

Participation & the Liturgy of the Word

*In the readings God speaks to his people,
opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation,
and offering them spiritual nourishment;
and Christ himself is present
in the midst of the faithful through his word.*

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the Homily.

GIRM 55, 56

Some Questions

- Does the Liturgy of the Word regularly begin before people are ready to listen?
- Is the number of readers matched to the number of readings?
- Is the Psalm sung?
- Is there a group trained to prepare the Prayer of the Faithful?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal:
29, 55–71, 194–198, 309
Celebrating the Mass: 19–20, 151–173
Spiritus et Sponsa: 6, 8, 12–13
Directory on Popular Piety: 87–89
General Directory for Catechesis: 94

Practical Points

- Help readers to be confident in letting silence and deeper listening begin before they move from the ambo.
- Make use of the Common Psalm especially during the major liturgical seasons
- Regular continuing formation programme for ministers of the word
- Give reference for the readings for this and next weeks' Sunday Masses in the bulletin.
- Ensure that Intercessions are brief, and written to suit the day and congregation
- Promote regular use of the Sunday readings in parish catechesis

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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?