

***Exerts from: GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL (NZ)
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THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS, ITS ELEMENTS AND PARTS

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', 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.

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.

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.

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. It is possible to use 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, and whose text has been approved by the Conference of Bishops.

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).

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.

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.³⁵

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 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...

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 welcome and greet 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.

The Preparation of the Gifts

74. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory Chant (cf. no. 37 b), which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance Chant (cf. no. 48). Singing may always accompany the rite at the Offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.

The Eucharistic Prayer

79. The main elements of which the Eucharistic Prayer consists may be distinguished from one another in this way:

b. The *acclamation*, by which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the *Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)*. This acclamation, which constitutes part of the Eucharistic Prayer itself, is pronounced by all the people with the Priest...

h. The concluding doxology, by which the glorification of God is expressed and which is affirmed and concluded by the people's acclamation Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

81. In the Lord's Prayer a petition is made for daily bread, which for Christians means principally the Eucharistic Bread...

The invitation, the Prayer itself, the embolism, and the doxology by which the people conclude these things are sung or are said aloud.

The Fraction of the Bread

83. ...

...The supplication *Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)* is usually sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation replying; or at least recited aloud. This invocation accompanies the fraction of the bread and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has been completed. The final time it concludes with the words *grant us peace*.

Communion

86. While the Priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion Chant is begun, its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the 'communitarian' character of the procession to receive the Eucharist. The singing is prolonged for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful.⁷⁴ However, if there is to be a hymn after Communion, the Communion Chant should be ended in a timely manner.

Care should be taken that singers, too, can receive Communion with ease.

88. When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation.

To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the whole Communion Rite, the Priest pronounces the Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

90. To the Concluding Rites belong the following:

c. the Dismissal of the people by the Deacon or the Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God;

d. the kissing of the altar by the Priest and the Deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers.