

The Role of the Lay Leader

The laypersons appointed should regard the office entrusted to them not so much as an honour but as a responsibility and above all as a service to their sisters and brothers and under the authority of the parish priest.¹ Those who are appointed to such an office “should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to the office”.²

A layperson who leads the assembly acts as one among equals, in the way followed in the liturgy of the hours when not presided over by an ordained minister, and in the case of blessings when the minister is a layperson (“May the Lord bless us...”; “Let us praise the Lord...”). The layperson is not to use words that are proper to a priest or deacon and is to omit rites that are too readily associated with the Mass, for example greetings – especially “The Lord be with you”- and dismissals, since these might give the impression that the layperson is a sacred minister.³

In order that the participants may retain the word of God, there should be an explanation of the readings or a period of silence for reflection on what has been heard. Since only a priest or a deacon may give a homily,⁴ it is desirable that the priest prepare a homily and give it to the leader of the assembly to be read.

¹ Codex Iuris Canonici, 1983, can. 230,3. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, 31.

² Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, art. 28: Formation for the Apostolate. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, page 31.

³ The Roman Ritual, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass, ch.1, no.37. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, page 39.

⁴ Codex Iuris Canonici 1983, can. 766-767. Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, page 43.

Celebrations of the Word with Communion

Introductory Rites

Gathering of the Community

- As the community gathers, people welcome one another. Worship materials are distributed as people arrive.
- The priest's chair remains empty as this is the place for the priest at the Eucharist. The Lay leader of liturgy may sit in the front row (standing to face the people when leading) or may use a special chair at the front.

Gathering Song

- This is the first act of worship of the assembly; it expresses the unity of the assembly and is most appropriately a song of praise.
- There need not be an entrance procession with the minister - they may simply take their places in the assembly.

Liturgical Greeting & Introductory Remarks

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us.

All: Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Leader: Since no priest is available today, we cannot celebrate the Eucharist together. Nevertheless, we have gathered to be nourished by God's word and share Holy Communion. *It is a good idea for the lay leader to make the link to the current liturgical season at this point.*

Opening Rite

Litany of Praise

Leader: Our Saviour is rich in mercy and kindness. Let us give praise to Christ our Lord.

Leader: Jesus, Word of God, you came to reveal God's love to us:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Jesus, risen from the dead, you bring us to new life:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Jesus, Sun of Justice, you bring together the scattered flock of God:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

OR

Penitential Act

Leader: My brothers and sisters,
to prepare ourselves to hear the word of God,
let us call to mind our sins.

After a brief period of silence, the Penitential Rite continues using one of the following forms:

All: I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do,
(and, striking their breast, they say:)
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Sung 'Lord, have mercy' or 'Kyrie'

OR

Leader: Gathered together in Christ, let us sing of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Sung 'Lord, have mercy' or 'Kyrie'

Opening Prayer

A prayer is then said by the leader. This may be chosen from those found in the Sacramentary, or one of the following prayers may be used. Prayers which refer to the celebration of the Eucharist are not appropriate. The lay leader prays the prayer with hands outstretched.⁵

⁵ Lay Leader of Liturgy with sample rites for Sundays, Weekdays and Funeral, Liturgical Commission, Brisbane, 2004. Page 38.

Leader: Let us pray that we will know and do what God wills.
(pause for silent prayer)
God of love,
hear our prayers.
Help us to know your will
and do it with courage and faith.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

OR

Leader: Let us pray that God will watch over us and protect us.
(pause for silent prayer)
Father,
watch over your family and keep us safe in your care,
for all our hope is in you.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

Procession of the Word of God

After the opening prayer the assembly remain standing and sing an acclamation or song. Led by candles the lectionary is carried in procession through the church by a reader and solemnly place on the ambo.

When the singing is finished, the lay leader proclaims: May the Word of God always be heard in this place.

Silence

Allow for a short period of silence after the readings for the community to meditate on God's word.

First Reading

The scripture passages are normally chosen from the readings of the day as outlined in the Lectionary.

Responsorial Psalm

The psalms are a form of song and it is therefore preferable that they be sung.

Second Reading

The scripture passages are normally chosen from the readings of the day as outlined in the Lectionary.

Gospel Acclamation and Gospel

The Gospel Acclamation is intended to be sung, if not sung, it may be omitted. The introductory phrase "The Lord be with you" is omitted before the Gospel.

Scriptural Reflection

The leader or someone appointed by the priest have prepared some reflective thoughts to be shared. In order that the participants may retain the word of God, there should be an explanation of the readings or a period of silence for reflection on what has been heard. Since only a priest or a deacon may give a homily,⁶ it is desirable that the priest prepare a homily and give it to the leader of the assembly to be read.

Profession of Faith [Only on Sunday or Solemnity]

All: I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
At the words that follow, up to and including 'the Virgin Mary', all bow.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

OR

The Nicene Creed.

⁶ Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, Page 43.

General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful)

- Recognizing that we live in solidarity with all our Christian brothers and sisters, who suffer, struggle, or rejoice: This concern should be expressed in the prayers of the faithful.
- Called to become committed in our own social setting by the Word of God, we ponder: what am I (are we) going to do to live out my (our) commitment this week?
 - individual commitment
 - group commitment

An introduction is made by the leader. This is followed by a series of intentions for:

- the needs of the Church,
- public authorities and salvation for the world,
- those oppressed by any need,
- the local community.

A concluding prayer is said by the leader. (The principles upon which the General Intercessions are based can be found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.⁷ These prayers may be written by a person deputed to do so or they may be found in printed editions of this prayer.)

Proclamation of Praise

The leader and the faithful, stand, and facing the altar, together pray a prayer of thanksgiving.⁸

In order to avoid any confusion, this prayer of praise should, under no circumstances, take the form of the Eucharistic prayer. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that one does not borrow from one of the texts of the Eucharistic prayers—such as using the introduction or conclusion to one of them.⁹

The proclamation of praise takes the form of a prayer, litany, song psalm or canticle, each involving the people's participation. It should celebrate the saving work of God as revealed in the Scriptures rather than focus on the Eucharist which is not being celebrated.

The lay leader should not stand at the altar, nor should the blessed Sacrament be placed on the altar at this point. Acclamations from the Eucharistic Prayer should not be used.

OR

⁷ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, pages 45,46.

⁸ Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, #45.

⁹ Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, #45.

Leader: Let us praise God.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Sign of Peace

The leader may invite the people in these or similar words:

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

All and invited to make an appropriate sign of peace according to local custom.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

The Lay leader introduces the Lord's Prayer in the usual way:

Leader: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching we dare to say:
Our Father...

The Deliver us is not said, but the people add the doxology For the Kingdom...

Invitation to Communion

The community remains standing after the sign of peace. A Communion minister brings the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle to the altar. Candles which accompany the minister are placed on the altar.

When all is prepared the leader of prayer or the communion minister who is to lead the Rite of Communion comes to the altar and stands alone facing the assembly.

The bread is never broken and the Lamb of God is never used. After the Lord's Prayer, the lay leader genuflects, hold up a host and says the invitation to communion:

Leader: Behold the Lamb of God...

Communion

- Communion takes place in the usual way without the Precious Blood
- A hymn may be sung during communion. Not all hymns are appropriate – they should not suggest that the Eucharist has been celebrated.
- After communion, what remains of the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the tabernacle and the vessels are purified in the usual way.
- A period of silence is observed.

Prayer After Communion

- Standing at the Altar or at another place, the lay leaders says the Prayer after Communion (before any announcements are made).
- Many of the Prayers after Communion in the Missal will not be appropriate since they presume that the eucharist has been celebrated.

Leader: Let us pray.

After a pause for silent prayer, the leader says:

God blessings,
We have been fed at this table with the bread of heaven.
Give us the food always,
That it may strengthen your love in our hearts
And inspire us to serve you in our brothers and sisters.
Grant this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Concluding Rite

Announcements

Collection

Blessing

The leader does not make the Sign of the Cross over the people. Rather, a prayer asking for God's blessing is said in dialogue with the community. for example, the leader says:

Leader: May the God of hope fill us with every joy in believing.
May the peace of Christ abound in our hearts.
May the Holy Spirit enrich us with gifts for service
Now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

OR

Leader: May the Lord bless us and keep us.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: May his face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: May he look upon us with kindness and give us peace.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: May almighty God bless us,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

OR

Leader: May the peace of God
which is beyond understanding
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: May almighty God bless us,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

OR

Leader: Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Concluding Song

The departure of the leader and ministers from the sanctuary may be accompanied by a song of thanksgiving or instrumental music. Texts which refer to the celebration of the Eucharist are not appropriate.