

# WORK OF THE PEOPLE: THE CATHOLIC MASS

## INTRODUCTION: ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLY

### VIDEO SUMMARY

The Second Vatican Council put renewed emphasis on the role of lay people in the Church, including the crucial function of the assembly at Mass. Mass is celebrated with the whole community gathered. When the People of God actively participate in the Mass, each according to their role, Christ is truly present. This series will highlight and explain the ways the assembly makes liturgy happen – by prayer, silence, singing, offering our gifts, and communion with the Body of Christ. By learning more about this role, we hope your community will be challenged to enter into a more active participation in the liturgy and appreciate more fully the power of the gathered community in the Church's celebrations.

### KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy by each member of the assembly is their right and duty by virtue of their baptism.
- The assembly is a vital role – not an extraneous one.
- By taking their proper role and exercising it well, members of the assembly can experience the holy sacrifice of the Mass in richer and deeper ways.

### WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

- “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 14)
- “To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 30)
- “In the celebration of the sacraments it is thus the whole assembly that is *leitourgos*, each according to his function, but in the ‘unity of the Spirit’ who acts in all. (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1144)
- “The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are they are called upon, as living members, to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification.” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 33)
- “Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord’s table. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful.” (*The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 96)

## FORMAT

- This series is broken into 5 sections that each highlight the assembly's role in specific parts of the Mass:
  - The Collect
  - Bringing our Gifts
  - Eucharist
  - Silence (at various times in the Mass)
  - Singing
- Each video is 3-4 minutes in length.
- A study guide for each video includes:
  - A summary of the content
  - Key learning outcomes
  - Questions for discussion
  - Ways to put these ideas into practice
  - Quotations from Church documents that support the content

## HOW TO USE THIS

The audience for this video series is everyone! There are many, many ways to share this information with your parish. Here are a few ideas:

- Share with the parish Worship and Formation Committees for review, study, and discussion. These committees may wish to work together to recommend how to best share widely in the parish.
- Share with other major committees, especially the Parish Council, and invite the series' use as a prayer focus for several meetings.
- Use as formation for candidates and catechumens in your RCIA process. These videos also could provide good resources for the mystagogy period.
- Invite Bible study groups or other adult formation groups to spend a few weeks on these topics. The videos are short enough that they could be done in two, three, or six sessions.
- Develop the series as a resource for a special Lenten series along with an invitation to parishioners to intensify their Mass attendance.
- Provide the videos and study guides to the parish school (if applicable), parish religious education program, and youth/young adults groups. We recommend use for children 10 years and older. The study guide questions can be adapted for youth, young adult, and adult formation.
- Utilize in Confirmation preparation.
- Include the series on your parish website, YouTube Channel, Facebook page and/or Twitter feed. You may wish to highlight an episode each week for six weeks. Be sure to publicize the highlighted video in other parish communication vehicles, e.g. bulletin, newsletters, emails, etc. The Archdiocese also will be promoting this series on its social media channels, and we will be happy to work with you on cross-promotion. Just contact Gary Hermann at [ghermann@archlou.org](mailto:ghermann@archlou.org).
- Utilize the series along with a "Straw Mass" or "Slow-Motion Mass" that informs parishioners about the Mass in general.
- Include in formation sessions for liturgical ministers so that they can learn how their roles interact with the roles of the assembly.