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CONCELEBRATION

In the Diocese of London

In 1999 Bishop Sherlock asked the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese to review guidelines for concelebration. The following have been prepared by the Liturgical Commission based on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 1973 and the Pastoral Introduction of the revised Edition for Canada of the Roman Sacramentary.

Consistent, with the new Sacramentary, these guidelines were promulgated by Bishop Sherlock in June 2000 on an interim basis until the new Sacramentary is finalized.

Concelebration and its significance

Concelebration at the Eucharist has been a practice, in varying degrees, of the Eastern and Western Churches since at least the third century and was restored to wider use by the Second Vatican Council. **A**Concelebration, viewed within the Eucharistic act of self-expression, is a clear sign of the collegial nature of the Church. It highlights >the unity of the priesthood, of the sacrifice, and of the whole people of God.== #321* **A**The appropriateness of concelebration must always be judged on the basis of the sacramental sign.@ #322

*These numbers refer to the Pastoral Introduction p770ff of The Roman Missal, the Sunday Sacramentary, Revised Edition, December 1998, National Office of Liturgy, Canada

Occasions for concelebration

AProvided that the needs of the faithful have been met, concelebration is always permitted and is encouraged.@ #323

The instruction goes on to add, **A**Concelebration should be avoided, however, when the number of concelebrants creates an imbalance in the assembly. Moreover, it should not take place when it is viewed as a way of giving special honor to a person being buried, or to a couple celebrating a wedding or anniversary of marriage.@ #328

Privileged Occasions #324

- \$ the Mass at which the diocesan bishop presides
 - \$ the ordination of bishops
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- \$ the ordination of presbyters
- \$ the Chrism Mass
- \$ the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and Easter Triduum
- \$ the Easter Vigil
- \$ the visit of a diocesan bishop to another diocese

Other Appropriate Occasions #327

- \$ major diocesan anniversaries and feasts
- \$ the pastoral visit of the bishop
- \$ the parish celebration of confirmation
- \$ episcopal and presbyteral assemblies, retreats, and days of recollection at the Eucharist celebrated in communities of presbyters, in seminaries, and in residences for presbyters
- \$ at the parish weekday Eucharist, when there are more presbyters than there are scheduled celebrations
- \$ at the funeral liturgy of bishops and presbyters
- \$ at the funeral liturgy of parishioners, at least on the part of parish priests.

Special occasions in our Diocese

Questions have arisen in our diocese as to the appropriateness of concelebration on three particular occasions:

Concelebration at the funeral of a parent of a priest

We recommend that concelebration be at the invitation of the principal celebrant.

Funerals where other priests are present

The visible presence and participation of the priests who are present is usually a positive sign to all the faithful who are present. Therefore, for pastoral reasons we recommend that concelebration take place. It is helpful if priests planning to attend consult with the presider before the day of the funeral.

The "Mass of Welcome"

This is the Mass celebrated with the Bishop for those who have been received into full communion. This is debatable and different practices are followed in the Diocese. For the sake of

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pastoral consistency and the sign of the Church gathered around the Bishop participating according to their respective ministries, we encourage the priests present to concelebrate.

*When announcements and invitation are issued to Eucharistic Celebration, the following statement is to be included: A*Priests present are invited to concelebrate@ *or A*Priests present are invited to participate in the congregation.@

The ritual of concelebration

The Principal Concelebrant: AIn any concelebration it should be evident to the assembly that there is only one priest who is presiding over the celebration, whether presiding at the chair or at the altar.@ #332

Dividing the Eucharistic Prayer into Parts: AThe liturgy is better served when the presider prays the prayer without distributing its parts.@ #335

Principal Concelebrants: AFor the liturgy of the Eucharist it is better if only a representative body of presbyters gathers around the presider.@ #333 In our diocese it has become a custom to have "principal concelebrants.@

Vesture of Concelebrants: AThe principal ways in which concelebrants participate in the Eucharistic Prayer are by their vested presence in at least alb and stole, by their association with the presider in the gestures of their hands in prayer and in the invocation of the Holy Spirit.@ #337

Recitation of Eucharistic Prayer by Concelebrants: Whenever concelebrants join the presider in recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer it is to be done Aquietly,@ Ainaudibly,@ Amentally@ so that they cannot be heard by those around them. Cf #336

The Doxology: In keeping with the above, the Doxology should be said or sung by the Principal Concelebrant alone.

Communion of the concelebrants

This may be done in a variety of ways according to circumstances. The consecrated bread and wine are taken or given to each concelebrant without the statement, AThe body/blood of Christ@ and AAmen.@ When there are many concelebrants they should receive communion after the communion of the presider.

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