

CHAPTER II

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS, ITS ELEMENTS AND ITS PARTS

I. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE MASS

27. At Mass or 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 or Eucharistic Sacrifice.³⁷ In an outstanding way there applies to such a local gathering of the holy Church the promise of Christ: '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,³⁸ Christ is really present in the very assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his word, and indeed substantially and uninterruptedly under the Eucharistic species.³⁹

28. The Mass consists in some sense of two parts, namely the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, these being so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship.⁴⁰ For in the Mass is spread the table both of God's Word and of the Body of Christ, and from it the faithful are to be instructed and refreshed.⁴¹ There are also certain rites that open and conclude the celebration.

II. THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE MASS

Reading and Explaining the Word of God

29. When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel.

Therefore, the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone, for they are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy. Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture the Word of God is addressed to all people of whatever era and is understandable to them, a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, by the Homily, as part of the liturgical action.⁴²

The Prayers and Other Parts Pertaining to the Priest

30. Among those things assigned to the Priest, the prime place is occupied by the Eucharistic Prayer, which is the high point of the whole celebration. Next are the orations, that is to say, the Collect, the Prayer over the Offerings, and the Prayer after Communion. These prayers are addressed to God by the Priest who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ, in the name of the entire holy people and of all present.⁴³ Hence they are rightly called the 'presidential prayers'.

31. Likewise it is also for the Priest, in the exercise of his office of presiding over the gathered assembly, to offer certain explanations that are foreseen in the rite itself. Where

37 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 5; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 33.

38 Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, cap. 1: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 1740; Paul VI, Solemn Profession of Faith, 30 June 1968, no. 24: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 60 (1968), p. 442.

39 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium fidei*, 3 September 1965: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), p. 764; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, no. 9: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 547.

40 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 56; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, no. 3: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 542.

41 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 48, 51; Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, no. 21; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 4.

42 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 7, 33, 52.

43 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 33.

this is laid down by the rubrics, the celebrant is permitted to adapt them somewhat so that they correspond to the capacity for understanding of those participating. However, the Priest should always take care to keep to the sense of the explanatory text given in the Missal and to express it in just a few words. It is also for the presiding Priest to regulate the Word of God and to impart the final blessing. He is permitted, furthermore, in a very few words, to give the faithful an introduction to the Mass of the day (after the initial Greeting and before the Penitential Act), to the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings), and to the Eucharistic Prayer (before the Preface), though never during the Eucharistic Prayer itself; he may also make concluding comments regarding the entire sacred action before the Dismissal.

32. The nature of the 'presidential' parts requires that they be spoken in a loud and clear voice and that everyone listen to them attentively.⁴⁴ Therefore, while the Priest is pronouncing them, there should be no other prayers or singing, and the organ or other musical instruments should be silent.

33. For the Priest, as the one who presides, expresses prayers 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. Prayers of this kind, which occur before the reading of the Gospel, at the Preparation of the Gifts, and also before and after the Communion of the Priest, are said quietly.

Other Formulae Occurring during the Celebration

34. Since the celebration of Mass by its nature has a 'communitarian' character,⁴⁵ both the dialogues between the Priest and the assembled faithful, and the acclamations are of great significance;⁴⁶ for they are not simply outward signs of communal celebration but foster and bring about communion between Priest and people.

35. The acclamations and the responses of the faithful to the Priest's greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that is to be made by the assembled faithful in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the whole community may be clearly expressed and fostered.⁴⁷

36. Other parts, most useful for expressing and fostering the active participation of the faithful, and which are assigned to the whole gathering, include especially the Penitential Act, the Profession of Faith, the Universal Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer.

37. Finally, among other formulae:

- a. Some constitute an independent rite or act, such as the Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*), the Responsorial Psalm, the Alleluia and Verse before the Gospel, the Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*), the Memorial Acclamation, and the chant after Communion;
- b. Others, on the other hand, accompany some other rite, such as the chants at the Entrance, at the Offertory, at the fraction (*Agnus Dei, Lamb of God*) and at Communion.

The Manner of Pronouncing the Different Texts

38. In texts that are to be pronounced in a loud and clear voice, whether by the Priest or the Deacon, or by a reader, or by everyone, the voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself, that is, depending upon whether it is a reading, a prayer, an explanatory

44 Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musicae sacram*, 5 March 1967, no. 14: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 304.

45 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 26-27; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, no. 3d: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 542.

46 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 30.

47 Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musicae sacram*, 5 March 1967, no. 16a: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 305.

comment, an acclamation, or a sung text; it should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Consideration should also be given to the characteristics of different languages and of the culture of different peoples.

Therefore, in the rubrics and in the norms that follow, words such as ‘say’ and ‘proclaim’ are to be understood either of singing or of reciting, with due regard for the principles stated here above.

The Importance of Singing

39. The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles (cf. Col 3: 16). Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy (cf. Acts 2: 46). Thus St. Augustine says rightly, ‘Singing is for one who loves,’⁴⁸ and there is also an ancient proverb: ‘Whoever sings well prays twice over’.

40. Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are in principle meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holydays of Obligation.

However, in the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, preference is to be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those which are to be sung by the Priest or the Deacon or a reader, with the people replying, or by the Priest and people together.⁴⁹

41. The main place should be given, all things being equal, to Gregorian chant, as being proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other kinds of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.⁵⁰

Since the faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is desirable that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Profession of Faith and the Lord’s Prayer, according to the simpler settings.⁵¹

Gestures and Bodily Posture

42. The gestures and bodily posture of both the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers, and also of the people, must be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to making clear the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to fostering the participation of all.⁵² Attention must therefore be paid to what is determined by this *General Instruction* and by the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.

A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them.

48 St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* 336, 1: PL 38: 1472.

49 Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musicam sacram*, 5 March 1967, nos. 7, 16: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 302, 305.

50 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 116; cf. also no. 30.

51 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 54; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, no. 59: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 891; Instruction, *Musicam sacram*, 5 March 1967, no. 47: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 314.

52 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 30, 34; cf. also no. 21.

43. The faithful should stand from the beginning of the Entrance Chant, or while the Priest approaches the altar, until the end of the Collect; for the Alleluia Chant before the Gospel; while the Gospel itself is proclaimed; during the Profession of Faith and the Universal Prayer; and from the invitation, *Orate, fratres (Pray, brethren)*, before the Prayer over the Offerings until the end of Mass, except at the places indicated here below.

The faithful should sit, on the other hand, during the readings before the Gospel and the Responsorial Psalm and for the Homily and during the Preparation of the Gifts at the Offertory; and, if appropriate, during the period of sacred silence after Communion.

They should kneel, on the other hand, at the Consecration, except when prevented on occasion by ill health, or for reasons of lack of space, of the large number of people present, or for another reasonable cause. However, those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the Priest genuflects after the Consecration.

It is for the Conference of Bishops, in accordance with the norm of law, to adapt the gestures and bodily postures described in the Order of Mass to the culture and reasonable traditions of peoples.⁵³ However, attention must be paid to ensuring that such adaptations correspond to the meaning and character of each part of the celebration. Where it is the practice for the people to remain kneeling after the Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer and before Communion when the Priest says, *Ecce Agnus Dei (Behold the Lamb of God)*, it is laudable for this practice to be retained.

For the sake of uniformity in gestures and bodily postures during one and the same celebration, the faithful should follow the instructions which the Deacon, a lay minister, or the Priest gives, according to what is laid down in the Missal.

44. Among gestures are included also actions and processions, by which the Priest, with the Deacon and ministers, goes to the altar; the Deacon carries the Evangeliary or *Book of the Gospels* to the ambo before the proclamation of the Gospel; the faithful bring up the gifts and come forward to receive Communion. It is appropriate that actions and processions of this sort be carried out with decorum while the chants proper to them are sung, in accordance with the norms laid down for each.

Silence

45. Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times.⁵⁴ Its nature, however, depends on the moment when it occurs in the different parts of the celebration. For in the Penitential Act and again after the invitation to pray, individuals recollect themselves; whereas after a reading or after the Homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise God in their hearts and pray to him.

Even before the celebration itself, it is a praiseworthy practice for silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred celebration in a devout and fitting manner.

III. THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS OF THE MASS

A. The Introductory Rites

46. The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation.

53 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 40; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction, *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, no. 41: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 87 (1995), p. 304.

54 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 30; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musica sacra*, 5 March 1967, no. 17: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 305.

Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

In certain celebrations that are combined with Mass according to the norms of the liturgical books, the Introductory Rites are omitted or take place in a particular way.

The Entrance

47. When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins. Its purpose 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.

48. This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the dioceses of England Wales the Entrance Chant may be chosen from among the following: the antiphon with its Psalm from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*, or another chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year,⁵⁵ and whose text has been approved by the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales.

If there is no singing at the Entrance, the antiphon given in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation (cf. no. 31).

Reverence to the Altar and Greeting of the Assembled People

49. When they have arrived at the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers reverence the altar with a profound bow.

Moreover, as an expression of veneration, the Priest and Deacon then kiss the altar itself; the Priest, if appropriate, also incenses the cross and the altar.

50. When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of the Cross. Then by means of the Greeting he signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people's response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.

After the greeting of the people, the Priest, or the Deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.

The Penitential Act

51. After this, the Priest calls upon the whole community to take part in the Penitential Act, which, after a brief pause for silence, it does by means of a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the Priest's absolution, which, however, lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance.

From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter Time, instead of the customary Penitential Act, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place as a reminder of Baptism.⁵⁶

The Kyrie Eleison

52. After the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, eleison (*Lord, have mercy*), is always begun, unless it has already been part of the Penitential Act. Since it is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy, it is usually executed by everyone, that is to say, with the people and the choir or cantor taking part in it.

⁵⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, 31 May 1998, no. 50: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 90 (1998), p. 745.

⁵⁶ Cf. below, pp. 0000-0000.

Each acclamation is usually pronounced twice, though it is not to be excluded that it be repeated several times, by reason of the character of the various languages, as well as of the artistry of the music or of other circumstances. When the Kyrie is sung as a part of the Penitential Act, a 'trope' precedes each acclamation.

The Gloria in Excelsis

53. The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) is a most ancient and venerable hymn by which the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other. It is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other.

It is sung or said on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, and also on Solemnities and Feasts, and at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.

The Collect

54. Next the Priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the Priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of being in God's presence and may call to mind their intentions. Then the Priest pronounces the prayer usually called the 'Collect' and through which the character of the celebration finds expression. By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit,⁵⁷ and is concluded with a Trinitarian ending, or longer ending, in the following manner:

- If the prayer is directed to the Father: Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever;
- If it is directed to the Father, but the Son is mentioned at the end: Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever;
- If it is directed to the Son: Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation Amen.

At Mass only a single Collect is ever said.

B. The Liturgy of the Word

55. The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. As for the Homily, the Profession of Faith and the Universal Prayer, they develop and conclude it. For in the readings, as explained by the Homily, God speaks to his people,⁵⁸ opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful.⁵⁹ By silence and by singing, the people make this divine word their own, and affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith; finally, having been nourished by the divine word, the people pour out their petitions by means of the Universal Prayer for the needs of the whole Church and for the salvation of the whole world.

57 Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, IV, 9: *Corpus Christianorum, Series latina* 1, p. 560; Origen, *Disputatio cum Heracleida*, no. 4, 24: *Sources chrétiennes* 67, p. 62; *Statuta Concilii Hipponensis Breviata*, no. 21: *Corpus Christianorum, Series latina* 149, p. 39.

58 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 33.

59 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 7.

Silence

56. The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to favour meditation, and so any kind of haste such as hinders recollection is clearly to be avoided. In the course of it, brief periods of silence are also appropriate, accommodated to the assembled congregation; by means of these, under the action 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.⁶⁰

The Biblical Readings

57. In the readings, the table of God's Word is spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to them.⁶¹ Hence, it is preferable that the arrangement of the biblical readings be maintained, for by them the unity of both Testaments and of salvation history is brought out. Nor is it lawful to replace the readings and Responsorial Psalm, which contain the Word of God, with other, non-biblical texts.⁶²

58. In the celebration of the Mass with the people, the readings are always read from the ambo.

59. The function of proclaiming the readings is by tradition not presidential but ministerial. Therefore the readings are to be read by a reader, but the Gospel by the Deacon or, in his absence, by another Priest. If, however, a Deacon or another Priest is not present, the Priest Celebrant himself should read the Gospel, and moreover, if no other suitable reader is present, the Priest Celebrant should also proclaim the other readings as well.

After each reading, whoever reads it pronounces the acclamation, and by means of the reply the assembled people give honour to the Word of God that they have received in faith and with gratitude.

60. The reading of the Gospel constitutes the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches the great reverence that is to be shown to this reading by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honour, by the fact of which minister is appointed to proclaim it and by the blessing or prayer with which he prepares himself; and also by the fact that through their acclamations the faithful acknowledge and confess that Christ is present and is speaking to them and stand as they listen to the reading; and by the mere fact of the marks of reverence that are given to the Book of the Gospels.

The Responsorial Psalm

61. After the First Reading follows the Responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and which has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God.

The Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should usually be taken from the Lectionary.

It is preferable for the Responsorial Psalm to be sung, at least as far as the people's response is concerned. Hence the psalmist, or cantor of the Psalm, sings the Psalm verses at the ambo or another suitable place, while the whole congregation sits and listens, normally taking part by means of the response, except when the Psalm is sung straight through, that is, without a response. However, in order that the people may be able to sing the Psalm response more easily, texts of some responses and Psalms

60 Cf. *Missale Romanum, Ordo lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera, 1981, no. 28.

61 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 51.

62 Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, no. 13: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 81 (1989), p. 910.

have been chosen for the different times of the year or for the different categories of Saints. These may be used instead of the text corresponding to the reading whenever the Psalm is sung. If the Psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in a way that is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the Word of God.

Instead of the Psalm assigned in the Lectionary, there may be sung either the Responsorial Gradual from the *Graduale Romanum*, or the Responsorial Psalm or the Alleluia Psalm from the *Graduale Simplex*, as described in these books.

The Acclamation before the Gospel

62. After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the Alleluia or another chant laid down by the rubrics is sung, as the liturgical time requires. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the gathering of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel and profess their faith by means of the chant. It is sung by everybody, standing, and is led by the choir or a cantor, being repeated as the case requires. The verse, on the other hand, is sung either by the choir or by a cantor.

- a. The Alleluia is sung in every time of year other than Lent. The verses are taken from the Lectionary or the *Graduale*.
- b. During Lent, instead of the Alleluia, the Verse before the Gospel as given in the Lectionary is sung. It is also possible to sing another Psalm or Tract, as found in the *Graduale*.

63. When there is only one reading before the Gospel:

- a. during a time of year when the Alleluia is prescribed, either an *Alleluia* Psalm or the Responsorial Psalm followed by the Alleluia with its verse may be used;
- b. during a time of year when the Alleluia is not foreseen, either the Psalm and the Verse before the Gospel or the Psalm alone may be used;
- c. the Alleluia or the Verse before the Gospel, if not sung, may be omitted.

64. The Sequence which, except on Easter Sunday and on Pentecost Day, is optional, is sung before the Alleluia.

The Homily

65. The Homily is part of the Liturgy and is highly recommended,⁶³ for it is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life. It should be an explanation of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass of the day and should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.⁶⁴

66. The Homily should ordinarily be given by the Priest Celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating Priest, or from time to time and, if appropriate, to the Deacon, but never to a lay person.⁶⁵ In particular cases and for a just cause, the Homily may even be given by a Bishop or a Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate.

On Sundays and Holydays of Obligation there is to be a Homily at every Mass that is celebrated with the people attending and it may not be omitted without a grave reason. On other days it is recommended, especially on the weekdays of Advent, Lent and Easter

63 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 52; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 § 1.

64 Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, no. 54; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 890.

65 Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 § 1; Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, response to *dubium* regarding can. 767 § 1: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 79 (1987), p. 1249; Interdicasterial Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of Priests, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, 15 August 1997, art. 3: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 89 (1997), p. 864.

Time, as well as on other festive days and occasions when the people come to church in greater numbers.⁶⁶

It is appropriate for a brief period of silence to be observed after the Homily.

The Profession of Faith

67. The purpose of the Symbol or Profession of Faith or Creed is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the Homily and that they may also honour and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use and before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist begins.

68. The Creed is to be sung or said by the Priest together with the people on Sundays and Solemnities. It may be said also at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.

If it is sung, it is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir. It is then sung either by everybody together or by the people alternating with the choir.

If it is not sung, it is to be recited by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other.

The Universal Prayer

69. In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that petitions may be offered for holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world.⁶⁷

70. The series of intentions is usually to be:

- a. for the needs of the Church;
- b. for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- c. for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- d. for the local community.

Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion.

71. It is for the Priest Celebrant to regulate this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he calls upon the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes it with an oration. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community.

They are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful.⁶⁸

The people, for their part, stand and give expression to their prayer either by an invocation said in common after each intention or by praying in silence.

⁶⁶ Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, no. 53: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 890.

⁶⁷ Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 53.

⁶⁸ Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, no. 56: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 890.