

# GUIDELINES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE ORDER OF PREACHERS \*

## FOREWORD

1. Although the Order of Preachers adopts the revised Roman Rite, it wished to retain certain elements of its own Rite which communities of friars, nuns or sisters might use *ad libitum*.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the revised Roman liturgical books repeatedly refer to particular customs. And so it seemed necessary to up-date our practices that they might be better attuned to the present time.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the important circumstances of our way of life and our customs, which ought to be in harmony with our particular vocation had to be kept in mind.<sup>3</sup>
2. The conventual structure and the diversity of the communities in which our liturgy is usually celebrated invite us to direct our attention to certain rites, which express the spirit of the Order more fittingly and harmoniously in the liturgy.

For this reason the guidelines which follow are provided to communities of friars, nuns or sisters of the Order as suggestions and give a sense of direction for the correct application of the norms of the new books of the Roman liturgy to our own situation. Later the authorities of the Order can review these Guidelines and interpret them, whether it be for the entire Order or for various provinces, for federations of nuns or for congregations of sisters.

## I GENERAL REMARKS

### *The Nature of Liturgical Assemblies in our Churches*

3. The assembly gathered in our churches to celebrate the liturgy possesses in a sense its own particular character. Here other faithful, who happen to be present gather together with our communities which are bound to the celebration of the Eucharist and the Hours.<sup>4</sup> All, whether community members or other faithful, are called to participate fully in the liturgical action with each person fulfilling his or her proper role.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Arrangement of the Community and the Place of Celebration*

4. Although the liturgical obligation pertains to the community and not the place of celebration,<sup>6</sup> care should be taken that, depending on the type of celebration, the community can pray in a suitable place and take their proper roles.

An arrangement in which the community members face one another rather than the altar<sup>7</sup> fittingly signifies the presence of Christ in the Church at prayer (Mt 18: 20); it is a rich symbol of the contemplative life and of the eschatological dimension of community.<sup>8</sup>

No matter what is done in arranging the worship space, what has been said above should be kept in mind when designing or renovating sacred buildings or when planning various celebrations. Attention should also be given to what is required to enable the faithful to share and participate in our conventual liturgy.

### *Various Roles*

5. The role of presider and the other roles to be exercised in celebrations are determined by the new liturgical books.  
One must keep in mind the practice and customs of our Order to the extent that they are in harmony with the nature of the liturgy and the current liturgical norms.
6. It is the responsibility of the prior or superior of the community to entrust the task of

giving life to the liturgy and of carrying it out properly to a community member who is truly competent in liturgy and chant.<sup>9</sup>

7. In selecting those who are to exercise various roles in liturgical celebration, especially on more solemn occasions, attention should be given to a person's true competence, rather than to custom or seniority in the Order.<sup>10</sup>

However, let us be watchful that all members of the community, as well as the faithful, can actively participate in the celebrations.

At a suitable time, adequate preparation for the ceremonies and the singing should be given to the community; the opportunity to give directions within the liturgical action should not be overlooked.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Progressive Solemnity*

8. The conventual celebration of the liturgy deserves by its very nature to be known for its quality and it is most fitting that it be sung.<sup>12</sup>

The principle of "progressive solemnity" can be applied with profit to music as well as to other aspects of the various liturgical actions.<sup>13</sup> In this way after considering what is possible as well as the rhythm of conventual life and the liturgical seasons, each community will through experience strive to achieve a liturgical life that glorifies the Lord and suitably nourishes the spiritual life of its members.

#### *Presentation of Self in Celebration*

9. Communal prayer is accompanied by gestures and various bodily postures which foster the hearing of the Word of God and the fuller participation of mind and body in common prayer and liturgical celebration.

In the course of time certain appropriate adaptations in bodily postures have been made and certainly will be made in the future. It is important to note, however, that at least some gestures or bodily postures are always necessary in celebration to preserve its harmony and dynamism (see no. 4 above.)

It is commendable that research in this domain is being undertaken and that the participation of the faithful in this kind of prayer, as the occasion permits, has not been forgotten.

10. In order to foster a harmony in celebrations some general guidelines are given here:
  - a) the friars should participate in liturgical celebrations in the apparel prescribed by the liturgical books or in whatever is most appropriate for local conditions. The habit is normally worn for the Liturgy of the Hours, or vesture suited to its celebration.
  - b) Local custom is observed when entering or leaving the place of worship after one reverences the altar or the image of the Saviour, either individually or together.
  - c) In choir and in community celebrations the friars should take their places according to the custom of the Order.<sup>14</sup> However, it is important that those who have a role to fulfil stand in a suitable place and that the singing done by the entire community be such that it can be easily performed.

## II THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONVENTUAL MASS

### *General Guidelines*

11. The conventual Mass, the center of the liturgy of the community,<sup>15</sup> should be celebrated according to the spirit and the rubrics of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Order of Mass*.

Although the conventual Mass does not have any special form of celebration,<sup>16</sup> certain special points arising from its choral nature should be noted.

12. In the communities where there are many concelebrants, care should be taken to maintain the unity of the community, particularly during the Liturgy of the Word.

When the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins, if it seems advisable and if the circumstances of place and persons permit, nothing prevents the friars who are not concelebrating as well as the faithful who are present from entering the sanctuary.

### *Postures at Community Prayer*

13. The postures to be observed at community prayer will be best determined by taking into account local customs and circumstances while bearing in mind the guidelines which follow.

14. As a general rule, community members stand facing the celebrant or the altar:

- a) during the various dialogues with the celebrant;
- b) at the prayers (unless local custom calls for a profound bow);
- c) at the general intercessions;
- d) for all or part of the Eucharist Prayer;
- e) during the Lord's Prayer and the prayers which follow.

15. For the various parts which are sung, whether by the choir or the assembly, the community may either stand or sit, as the case may be.

16. During the reading and the homily all are seated. During the Gospel, all stand and face whoever proclaims it.<sup>17</sup>

17. The Community members make a profound bow:<sup>18</sup>

- a) before the altar at the beginning and end of the celebration, when the Blessed Sacrament is not present in the tabernacle;
- b) if it seems appropriate, during the doxologies of hymns or of vernacular songs;
- c) if desired, during the prayers and the conclusions;
- d) if it seems appropriate, before receiving Holy Communion.

18. If there is a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in the sanctuary, the priest and ministers genuflect before and after Mass.<sup>19</sup>

19. The Community members kneel:

- a) during the Eucharistic Prayer, depending upon local custom;
- b) if it seems appropriate, for the prayers and their conclusions on weekdays of Lent and on days of penance;
- c) during the creed at the words "and became man" on the feast days of the Annunciation and Christmas.<sup>20</sup>

20. Other gestures, as suggested by episcopal conferences<sup>21</sup> or adopted by a community, may better express the meaning of the conventual Mass, e.g. during the penitential rite, at the preparation of the gifts, during the Lord's Prayer or at the sign of peace.

### III THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

#### *Rites to be observed*

21. The communal and public celebration of the Divine Office is carried out according to the rites determined by the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*<sup>22</sup> and particular customs.<sup>23</sup>

Some customs proper to the Order and certain guidelines are given here as suggestions because of their value for providing a harmony and diversity in celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours in our communities.

#### *Presiding at a Celebration.*

22. A Friar who is a priest should preside at Office as hebdomadarian, or, in the absence of the priest, one assigned for this role, or a deacon. In communities of nuns or sisters, a sister assigned for this role presides at the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours or, if it seems appropriate, a priest or deacon who may be present.

According to our practice, the prior or prioress may make certain interventions during the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as preside on particular occasions.

23. The one who presides, even if clothed in the liturgical vestments,<sup>24</sup> takes his place among the friars in the place most suitable for his role, unless the presence of the laity or the solemnity of the day suggest that he be seated in the sanctuary.
24. In addition to the roles assigned the presider in *the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*,<sup>25</sup> others may be assigned in small communities, e.g. reading the lessons, especially when they are short.

#### *Other roles in the celebration of the Office*

25. Hymns, antiphons and psalms, and other chants, are intoned by the cantor or cantors, either from their places or, on more solemn days, in the middle of the choir.
26. Whenever possible, the Invitatory Psalm, responses, intercessions and versicles should be assigned to special ministers who say them either from their places or, if it seems appropriate, in the middle of the choir.
27. The reader should stand a suitable place to proclaim the readings or, if the text is short, in his or her place among the community members.

#### *The festive character of celebrations*

28. When decorating our churches as well as their choirs, we should draw our inspiration from the principles in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*,<sup>26</sup> and the customs of the Order.<sup>27</sup>
29. At the major hours, it is customary to light the altar candles, and, during the Easter season, (from Easter Sunday through Pentecost) the paschal candle as well.
30. During the gospel canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer, the altar and then the presider, the community and the people may be incensed.<sup>28</sup> If it seems more appropriate, incense may be burned in the middle of the choir at these celebrations.

*Posture and gestures of the community*

31. As for the conventual or community Mass, the posture of the community members will be best determined by considering the circumstances of those involved and of the place, and by keeping in mind what follows.
32. The community members stand facing the altar or the image of the Saviour:
  - a) for the introductory verse of each Hour and during the invitatory psalm;
  - b) for the Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer, if it seems appropriate;
  - c) during the prayer of the day and its conclusion, unless a profound bow is made.
33. The two choirs stand facing one another:
  - a) for the hymns;
  - b) for the gospel canticles;
  - c) for the Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer, unless the community faces the altar or the image of the Saviour.
34. During the psalms and all other canticles, the choir is seated, or remains standing, as the case may be. All bow reverently during the doxologies.
35. All remain seated to listen to the readings, except for the solemn proclamation of the Gospel. During the responsories which follow the readings, the community members adopt whenever posture seems most appropriate.
36. The community members make a profound bow:
  - a) to the altar when entering or leaving the choir, if the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved in the tabernacle;
  - b) at the "Glory be to the Father" and the doxology of the introductory verse of each Hour, as well as at the doxologies of the psalms and canticles from sacred scripture;
  - c) during the conclusions of a vernacular hymns and canticles, if these conclusions are true doxologies;
  - d) *ad libitum* during the prayer of the day and its conclusion, unless the community members face the altar or the image of the Saviour;
  - e) *ad libitum* for the blessing at the end of the Hours.
37. If there is a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in the sanctuary, the community members genuflect when entering or leaving the choir.
38. The community members may kneel:
  - a) during the examination of conscience at Night Prayer;
  - b) if it seems appropriate, on the weekdays of Lent and on days of penance, during the prayer of the day and its conclusion;
  - c) during the *Salve Regina*, when it is sung, at the beginning, and from the words *Eia, ergo, advocata nostra* until the word *ostende*.
39. All make the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of the Hours, at the words, "O God, come to our aid."  
They make the Sign of the Cross on their lips at the beginning of the Invitatory, at the words, "Lord, open our lips."

40. Other gestures which provinces or communities have tried may be used, provided that they correspond to the true meaning and character of the various parts of the Office are in harmony with the choral celebration and can provide a stimulus for expressing common prayer.

#### IV. OTHER CELEBRATIONS

##### *General Guidelines*

41. In all liturgical actions, the norms and books of the Roman Rite are to be observed. Due attention should be given to the form of participation best suited to the community and to the way in which it blends with the participation of the laity.

Certain customs of the old Rite of the Order can be maintained if they are in harmony with the spirit of the revised liturgy and with the different parts of the celebration.

##### *The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*

42. The prescriptions contained in the revised *Roman Ritual*<sup>29</sup> are to be observed in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass.

##### *Processions*

43. Where processions are held, the norms of the liturgical books, and, in certain cases, the customs proper to the Order, are to be observed.

The route to be followed, and the stations, if there are to be any, are determined by local conditions. In all this the meaning of the procession should be clearly apparent.

##### *Various Prayers Used in Community Life*

44. As far as the other prayers used in community life are concerned,<sup>30</sup> let our customs be observed, keeping in mind the spirit of the revised liturgy and the guidelines of the present document.

---

\* The text of this document, inasmuch as it is the particular law of the Order, was approved by the General Chapter (1974), which ordered it to be published as the law for all the provinces of the Order to use (ACG 1974, n.172 [ASOP 43 (1977), pp.160-168 and *Notitiae* 14 (1978), pp. 463-469])

This translation, which follows the original text, has at times retained the term "friars." However, these guidelines may be applied to monasteries and congregations *mutatis mutandis*.

---

#### NOTES

1. See ACG 1968, n.58; ACG 1971, n.135.
2. See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life *Perfectae Caritatis* October 28, 1965, n. 3 [Hereafter = PC; DOC 203].
3. See Paul VI Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio* June 29, 1971, n. 3
4. See LCO n.58; LCM. nn.81, 85.
5. See Vatican Council II SC, n. 28 [DOC 28].
6. See GILH, n.262; LCO, n.61 § iii : "When, for a just cause, the Liturgy of the Hours cannot be celebrated in choir, it shall be carried out in another suitable location especially so that the faithful may be able to participate actively in the liturgical prayer of the brethren." See: ACG 1980, n.188.
7. See *Caeremoniale juxta Ritum S.O.P.*, ed. V. Jandel, [Mechliniae, 1869], nn.469-477, especially n.472; *Missale O.P.* ed. A. Fernández (Romae 1965), p. 104 n.5.
8. See Humbert of Romans, *Opera de vita regulari*, ed. J.-J. Berthier, II (Romae, 1889) p.84.

9. See: LCO n. 330; LCM, n. 244; GIRM, nn. 69, 73.
10. See: MSSL, n. 95; MS, nn. 5, 8, 11 [DOC 4126, 4129, 4132].
11. See: SCR (Consilium), Instruction (first) *Inter Oecumenici*, on carrying out the Constitution on the Liturgy, September 26, 1964, n. 13 [DOC 305]; Idem: MS, n.5 [DOC 4126]; GIRM, nn. 21, 73.
12. See MSSL, n. 35; MS, nn. 5, 11 [DOC 4126, 4132].
13. See: GIRM, n.18; GILH, n.273; LCO, n. 65; LCM, n.88.
14. See: LCO n.266; LCM, Ord. 10.
15. See LCO n. 59; LCM, n. 82.
16. See: GIRM n. 76.
17. See: *Ordinarium juxta Ritum S.O.F.P.* (1256), ed. L. Theissling (Romae, 1921), p. 238; *Caeremoniale S.O.P.*, ed. V. Jandel (Mechliniae, 1869), n. 701; *Missale O.P.*, ed. A. Fernández Fernández, n. 10, p. xlvii.
18. According to custom, in choir the profound bow of which the *Roman Missal* speaks [GIRM n. 234] is ordinarily executed in such a way that the hands can be placed upon the knees.
19. See: GIRM, nn. 84, 233.
20. See: GIRM, n. 98.
21. See: GIRM, n.21.
22. See: GILH, nn. 253 - 284.
23. See: GILH, n. 265.
24. See: GILH, n. 255.
25. See: GILH, nn. 256, 257.
26. See: GILH, nn. 253 - 280.
27. See: LCO, n. 65; LCM, n. 90. See also the primitive legislation of the Order, where the mind of Saint Dominic regarding buildings is expressed: "[They are to be built] in such a way that the brethren are not encumbered by debts, and other seculars and religious are not scandalized by the sumptuousness of our edifices." [G. Meersmann, "L' architecture dominicaine au XIII siècle," AFP 16 (1946), p. 146.]
28. See: GILH, n. 261; *Caeremoniale juxta Ritum S.O.P.*, ed. V. Jandel, [Mechliniae, 1869], nn. 1106 - 1115.
29. See SCCD, *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, June 21, 1973 [DOC, n. 125.]
30. See LCO, nn. 7, 11, 69; LCM, nn. 61, 76.