



In accordance with the Legatine Directive written by His Holiness, the Legate,

On February 18, 2026

LAY PRESIDERS MANUAL

Holy Eucharist, under the Legatine Directive

For the laity of the Holy Catholic Church of the Gospels

Approved by His Holiness, the Legate, under the Legatine Directive

Read this like a driver's manual. You are not being tested on how "churchy" you sound. You are being trusted to handle holy things with a steady hand and a clean heart.

1. What you are actually doing when you preside

You are not "pretending to be clergy." You are not putting on a role. You are acting under delegation, for the sake of the people, so the Church can still pray the Eucharist when clergy are not present.

Presiding means you lead the Church's prayer. You keep the service faithful to the text. You make space for the people's responses. You keep the tone reverent. You do not turn it into a show. You do not turn it into a lecture. You do not turn it into your personal brand.

2. The one requirement that matters most: intention

This is the heart of the whole thing.

When you pray the Eucharistic Prayer, you must intend to do what the Church is doing in that prayer.

Say it plainly to yourself before you begin:

"I intend to celebrate the Holy Eucharist as the Church intends. I intend to give thanks to the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. I intend to obey Christ's command to 'do this in memory of me.' I intend to pray the authorized Eucharistic Prayer as written, over bread and wine, trusting God to do what God promises to do."

If you cannot honestly intend that, do not preside the Eucharist. You can still lead a service of the Word, you can still pray, you can still invite Spiritual Communion, you can still serve the people. There is no shame in restraint. There is shame in treating holy things like theater.

3. The mindset you must bring

A) Reverence

This is sacred. Calm down. Slow down. Don't rush through prayers like you are trying to beat a timer.

B) Humility

You are serving the Church, not proving yourself. If you feel yourself getting proud, take that as a warning light on the dashboard.

C) Fidelity to the text

Use the service exactly as authorized. Do not rewrite the Eucharistic Prayer. Do not "improve" it. Do not insert your own mini sermon in the middle of it. Your job is to carry the rite, not edit it.

D) Charity

You are holding a table that is meant to heal people. That should be heard in your voice. Keep your tone gentle, steady, and welcoming.

4. What you need before you begin

Get this set up before you go live, before anyone joins, before you start reading.

Bread and wine. Real bread. Real wine. If you must use a substitute for a serious reason, do what is necessary, and do not be casual about it.

A clean table or altar space.

The Full Service text open and ready.

A Bible open and ready, or the readings printed in front of you.

A quiet minute. You need at least one minute of silence before you start. If you cannot give God one minute, you are not ready to lead God's people in prayer.

5. Where to find the readings for the day

We are using Vanderbilt Divinity Library's Revised Common Lectionary.

Go to the Vanderbilt lectionary calendar. Choose the date for Sunday. It will list the readings: First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel.

Write down the citations. Then read the passages from your Bible. Vanderbilt gives you the references. It is not a replacement Bible.

If you are preparing ahead of time, you can also use Vanderbilt's PDFs for the lectionary year and plan the Sundays in advance.

6. How to conduct the service, step by step

This assumes you are following the Full Service document. The point is consistency, so people can worship without guessing what comes next.

A) Opening and Gathering

1. Start with the opening line as printed.
Say it like a prayer, not like you are reading a script in a school play.
2. Greeting.
Pause for the people's response. On livestream, you have to give them time to actually speak.
3. Penitential Act and Confession.
Invite confession. Keep a brief silence. Pray the confession with the people.
4. Mercy declaration.
Use the words the service provides. Say it clearly. Do not get dramatic with it. God's mercy does not need an acting coach.
5. Gloria, if appointed.
If the season omits it, omit it. If it's included, include it. Don't improvise seasonal rules.
6. Collect of the Day.
"Let us pray." Pause. Then pray the collect.

B) Liturgy of the Word

1. First Reading.
End with "The Word of the Lord." Pause for "Thanks be to God."
2. Psalm or Canticle.
If it is responsorial, let the people respond. If it is read, read it reverently and slowly.
3. Second Reading.
Same pattern as the first.
4. Gospel.
Stand if you are able, and invite the people to stand if they are able. Use the responses. Don't rush the "Glory to you, O Lord" and "Praise to you, Lord Christ." People need time.

5. Homily or reflection.

If you are giving the homily, keep it focused. If you are reading one provided by the Legate, say that plainly and read it slowly.

6. Creed, when appointed.

Pray it with the people.

7. Prayers of the People.

Use the authorized form. This is where you can name needs, current events, grief, injustice, sickness, and thanksgiving, with a steady spirit.

8. The Peace.

Offer it as the rite says. Keep it appropriate. Peace is not a social obligation. It is a sign of communion.

C) Liturgy of the Eucharist

This is where intention matters most. Slow down here. If your service is 45 minutes, this part can still take the time it takes.

1. Offertory.

Prepare the table. Then pray the offertory blessings as written.

2. Sursum Corda and Preface.

This is call and response. Pause after every line that expects the people to answer.

3. Sanctus.

Pray it with the people.

4. Eucharistic Prayer I

Here is the internal checklist.

Before the epiclesis, quietly form your intention again: “Lord, I intend what your Church intends.”

At the epiclesis, when the prayer asks the Father to send the Spirit upon the gifts, do not treat this like a magic spell. It is a prayer. Pray it as a request to God, because that is what it is.

At the institution narrative, do what the words say. Take the bread. Give thanks. Break. Then the cup. Elevate as indicated. Keep it reverent and simple. Nobody needs theatrics, because the Eucharist is already weighty.

At the doxology, lift your voice with confidence, then let the people’s “Amen” land. That “Amen” is not a formality. It is the people sealing the prayer.

D) Communion Rite

1. Lord's Prayer.
Invite everyone to pray it.
2. Fraction.
Break the bread as indicated.
3. Invitation to Communion and the response.
Say it clearly. Pause for the people's response.
4. Distribution.
If you are physically together, distribute reverently. If you are virtual, state clearly that those present are invited to Spiritual Communion, and then lead the Act of Spiritual Communion as provided.
5. Post Communion Prayer.
Pray it. Pause. Let "Amen" be spoken.

E) Concluding Rite

Blessing. Dismissal. Done. Keep it clean. Do not tack on extra speeches after the dismissal like the liturgy was only the opener for your commentary.

7. Rules that keep us from going off the rails

Do not rewrite the Eucharistic Prayer.

Do not add "extra prayers" inside the Eucharistic Prayer.

Do not use presidency to police people. No interrogations. No purity tests. No public shaming. If someone needs pastoral correction, that is handled pastorally, not by embarrassing them at the Table.

Do not rush. The people can tell when you are rushing, and it makes prayer feel unsafe.

Do not treat livestream worshippers like spectators. Pause for their responses. Name them as present. Lead Spiritual Communion with seriousness.

8. A short preparation you should do every time

Five minutes before you begin:

Read the intention paragraph out loud.

Read the Sursum Corda once quietly to yourself.

Read the epiclesis once quietly to yourself.

Ask God for a clean heart and a steady voice.

Then begin.

9. What to do if you mess up

You will. Humans do human things.

If you skip a line, go back and read it.

If you lose your place, stop, breathe, find the place, and continue.

If you mispronounce a word, keep going.

If you accidentally change a phrase in the Eucharistic Prayer, stop and restart that sentence correctly. Do not panic. This is prayer, not a courtroom transcript, yet we still value accuracy because accuracy protects unity.

10. The concluding reminder

You are not being asked to become a theologian overnight. You are being asked to become dependable.

The Eucharist is the Church's prayer. Your job is to mean it, to pray it, and to serve the people with a heart inclined toward Christ.