

With Hearts

& Minds

Reflections on

our participation in the Mass

Leader's Book

Sample Session

With Hearts and Minds

Before you begin

Read through the session.

Look over the questions — how would you answer them?

Does anything in particular strike you; something you have not thought of before; something you disagree with; something you want more time to think about.

It is unlikely that your group will have the same response as you nor it is desirable that they should but it is important that you are familiar with the material, understand the connection between the different parts and have an overall feel for the session.

Aim

How we participate in the life of Christ through the celebration of the Mass.

Welcome

Listen to Scripture

Matthew 14: 13–21

The crowd are drawn to Jesus who are fed from what they themselves provide.

Our Experience

- Why do I come to Sunday Mass?
- What do I bring to Sunday Mass that in Christ might become food for all?

Read & Reflect

Two paragraphs from the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy — Sacrosanctum Concilium that speak of the centrality of liturgy to the life of the Church and the desire of the Church that all the faithful be led to full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations. The extracts from the General Instruction reiterate this desire.

For Discussion

- *'Participation... of the sort which is desired by the Church and demanded by the very nature of the celebration'* (GIRM 18).
Describe a celebration of Mass that fully engaged you?
What was different for you?
- *'That... leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity'* (GIRM 18)
In what ways do we take part in the Mass?
- *'...to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism'* (GIRM 18)
What do I expect of the Church and Mass?
What does the Church and Mass expect of me?

Act

Introduction to Journals.

In preparation for next Sunday's Mass.

In preparation for the next meeting.

Prayer

1. Introduction

*How we participate in the life of Christ
through the celebration of the Mass.*

Recently I met with a group of people preparing to be received into the Catholic Church. I asked if they would be willing to share their reasons for taking this step. They were very ready indeed! One woman spoke of her experience at Sunday Mass, which she had attended with her husband and family for many years. She spoke of how she had always felt 'taken up' and 'included' in what was going on. I asked if she was speaking about the singing, the preaching, or the 'sense of community'? To my surprise she rejected these alternatives and said that it was 'what went on at the altar' that had always touched her deeply, and she felt taken up in that.

This woman, I believe, sensed the deeper reality of the Church. She was able to experience something of that communion of life which lies beyond many of its more outward expressions. She had a sensitivity to those realities which came through to her as an invitation, a call, to a fuller life. She was responding to that experience by seeking formally and consciously the full communion of life in the Catholic Church.

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



Welcome

See section in Leader's Introduction. pg. xii.



Listen to Scripture

This section helps those taking part to start to explore the session's main theme.

After the reading of the passage invite people to share a word or phrase that struck them. The questions may not at first appear always to refer to the scripture but they begin to open up the theme of the session and connect it with people's lives.

Questions for all are printed on the participant's sheets. Below are listed some likely responses. Don't think of this as a checklist of correct answers or even an exhaustive list of possible answers. Some may appear 'incorrect' but it is important that people engage honestly with the questions. Listen out to see which ones are voiced by people in your group; if some are not you might want to invite people to consider some of them. For example, asking: 'Do you think the main reason that some people come to Mass is to set a good example for their children'.

There are also given below supplementary questions which might be useful to 'keep the conversation going' or develop the discussion though it will often be better to move on to the next question or section.

Listen to Scripture

Now when Jesus heard the news of John the Baptist's death, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Matthew 14: 13–21



Read & Reflect

Describe a celebration of Mass that fully engaged you.

What was different for you?

Possible responses

- A joyful celebration — lots of people involved.
- Good music
- A homily that spoke to me
- A prayerful Mass
- A Mass that responded to an event/crisis
- A wedding or a funeral
- I felt different at the end of it.

Possible supplementary questions:

- Is there a difference between ‘lots of people being involved’ and ‘my being involved’?
- Is there a difference between ‘music I like’ and ‘music that draws me closer to Christ’?

In what ways do we take part in the Mass?

Possible responses

- Gathering
- Praying
- Listening to scripture
- Making responses
- Intercessions
- Singing
- Posture
- Communion

Possible supplementary questions:

- Do we ever think of how we use our bodies in prayer? Sometimes, for example, we pray without using any words — we genuflect, kneel or make the sign of the cross.
- Is there a difference between when we pray together and when we pray alone?

Read & Reflect

CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

10. The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all the Church’s power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper.
14. The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Pet 2:9; see 2: 4–5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit and therefore pastors must zealously strive in all their pastoral work to achieve such participation by means of the necessary instruction.

GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

17. It is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass — that is, the Lord’s Supper — be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church, his beloved Bride, as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection.
18. This will best be accomplished if, with due regard for the nature and the particular circumstances of each liturgical assembly, the entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and demanded by the very nature of the celebration, and to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism.



Act

*See section in Introduction
(page xv)*

Act

- *Beginning your Journal. See page v.*
- *In preparation for next Sunday's Mass.*
What has happened during this week?
What is most on my mind today?
Remember and reflect on these things on Sunday in your time of preparation before the beginning of Mass.
- *In preparation for the next meeting.*
What at Mass made an impression on you?
In what ways did last Sunday's Mass suggest how we might live as Christ in the world.



Prayer

“This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.
I do not call you servants any longer,
because the servant does not know what the master is
doing;
but I have called you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything that I have heard from my Father.
You did not choose me but I chose you.
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,
so that the Father will give you
whatever you ask him in my name.
I am giving you these commands
so that you may love one another.

John 15: 12–17

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.

Prayer

*See section in Introduction
(page xvi)*

Gather

- Light a candle(s) and/or time of silence:
*In the name of the Father...
Let us begin our time of prayer
with a few moments silence.*
- Sing a song or chant about the Church, Sunday, Praise of God, or Baptism (for example the refrain *We come to share our story or Ubi Caritas* (Taizé)).

Listen

- John 15: 12–17

Respond

- Time of silent reflection
- Invite people to name concerns for prayer.
Don’t forget to include the group itself and its forthcoming time together.
- **The Lord’s Prayer**
All say the Lord’s Prayer together.
Consider standing up and/or adopting the ‘orans’ position.
Introduce in these or similar words:
*Let us now pray in the words our Saviour gave us: or
Following our Lord’s teaching, let us say with faith and trust:*

Sending Forth

- Leader:
*The Lord bless us, and keep us
from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.*
All: *Amen*

Further Reading

- At the end of session material is provided for further reading. This includes the complete text of those passages which have been quoted only in part as well as offering other related paragraphs.

CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

106. By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that; by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). Hence the Lord's day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the piety of the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of greatest importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.

GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

27. At Mass — that is, the Lord's Supper — the People of God is called together, with a priest presiding and acting in the person of Christ, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord, the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For this reason Christ's promise applies in an outstanding way to such a local gathering of the holy Church: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst' (Mt 18:20). For in the celebration of Mass, in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated, Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his word, and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.
28. The Mass is made up, as it were, of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These, however, are so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship. For in the Mass the table both of God's word and of Christ's Body is prepared, from which the faithful may be instructed and refreshed. There are also certain rites that open and conclude the celebration.

CELEBRATING THE MASS

21 The celebration of Mass is the action of Christ and the Church, which is “the Sacrament of unity”, namely the holy people of God united and ordered under the Bishop. It is the action in which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart’, expresses its unity and its nature. It is the action of the whole people of God, ministers and congregation, united with Christ, who is head of the Body.

Within the one body of Christ there are many gifts and responsibilities. But just as each organ and limb is necessary for the sound functioning of the body (see 1 Corinthians 12), so every member of the assembly has a part to play in the action of the whole. It is therefore of the greatest importance that in all circumstances and on every occasion the celebration be so organised that priest, ministers, and faithful may all take their own part. The participation of all is demanded by the nature of the liturgy, and, for the faithful, is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

- By apostolic tradition, the Church gathers on the Lord’s Day to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. This Sunday Eucharist, at which the entire local community assembles and in which all play their proper parts, is the primary manifestation of the local Church and, as such, the most important and normative form of Eucharistic celebration. It should be in every sense inclusive and not be needlessly multiplied. (Although more than one mass will often be celebrated in a parish on a Sunday a balance needs to be kept between what is convenient, and what helps the Church to become an authentic community of faith and mission and celebrate the Liturgy fully, richly and reverently.) The celebration of other Sacraments, when the Roman Ritual allows, may be accommodated within it.
- In the celebration of the Eucharist, all present, ordained or lay faithful, render the particular service corresponding to their role and function in the assembly. A celebration is the work of the whole body of Christ; the ministers and other members of the assembly have a part in the action and have a contribution to make. Each of these special services is performed for the good of the whole and for the glory of God.

With Hearts and Minds is a resource for small groups, intended to assist participants to a deeper appreciation of the nature and role of the Liturgy in the life of the Christian community; to participate more deeply in the Liturgy.

It presents in a more accessible form the teaching about parish celebration of the liturgy that is in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and in Celebrating the Mass, a document of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Through reflection on the scriptures, the teaching of the Church and on their own experience group members will be helped to develop both their understanding of the Mass and a liturgical spirituality.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor has written: 'With Hearts and Minds provides an opportunity to consider how we pray the Mass, and how what we experience in the Mass might be carried into our lives, helping us to become a still more authentically Eucharistic people.'

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'Recently I met with...' Vincent Nichols. *Promise of Future Glory: Reflections on the Mass*. © Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1997. (p.16-17)

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For further resources: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources