



*Liturgy of the Word
with Holy Communion in
the Absence of a Priest
Guideline for Lay Leaders*

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FOREWORD

This document, *Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion in the Absence of a Priest*, has been approved for use within the Diocese of Sale.

There are occasions when, for a variety of pastoral reasons, Eucharist cannot be celebrated on Sunday, the Lords Day, or a weekday. This guideline for Lay Leaders provides a framework which draws upon our ritual tradition. This important liturgy is distinct from the celebration of Mass and reflects its uniqueness. Gathering for the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion enables our Catholic communities to remain united in prayer, nourished by Word and Holy Communion, so they may be sent forth as missionary disciples.

Sudden illness or an emergency in the life of a priest may also render it impossible for him to celebrate Mass, so this liturgy would be conducted on such occasions. On other Sundays, parish priest/administrator may seek permission of the local bishop, for a local community to gather for a celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion using this service booklet. It may not always be possible for a supply priest to be engaged to cover weekend masses when a priest is away on annual leave or on retreat. This liturgy is to be used so as not to deny people of communal prayer or the Eucharist. This service booklet will assist lay leaders and communities in gathering in a dignified and prayerful manner to reflect on the Word of God and to receive Holy Communion.

It is imperative lay leaders who are asked to undertake this particular ministry receive appropriate formation and induction. Parish priests must ensure lay leaders are well equipped to conduct a Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion with a sense of beauty, reverence and prayerfulness. In being invited to lead this ministry they unite with their sisters and brothers in a profound expression of faith. This requires of the lay leader a spiritual disposition which acknowledges the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, in the proclamation of the Word, and in the community of believers united in our common baptism.

May this Service Booklet enable communities to gather in honour of the Lord's Day and in union with the Church celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

+Greg Bennet

Liturgy of the Word with Communion

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Gathering
- Greeting
- Introduction
- Penitential Rite
- Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (on a Sunday)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Reflection on the Readings
- (Profession of Faith – on Sundays only)
- General Intercessions
- Collection
- Act of Thanksgiving

COMMUNION RITE

- Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Invitation to Communion
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

CONCLUDING RITE

- Brief announcements
- Blessing
- Dismissal

When Mass cannot be celebrated a Parish community still benefits from the presence of Christ when they gather as God's people to be strengthened by the riches of the Scriptures and the reception of Holy 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 chair at the front.

Gathering Song - [for Sunday Service]

- 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 Lay Leader - 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 for ever.**

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.



Penitential Rite

Leader: Brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this prayerful celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Communion, let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows. After a brief silence:

Leader: Lord Jesus, you come to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom:
Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You come in word and in sacrament to strengthen us and make us holy:
Christ, have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You will come again in glory with salvation for your people.
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**

Opening Prayer

A prayer is then said by the leader. This may be chosen from those found in the Sacramentary, or the following prayer may be used. Prayers which refer to the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) are not appropriate.

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.**

Liturgy of the Word

Allow for a short period of silence after each reading for the community to reflect on God's word.

First Reading

The scripture passages are 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 but this is not compulsory.

[Second Reading]

For Sunday Service and Solemnities

Gospel Acclamation and Gospel

The introductory phrase "The Lord be with you" is omitted before the Gospel.

Scriptural Reflection

It is desirable that the priest prepare a homily and, in his absence, give it to the presider of the service to be read. He may also appoint someone to this task. 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.

[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.

General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful)

It is preferable that the General Intercessions prepared for the day are used. If these are unavailable refer to the Appendix pg 17-18.

Leader: Confident in the love of the Father, let us turn to him with our prayers of intercession.

See General Instruction Roman Missal 70

70. As a rule, the series of intentions is 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.

These prayers may be written by a person invited to do so or they may be found in parish resources for the liturgy to be celebrated.

Leader: Father, be near to your people. Hear and answer our prayers for we trust in your kindness and compassion. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collection



Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Jesus invites us to call on his Father's name: filled with trust in Jesus' power, we pray in his own words:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom,
the power and the glory
are yours now and for ever.

Sign of Peace [optional]

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

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

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

Invitation to Communion

The community remains standing after the Sign of Peace. At the conclusion of the Sign of Peace, the Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist moves to the table and washes their hands. They then go to the tabernacle, open it and remove the ciborium with hosts, leaving the lid at the tabernacle and move to stand behind the Lay Leader. If more than one ciborium is required, the use of a corporal is necessary when placing the ciborium down on the altar or credence table to divide the contents.

When all is prepared, the Extraordinary Minister (or the Leader) 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 sign of peace, the lay leader genuflects/bows, hold up a host and says the invitation to communion:

Leader: This is the bread of life, taste and see that the Lord is good.

All: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion

- *Communion takes place in the usual way.*
- *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 ciborium are purified in the usual way (with water and consumed).*
- *A period of silence is observed.*

Prayer After Communion

- *Standing at the front, the Lay Leader 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 Lay Leader says:

God of 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

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.**

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Concluding Song [optional]

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.

Notes for Lay Leaders

Mass vs Celebration/Liturgy

- Many Catholics don't recognise that worship that doesn't include the Eucharistic Prayer isn't Mass. Please refrain from using the word 'Mass'.
- The Presider's Chair used by the priest when presiding at Mass is left empty as a reminder for all to hope for a time when Mass will again be celebrated in that community.
- The faithful are strongly encouraged to gather in the parish church for a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest, with or without the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Such Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest which are led by a commissioned Lay Leader do not replace the Mass. Rather, these liturgies should cause the gathered community to desire the complete Eucharistic celebration all the more.
- The Church wishes to ensure that on the Lord's Day the faithful should find both active participation and a true spirit of community as well as the opportunity to be renewed spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Their Sunday assembly maintains their communion with the universal and local Church from Sunday to Sunday.
- Sunday celebrations should include the Creed.
- When possible there should be music and a reflection read (the Parish Priest could prepare a Homily to be shared or reflections can be obtained from a reliable source).
- **The Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest is to be celebrated as laid out in this document and should not be adapted.**



Role of the Lay Leader

Since Jesus himself is present in the Eucharist, whenever the community gathers in his name, the ministry of leadership is undertaken in Jesus' name.

Lay leaders facilitate the participation of the community in the words and actions of the celebration, assist the good order of the service and co-ordinate the ministry of others in the liturgy.

- ❖ It is important to use a clear voice with a measured delivery.
- ❖ Encourage the community to respond through reverent gesture and posture.

As appropriate in the Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, Lay Leaders:

- may enter either in procession with the processional cross, the Word and other ministers **OR** take their place informally before the Introductory Rites
- lead the Introductory and Concluding Rites
- invite the assembly to listen attentively to the Word of God and give a brief introduction to the readings
- read the homily prepared by the Parish Priest after the gospel or using sources supplied in the appendix of this document
- lead the Profession of Faith (Creed)
- introduce and conclude the Prayer of the Faithful
- lead the Prayer of Praise
- may assist with the distribution of Holy Communion if no other Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are present
- following a period of silence, lead the Prayer after Communion
- make any announcements.
- pray the Blessing and Dismissal.



Other Important Ministries

The function in the use of ministers is to facilitate the full, active, conscious participation of the whole assembly and remind those gathered we are 'one body'.

❖ **READERS:**

The Liturgy of the Word proceeds as it does for Mass. Where possible reader proclaims the gospel rather than the Lay Leader.

❖ **MUSICIANS:**

Musical participation with hymns and sung responses will assist the assembly to connect with the liturgy. An entrance hymn, the psalm and its response and communion hymn would seem essential for Sunday liturgies.

- Musicians should note that the Eucharistic Acclamations are **not used**.
- In addition the Gloria is not recited or sung before the readings.

❖ **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION:**

At a Sunday Celebration in the absence of a priest, Extraordinary Minister(s) of the Eucharist are used if available. They:

- bring the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle at the beginning of the Communion rite
- leads the community in the Lord's Prayer
- invites the assembly to exchange the Sign of Peace
- makes the invitation to Communion through word and gesture
- receives Holy Communion first from the Leader
- distributes Holy Communion to any other Extraordinary Ministers
- return the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle and remove all empty ciboria to the side table for purification.

Signs, Symbols, Gestures and Other Things

The liturgy speaks to us through signs and symbols. Actions done by the whole community demonstrate our unity as God's people. They enhance our celebration.

Dialogue between God and the community of faith calls for times of silence. Every assembly needs to develop a sense of the rhythm appropriate for words, music, actions and silence.

Pay due attention to the seasons and feasts of the Church, reflected in the introductory comments, scripture readings and music, church environment etc.

The altar candles are lit and the altar used to distribute hosts to multiple ciboria if required.

The Lectern is to be used for the proclamation of the word in the readings and psalm.



Glossary of Terms

Ciborium

The ciborium is often similar in shape to the chalice but has a lid. The ciborium is used to hold the consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle. The plural for ciborium is ciboria.

Corporal

Is the square white cloth placed in the centre of the altar if it is necessary to have multiple ciboria. The corporal is placed on the altar or table and allows any consecrated crumbs to be collected.

Credence Table

A small side table at one side of the sanctuary where liturgical vessels, books, and other items used in the celebration of the liturgy are kept until required for the altar.

PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY

Lay Leaders should be familiar with all necessary procedures, with opening and closing the Church and have access to keys (including the tabernacle).

1. Check the season or feast of the liturgical year. Consult the Ordo or Liturgical Calendar.
2. Find the Opening Prayer and the Prayer after Communion from the Sunday Missal. Have these prayers in a suitable place near the Lectern.
3. Find the readings in the Lectionary and check that the readers are prepared. Assign a reader to proclaim the Gospel.
4. Check those parts of the liturgy where there may be an option to be chosen considering the season or feast.
5. Prepare any comments to introduce the liturgy.
6. Has the priest supplied a homily to be read? Note the resources for reflections in this document.
7. Ensure that the Prayer of the Faithful is prepared and someone is assigned to lead it. Recognition that we live in solidarity with all our Christian brothers and sisters, who suffer, struggle, or rejoice should be expressed in the Prayer of the Faithful. *Note sample 'PoF' are available in the appendix of this document (see pages 17-18).*
8. If they are present, speak with the musicians to confirm the changes in music including the following: **NOT** to be included are the Gloria, Holy Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen and the Lamb of God.
9. Ensure the key for the tabernacle is out. Ensure that there are sufficient consecrated hosts in the tabernacle (if there are not it will be necessary to break the hosts into smaller pieces). If there are insufficient consecrated hosts, Holy Communion will not be possible.
10. Altar candles have been lit.
11. Confirm with collectors that a collection is to be taken and placed in a secure location.

Prayer of the Faithful Sample #1

Leader: God is the source of our strength and our hope. With confidence, let us bring our prayer before the Lord.

Reader: That church leaders will grow ever closer to Christ so that their lives will reflect his teaching, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who have wealth and power will place themselves at the service of those in need, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That Christians everywhere will respond to God's call to discipleship and mission, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That we who are gathered around this table will desire Christ more than wealth or possessions, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who are suffering in mind or body will find healing and consolation through our care and support, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, you have given us a share in the good things of heaven and earth. Hear our prayers that we may welcome you into our midst and make known your saving deeds. We ask this through Jesus your Son.

All: Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful Sample #2

Reader: For the Church and its leaders. May our commitment to the Gospel lead us to deepen our faith and trust in God, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all people of faith throughout the world. May our faith in the love God has for us be expressed in our love for one another, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For our world and its leaders. May all people be treated with the dignity they deserve as God's children, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For our country and those who defend it. May our men and women who serve in the military be kept safe from all harm, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those who are sick, lonely, and depressed. May they be strengthened by God's love and aided by friends and family, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For (special intentions) and all who have died. May they know the peace and fullness of eternal life with God, (pause)
Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God our Creator, guardian of our homes and source of all blessings, you delight in the happiness of your people. Hear the prayers this Church offers and guide our actions toward the building up of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

RESOURCES

RITUAL BOOKS AND MATERIALS FOR PREPARATION AND PLANNING.

1. Roman Missal (Sunday or Weekday)
2. Lectionary 1: Proper of the seasons and Sundays in Ordinary Time
3. ORDO for the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand: the liturgical calendar of the Church's year. (found in the sacristy)
4. Living Liturgy: Diocesan Resource - Online Parish Resource Page

LITURGY RESOURCES:

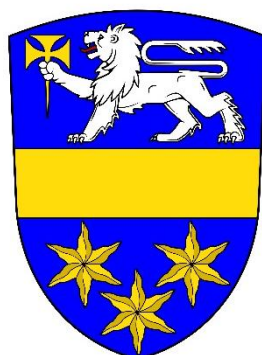
<https://cgatholic.org.au/faith-resources/liturgical-resources/>

REFLECTION RESOURCES

- God's Word - book
- Liturgy Help - online

Acknowledgements:

- General Instruction of the Roman Missal
- Manual for Lay Leaders of Sunday Assembly of the Word and Communion, Ballarat, 2014



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