

Reflecting on Presiding

Diaconal Formation

March 29, 2025

Leaders of Prayer

- Leaders of Prayer are those who bring order to the liturgy and create a space for others to deepen and foster their relationship with God.
- By reason of our baptism, we all have the potential to be leaders of prayer.
- By God's gifts and a life of faith, we discover we have been called to be leaders of prayer.

Leaders of Prayer

- Someone who must lead a community event on God's behalf. He is the living vehicle of something that goes beyond him. He is, therefore, neither robot nor actor; he is a servant. Godfried Danneels

Leaders of Prayer

- Presiding is not a right, it is a responsibility that comes from our baptism, nurtured by our faith and graced by the call to lead a certain part of the flock into a deeper relationship with God.

Leaders of Prayer

- As I said at the outset, in order to serve well, the deacon must develop an expertise not only in the rubrics, but also in the theology of the liturgy. It is not enough to know ***what*** is supposed to happen; the deacon will serve best if he knows ***why*** the liturgy unfold in the way it does.

Baurschmidt, page 20

Music in Catholic Worship #21

- No other single factor affects the liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the celebrant.

Leaders of Prayer

- The way we greet the assembly, move into the sanctuary or take our place from where we will preside makes a statement.
- A welcoming attitude showing reverence and hospitality is the attitude to work towards.

Basic Liturgical Principle

- Learn the Church's prayer
- Understand the Ritual language
- Understand Progressive Solemnity
- Have enough self confidence to preside with grace and enough humility to realize your authority comes from your baptism

Basic Liturgical Principle

- Prepare
- Know the rite you are celebrating
- Stick to the text written and do not strive for spontaneity
- Avoid temptation to overexplain the ritual

Bauerschmidt, page 21-22

General Instruction of the Roman Missal #93

- (the presider) must serve God and the people with dignity and humility
- and by his bearing and by the way he says the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ.
- Reference to CSL #7 and the Four Presence of Christ in the Liturgy

Presider's Personal Style

- “Appropriate, honest, authentic, as genuine and real as it can be”

Robert Hovda

- Presiding is an art that is achieved under grace by constant prayer, reflection, self-discipline and continual practice on the minister's part

Aidan Kavanaugh

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

27

- Communal celebrations are to be given preference over individual and private celebrations.

What do you think that means?

Why are communal celebrations the preference?

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

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- ... within the communal celebrations, ministry is to be shared, so that each person who has a ministry to perform does only those parts that pertain to that office by nature of rite and principles of liturgy.

- This means that as the leader, it is important not to do **ALL** the parts but to have others take an active part.
 - Readers
 - Music
 - Who else might be needed?




Two Elements of Liturgy

Verbal and Non-verbal

Verbal

- Practice and be familiar with the text you will be speaking
- Good lectoring skills
 - Projection
 - Intonation
 - Pronunciation
 - Breath control



Reading is not acting: it is allowing
oneself to be the humble
instrument of a word that comes
from far beyond.

Godfried Danneels

Ritual Language

- Formal
- Metaphorical
- Open ended not time/clock bound
- Highly symbolic with layers of meaning
- Engages the whole person
 - As many of the senses as possible

Singing and Chant

- Singing the liturgy, not singing at Liturgy.
- It is the liturgy itself that is the church's great song of praise to God, and it often takes the form of call and response between minister and assembly.

Bauerschmidt page 26

Singing and Chant

- Far from being a performance designed to entertain, or delight, it is in fact a ministry.
- This does not necessary mean that everything that can be sung should be sung all the time.

Bauerschmidt 27

Non-Verbal

- Movement
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Body language/posture
- Gestures of presider
- Handling books and other liturgical objects
- Participation in the liturgy as a participant as well as presider

Movement

- Walking
- Prostrating
- Genuflecting
- Kneeling
- Bowing
- Incensing

Body Language

- What does your posture say about how you are feeling?
- What does your face say?
- What does your fidgeting say?
- Are you engaged in the liturgy?

Posture

- How you sit
- How you stand
- How you hold your hands

Gesture

- When the gestures are done by the presiding minister, they can either engage the entire assembly and bring them into an even greater unity, or if done poorly, they can isolate.

Touch

- Ritual touch
 - Laying on of hands
 - Signing the sense or blessing
 - Exchange of the sign of Peace

Touch

- The sense of touch finds its most profound expression in the laying on of hands and in anointing. These are among the most physical gestures of the liturgy and they can have an enormous impact on the human person.

Godfried Danneels

The Sense of Smell

The sense of smell in some place is almost completely unused in the liturgy. In other places it is overused.

- What do you think about this statement?
- How can the sense of smell be used?

Silence

- Lack of silence turns the liturgy into an unstoppable succession of words which leaves no time for interiorizations. Godfried Danneels
- There is a serious imbalance in the articulation of word and gesture. Liturgy then ends up lapsing from celebration into mere instruction and address.

Godfried Danneels

Things to Remember

- The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy.

CSL #14

Things to Remember

- When we realize clearly that our entire job in presiding is facilitating the assembly's experience, then everything we do or say or touch demands our attention

Robert Hovda

Things to Remember

- Liturgical Prayer is part of the official or larger Church.
- It is public and most often communal
 - Sacramental celebrations
 - Liturgy of the Hours
 - Liturgy of the Word, especially for wakes funerals, weddings, or special events

Things to Remember

- Devotional prayer is not liturgical prayer.
 - It can be prayed communally or personally but it is always a reflection of piety.
 - Stations of the Cross
 - Rosary
 - Novenas
 - Some Litanies

Things to remember

- Plan the liturgy/prayer even if it is short
- Give all directions prior to the beginning of the prayer
- Make sure you have what you need before beginning
- If you use it in the liturgy, it should be in the environment



Questions

or

Comments