

Sharing the Bread of Life

for

Communion and Mission

A document on the Eucharist

Bishop Crispian Hollis

2011

STUDY BOOK

Sharing the Bread of Life for Communion and Mission

Introduction

Our Pastoral Plan – *Go Out and Bear Fruit* – represents the way ahead for renewal and revitalisation of the Diocese in the context of Pastoral Areas and a diminishing number of priests. It challenges us, above all, to continue to give the Eucharist its rightful place in the centre of our personal lives and in the life of the diocese. The Eucharist affirms our identity, it gives us energy and it strengthens and enables us for Mission.

In 2003, I wrote that “our vision – our hope – is of ourselves as the gathered community of the disciples of the Lord, united in baptism and bonded together in the Eucharist. Our mission is so to live out this communion in the power of the Spirit that we proclaim the Gospel by our words and become the Good News by our way of life.”¹ This vision has not changed in the intervening years and the celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of what we are and seek to become.

It was for this reason that I invited the Diocesan Pastoral Council to reflect with me on the reality of the centrality of the Eucharist in our life as a Catholic community. As a result of these reflections, I now offer this document to the diocese in the hope that it will help us to deepen our appreciation of the awesome reality of the presence of Christ in the celebrations for which we gather day by day and week by week.

We have attempted to deal with the central importance of the Eucharist, whilst, at the same time, considering certain practical points which arise in the Eucharistic life of our communities. The document, therefore, follows a certain progression:

- Who are we when we come together for worship and what does this mean for us?
- How and why do we participate in the Eucharist?
- Why is Sunday – the Lord’s Day – so important for us?
- Why is Mass on Sunday the high point of our spiritual lives?
- What is the place of the weekday Mass?
- What happens when the priest cannot be present?
- Do we always have to have Holy Communion?
- How do lay Ministers of Holy Communion help us to share the Bread of Life?
- What is the proper place for Eucharistic devotions?
- And finally, what is the force of the words of dismissal *Ite Missa est*?
- Do we have a real sense of what it means to be *sent out*?

I am very grateful to the small team who has helped me to put these thoughts together and I commend all that is written here to your study, your reflection and your prayer.

Bishop Crispian Hollis
2011

¹ *Growing Together in Christ*, Communion and Mission in the Diocese of Portsmouth, 2004 [hereafter *GTiC*], 18

1. Gathering together

God calls us

The call to gather comes from God. When we gather, God works in a way that he simply cannot if we do not gather.² Gathering makes us who we are. Once gathered, God calls us to co-operate with him in doing something both ancient and new.

How do we know when we are truly gathered ?

Universal Church and Local Church

First and foremost, God gathers the whole Church throughout the world with Christ as the Head and great High Priest.³ As a sharer in the work of Christ, the Bishop shepherds and gathers his diocesan family to be a reflection of that universal gathering. This is why the Bishop with his diocese is considered the fullest and proper expression of the Church in a locality.⁴ Only in the light of this can a parish or worshipping community call itself a part of the Church.

Liturgical celebrations presided over by the Bishop in the presence of the diocesan family include

– the Chrism Mass (also known as the Mass of the Oils),
and

– the Rite of Election

Both of these are normally celebrated in the Cathedral.

No community can exist in isolation from the rest of the Body. This is why the celebration of Mass in our parishes and communities needs to follow the norms laid down in universal, national or diocesan official liturgical books, as appropriate. Mass can never be seen as simply the celebration of our local community: parish or otherwise. Nor is it the private property of the priest. It is always an action of the whole Church, past, present and future. It is public. It is communal.⁵

Other celebrations which may take place in the Cathedral or elsewhere, presided over by the Bishop, include

– ordinations to the diaconate
and priesthood

– dedications of churches and
altars

– blessings of abbots and
abbesses

– diocesan celebration of
Significant Wedding
Anniversaries

What are we gathering to celebrate?

At the heart of the Mass is the dying, rising and glorifying of Christ. This is the watershed event in the history of the universe. It promises that we may share in the life of the Trinity and pledges that the whole of creation will be returned to the glory and beauty and splendour which is God's intention for it. That wonderful sweep of past, present and future is what we have learned to call the 'Paschal Mystery'. The Mass remembers it; the Mass accomplishes it and foretells it.⁶

² In order that the liturgy may possess its full effectiveness, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, ... and that they co-operate with divine grace, lest they receive it in vain. (Footnote to 2 Cor 6:1) (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* [hereafter *SC*] 11)

³ cf. Hebrews 5:1-10.

⁴ "All should hold in great esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church; they must be convinced that the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers." (Cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Smyrnians*, 8; *To the Magnesians*, 7; *To the Philadelphians*, 4) *SC* 41.

⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [hereafter *CCC*] 1140.

⁶ "Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven,

“Whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is accomplished.”⁷ For Catholics now, as in the past, the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice⁸ is both the source and summit of the whole Christian life.⁹

All of this is made clear in *One Bread, One Body*:

*“The Church is most fully and visibly itself when it gathers for the Eucharist. There the Church expresses what it already is by God’s gift, and what it must more truly become – a community of faith and love, one in Christ, holy by the power of the Holy Spirit, catholic in the integrity of its faith and the universal scope of its outreach, apostolic in its living continuity with the faith of the apostles and the Church throughout the ages. This communion with the Church across continents and centuries is a communion in the Spirit but ‘made flesh’ in a visible way, above all, in the Eucharist and through the bishops and priests who preside at the Eucharist. This intimate link between the Church and its celebration of the Eucharist is an essential point to remember...”*¹⁰

What appeals to you most about this description of the Church ?

Does anything surprise you ?

The ‘Body of Christ’

When we use the term ‘Body of Christ’ it’s natural to think of the ‘Body of Christ’ received in Holy Communion. But the word also means ‘the Church’.¹¹

When we say that the Church *is* the Body of Christ, we need to remember that this is part of the divine ‘shape of things to come’. Christ’s Church, humanly speaking, is a ‘work in progress’.¹² It is always growing, developing and changing.

It is the celebration of Mass that brings the Church ever closer to that wonderful goal, to be the hands and voice of Christ,¹³ the Body with Christ as its head.¹⁴ Vatican II says that the destiny of the Church is to be

and as we look forward to his second coming,
we offer you in thanksgiving
this holy and living sacrifice.”

Eucharistic Prayer III (Roman Missal, revised translation)

⁷ *Prayer over the Offerings for Maundy Thursday* (Roman Missal, revised translation)

⁸ “We offer you his Body and Blood,
the sacrifice acceptable to you

which brings salvation to the whole world.” (*Eucharistic Prayer IV*)

⁹ cf. SC 10

¹⁰ *One Bread, One Body* (hereafter *OBOB*), a teaching document on the Eucharist in the life of the Church, and the establishment of general norms on sacramental sharing: Catholic Bishops’ Conferences of England & Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, CTS (London) and Veritas (Dublin), 1998, para 19: ISBN 1-86082-048-4

¹¹ “Those who have received the grace of baptism are not saved as individuals alone but as members of the Mystical Body, having become part of the People of God. It is important, therefore, that they come together to express fully the very identity of the Church, the *ekklesia*, the assembly called together by the risen Lord.” *Dies Domini* 3:31

¹² “Beneath the pulse of the workaday world there is the heartbeat of another, deeper rhythm that is the eager looking forward, week by week getting closer, to the return of the Lord. That is the rhythm of the liturgy, the heartbeat of the Church.” (Source unknown)

¹³ “Liturgy is an ‘action’ of the *whole Christ* (*Christus totus*).” CCC 1136

¹⁴ “Now Christ’s body is yourselves, each of you with a part to play in the whole.” (1 Cor 12:27) “The Church is his body, he is its head.” (Col 1:12) Cf. also Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body now but yours, no hands to do his work but yours...”

“the sacrament of salvation” for humankind.¹⁵ In a sense, gathering is itself a sacrament.¹⁶

What is the Mass, anyway ?

In many of the reformed traditions, the liturgy celebrated is not the same as the Mass. One principal difference is that, while there will be a Liturgy of the Word, there may be no Liturgy of the Eucharist. Other Christian Churches do have a Liturgy of the Eucharist, but not all of them are recognized as valid by the Catholic Church.

The sacrificial meal of the Eucharist in the Catholic Church consists of four main elements: (1) Gathering Rites, (2) Liturgy of the Word, (3) Liturgy of the Eucharist (which includes the Communion Rite), and (4) Rites of sending forth for Mission.

1. Gathering together

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. *When does Mass begin ?*
2. *When does Mass begin **for you** ?*
3. *How do you prepare ?*
4. *Is it different preparing for a Saturday or Sunday evening Mass than for one on Sunday morning ? Why ?*

Further questions

5. *Is there a difference between going to church and going to Mass ?*

¹⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 48

¹⁶ “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt 18:20)

Suggested outline for Discussion Session 1: Section 1 – Gathering Together

10 mins Welcome, introductions

10 mins ***Time of Prayer***

Leader We gather in the name of the Father,
All **who created humanity in all its richness and diversity.**
Leader We gather in the name of the Son,
All **who gathered with saints and sinner,
sharing bread and fish, water and wine,
delighting in the company of those who came to feast on his word.**
Leader We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit,
All **who gathers God’s people into a communion of love.**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:20 + a brief silence for reflection

Leader Be with us, Lord, as we come together in your name
to reflect on the gift of the Mass.
Open our minds and hearts
to deepen our appreciation of the privilege you offer
when we gather at your table with our sisters and brothers.
All **Amen.**

10 mins ***Everyday life***

Discussion:

In your everyday life, when do you get together with other people? Why? (insert prompts e.g. to celebrate, to mourn, to show solidarity) What does it feel like? What do you do? Do you think there is a difference between being in the same place as other people and being ‘gathered’?

20 mins ***Church experience***

Read the sections ‘God calls us’ and ‘Universal Church and Local Church’

Discussion:

Think of different Church gatherings you have been part of e.g. in your own parish, a Pastoral Area liturgy, a diocesan liturgy, a pilgrimage.

What was it like to be a part of these gatherings?

Did you feel you were ‘truly gathered’?

How did you know this?

When does Mass begin?

When does Mass begin *for you*? How do you prepare?

15 mins ***Going deeper***

Read the sections ‘What are we gathering to celebrate?’ and ‘The ‘Body of Christ’

Underline words and phrases that stand out for you. Why do you think these are important? Share your thoughts with one or two other people.

10 mins ***Implications***

What has struck you in this session that will make a difference to the way you prepare for Mass? To the way you gather with others to celebrate Mass?

What might you do to enhance the ‘gathering together’ part of Mass in your parish?

10 mins

Time of Prayer

Everyone is invited to spend a few moments in silence to reflect on what they have seen, heard, reflected on during the session.

The following litany of gathering may be used as it is – or as the basis of your own litany, using insights from your shared discussions and reflections:

With our families and our friends — **We gather in your name, Lord.**
With the strangers in our midst —
With the lost and the lonely —
With the young and the old —
With the sick and the frail —
With the healthy and the active —
With those from other races and nationalities —
With our bishop and our priests —
...
With the whole people of God —

Leader May God bless us as we close our meeting,
 and keep us mindful of what we are doing
 when we gather:
 in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All **Amen.**

2. Participation

What is participation?

Participation in liturgy is about more than *my* personal presence and what *I* do – it is essentially something communal. Therefore, even before we gather, we must think carefully about the ways in which we encourage (or discourage) the members of the Body of Christ, and those who are not yet part of that Body, to come together with us.

The key parts of this process are

- ❖ witness
- ❖ invitation
- ❖ welcome

How do we, both individually and collectively, show ourselves to be people of faith, hope and love? Without external indications of these qualities, how would anyone come to know Christ as their Lord and Saviour? As Paul VI said, the world “listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if it does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”.¹⁷

Good **witness** will ensure that our invitation has a better chance of being well received. We must never be so private about our beliefs that we don’t feel able to make that invitation. This means looking outwards, not inwards, even if our natural inclination is to be reticent!

Giving witness does not necessarily mean standing on street corners and shouting to passers-by about the Good News of Jesus. We can give witness to our faith by the kind of lives we lead, and by our attitude to other people, as well as by what we may say to them about what we believe. Witnessing is about encouraging others, not about telling them they’re wrong.

If someone does respond positively to our **invitation**, we need to make sure that the welcome they receive, both at the door and inside the church, is clear and heartfelt. This applies not only to those who are new to us but also to those who may have been with us for many years.

Further, our **welcome** must be inclusive so that all members of society, of whatever background or need, will feel at home. Sustaining a proper welcome requires constant effort and sensitivity. But it is worthwhile because it helps everyone to respond wholeheartedly to God’s saving initiative in the Eucharist.

Participation at Mass

The principal ways in which we become caught up in God’s initiative at Mass are:

- ❖ the worthy proclamation of the word
- ❖ our attentive listening to that word
- ❖ our heartfelt prayer (both sung and spoken) in response to that word
- ❖ our full engagement in the sacrifice of Christ made present at the altar
- ❖ being sent out to love and serve the Lord in others

Which of these ways of participation do you think is the most inclusive?

What might improve the proclamation of the word?

How might we listen more attentively?

How might we make our response more heartfelt?

How might we become more engaged in the sacrifice of Christ?

*Do we actually realise that we are genuinely being sent out **to do something**?*

¹⁷ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 41

Ways of participating

None of these ways is passive – even listening. All of these ways require everyone to be involved. We know, of course, that it is possible to take part at different levels, depending on how in tune we are with what is happening. Sometimes our participation can be almost perfunctory – we are there in body, but our minds are elsewhere. At other times our involvement is much deeper, and we experience a real sense of communion with God and those with whom we are celebrating.

We see this clearly in Acts, where St Luke writes “The whole group of believers was united heart and soul.”¹⁸ This community was so powerfully attractive to others that they were eager to join it: “They remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers...they were looked up to by everyone. Day by day, the Lord added to their community those who were being saved.”¹⁹

“Our vision – our hope – is of ourselves as the gathered community of the disciples of the Lord, united in baptism and bonded together by Christ in the Eucharist. ‘This is our faith; this is the faith of the Church: we are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus, our Lord’²⁰.”²¹

“Assembly” is the word often used to describe everyone involved in the celebration – i.e. ministers as well as the congregation. A good assembly has a sense of *being church*. The Greek word for assembly or church, *ekklesia*, literally means “those who are called out to be together”.

We celebrate together

Although the Mass is one corporate act of worship, there is nonetheless an inexhaustible richness that particularly comes to the one who is the principal celebrant of the Mass. I’m now in my 46th year of priesthood and I have been privileged to celebrate Mass on almost every day of those years; and I am finding more and more how absolutely indispensable it is to me as I enter more and more deeply into my calling to minister to the disciples of Christ. While there might be certain circumstances in which a priest might celebrate Mass alone, in normal ministry a priest will always celebrate with others.²² After all, the Mass is the primary means by which *together* we discover our identity – and our glory – as the chosen people of God.

We need to strain every muscle to maintain the Mass as central to the life of our diocese. That also means encouraging, as best we can, men to hear the call of the Lord to ordained priesthood and, in answering that call, offer themselves for this sublime ministry of service to the people of God. But this by no means implies that there is no such thing as the priesthood of all believers. When Mass is celebrated, it is the priest who presides but the people celebrate with him, and together with him offer sacrifice and praise to God.

A deeper understanding of taking part

We are well used to speaking about participation in Mass. But this participation is so much more than speaking responses and singing acclamations. Most basically, we participate in the priestly act of Christ

¹⁸ Acts 4:32

¹⁹ Acts 2:42-47

²⁰ *Rite of Baptism for Children* 59

²¹ cf. *GTiC*, paras 15-18

²² cf. *Code of Canon Law* [hereafter *CCL*] 906: “A priest may not celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice without the participation of at least one of the faithful, unless there is a good and reasonable cause for doing so.” *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [hereafter *GIRM*], version for England & Wales, 2005, para 254: “Mass should not be celebrated without a minister, or at least one of the faithful, except for a just and reasonable cause.”

because we are baptised into that act: Christ giving himself to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.²³ It is in this that we participate. Our active participation in the Mass is no less than an expression of that. Only in this context can actions proper to different ministries – whether ordained, instituted or otherwise – have their meaning. The principal minister is Jesus Christ. Each of us, according to our order or role, participates in his ministry accordingly. For most of us, Sunday Mass is the place where this is most clearly experienced.

2. Participation

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. *What are we participating in ?*
2. *What does active participation mean for us ?*
3. *Might there be other ways of participating that we have not thought of ? For example, how do we **pray the silences** ?*
4. *Do we really feel part of a group of people who are doing something **together**, or is it more like a group of individuals who just happen to be in the same building at the same time and are all "doing their own thing" ?*
5. *What do we choose not to do, in order that we can come together to celebrate?*

²³ Liturgy is OF God, not merely about God (cf. Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, Pueblo 1984/Liturgical Press 1992), pp. 96ff.: ISBN 978-0-8146-6067-6).

Suggested outline for Discussion Session 2: Section 2 – Participation

10 mins Welcome, introductions

10 mins ***Time of Prayer***

Leader We gather in the name of God who is Three-in-One,
All **the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**

Leader In the name of the Father:
All **who calls us to participate
in the unfolding of the great work of creation.**

Leader In the name of the Son:
All **who calls us to participate
in the work of his disciples and friends,
to be his Body in the world.**

Leader In the name of the Spirit:
All **who calls us to participate
in sharing the abundance of gifts and fruits.**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28: 16-20 + a brief silence for reflection

Leader We gather in the spirit of the Holy Trinity,
Three Persons participating in the fullness of the One God:
may their communion of love inspire our meeting
and sharing of our own gifts and insights.

All **Amen.**

10 mins ***Everyday life***

Discussion:

In your family, work, leisure: think of the different ways in which people participate in the activities (e.g. watching a football match on TV, being at the football match in person, playing in a football match, being the mother of the goalkeeper...)

20 mins ***Church experience***

Discussion:

Read the sections ‘What is participation?’ and ‘Participation at Mass’

How well do you witness, invite and welcome?

Looking at the ways of participating at Mass:

Which of these ways of participation do you think is the most inclusive ?

What might improve the proclamation of the word ?

How might we listen more attentively ?

How might we make our response more heartfelt?

How might we become more engaged in the sacrifice of Christ ?

Do we actually realise that we are genuinely being sent out *to do something* ?

15 mins ***Going deeper***

Read the sections ‘Ways of participating’ and ‘A deeper understanding of taking part’

Underline words and phrases that stand out for you. Why do you think these are important? Share your thoughts with one or two other people.

3. Why Sunday?

Sunday Mass is at the heart of our Catholic practice.

It is not by chance that we place so much emphasis on the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays. Sunday is the day of the resurrection. The Apostles began to call it 'The Lord's Day'. Sunday is the day of the Eucharist, when the two disciples walked with Jesus and "recognised him in the breaking of bread".²⁴ We celebrate the Risen Jesus present in the midst of his people. Therefore

"the Sunday celebration of the Lord's day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the Church. Sunday is 'observed in the universal Church as the primary holyday of obligation'²⁵, and taking part in Mass every Sunday is a 'testimony of belonging and being faithful to Christ and to his Church'^{26,27}

Following the biblical tradition of the Sabbath, which is observed from dusk till dusk, the Church marks the Lord's Day from dusk on Saturday. As such, the practice of celebrating Sunday Mass on a Saturday evening honours the Church's observance of this day.

All this points to the centrality of Sunday and the Sunday Liturgy in our very secular lives of today and leads us on to consider now the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist in our life as a diocesan community, the gathered community of the disciples of Christ in this place. In the rush and complexities of modern living, it is easy for us to lose our sense of the value of sacred time. As Christians, we must be mindful of the need to achieve a balance between the different facets of our human lives. The Lord's Day must not become a casualty of the pressures of modern life.

Sunday obligation

Many people seem to ride light to the Sunday obligation in our present climate but I want to reaffirm the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays. This obligation is founded, not just in Canon Law, but more deeply, in the Mystery of our salvation, the nature of the Lord's day itself. "The very act of coming together for Mass on Sunday is a proclamation of our faith and commitment." It is "a witness to the world"²⁸, and a strong demonstration of our commitment to our discipleship of Christ.

Presence at Mass on the Lord's Day must never be seen merely as the fulfilment of a legal obligation but the very way in which we remain faithful to Christ, the Church and our local community. For this reason, any absence from the Sunday celebration amounts to a loss to the individual person, to the community, to the Church, and to Christ. As one writer has expressed it: "You have to be there. *You* have to be there."²⁹

For pagan commentators on the early Church, the primary mark that distinguished Christians was the fact that they gathered together on a fixed day. It was there that their persecutors found them; it was this that they were accused of, and it was this for which the martyrs of Abitina (put to death in Carthage in AD 304) proudly defended themselves when they faced the Roman governor:

"As if a Christian could exist without the Sunday assembly, and as if this day could be celebrated without Christians! One cannot exist without the other."

Their leader, Emeritus, summed it up like this: *Sine dominica non possumus* – "Without Sunday we cannot exist."

Holydays of obligation are "honorary Sundays" in the eyes of the Church.

²⁴ Luke 24:13-34

²⁵ CCL 1246 §1

²⁶ CCC 2182

²⁷ OBOB 54

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Gabe Huck: "You have to be there: liturgy requires bodies", *Pastoral Music*, June/July 1998

3. Why Sunday?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. How are Sundays different if you don't go to Mass ?*
- 2. What is missing if you don't go ?*
- 3. Why do you think the Church considers it so important to place an obligation on you to be at Sunday Mass ?*
- 4. Why is it not complete without you ?*

Further questions

- 5. Why not just have Mass on a Tuesday evening instead ?*
- 6. How might this separate the local community from the wider Church ?*

4. Sunday Mass

Sunday is the day when the whole community of believers gathers. The Eucharist offered on that day is the most sublime and important action that we can undertake.

Since it is truly the moment when we share in the saving work of Christ and are united with him and he with us in an extraordinary and unique act of worship, we need to ensure that every Mass is prepared and celebrated with the utmost care and commitment.³⁰ Only in this way will Sunday Mass continue to be a much-anticipated high point in our week.

Helping us to celebrate well

In order to ensure that Mass is well-prepared and celebrated, we need to be mindful of the foundation provided by our liturgical books, especially the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* and our national commentary *Celebrating the Mass*, the *General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, and help available from our diocesan liturgy committee. Sacred liturgy is never just the action of ‘our parish alone’: it is the action of the whole Church.

That being said, no two communities are the same, and for that reason the rites allow for a certain pastoral flexibility, the parameters of which are indicated in the relevant documents. For instance, a Liturgy of the Word with children is highly recommended,³¹ on the understanding that it is a genuine celebration of word and prayer rather than an opportunity for other activities, and does not unduly affect the unity of the whole Mass. Diocesan guidelines and recommended resources give much practical help in this and other areas.

Practical considerations

“This diocese wants to ensure that Sunday Mass continues to be celebrated as widely as possible by as many people as possible.”³²

- ❖ As numbers of priests diminish, and local populations shift and change their character, it is becoming increasingly important to reassess the provision of Mass within a given Pastoral Area. Co-ordination of times and locations of the celebration of Mass is only one part of this process. A different, more flexible way of thinking is necessary on the part of both clergy and laity. For instance, in some Pastoral Areas, a collaborative approach has in fact led to a greater availability of Masses.
- ❖ In the discussion that preceded the writing of this document, a number of you noted – and rightly so – that the celebration of Mass is not just a function but an action which demands concentration, reverence and a deep sense of commitment from all present. An undue multiplication of Masses risks compromising these demands and dissipating the energies of priests and the cohesion of communities. In other words, we should not be spreading priests *or* people too thinly.
- ❖ In fact, the Church envisages a priest celebrating a maximum of three Sunday Masses (including Saturday evening), and then only where there is clear pastoral need and with the permission of the Bishop. Even less is there permission for a priest to celebrate four or more Masses, though a number are already doing this.

³⁰ *Go Out and Bear Fruit* (hereafter *GOBF*), a Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Portsmouth, 2005, p. 6

³¹ cf. *Directory on Masses with Children* 17

³² *GOBF* p. 6.

Perhaps in the end, a very apt summary of all the discussion rests in the truth that Sunday Mass is about the Lord and it is a celebration of the Lord's Day for those who are the disciples of Christ. It strengthens and builds *communion* and is vital for the ongoing *mission* to which we are committed in the light of our discipleship every moment of every day.³³

4. Sunday Mass

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. What does it mean to celebrate well ? How do you give yourself to the celebration ?*
- 2. Does the Mass schedule in our parish or Pastoral Area enable priest and people to celebrate worthily ?*
- 3. What have we done so far in our parish or Pastoral Area, and what remains to be done, to enable this to become a reality ?*

³³ cf. *GTiC* 5, 7ff.

**Suggested outline for Discussion Session 3:
Section 3 – ‘Why Sunday?’ and Section 4— ‘Sunday Mass’**

10 mins Welcome, introductions

10 mins ***Time of Prayer***

Leader We gather in the name of the Father,
All **whose mighty work of creation ended in Sabbath –
a day of rest to be sanctified for all time.**

Leader We gather in the name of the Son,
All **whose resurrection on the third day
made Sunday the Lord’s own day,
a day of joy-filled remembrance.**

Leader We gather in the name of the Spirit,
All **whose graces poured forth on the Sunday of Pentecost,
breathing wind and fire into the souls of the disciples,
sending them out to transform the world.**

Scripture Reading: John 20: 19-23 + a brief silence for reflection

Leader From the beginning of time,
God set aside and made holy one day in each week.
May God bless our reflections as we deepen our appreciation of this gift.
All **Amen.**

10 mins ***Everyday life***

Discussion:

How has Sunday changed during your lifetime? (e.g. what people do on a Sunday)

20 mins ***Church experience***

Discussion:

Read the sections ‘Why Sunday?’ and ‘Sunday obligation’

1. How are Sundays different if you don’t go to Mass ?

2. What is missing if you don’t go ?

3. Why do you think the Church considers it so important to place an obligation on *you* to be at Sunday Mass ?

4. Why is it not complete without you ?

15 mins ***Going deeper***

Read the section ‘Sunday Mass’

Underline words and phrases that stand out for you. Why do you think these are important? Share your thoughts with one or two other people.

10 mins ***Implications***

How can you make Sunday “a celebration of the Lord’s Day” in your own life?

What has happened in your Pastoral Area ensure that Sunday Mass is celebrated as widely as possible by as many people as possible? What else needs to happen?

10 mins ***Time of Prayer***

Everyone is invited to spend a few moments in silence to reflect on what they have seen, heard, reflected on during the session.

The following litany of thanksgiving may be used as it is – or as the basis of your own litany, using insights from your shared discussions and reflections.

For the gift of the Mass – **We thank you, God.**
For a day of rest –
For a day of holiness –
For a day on which we remember that we are more than our work –
For a day of remembrance –
...
For the day which unites the whole people of God –

Leader May God increase our love of Sundays as a day of rest and holiness –
 a day to live in unity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world.
 In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

All **Amen.**

5. Weekday Masses

A more intimate gathering

When there are celebrations of Mass during the week in the parish, this can be a rather more intimate occasion than a parish Mass at a weekend. Thought may well be required as to layout of seating for smaller numbers.³⁴ One of my particular joys is to be able to take my turn celebrating the 7.30am Mass in St John's Chapel at the Cathedral, which provides an opportunity for Eucharist to some of those who are on their way to or from work. For me, such Masses contrast with the grander celebrations that form so much a part of my diocesan ministry. Nevertheless, both forms of celebration can and should include periods of silent prayer, singing and ritual movement.

When you invite people to dinner in your home, you arrange the furniture rather differently if you have only two guests compared to when you have, say, eight of them. The same sort of thing should be true as we gather around the table of the Lord's Supper.

Sensitive scheduling

Often there will be a need to balance the needs of the different groups of people who wish to come, and this will have an impact not only on timing but on location. For instance, the *Order of Christian Funerals* says that scheduling of weekday Mass should take into consideration provision for funerals in order that bereaved families can be enfolded in the spiritual support and consolation of the local community.³⁵ Some parishes may have a weekday Mass in a local school, for example, on a holyday. Much as it may be desirable to have consistency of Mass times during the week, in practice the pastoral care of all these different groups makes it very difficult to achieve.

Some parishes have a "ministry of consolation" or bereavement ministry, people whose role is to give profound witness to the presence of Christ in the assembly, by accompanying the mourners, by helping to surround them with prayerful music, by welcoming them unconditionally, even if they may not have been to church for many years.

Preaching

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* encourages a homily at weekday Mass.³⁶ My own view – and indeed my own practice – is always to preach even the briefest of homilies at weekday Masses. The Word has been proclaimed and it needs to be broken – not perhaps with great erudition and preparation – but simply as a way of sharing faith with those who gather for these weekday celebrations. In any case, there should always be time for silent reflection on the readings,³⁷ and for intercessory prayer.³⁸

³⁴ *GIRM* 311: "Places for the faithful should be arranged with appropriate care so that they are able to participate in the sacred celebrations, duly following them with their eyes and their attention." *Consecrated for Worship* [hereafter *CFW*] 135: "Seating arrangements which encourage people to sit apart from their brothers and sisters in Christ or which encourage people to watch passively should be avoided." *CFW* 138: "Since weekdays services are generally less well attended, particular attention should be given to how to provide seating arrangements for these services which will encourage the community to draw together, rather than spreading to the extremities of the church."

³⁵ "The rites should be scheduled at times that permit as many of the community as possible to be present." (*Order of Christian Funerals* 11)

³⁶ *GIRM* 66

³⁷ *GIRM* 45, 55, 56

³⁸ *GIRM* 55, 69

*Combining Mass with the Divine Office*³⁹

Another practice, provided for in the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*,⁴⁰ is the combination of the Prayer of the Church with the celebration of Mass, including the incorporation of the Benedictus or Magnificat after Communion. If this is done, we should be careful to avoid any confusion between the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours combined with Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours combined with the distribution of Communion.

Sunday Mass is the norm

Having said all this, we need to remember that Sunday Mass is the norm, and weekday Mass must always be seen as a welcome privilege whenever it is possible to have such a celebration.

5. Weekday Masses

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. Do we pay enough attention to the human aspects of the way people are seated ? Do we sometimes have the impression that people are seated as far away from each other as possible? Or do we feel that we are trying to break into a tightly-knit clique ?*
- 2. What are some of the practical ways we could do something about this ?*
- 3. At parish funerals, how do the mourners relate to the "regulars"? Do they feel enfolded by their presence or isolated at the front of the church ?*
- 4. How could we better show the presence of the Body of Christ at funerals in the way we arrange the seating ?*

³⁹ 'Divine Office', also known as 'the Prayer of the Church' and 'the Liturgy of the Hours' is the Church's official form of daily prayer, contained in the Breviary; it is mandatory for religious and those in holy orders, but also recommended for use by all the faithful.

⁴⁰ *GILH* 93-99

6. Celebrations in the absence of a priest

Liturgies of Word and Communion

Discussion about weekday Mass brings us properly to consider the place that Liturgies of the Word have in the day-to-day life of a parish when no priest is available – and it's worth remembering that it is legitimate and in fact necessary for a priest to take a day off.

It is important to re-emphasise that a Liturgy of Word and Communion cannot in any way be seen as a substitute for the celebration of Mass. We are not a Eucharistic community because we celebrate Liturgies of Word and Communion. We are a Eucharistic community because we celebrate Mass. In other words, receiving Communion outside Mass is not the same as participating in the celebration of Mass. The first derives its meaning from the second. For this reason, I believe that attendance at Mass is preferable to any other form of weekday liturgy.

That being said, there is a place for liturgies of Word and Sacrament. They make it possible for the community to gather to pray; they offer opportunities for a diversity of ministry; they are a moment of daily prayer in the life of the community as well as for the individual. They can be an opportunity for the community to hold in prayer the sick and housebound, to whom Communion can be taken as an ongoing part of the celebration. This is especially commended when Communion cannot be taken to them directly from Mass.⁴¹

The Prayer of the Church

These celebrations can be an opening up of the Scriptures, and particularly the Psalms, for many who are not so familiar with them. They can be an introduction to the Prayer of the Church, which means, as the hymn puts it, "The voice of prayer is never silent nor dies the strain of praise away. The sun that bids us rest is waking our brethren 'neath the western sky and, hour by hour, fresh lips are making thy wondrous doings heard on high."⁴² To be part of this universal prayer and praise of God is a wondrous privilege and it introduces us into a spirituality that I would want to both endorse and encourage. The Prayer of the Church is not just for those bound to pray the Divine Office: it is for all; and, as such, is yet another of the best-kept secrets of the Church. In our diocese, Divine Office with distribution of Communion is in fact the preferred option over services of Word and Communion.⁴³ Some people find the Divine Office too complex, so it is worth noting that simplified alternatives do exist.⁴⁴ Liturgy groups might like to consider offering a session for parishioners to explore the riches of this form of prayer.

Other possibilities

As I have already said, Liturgies of Word and Communion cannot replace the celebration of Mass and for this reason, except in emergencies, they should not form part of the Sunday diet of any congregation. I do

⁴¹ The Church in fact recommends that where Communion is distributed outside Mass, the hosts should come from an identifiable Mass that has taken place somewhere in the locality. cf. *Directory on Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, 1988, para 47.

⁴² Hymn – *The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended*

⁴³ Diocese of Portsmouth, *Celebrations of the Divine Office with Communion, or of the Word and Communion* (2002), Introductory Notes 7: "In the first part are given details of Divine Office combined with the distribution of communion. *This is the preferred option in the Diocese of Portsmouth.*"

⁴⁴ For example:

A Time of Prayer, Daily Prayer for Groups and Individuals for Morning, Evening or any time of day, CTS, 2005: ISBN 1-86082-299-1

Shorter Morning and Evening Prayer, Collins, 2005: ISBN 978-00-0721987-2

The People's Companion to the Breviary with Seasonal Supplement, Carmelites of Indianapolis, 2 volumes: ISBN 1-886873-12-7

appreciate that these liturgies have increasingly become a feature of our parishes on weekdays when the priest is away; but a service of Word and Communion is only one possibility among a number of options. Indeed, proper consideration should also be given to Liturgies of the Word or celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours *only*.⁴⁵

Collaborative liturgical leadership

Liturgical leadership in the worshipping communities and the Pastoral Areas will always be primarily invested in the clergy but this does not of course preclude the sharing of leadership and responsibilities within the community. There is wisdom and a wealth of experience among our lay people that needs to be engaged. That is one reason why our Pastoral Plan asks that every Pastoral Area have a liturgy group.⁴⁶ Permanent deacons can be well placed to facilitate the participation of lay people in liturgical ministry.

A Liturgy celebrating the Word can have many different structures. Here is an example of a simple one:

- Gathering **Song**
- Sign of the Cross & Opening **Prayer**
- Scripture **Reading**
- Extended **silence** for reflection
- Reader **re-reads** two or three lines or a phrase from the Reading
- Responsorial **Psalm**
- Silent **pause**
- Gospel **Procession** with song
- Gospel **Reading**
- **Homily** or shared **reflection** on the Word
- **Veneration** of the Book of the Gospel by all
- **Intercessions** with silences
- Closing Prayer and **Blessing**
- Closing **Song**

6. Celebrations in the absence of a priest *QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION*

1. *What are the differences between Mass and a Liturgy of Word and Communion ?*
2. *When is it appropriate for a Liturgy of Word and Communion to happen ? Why shouldn't it replace the Sunday Mass ?*
3. *What do you think collaborative liturgical leadership would look like ?*
4. *If you were asked to be part of a team of people responsible for a celebration in the absence of a priest, what sort of training and formation would be helpful for you ?*

⁴⁵ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 166: "Likewise, especially if Holy Communion is distributed during such celebrations, the diocesan Bishop, to whose exclusive competence this matter pertains, must not easily grant permission for such celebrations to be held on weekdays, especially in places where it was possible or would be possible to have the celebration of Mass on the preceding or the following Sunday." *CCL* 1246 §2: "If it is impossible to assist at a Eucharistic celebration, either because no sacred minister is available or for some other grave reason, the faithful are strongly recommended to take part in a liturgy of the Word, if there be such in the parish church or some other sacred place, which is celebrated in accordance with the provisions laid down by the diocesan Bishop; or to spend an appropriate time in prayer, whether personally or as a family or, as occasion presents, in a group of families." *GOBF* p. 7: "Where weekday Mass is not available, people are encouraged to meet for a Celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours (e.g. Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church) or the Liturgy of the Word for the Day."

⁴⁶ *GOBF* p. 14: "Every parish is asked to develop a Liturgy Group, with a named coordinator, by Easter 2007."

**Suggested outline for Discussion Session 4:
Section 5 – ‘Weekday Masses’ and
Section 6 – ‘Celebrations in the absence of a priest’**

- 10 mins Welcome, introductions
- 10 mins ***Time of Prayer***
- Leader* We gather in the name of the Father,
All **whose praises have been sung day by day,
from generation to generation.**
- Leader* We gather in the name of the Son,
All **who made the everyday holy,
bringing God’s life into the heart of the marketplace.**
- Leader* We gather in the name of the Spirit,
All **whose grace infuses the ordinary with holiness,
and opens our hearts to seek and find it.**
- Scripture Reading: Ps 112(113): 2-4 / Malachi 1: 11 + a brief silence for reflection*
- Leader* Lord Jesus, you became human,
and through you every thing and every day is made holy.
Be with us in our meeting as we share our thoughts and insights,
seeking to celebrate your presence in the events of our daily lives.
All **Amen.**
- 10 mins ***Everyday life***
Discussion:
What is it like to be part of a gathering of 5 people? 50 people? 500 people?
Does the size of the venue matter? (e.g. 5 people in a large church hall or 50 people in
someone’s sitting room)
- 15 mins ***Church experience***
Discussion:
Read the sections ‘A more intimate gathering’ and ‘Sensitive scheduling’
Underline words and phrases that stand out for you. Why do you think these are
important? Share your thoughts with one or two other people.
- 20 mins ***Going deeper***
Read the section ‘Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest’
1. What are the differences between Mass and a Liturgy of Word and Communion ?
2. When is it appropriate for a Liturgy of Word and Communion to happen ? Why
shouldn’t it replace the Sunday Mass ?
3. What do you think collaborative liturgical leadership would look like ?
- 10 mins ***Implications***
If you were asked to be part of a team of people responsible for a celebration in the
absence of a priest, what sort of training and formation would be helpful for you ?
- 10 mins ***Time of Prayer***
*Everyone is invited to spend a few moments in silence to reflect on what they have seen,
heard, reflected on during the session.*

The following litany of thanksgiving may be used as it is – or as the basis of your own litany, using insights from your shared discussions and reflections.

In the proclaiming of your Word –
In our prayerful companionship –
In those who mourn –
In those who come to pray with us –
In those we pray for –

Help us to recognise you, God.

Leader Lord, you make the everyday holy
and call us each day to give thanks for all that you have given us.
Increase our sense of gratitude and of vocation –
to serve you in the ordinary and the everyday.
We pray for vocations to the priesthood
so that our lives may be sanctified by celebrations of the Mass..
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

All **Amen.**

7. Role of Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Dedicated laypeople

It is one of the real joys of the present day Church that, in the whole history of the Church from its earliest days, our sick and housebound have never been as well served as they are today. That this is possible is entirely due to the readiness of devoted laymen and laywomen to accept the invitation to become Ministers of Holy Communion, so that Holy Communion can be taken regularly to the sick and the housebound.

Training and formation

It is important, however, to note two things, and the first is that this is a ministry of service and not a measure of status; secondly, there needs to be proper training, carried out in the Pastoral Areas for this ministry, together with some formal and public ceremony of commissioning. It is also worth remembering that the ministry is for a specified period of time⁴⁷ and that the commissioning therefore needs to be renewed from time to time. Apart from anything else, this allows a minister to step down from what he or she is

What is an Extra-ordinary Minister?

Someone who

- (1) assists in the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, when there are not enough priests or deacons to distribute Communion in a reasonable space of time
- (2) assists in taking Communion to the sick and housebound (including the dying)
- (3) assists as a minister of Communion (not as the leader) of celebrations in the absence of a priest.

Why 'extra-ordinary' ?

This is a technical term. It doesn't mean 'astonishing' or 'fantastic' but 'out of the ordinary' or 'not normal'. That is why this document prefers to spell 'extra-ordinary' with a hyphen to make the distinction between that word and 'extraordinary'.

The 'ordinary' (i.e. normal) minister of Communion is a priest or deacon.

The 'ordinary' minister of the chalice is a deacon (or a priest, if there is no deacon present).

Lay ministers are therefore an aid, assisting in pastoral situations. We no longer refer to them as 'special' or 'eucharistic' ministers, since they are actually neither of those things.

What qualifications are needed?

Someone who

- (1) tries to live a good Christian life
- (2) has been selected by the priest or pastoral administrator
- (3) is at least 15 years old and has been confirmed
- (4) has received proper training

⁴⁷ Currently three years in the Diocese of Portsmouth.

doing without there being any questioning or embarrassment.

Communion taken to the sick from Mass

With this important ministry in mind, I also want to encourage what many parishes already do, which is for Communion to be taken directly to the sick and housebound with bread consecrated at the same Mass rather than from the tabernacle, with ministers being formally sent out to them. In this way, the sick and housebound can be really integrated into the worship and celebration of the whole community of which they form an important part. They should not be marginalised or made to feel somehow excluded from the Eucharistic life of the parish.

Communion under both kinds the norm

Extra-ordinary Ministers are not simply recruited for the service of the sick and the housebound. Since in all dioceses of England and Wales Holy Communion under both kinds is the norm for all celebrations of the Eucharist, so this ministry of lay people in the church and at the altar is also indispensable and truly welcomed. Our diocesan training and guidelines for Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion aim to facilitate this ministry by providing formation, ongoing support and resources.

We do not just minister to the sick and housebound – they minister to us too.

If there are several ministers taking Communion to the sick from the same Mass, our national guidelines encourage them to leave in the final procession with the other ministers.

Why does Communion under both kinds matter?

Because it is a strong sign of our fuller participation in the sacrifice being offered at Mass. It is also a fulfilment of Jesus’s command: “Take and eat...take and drink”. Drinking the blood of Christ reminds us of the self-sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist: we are called to go out and if necessary shed our own blood for the life of the world.

7. Role of Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. How can we include the sick and housebound in the life of our parish or Pastoral Area ?
How can/do we involve them in the life of the community?*
- 2. Are there categories of people we might not have thought of who would come under the heading of ‘housebound’ ?*
- 3. What about our young people ? Do we involve them in the eucharistic life of the community ?
How many teenage ministers of Communion are there in our church ?*

The above section is especially suited to discussion by new and existing Extra-ordinary Ministers

8. Devotion to the Eucharist

Some basic understandings

As Pope John Paul II put it, “The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle must be a kind of magnetic pole attracting an ever greater number of souls enamoured of him, ready to wait patiently to hear his voice and, as it were, to sense the beating of his heart.”⁴⁸ This experience naturally leads us to a deeper understanding of our calling as the Body of Christ.

For St Paul, participation in Christ in the Eucharist means recognizing that the Lord’s body is not only ‘on’ the table but ‘at’ the table.⁴⁹ This means that it’s not us gathered as a collection of individuals; as I said earlier, it means we are the Body of Christ. The meal not only brings believers into the domain of Christ’s death and resurrection; *it also implicates them in each other’s lives.*⁵⁰

The transformation at Mass is not confined to the elements of bread and wine: it expands to include us. In presenting the bread and wine we are also presenting ourselves. Even as the bread and wine are transformed, so too we are transformed. Through these transformations God acts in the world. “The Christian is called into a broken world to witness to and work for the coming of the Kingdom of God. . . . for their work in the healing of relationships, in the promotion of peace and justice, and in the proclamation of the Good News.”⁵¹

More than adoration

Our own presence-and-transformation is part and parcel of what it is to speak of Christ as present in the consecrated elements. When we look at the tabernacle or monstrance or ciborium, it is an encounter demanding a response from us. It challenges us to change; it enables us to be faithful witnesses to the living Christ, in order that God’s Kingdom may be revealed. That in turn means *action* – inviting God to act in and through us. And so it is that there is a real and proper place for Adoration and Benediction in the life of our parishes, not simply as an end in itself but as a launching pad for our action in the world.

Adoration and Benediction represent another aspect of the richness of the Eucharistic presence in the life of the community. “For Catholics, reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is a sign of Christ’s abiding presence in the Church and a much loved focus of devotion.”⁵² Always centred on the actual celebration of the Eucharist, the sacrament is reserved for taking communion to the sick and the dying, and for adoration. “In his Eucharistic presence, Christ remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who gave himself up for us, and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love.”⁵³ As your bishop, I

Adoration is prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is silent, and is done by one or more individuals.

Exposition is a collective liturgical act of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. It includes spoken prayers, readings and singing, candles are lighted for it, and incense is normally used (the latter is not obligatory in the case of exposition with a ciborium).

Exposition may be done with a ciborium if a monstrance is not available.

The normal minister for exposition is a priest or deacon, who may bless the people when the Blessed Sacrament is reposed.

A lay minister of Communion may also expose the Blessed Sacrament, but may not give a blessing before reposition.

Exposing the Blessed Sacrament exclusively for the giving of Benediction is prohibited.

⁴⁸ Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* 18

⁴⁹ 1 Cor 11:29

⁵⁰ Nathan Mitchell, *The Work of Real Presence*, Liturgy Training Publications, p. 77: ISBN: 1-56854-265-8.

⁵¹ *CTM* 17

⁵² *OBOB* 55

⁵³ *CCC* 1380

strongly encourage prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, including extended periods of Exposition, Benediction and personal visits to church for prayerful adoration. “Our response of ‘Amen’ when we come forward for Holy Communion includes an acceptance in faith of the permanence of the sacramental presence of the Lord, and a readiness to reverence that presence in our hearts, in our prayer and in the way we act in church, together and alone.”⁵⁴

Exposition should express a relationship with the sacrifice of the Mass, but should not be seen as a substitute for it.

A liturgical act

Unlike private adoration, Exposition and Benediction are only fully understood as public liturgical acts. Therefore they should include elements common to all public liturgies, namely communal word, prayer, song, gesture, silence....⁵⁵

At the Diocesan Assembly in Reading in 2005, a period of exposition was held one evening. The large host placed in the monstrance had been consecrated during the preceding Mass. At the end of the time of exposition, the host was removed from the monstrance, broken into pieces, and then taken as Holy Communion to sick and housebound people in the locality.

This was a good example of the action of the Eucharist connected to devotion connected to the pastoral life of the Church.

8. Devotion to the Eucharist

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. What's the difference between private prayer and personal prayer ?*
- 2. In your parish, is watching before the Altar of Repose on Maundy Thursday evening an act of adoration or of exposition ?*
- 3. How does devotion to the Eucharist result in action in the lives of the people of our parish or Pastoral Area ?*

⁵⁴ *OBOB* 55

⁵⁵ “Even short expositions of the blessed sacrament, conducted in accord with the norms of the law, must be so arranged that before the benediction reasonable time is provided for readings of the word of God, hymns, prayers, and silent prayer, as circumstances permit.” (*Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 66) “Shorter expositions of the eucharist are to be arranged in such a way that the blessing with the eucharist is preceded by a suitable period for readings of the word of God, songs, prayers, and sufficient time for silent prayer.” (*Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 1973, 58)

9. Conclusion

I referred at the beginning of this paper to the fact that our sharing in the call to be members of the community of the disciples of the Lord inevitably involves us and inserts us into a living communion. But that's only part of the picture because being disciples also takes us into the heart of the Lord's closing words to his disciples that we should go out to the whole world to proclaim the Good News. A Christian community which has no sense of mission is only a very pale approximation to what the Lord is asking of us.

Because our communion is inextricably bound up with our celebration of the Eucharist, then we need to pay serious attention to the very last words that we hear as we celebrate Mass, "*Ite, missa est*" or "Go out and proclaim the Good News."

"At the end of Mass, we are sent forth in peace to love and serve the Lord, in deeper communion, we hope, with each other and with the whole Church. We receive the Body of Christ so that we may go forth as the Body of Christ into the world, the living sacrament of his presence in the midst of others. Through the Eucharist, we become more profoundly the Church and we are sent forth as the Church to fulfil our mission in and for the world. There is an intimate and inseparable link between Mass and mission, between worship and way of life. Our communion with Christ means that we share not only his life but his mission. At each Eucharist, the Risen Christ says to us anew: 'As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you' (Jn 20:21), and breathes his Spirit upon us. The Spirit we receive anoints us afresh to bring good news to the poor, since any true communion with the living Lord will lead us to recognise him in those most in need."⁵⁷

There is a liturgical prayer which says: "Open our eyes to the needs of our brothers and sisters; inspire in us words and actions to comfort those who labour and are burdened. Make us serve them truly, after the example of Christ and at his command. And may your Church stand as a living witness to truth and freedom, to peace and justice, that all people may be raised up to a new hope."⁵⁸ My prayer is that we can all say a heartfelt "Amen" to that. As the Lord says: "It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples... This is my Body given for you... This is my Blood shed for you... Do this in memory of me."

9. Conclusion

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. *What does it mean to 'go in peace to love and serve the Lord' ? Has your understanding of this changed ?*
2. *What has changed for you during your reading of this document ? How have you been challenged ?*
3. *Is there anything you'd like to highlight as particularly important for you during the sessions ?*

⁵⁷ *OBOB 67*

⁵⁸ Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, 4th option.

**Suggested outline for Discussion Session 5:
Section 8 – ‘Devotion to the Eucharist’ and Section 9 – ‘Conclusion’**

10 mins Welcome, introductions

10 mins ***Time of Prayer***

Leader We gather in the name of the Father,
All **who created all things,
 giving life to plants,
 to animals,
 to humans,
 and declared his creation to be very good.**

Leader We gather in the name of the Son,
All **who promised to be with us always,
 and is present to us in the Blessed Sacrament.**

Leader We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit,
All **who teaches us to catch glimpses of the divine
 in the ordinary matter of the earth.**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26: 36-41 / Mark 16:14-16 + a brief silence for reflection

Leader Creator God –
 all things came into being at your bidding,
 all that exists shows us your power,
 and your Word and the sacraments remind us of your presence.
 Bless our meeting with insights that deepen our love for you
 and for all that you have created.

All **Amen.**

10 mins ***Everyday life***

Discussion:

Have you ever been in the presence of someone who has inspired you or been inspired by someone you haven't met in person? What was it about them that made a difference?

15 mins ***Church experience***

Discussion:

Read the section ‘Devotion to the Eucharist’

Underline words and phrases that stand out for you. Why do you think these are important? Share your thoughts with one or two other people.

20 mins ***Going deeper***

Read the section ‘Conclusion’

1. How far do you agree that Mass and mission are inseparably linked?
2. How does your participation in the Mass support and encourage your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

10 mins ***Implications***

What does it mean to ‘go in peace to love and serve the Lord’ ? Has your understanding of this changed ?

10 mins

Time of Prayer

Everyone is invited to spend a few moments in silence to reflect on what they have seen, heard, reflected on during the series of meetings.

The following litany of thanksgiving may be used as it is – or as the basis of your own litany, using insights from your shared discussions and reflections.

For the gift of the Mass –
For all that we have learned –
For all that has inspired us –
For all that has challenged us –
For all that has amused us –
For all that has saddened us –

We thank you, God.

...

Leader God: Father – Son – Spirit,
you have blessed our exploration of the great gift of the Eucharist.

All **For this we thank you.**

Leader You have reminded us of the invitation to come to the Table of the Lord –
to remember the sacrifice of Jesus
and to be drawn into communion with the very life of the Trinity.

All **For this we thank you.**

Leader You have commissioned us to share Christ's mission
to save and transform the world -
giving us gifts to use in your service
and heavenly food for the journey.

All **For this we thank you.**

Leader As we close our final meeting,
we ask your continued blessing
so that all that we have shared, learned and reflected upon
will bear fruit in this life
and bring us rejoicing to the eternal banquet of heaven.

All **Amen.**

Appendix 1

Glossary

Adoration

Worship of the Blessed Sacrament reserved. This practice, traditional but becoming popular again in parishes, consists of praying quietly before the Blessed Sacrament. (Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance or other vessel is more properly known as Exposition, not Adoration.) Adoration may be prolonged; Exposition must be prolonged — see the explanatory box in section 8 on page 26 for a more detailed treatment of the difference between Adoration and Exposition.

See also **Benediction**, below.

Altar

The primary symbolic focus of a Catholic Church, the place where Mass is offered. The altar is usually permanent, preferably of stone, and solemnly dedicated. It is venerated during Mass and always covered with cloths, one of which may be of the liturgical colour of the day.

Altar of Repose

This is not an altar in the strict sense, but the shrine where the Blessed Sacrament is kept between the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday and the Liturgy of Good Friday. It is customary to mount a vigil before it, which may extend until midnight or even beyond. The Blessed Sacrament is not exposed but locked in a tabernacle, normally forming part of the structure.

Assembly

The gathering of people for the sacred liturgy. The traditional and more familiar term is the 'congregation', but this is frequently interpreted as meaning only the people, thus excluding the priest and other liturgical ministers. The term 'assembly' means *everybody*.

Benediction

From the Latin for 'blessing'. According to *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (1973), it takes place at the end of a period of exposition and consists of:

- a '**Eucharistic Song**' (traditionally the hymn *O salutaris hostia*, which was formerly sung as the Blessed Sacrament was being exposed)
- a **prayer** (In the former rite of Benediction, this was followed by another hymn, the *Tantum ergo*, and incensing of the Blessed Sacrament)
- the actual **blessing** of the congregation with the host in the monstrance (sometimes the ciborium) (In the former rite, this was followed by the recitation of the Divine Praises)
- the **replacing** of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, preceded where necessary by a procession to the place of reservation)
- an '**acclamation**' (in the former rite of this consisted of the antiphon *Adoremus in aeternum* and a psalm)

Bishop

The 'high priest' of the Local Church (Diocese). The Bishop is the principal liturgical minister of the Diocese and the 'Ordinary' who exercises overall sacramental and juridical authority.

Blessed Sacrament

The primary meaning of this term is the celebration of the Mass itself. However, the term is more usually used of the consecrated host received at Mass and reserved for Communion to the sick and housebound, for Viaticum to the dying, and for adoration.

Chalice

The vessel which contains the Precious Blood at Mass. Chalices are shaped like goblets and are normally made of precious or noble materials, usually gold or silver. The inside of the chalice is usually gilded. In the early Church they were also made of glass or crystal.

(The) Church

The body, known in Catholic teaching as ‘The Mystical Body’ of Christ, is called into being by God (the Latin *ecclesia* comes from the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning ‘called forth’), consisting of those who believe in Jesus Christ, his death, resurrection and ascension into glory. The Church on earth is a visible presence, gathered around the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons in ‘the Local Church’ or Diocese, which is the local expression of the whole Church. She (the Church, as ‘Bride’ of Christ is often referred to in the feminine) is charged with a ministry that is prophetic, announcing God’s universal call to holiness; priestly, gathering the human race for the true worship of God; and governing, guiding men and women in the way of Christ. The Church on earth is one with the Church in Purgatory and with the Saints in heaven (traditionally referred to as the Church suffering and the Church triumphant).

Ciborium

From the Greek for an Egyptian bean plant, describing the cup-shaped flower. In Catholic usage it has two meanings:

- (1) The permanent canopy erected over the altar in some churches, also referred to as a ‘Baldacchino’.
- (2) The vessel resembling a chalice with a lid, used to reserve consecrated hosts in the tabernacle.

Communion

The Second Vatican Council uses the Latin word *Communio* to mean that intimate linkage, that being-joined-together-ness which characterises the whole Church in earth and heaven.

In **Holy Communion**, we become intimately ‘linked’ with Christ and with each other by consuming his Body and Blood.

(The) Consecration

See **Institution, Words of**

Deacons

The third order of ordained ministry. The threefold ministry of the Deacon is as a Minister of Charity (serving and encouraging lay people in the service of the poor and disadvantaged), as Minister of the Word (proclaiming the Gospel and preaching) and as a Minister of the Table (at the altar, assisting the priest or bishop at Mass).

Deacons are either transitory (on the way to ordination to the priesthood) or permanent.

Dismissal

The moment when the congregation is sent out at the end of Mass to put into action in the world what they have celebrated in the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

See also **Mission**, below.

Divine Office

More correctly known as ‘The Liturgy of the Hours’. The daily, non-eucharistic, prayer of the Church, existing to sanctify the various times or ‘hours’ of the Day. Current Catholic practice recognises five ‘hours’ – Lauds (morning), Midday (during the day sometime) and Vespers (evening). In addition there is the ‘Office of Readings’ which may be recited at any hour of the day. The additional hour of ‘Compline’ is recited last thing at night.

Clergy and some religious are obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day.

Eucharist

From the Greek word meaning 'to give thanks'. It is used to describe the celebration of Mass. Catholics also use it to denote the Eucharistic Body and Blood of the Lord, especially when speaking of sacraments.

The Eucharist (Mass) contains the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** (from the presenting of the gifts to the distribution of Holy Communion inclusive). The Liturgy of the Eucharist in turn contains the **Eucharistic Prayer**, the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving in the course of which bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Eucharistic

Embodying the Eucharist. The priest is the 'ordinary' Eucharistic minister by virtue of what he does at Mass, through his ordination. Lay ministers of Holy Communion, however, are 'extra-ordinary' ministers, i.e., ministers enrolled where there are not sufficient priests or deacons to administer Holy Communion at Mass, or elsewhere. They should no longer be referred to as 'Eucharistic Ministers'.

In some places a Celebration of Word and Communion is referred to as a 'Eucharistic Service'. A moment's thought will show that in fact it is a '*Non-Eucharistic Service*' since the Eucharist, the Mass, is not celebrated at such a service.

Eucharist, Action of the

The Church imitates Christ's action at the Last Supper, where he took bread and the cup (the reparation of the altar and the offerings), blessed them with the prayer of thanksgiving (the Eucharistic Prayer), broke the bread and gave the bread and cup to the disciples (Holy Communion). It was to this sequence that he referred when he said "Do this in memory of me."

Exposition

The placing of the Blessed Sacrament in a vessel, normally transparent, outside the tabernacle.

See **Adoration** above.

'Extraordinary Form'

According to the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* of Benedict XVI, the Mass of the Roman Rite may be celebrated under two forms. The first, or 'Ordinary' form is the Mass we have been used to since 1970. The 'Extraordinary' form is the Mass celebrated according to the Missal of 1962, the last edition before Vatican II of the Missal promulgated after the Council of Trent in 1570.

Extra-ordinary (Minister)

See page 24 above. A lay minister of Holy Communion who has been trained and commissioned for this service. The minister assists the 'normal' or 'ordinary' minister of the Eucharist, a priest or deacon.

Institution, Words of

The words spoken by Christ over the bread and cup of the Last Supper. These are the words spoken by the priest in the central portion of the Eucharistic Prayer, often referred to as 'the consecration'. Although many have traditionally thought that it was through these words that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, in fact the Church considers *the entire Eucharistic Prayer* to be consecratory. This is why, at a Service of Word and Communion, the entire Eucharistic Prayer is omitted, not just the central portion. Many Eucharistic Prayers used in the early Church did not contain the words of institution at all, and some are still in use today and considered as valid by the Church.

Liturgy

The public worship of God enacted by the Church. This means the celebration of the Mass, the Sacraments and Liturgy of the Hours. Catholic teaching understands this to be, firstly, the work of Christ the High Priest in his glorification of the Father and intercession for us, and secondly, the work of the

Church, Christ's mystical Body, participating in this high priestly act. The Liturgy is the 'Work of God' (*Opus divinum* in Saint Benedict) and as such, more correctly referred to as 'The Sacred Liturgy'. It is also the 'Work of the People', the original meaning of the Greek *leitourgia*, liturgy.

Mass

The term by which Catholics describe the celebration of the Eucharist. It derives from the words of the dismissal in Latin: *Ite missa est*: "Go, this is the dismissal."

Minister, ministry

From the Latin meaning 'servant' and 'to serve'. This is the term used to describe all who exercise a role at the liturgy. Ministers are either ordained (Bishop, Priest, Deacon) or instituted (Reader, Acolyte) or 'Extra-ordinary'. The Assembly (q.v.) also has a ministry in the celebration. Through full, conscious and active participation in the celebration, people minister to each other.

Missal

The book which, since the Middle Ages, has contained the texts of prayers and readings for the Mass. Nowadays, the Missal of the 'Ordinary Form' of the Roman Mass is divided into two volumes, that containing the prayers (the Missal) and that containing the Scripture readings (the Lectionary).

Mission

From the Latin "*Ite, missa est*": the sending out of the congregation at the end of Mass, to enact in their lives in the world what they have celebrated in the Sacred Mysteries.

See also **Mass**.

Monstrance

The vessel usually employed for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Based on a medieval reliquary, it became a flat glass container for the host, often contained within a sunburst, on a stem and base. The clip on a stand which holds the consecrated host upright in the monstrance is known as a *lunette* because of its moon-like shape.

Paschal Mystery

The whole 'mystery' (action, reality) of the salvation of the human race: intended by God in the Creation of the Universe, frustrated by the Fall, promised through the covenants and the Prophets and achieved by our Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnation, life, dying and glorification by the Father; to be accomplished in us through faith and the sacraments, finally to be fulfilled in the divinisation of the human race, the 'making all things new' of humanity as a partaker of the Divine Nature, God's final intention.

Priest

The second degree of Holy Orders, priests are co-workers with the Bishop and are deputed to celebrate the Mass and sacraments, to call people into union with Christ and the Church, to teach the faith and to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours on behalf of the people.

Pyx

The vessel used to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, usually in the form of a small metal box, often contained within a pouch.

Real Presence

The Church holds that the whole Christ — Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity — is present really, truly and substantially in the bread and wine offered, consecrated, distributed and received at Mass. This presence is not restricted to the celebration of Mass and lasts as long as the appearances of bread and wine remain. It is normal to speak of 'the Body of Christ' and 'the Precious Blood', or of 'consecrated bread' and 'consecrated wine'.

Note that Paul VI speaks about other forms of the Real Presence of Christ — for example, in the Word proclaimed and preached, in the person of the priest, in the assembly gathered to worship, in the administration of the sacraments, and in carrying out works of mercy. The reason the form of the Real Presence in consecrated bread and wine is special for us is that it is the only form that we can consume.

Redemption

The term employed in the theological tradition of the Church to describe the act by which Christ rescued us from the fallen state of humanity, by shedding his blood and dying for us on the cross. He has ‘bought’ us back for his Father.

Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament

Because the presence of Christ in the eucharistic bread and wine is permanent, the sacred host is ‘reserved’ — kept in a special place of honour in the church for communion to the sick and housebound, and for adoration and prayer. Reservation of consecrated wine is forbidden; it must all be consumed during Mass.

Sacrament

The ritual act(s) by which Christ brings us to the fullness of salvation. Catholics recognise seven such acts: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Holy Orders, Penance (‘Confession’ or ‘the Sacrament of Reconciliation’) and Anointing.

Sacramental

The adjective from ‘Sacrament’. The term is used to denote actions and things employed in the life of the Church (such as holy water) which, as ritual acts, share something of the nature of a sacrament.

Sacrifice

The act whereby God is wholly and unreservedly given something. It is a characteristic of all religious traditions.

In the Old Testament, the term denotes either a ritual killing in which blood is shed, or, in the Prophets, the internal disposition of obedience to God. In the New Testament, the term denotes Jesus’s ‘once for all’ giving of himself in love and obedience to the Father by shedding his blood on the cross. At Mass, the sacrifice whereby Christ, through the ministry of the priest, accomplishes that same work of our redemption, offering his sacrifice of himself, but now in a manner without blood, for the life of the world.

It is important to realise that the Mass does not *repeat* the sacrifice of Calvary, which happened once for all. The Mass *re-actualizes* the sacrifice of Calvary, makes it present for us in the here-and-now.

Tabernacle

The vessel in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in church. It should be a lockable safe, and located in a position in the church determined by the Bishop and his advisors.

Traditionally, tabernacles have been built into the wall of reredos of a church, and have often been veiled. However, some tabernacles are beautiful in themselves and do not require veils. These would include the ‘sacrament-houses’ often found in Germany, built on top of pillars, and the hanging pyxes, often in the shape of a dove, that are suspended above altars in some churches.

Transubstantiation

The term given since the thirteenth century to the transformation of the Eucharistic bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

See also **Eucharistic Prayer** and **Institution, Words of**.

Viaticum

A Latin word meaning 'food for the journey'. Usually the last reception of Holy Communion by someone who is dying.

(The) Word

The self-communication of divine life to humankind, witnessed by sacred Scripture.

Appendix 2

Source material and reading list on the Eucharist

Level 1 – parish reflection groups

1 *With Hearts and Minds*

An excellent series of reflections on our participation in the Mass, aimed at parish groups. Covers six evenings.

Published by the Liturgy Office (England and Wales) & CTS
Leaders' Book ISBN 1-86082-306-8
Participant's Book ISBN 1 86082 307 6

2 *Celebrating the Mystery of Faith*
A guide to the Mass

Irish National Centre for Liturgy

Designed as an evaluation of parish practice and introduction to the Irish version of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, but still contains a lot of useful material for English users

Published by Irish Liturgical Publications (Veritas)
ISBN 0-95498-181-2

Level 2 – private reading; can also be used as a basis for group discussion

3 *What happens at Mass* Jeremy Driscoll OSB

A simple and accessible guide to the Mass, leading to deeper understanding.

Published in UK by Gracewing
ISBN 0-85244-637-3

4 *Liturgy made simple* Mark Searle

A useful general introduction to the Mass both for those who plan celebrations and for those who want to know more about it.

Published by Liturgical Press
ISBN (978-)0-8146-1221-7

Level 3 – commentary on church document

5 *Celebrating the Mass*

A pastoral introduction to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (see below)

Published by the Liturgy Office (England and Wales) & CTS

ISBN 1-86082-290-8

Also available online at <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/CTM.pdf>

Level 4a – church document

6 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*

The 2005 version of the Roman document for England and Wales

Published by the Liturgy Office (England and Wales) & CTS

ISBN 1-86082-288-6

Also available online at <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/GIRM.pdf>

7 *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*

Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II on the Eucharist and its relationship to the Church.

Published by the CTS, DO697

ISBN (978-)1-86082-210-0

Also available online at

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html

Level 4b – advanced background reading

8 *The Dilemma of Priestless Sundays* James Dallen

An in-depth look at the issues of Eucharist, Sunday, ordination and leadership, communion with the wider Church, and the implications for Catholic spirituality

Published by Liturgy Training Publications

ISBN 1-56584-042-6

9 *Real Presence: The Work of Eucharist* Nathan Mitchell

Excellent insights and analysis to deepen understanding of our primal sacrament of unity. Includes a comprehensive bibliography for further reading.

Published by Liturgy Training Publications

ISBN 1-56854-265-8

Level 5 – degree course reading material

- 10** *The Eucharist*
Essence, Form, Celebration Johannes M. Emminghaus

Comprehensive, in-depth, theological survey of the Mass. A standard textbook.

Published by Liturgical Press
ISBN 0-8146-1036-6

- 11** *Living Bread, Saving Cup: Readings on the Eucharist* ed. Kevin Seasoltz OSB

A classic collection of essays on the celebration of the Eucharist, from historical to theological.

Published by Liturgical Press
ISBN (978-)0-8146-1257-6 (expanded edition)

