



# Worship Context for Discussion

*...So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him... (Luke 24: 29-30)*

At the heart of the Church's liturgical life is the celebration of the Sacraments which are real and spiritual encounters with our Lord Jesus Christ. Central among the Sacraments is the Holy Eucharist (*the Holy Mass*) which is the source from which all the Church's power flows and the summit toward which all our activity is directed. Clergy and the faithful – one and all – are called to full, active, conscious participation in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, for it “is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, CSL #2*)

The Holy Mass is the highest form of worship that the Church can offer and all are invited to participate in it. It is through the Mass, as well as the other sacraments, prayer and devotions, that we most perfectly glorify God and offer praise and thanksgiving for His blessings. Topics for discussion may include the continued liturgical formation of clergy and all lay faithful so that all may be well disposed to receive the graces conferred in the sacraments and other forms of worship; awareness of local and universal traditions in the various expressions of worship; and the encouragement of frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion to nourish ongoing Christian life.

# Worship

## Key Elements of the Life of the Church in the Archdiocese of Washington

## Reflection Questions

1. What are examples of the Church's efforts in this area that are bearing fruit?
2. What are some areas where more might be done to strengthen the work of the Church?
3. What practical suggestions do you have?
4. What are the four key elements you identify as priorities?

### The Eucharist

1. The Mass is properly and reverently celebrated in parishes
2. The prayerful and active participation of the lay faithful is fostered by the way Mass is celebrated
3. The Mass times meet the needs of the people and are conscious of the time constraints of priests
4. The needs and cultures of diverse congregations are adequately met
5. Adoration of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged and opportunities are made available in parishes
6. Homilies are relevant to the needs and cares of the people
7. Special feast days are appropriately celebrated throughout the year
8. Music is fitting, reverent, and uplifting at Sunday Mass
9. Eucharistic processions are scheduled and encouraged
10. There is adequate training for the liturgical roles of the lay faithful, such as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, ministers of hospitality, altar servers, and cantors.

### Other Sacraments

11. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is regularly offered with set and published times
12. Times for Reconciliation are convenient to both laity and clergy
13. Where appropriate, both face-to-face and the confessional screen are made available in each parish
14. Communal penance services are offered, always including provisions for individual confession
15. Shut-ins, the ill, and the dying are well cared-for, and they are visited regularly with the opportunity to receive the sacraments of Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick

### Preparing for the Sacraments

16. There is adequate teaching (*catechesis*) on the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist
17. There is adequate teaching and preparation for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation for children, youth, parents, and sponsors
18. RCIA is well-implemented in the archdiocese and appropriate forms of preparation are offered for Christians being received into full communion with the Catholic Church
19. There is ongoing formation for the clergy in their celebration of the sacraments and in leading the people in worship
20. Appropriate attire is encouraged at Mass

### Prayer and Devotions

21. The beauty of our churches and the location of the tabernacle are conducive to prayer and piety
21. Various forms of Catholic spirituality are expressed: prayer groups, novenas, Bible studies, days of recollection, missions, archdiocesan retreats, etc.

### Others?