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## THE LITURGY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS

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March 16, 2004

### Who is on the parish liturgy committee ?

This committee must be composed of people who look after the liturgy, that is, those who look after the lectors, the choir, the welcoming committee, decorations, servers, those who look after the offerings and collection, etc. These people must be deeply attached to the liturgy and be convinced of its importance for the life of the parish community.

### What is the role of the liturgy committee ?

The parish liturgy committee ensures the proper celebration of the liturgy and the appropriate carrying out of the rites of the Church. Generally speaking, the committee's three functions are education, planning, and evaluation.

- **Education**

This function is of major importance because in order to plan and prepare interesting and vibrant liturgies, one must first of all seriously reflect on and study basic principles of liturgy and the theology underlying it. This is not to imply that only those with degrees in liturgy can be on the liturgy committee. However, it is evident that personal preferences and individual tastes and dislikes play no important role, here, and that nothing can replace ongoing liturgical formation. Only if the reference point of a decision is based on a particular and substantial understanding of the liturgy and its objectives that the problems will be solved and controversies cleared up.

- **Planning**

Planning is an important step for liturgy committees because it helps committee members get an over-all understanding of the entire liturgical year. The most important form of planning is the relational: every decision influences all the others. Planning facilitates uniformity while promoting creativity.

- **Evaluation**

This, too, is of the utmost importance, because it brings out the weaknesses and strengths. Regular evaluation keeps the committee from becoming self-satisfied with themselves and acting out of routine. It also encourages members to work in such a way that the rites are not just a distracted repetition of actions or a task that one feels obliged to perform.

### Characteristics of an Effective Liturgy Committee

- Members of the committee not only prepare the liturgy as such, but make of the liturgy the basis of their spiritual life. They allow sufficient time to pray together and to study questions pertaining to the liturgy.
- The committee needs to have an ongoing training programme to help committee members learn about the rites of the Church, and understand and appreciate the liturgical tradition and official documents pertaining to the liturgy. They must also understand the sense and the reason of liturgical law.
- The parish budget should allow financial resources for ongoing formation, diocesan and national conventions, and the establishment of a liturgical documentation library.

- The committee must examine its responsibilities as a ministry to the assembly and not as a group that picks and chooses what seems convenient. Besides, the committee must ensure that all committee members take part in the process; therefore, it must be sensitive to the concerns of people of all ages, cultures, abilities, etc.
- The committee oversees the parish's liturgical life, liturgical training and formation, and the correct unfolding of the different liturgical ministries. Besides, it plans the entire liturgical year so as to ensure that a calendar of special community events be prepared and integrated to the community's liturgical life.
- Continued liturgical formation of the community, establishing guidelines, evaluating celebrations and, possibly, the remodelling of the church edifice are the committee's responsibility.
- The Sunday Eucharist has priority, and careful attention given to preparing it, will ensure a dignified and active celebration.
- The committee must ensure the preparation of every sacrament as well as the integration of the liturgy within parish life.
- Evaluation must be ongoing, on a regular basis, and, if necessary, with the help of a professional from outside the parish.
- Good communication between committee and pastoral personnel, and collaboration with chairpersons and other people involved in basic, if others are to know about proposed projects.
- Musicians and choir must be an integral part of the parish's liturgical set-up, and must be involved in the liturgical planning.
- Communication with the parish community can be done through the parish pastoral council (PPC).
- The committee shall clearly set both long-and short term objectives.