

Knowing the Missal Respecting the Text

The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be truly heightened if the texts of the readings, the prayers, and the liturgical songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, spiritual preparation, and capacity of participants.

In order that a celebration may correspond more fully to the prescriptions and spirit of the sacred Liturgy, and also in order to increase its pastoral effectiveness, certain accommodations and adaptations are specified in this General Instruction and in the Order of Mass.

These adaptations consist for the most part in the choice of certain rites or texts, that is, of the chants, readings, prayers, explanations, and gestures which may respond better to the needs, preparation, and culture of the participants and which are entrusted to the priest celebrant, the priest must remember that he is the servant of the sacred Liturgy and that he himself is not permitted, on his own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass.

GIRM 352, 23–24

Some Questions

- How are the reflections of a parish liturgy preparation group shared with other ministers?
- Who decides whether a shorter or longer form of a reading is proclaimed at Sunday Mass?
- What opportunities are provided for less 'formal' prayer (e.g. Holy Hour, Prayer Vigil, Penitential Service) which can be more thematically based?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal
18, 23–24, 31, 38, 352–385

Celebrating the Mass
37, 78, 127–138

Redemptionis Sacramentum
30–33, 39, 59, 62

Practical Points

- Through the use of brief comments connections can be made between elements in the liturgy: music and scripture, for example — encouraging people to find their own connections.
- With days of special prayer rather than place the emphasis on Sunday Mass explore how the intentions might be explored through the Cycle of Prayer.
- As part of a parish liturgy review use a video camera to identify any idiosyncrasies, ideas that once worked but have become stale.
- Look at the *Masses for Various Needs and Occasions* in the Missal as a source of prayer that can put in the parish bulletin

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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?