

Presiding

*The priest, as the one who presides,
prays in the name of the Church and of the assembled community;
but at times he prays only in his own name, asking that
he may exercise his ministry with greater attention and devotion.*

A priest who possesses within the Church the power of Holy Orders to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ, stands for this reason at the head of the faithful people gathered together here and now, presides over their prayer, proclaims the message of salvation to them, associates the people with himself in the offering of sacrifice through Christ in the Holy Spirit to God the Father, gives his brothers and sisters the Bread of eternal life, and partakes of it with them. When he celebrates the Eucharist, therefore, he must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he says the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ.

GIRM 33, 93

Some Questions

- Does the presider look at the assembly when addressing them and inviting them to prayer?
- Is the distinction between the presidential and personal prayers of the priest observed?
- Are the presider's gestures expressive of the actions of the Mass?
- How is good coordination between ministries achieved? How might it be improved?

Further References

- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*: 4, 5, 30–42, 91, 93, 95, 108, 111, 112–113, 352
- *Celebrating the Mass*: 25–33, 35–37
- *Redemptionis Sacramentum*: 29–33

Practical Points

- Clear marking of the books before the celebration begins helps the presider to be more attentive to the assembly during the celebration.
- Pausing when the congregation is changing posture - for example standing after sitting, or kneeling after standing - indicates that their participation is important.
- The office of presiding over the prayer of the assembly sometimes requires brief and helpful comments and introductions to be offered. These should be suited to the nature of the assembly.
- The presiding priest should proclaim the Gospel only if a deacon or other priest is not present.
- The Homily is ordinarily given by the presiding priest.



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?