation. This procession is not to wait until the collection has been bagged, sealed and put into a basket. Nothing else should be brought up in the offertory procession.
33. The music that accompanies the Offertory should not be prolonged. It should be timed to conclude as soon as or very shortly after the Bishop washes his hands.
34. It is left up to the parish custom whether additional chalices are filled before mass, or if all the chalices are filled during the Offertory. The main chalice is always to be filled during the Offertory. If no Deacon is present, one of the concelebrating priests should prepare the main chalice.
35. Concelebrating Priests are to remain in their places until the Bishop finishes the prayer over the gifts. They may then come forward to the altar for the Preface.
36. If bells are used, the Bishop would like the bells to be rung only during the elevation of the Body of Christ and the elevation of the Blood of Christ, and be one sustained ring for each elevation.
37. Communion is to be distributed in as timely a manner as possible. The Bishop will give communion to the Deacons. He will then proceed to the center aisle, usually with the Pastor. All the other concelebrants, Deacons and, if needed, extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist should distribute the Eucharist to the rest of the congregation.
38. After he finishes distributing communion, the Bishop will return to the presidential chair to wash his hands with water.
39. Communion song(s) should be long enough to cover the time needed to distribute communion, wash the Bishop's hands and return the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. After this a meditation song may be sung, but is not required. At the conclusion of the song(s) some time in silence will be observed.

Closing Rites

40. If announcements must be made, they should be made by the pastor after the Prayer after Communion.

41. The Bishop will give the final blessing. If a Deacon is present, he says the dismissal. If a Deacon is not present, the Bishop will dismiss.
42. The Bishop will kiss the altar and move to the front of the altar to stand facing it. The concelebrating Priests may stand on either side of him. All will bow together, turn around and process out.
43. If there had been a pre-liturgical procession (of graduates, etc.) and if pictures are to be taken after the celebration, the graduates, etc. should remain in the pews. The Bishop will come back into the Church for pictures. If there are no pictures to be taken in the Church, the graduates, etc., may walk out behind the liturgical procession.
44. The Bishop will greet people at the door of the church, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon.

If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Paul White, Director of Liturgy, at whitep@ptdiocese.org or call 850-435-3511.