

LITURGICAL ASSEMBLIES DURING LENT

260 All the elements of Lenten observance should conspire to manifest more clearly and to promote the life of the local Church. For this reason *The Roman Missal (Sacramentary)* strongly encourages the preservation and development of the traditional form of gathering the local Church after the fashion of the Roman "stations," at least in the larger cities and in a way suited to the particular place. Especially with the chief pastor of the diocese presiding, such assemblies of the faithful can gather on Sunday or on more convenient weekdays, at the tombs of the saints, in the principal churches or shrines of the city, or in other frequently visited places of pilgrimage in the diocese. This may be done on Sundays or weekdays, in parish churches or places of pilgrimage. The manner of celebration will vary according to local needs.²¹

261 If, as local conditions permit, there is a procession preceding the Mass that is celebrated for such assemblies, the people gather beforehand in a chapel or other suitable place outside the church where the Mass will be celebrated.

In a convenient place the bishop puts on purple Mass vestments. In place of the chasuble he may wear a cope. He puts on a simple miter and takes the pastoral staff, then with the ministers and, if there are any, concelebrants, who wear Mass vestments, he goes to the gathering place, to the accompaniment of a suitable song.

After the singing has ended, the bishop lays aside the pastoral staff and miter and greets the people. The bishop, a concelebrant, or a deacon gives a brief introduction. Then, with hands outstretched, the bishop says an opening prayer on the mystery of the holy cross or for the remission of sins or for the Church, especially the local Church, or he says one of the prayers over the people given in *The Roman Missal (Sacramentary)*. He then takes the miter, and, as circumstances suggest, puts incense in the censer. As the deacon announces, **Let us go forth in peace,** the procession to the church is formed and during it the **Litany of the Saints** is sung. The names of the holy patron or founder and the saints of the local Church may be inserted at the proper places in the litany. When the procession reaches the church, all go to their appointed places. When the bishop reaches the altar, he puts aside the pastoral staff and the miter, reverences the altar, and incenses it. He then

²¹ See RM, Proper of Seasons, the rubric printed at the beginning of the Lenten season.

goes to the chair (cathedra) and takes off the cope, if he has worn it during the procession, and puts on the chasuble. The introductory rites of the Mass are omitted, and, as circumstances suggest, also the *Kyrie*. The bishop says the opening prayer of the Mass. The Mass continues in the usual way.

If this is preferable, the bishop may take off the cope and put on the chasuble as soon as he reaches the altar, before reverencing it.

262 At these assemblies, instead of Mass a celebration of the word of God may take place in the way already described in nos. 224-226, or in the form of the penitential services for the Lenten season provided in Appendix II of the *Rite of Penance* (see nos. 640-643 of this *Ceremonial*).