



ANDRZEJ RUTKOWSKI*

LUBLIN

MASSES FOR SPECIAL GROUPS IN THE LIFE
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The notion of the liturgical assembly and the importance of experiencing the communion with God by every member thereof, especially during the Eucharist, have acquired after the Second Vatican Council much greater significance¹. More emphasis have been put on building the ecclesial community – also on the level of a particular Church, especially a diocese. One aspect related to this is the introduction of the term ‘special group’ with all its richness of meaning. Such a group might consist of individuals defined by their age, the level of their religious formation, their occupation, social class or other relationships within a society. The notion of the ‘special group’, however, must not be understood in the sociological or theological terms (as an assembly of baptized persons). Also, one

* Rev. Andrzej Rutkowski, PhD, priest of the Diocese of Pelplin, adjunct professor of the Department of the Theology of Liturgy at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin.

¹ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika „Ecclesia de Eucharistia” o Eucharystii w życiu Kościoła* (17/04/2003), nos. 39, 52, „L’Osservatore Romano. Wydanie polskie” 24 (2003), no. 5, p. 16–17, 21–22; Benedykt XVI, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska „Sacramentum caritatis” o Eucharystii, źródle i szczyt życia i misji Kościoła* (22/02/2007), nos. 15, 58–59, 63, „L’Osservatore Romano. Wydanie polskie” 28 (2007), no. 4, p. 9, 27–28.

should not interpret it simply as a small liturgical gathering. Moreover, the term is not synonymous, yet close in its meaning, to the concept of an association, a society or a guild interpreted as a specific social group. One can realize especially the closeness of the two terms: 'special group' and a 'small group'. Finally, participants of Ritual Masses where sacraments are conferred or Funeral Masses might well be labeled as special groups².

Bearing that in mind, the Holy See had issued some guidelines concerning Masses for the special groups as soon as four years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council but before the commencement of the various works of the reform and the renewal of the liturgy. This step had been made not to give some privileges or to spur unnecessary liturgical creativity but with a view of bringing certain order to the practices of that day, to confirm some of them, to deepen the theological background thereof and to offer some applications in particular Churches³.

These Vatican instructions served as a reference for various local adaptations of the guidelines for the Masses for particular groups in the Churches of Warsaw (1974), Płock (1991) and Włocławek (1994)⁴.

1. THE PURPOSE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MASSES FOR SPECIAL GROUPS

The post-Vatican II emphasis on the proper participation of the faithful in the Holy Mass, the deepened understanding thereof and some

² S. Lech, *Odnowa liturgii w małych grupach*, „Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 38 (1985), p. 381–382; R. Pierskała, *Liturgia w grupach specjalnych*, in: E. Mateja, R. Pierskała (ed.), *Wprowadzenie soborowej odnowy liturgicznej*, Opole 1999, p. 148–149; R. Kaczyński, *Erneuerung der Kirche durch den Gottesdienst*, in: Th. Mass-Ewerd (ed.), *Lebt unser Gottesdienst? Die bleibende Aufgabe der Liturgiereform*, Freiburg 1988, p. 21–22; J. J. Kopeć, *Liturgia źródłem i szczytem życia Kościoła*, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 48 (2001), no. 8, p. 16–17; A. Żądło, *Eucharystia sakramentem komunii*, „Liturgia Sacra” 11 (2005), p. 268–269; S. Rau, *Die Gemeinde feiert – in mehreren Kirchen*, „Liturgisches Jahrbuch” 60 (2010), p. 243–244; K. Małys, *Duch i forma w liturgii Mszy świętej*, in: W. Świerżawski (ed.), *Sakramenty i sakramentalia*, Sandomierz 2013, p. 66–67, 74–75.

³ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych* (15/05/1969), in: J. Miazek (ed.), *To czyńcie na moją pamiątkę. Eucharystia w dokumentach Kościoła*, Warszawa 1987, p. 214, 218.

⁴ *Trzeci synod archidiecezji warszawskiej* (12/09/1974), „Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Warszawskie” 65 (1975), p. 100; *Uchwały czterdziestego drugiego synodu płockiego* (7/06/1991), „Miesięcznik Pastorski Płocki” 76 (1991), no. 10, p. 65; *Drugi synod diecezji włocławskiej* (4/04/1994). *Statuty*, Włocławek 1994, p. 48.

properly applied modifications aimed in enabling the full participation determine the purpose and the importance of the Masses for special groups⁵. On the level of local Churches one may perceive these Masses as a mean to achieve a higher degree of religious expression and to foster the communal spirit of the liturgical gathering. The formative value of these liturgical celebrations is manifested in their influence on spiritual growth and the preparation to the Christian apostolate. This purpose of the Masses for special groups ought to encourage the local Churches to facilitate such celebrations every time there is a pastoral need for them. Such a favorable attitude of the ecclesial authorities towards these liturgies could be manifested in granting appropriate permissions as well as simply the good will and involvement of the local pastors⁶.

2. THE VENUE, THE TIME AND THE ORDER OF THE CELEBRATION

It is a rule after the Second Vatican Council that the Holy Mass can be offered at any time of day and night (save a few exceptions in the course of the liturgical year) and in various places besides church buildings or chapels provided that there occur some circumstances that give reason for such a choice. The very rite of the renewed Mass allows for greater participation of the faithful due to the abolition of unnecessary repetitions in the liturgy or rendering the gestures and the ministries more legible. However, it does not mean that the careful choice of the time, the venue and the order of the celebration has a secondary importance in the case of the Masses for special groups⁷. On the contrary, this is

⁵ H. Büsse, *Gottesdienst in "Gruppe" und "Hausgemeinde"*, *Tradition und Aufgabe*, w: J. Schreiner (ed.), *Freude am Gottesdienst. Aspekte ursprünglicher Liturgie*, Stuttgart 1983, p. 249–251; W. Głowa, *Eucharystia. Msza święta i kult tajemnicy eucharystycznej poza Mszą św.*, Przemyśl 1997, p. 53; D. Emeis, *Die Gruppe in der Kirche*, „*Diakonia*” 4 (1973), p. 232–233; J. Krzywda, *Eucharystia a wspólnota Kościoła. Aspekt teologiczno-prawny*, „*Sosnowieckie Studia Teologiczne*” 7 (2005), p. 211–212; A. Żądło, *Eucharystia w duszpasterskim posłannictwie Kościoła*, in: A. Żądło (ed.), *Eucharystia w życiu Kościoła*, Katowice 2005, p. 162–163; H. Lenz, *Eucharistie und der Mensch von heute*, „*Heiliger Dienst*” 63 (2009), p. 12–13.

⁶ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie w Kościele Katowickim. Uchwały pierwszego synodu diecezji katowickiej* (23/11/1975), Katowice–Rzym 1976, p. 58; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem. Drugi synod diecezji częstochowskiej* (23/11/1986), Częstochowa 1987, p. 96; *Uchwały czterdziestego drugiego synodu płockiego*, p. 65; *Drugie synod diecezji włocławskiej*, p. 48.

⁷ Z. Wit, *Msza święta w grupach specjalnych*, in: B. Nadolski, *Mszal księgą życia*

a responsibility of particular Churches to answer some doubts concerning these liturgies and to issue some detailed guidelines for them. And so, such celebrations are strongly recommended to take place on weekdays. It is assumed that the principal celebrant has a right to celebrate twice on that day. When it comes to the venue, one should bear in mind that it is a common practice to allow for the Holy Mass to be said not in a church or in a chapel but in some other, well prepared place such as a meeting room in a parochial house. However, on Sundays and the Holy Days of obligation such celebrations ought to take place in the parish church with the participation of the local parochial community⁸. These rules concerning the Masses for special groups are motivated in the universal Church by the effort to give the communal feel to the Sunday Eucharist and to ensure that the local parish is provided with an adequate number of ordained ministers – this could not be achieved if the pastors' primary care was for numerous groups existing in the parish. Moreover, in order to shape the relationship between the parish and the group, it would be good for the latter to enrich the whole community with their characteristic experience of faith. This is why among the places for the celebration apart from the church and the chapel the meeting room in the parochial house is preferred and the condition of having the permission of the proper diocesan authority for such liturgies is maintained. On the other hand, we can observe that there is a shift in calling the venues fit for liturgical celebrations from 'holy' and 'worthy' to 'decent' (see CCL Can. 932 §1)⁹. The reason behind it might be to avoid

chrześcijańskiego, Poznań 1989, p. 455–456; M. Pastuszko, *Najświętsza Eucharystia według Kodeksu Prawa Kanonicznego Jana Pawła II*, Kielce 1997, p. 296; T. Dola, *Eucharystia źródłem wspólnoty*, „*Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego*” 20 (2000), p. 206–208; W. Haunerland, *Authentische Liturgie. Der Gottesdienst der Kirche zwischen Universalität und Individualität*, „*Liturgisches Jahrbuch*” 52 (2002), p. 138–139; L.-M. Chauvet, *La diversité des pratiques eucharistiques: quelques repères théologiques*, „*La Maison-Dieu*” 242 (2005), p. 156–157; J. Janicki, *Obrzędy Mszy świętej*, in: W. Świerzawski (ed.), *Msza święta*, Zawichost–Kraków–Sandomierz 2012, p. 281–282.

⁸ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 60; *Trzeci synod archidiecezji warszawskiej*, p. 114; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej 1982–1986. Ad imaginem Ecclesiae universalis (Lumen gentium 23)* (13/03/1986), Tarnów 1990, p. 101, 121; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 92; *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej 1977–1985* (8/12/1987), Lublin 1988, p. 198; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie* (10/11/1990), Lubaczów 1991, p. 59, 130; *Drugi synod diecezji wrocławskiej*, p. 46, 48.

⁹ *Instrukcja „Eucharisticum mysterium”* (25/05/1967), no. 27, in: *To czyście*, p. 171–172; *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 215, 217 (nos. 3–4, 10a).

to suspicion that some flats would be more worthy compared to others and to abandon the restriction concerning the Holy Mass in a bedroom (which is vital in the case of Masses for the ill people). There is one exception to be noted, namely the Archdiocese of Gniezno. In the period of 1980s there was a ruling that the Masses for particular groups ought to take place exclusively in churches or chapels¹⁰. However, the appropriate permissions for such celebrations were granted in the local Churches of Tarnów (1986) and Lubaczów (1990)¹¹. Moreover, in these two dioceses, along with the local Church of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg (1989) there were some guidelines issued for planning new churches, which include in the projects a chapel for small groups¹². This was also the case in the local Church of Katowice, especially after 1975, that the Masses celebrated for a small group gave an opportunity to appreciate such liturgical signs as the Procession with the gifts¹³. Consequently, pastors were encouraged to share their experience with that sort of celebrations in 1983 during the Synod of the Province of Cracow¹⁴.

3. APPLICATION OF THE MASSES FOR SPECIAL GROUPS

The proper pastoral use of the celebrations for particular groups is a result of observing the guidelines for this kind of Masses (if there are reasons or circumstances that would favor them) and working towards the pastoral goals they are to achieve¹⁵. The application of various modifications

¹⁰ *Drugi synod archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej* (16/05/1981), Gniezno 1981, p. 38.

¹¹ *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 121; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 59.

¹² *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 143; *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzesckiej* (9.12.1989), Koszalin 1990, p. 101; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 98.

¹³ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 88.

¹⁴ *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej. Communio et communication* (1983), Kraków 1992, p. 38.

¹⁵ E. Szafronowski, *Tajemnica Eucharystii w praktyce życia chrześcijańskiego*, in: J. Kudasiewicz (ed.), *Sakramenty wtajemniczenia chrześcijańskiego*, Warszawa 1981, p. 386–387; A. Bugnini, *La riforma liturgica (1948–1975)*, Roma 1983, p. 429; H. J. Sobczko, *Pełne i owocne uczestnictwo w Eucharystii*, in: *Eucharystia w życiu Kościoła*, p. 117–119; J. Krzywdą, op. cit., p. 213–214; A. Perz, *Wpływ Eucharystii na życie chrześcijanina*, „Kieleckie Studia Teologiczne” 5 (2006), p. 124–125; B. Nadolski, *Wspólnototwórczy charakter celebracji eucharystycznej*, „Studia Bydgoskie” 1 (2007), p. 38–39; K. Małys, op. cit., p. 73–74; C. Maggioni, *Riti liturgici per occasioni particolari*, „Rivista Liturgica” 95 (2008), p. 915–916.

foreseen for the Masses for special groups can take place in many parts of the Liturgy, both in its form and its contents. The details depend on the profile of the particular group but the purpose – the active participation – always remains. There may be a short meditation on the readings as an introduction to the Mass. The liturgical commentaries made by the commentator or the celebrant himself may prove vital at the Introductory Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, before the Eucharistic Prayer or in the Concluding Rite. The priest can choose an alternative set of readings or sung parts of the Liturgy of the Word, yet they must be taken from the Lectionary. Lay men and women are encouraged to serve as readers (with exception of the Gospel). The homily is an opportunity to stress the bond between the particular group and the local and the universal Church. Finally, the bidding prayers could refer directly to the members of the special group provided that the proper order of these prayers is observed, the prayer is well prepared and that it includes the invocations for the Church, the entire World, the needy and the faithful present at the Mass¹⁶. It appears that the most common instances when the Masses for special groups are celebrated in the local Churches with the aforementioned guidelines are: Eucharist in the room of an ill or an elderly person, liturgies during closed retreats or Light-Life Movement days of recollection, the retreats for the couples planning to marry, the Masses during the formative meetings for married couples or the faithful involved in apostolate, pastoral work or willing to deepen their faith. Also, the Masses for various groups of school-children or teenagers attending the catechesis are mentioned¹⁷. In all the cases given above the Mass for special groups may enable the growth of the importance of the Eucharist in one's life of faith which is so strongly recommended by the universal Church¹⁸.

3.1. MASSES DURING THE LIGHT-LIFE MOVEMENT RETREATS AND FORMATIVE MEETINGS OF OTHER ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS

The notion of the special group may be very well applied to the participants of various retreats or formation meetings organized by Catho-

¹⁶ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 215–216 (no. 6).

¹⁷ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 55–56; *Drugi synod archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej*, p. 38; *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej*, p. 38; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 96; *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzeskiej*, p. 9, 182, 187.

¹⁸ *Instrukcja „Eucharisticum mysterium”*, p. 173 (no. 30).

lic movements because they usually consists of the faithful committed to a range of liturgical ministries or the liturgy preparation. It is often the case that the everyday Mass during the consecutive days of a retreat has its purpose in including the mystery of the Eucharist in the formative path. When it comes to such celebrations which take place somewhere else than a church or a chapel, it must be said they are a post-Vatican II novelty¹⁹. In the case of the liturgies celebrated during the Light-Life Movement summer retreats, the Diocese of Kielce has pointed in 1992 at their paramount importance in fostering the communal experience of the faith in the six-day programme with the Eucharist at its heart. In the course of the retreat there is the penitential service on the 5th day and the Mass on the 6th day²⁰. In such a way the local Church can experience what the universal Church recommends, that is finding the place for the Eucharistic celebration in the context of other liturgical services during a retreat and demonstrating in this way the richness and the profoundness thereof²¹. In addition to this, we should draw our attention to the document of the local Church of Lublin dealing with the liturgical celebrations presided over by priests in the Neocatechumenal Movement (1987)²². As we may suspect, the details concerning some modifications in the Neocatechumenal liturgical celebrations were left, in accordance with the ecclesial norms, for the judgment and prudent pastoral creativity of individual pastors.

3.2. MASSES FOR THE ILL FAITHFUL

The Masses for the ill faithful can be celebrated in churches and chapels as well as in some other decent place. We may call it a long-

¹⁹ S. Szczepaniec, *Eucharystia w Ruchu „Światło-Życie”*, in: J. J. Kopeć (ed.), *Eucharystia. Misterium – Ofiara – Kult*, Lublin 1997, p. 201; W. Kazimieruk, *Istotne aspekty przygotowania i celebracji Eucharystii ważne dla doświadczenia ewangelizacyjnego*, in: W. Kazimieruk, I. Chłopkowska (ed.), *Liturgia i ewangelizacja*, Warszawa–Siedlce 2005, p. 99–100; I. Celary, *Eucharystia źródłem i szczytem ewangelizacji*, in: *Eucharystia w życiu Kościoła*, p. 182–183; K. Matwiejuk, *Formacyjny wymiar liturgii*, „Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne” 8 (2008), p. 139–149; A. Źądło, *Pojmowanie uczestnictwa w liturgii w okresie po Soborze Watykańskim II*, „Liturgia Sacra” 17 (2011), p. 320–321; T. Sinka, *Podział funkcji z zgromadzeniu liturgicznym*, in: *Msza święta*, p. 216–217, 229–230.

²⁰ Trzeci synod diecezji kieleckiej 1984–1991 (3/06/1992), Kielce 1992, p. 165.

²¹ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214 (no. 2a).

²² Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej, p. 208.

standing custom that the celebration involving an ill and suffering person or numerous people had been an opportunity to organize the service in some other place than a church or a chapel. However, after the Second Vatican Council there has been an unprecedented surge in the number of such liturgies²³. The local Church in Lublin realized such a development to have taken place and expressed its appreciation of this practice. In the document the Eucharistic celebration is seen as a mean to help the ill people²⁴. The dioceses of Katowice and Gniezno encouraged such celebrations (in 1975 and 1981 respectively) and emphasized the importance of living the mystery of the Eucharist during illness. These encouragements had also a practical dimension. In the times before the broadcast of the Holy Mass was resumed in the public Radio, the parish charity groups had been recording liturgies for the ill using cassette recorders.²⁵

3.2.1. HOLY MASSES IN HOSPITALS

The masses for the hospital patients usually take place in chapels specially designed for this purpose and the celebrations are regular – every Sunday, every feast day or sometimes even every day. This regular schedule allows the pastor to concentrate on the very celebration and to adjust it to the needs of the ill²⁶. In the context of local churches' life the everyday celebration is recommended in large hospitals, shelters and sanatoriums and, wherever possible, Sunday Mass is most encouraged. The proper venue for the liturgy is a hospital chapel or any room within the hospital as long as it is well arranged for the celebration (see

²³ Z. Wit, op. cit., p. 454; R. Pierskała, *Uczestnictwo wiernych w Eucharystii*, „Liturgia Sacra” 8 (2002), p. 232–233; A. Sielepin, *Eucharystia – „przedziwny” sakrament życiowego optymizmu*, in: *Eucharystia w życiu Kościoła*, p. 308–309; Perz, *Wpływ Eucharystii*, p. 127–128; A. Żądło, *Eucharystia sakramentem komunii*, p. 270–271; S. Cichy, *Teologia Eucharystii*, in: *Msza święta*, p. 104–105.

²⁴ *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej*, p. 87.

²⁵ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 49; *Drugi synod archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej*, p. 88.

²⁶ Cz. Krakowiak, *Eklesjalny charakter troski o chorych*, in: E. Szczotok, A. Liszkowska (ed.) *Ewangelizacja i nawrócenie Kościoła jako miejsce nawrócenia i pojednania. Sakramenty uzdrowienia. Program duszpasterski na rok 1995/96*, Katowice 1995, p. 212; W. Haunerland, op. cit., p. 144–145; A. Żądło, *Eucharystia w duszpasterskim*, p. 159–158; B. Margański, *Celebracja Mszy świętej w świetle odnowionego Mszału rzymskiego*, in: *Msza święta*, p. 200–201, 204–205.

CCL 932 § 1). This Holy Mass should be preferably presided over by the appointed hospital chaplain or other pastor entrusted with the care for the patients²⁷. Should the celebration of the Holy Mass be impossible on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation, the local Church of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg urged hospital chaplains to encourage patients to listen to the Holy Mass on the radio²⁸.

3.2.2. MASSES CELEBRATED AT HOME OF THE SICK

The liturgical celebrations which take place at patients' homes may be seen as a pastoral necessity given the difficult situation of the sick and the obligation to provide them with the Sacraments of the Church. Very often these Masses are attended by numerous elderly or disabled faithful²⁹. On the level of dioceses one must not overlook the great importance of the Masses said for the sick and the elderly in villages inconveniently remote from parish churches. The venues fit for such liturgical celebrations might be some rooms originally arranged for catechesis classes or even private households as long as they are properly adapted for the Eucharist to take place³⁰. In the case of the Masses celebrated at home of the sick the pastoral sensitivity of local Churches reflects that of the universal Church, especially in the aspect of scheduling such celebration as a regular event taking place on the days scheduled in advance³¹. One sort of a Mass for special groups which the particular Churches draw

²⁷ *Statuty archidiecezjalnego synodu poznańskiego, odprawionego pod przewodnictwem księdza arcybiskupa Antoniego Baraniaka w dniach 4 VI, 12 IX i 12 X milenijnego Roku Pańskiego 1968 (14/10/1970), Poznań 1972*, p. 68–69; *Statuty drugiego synodu gdańskiego (20/12/1973), Gdańsk-Oliwa 1976*, p. 109; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 156; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 239; *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzesckiej*, p. 27; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 210; *Trzeci synod diecezji kieleckiej*, p. 279.

²⁸ *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzesckiej*, p. 27.

²⁹ A. Dyr, *Msza w domu chorego*, in: *Mszał księga*, p. 158–159; J. Stefański, *Sakrament chorych w praktyce duszpasterskiej*, in: *Ewangelizacja i nawrócenie*, p. 495–496; W. Nowak, *Zarys liturgii Kościoła domowego*, Olsztyn 2000, p. 110–111; Rau, *Die gemeinde feiert*, p. 247–248; A. Sielepin, op. cit., p. 311–312; T. Cichy, op. cit., p. 109–110; B. Nadolski, *Eucharystia komunii z Chrystusem i między nami*, Kraków 202, p. 31–32.

³⁰ *Statuty archidiecezjalnego synodu poznańskiego* p. 18; *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej*, p. 73; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 112.

³¹ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214 (no. 2c).

much attention to are such celebrations which take place at home of a sick person and which are attended by members of the household. This liturgy manifests the truth that all the Sacraments draw their power from the Paschal mystery of Christ and that every liturgy has got in principle the social character (which the communal prayer for the sick person points at). The Mass can take place in the room of the disabled patient. It has been elucidated in the relevant Church regulations that a priest who offers such a Mass at home of the ill parishioner has a right to celebrate twice on weekdays and thrice on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation³². All the encouragements, guidelines and elucidation mentioned in this point can surely draw from the spirit of the universal Church's legislature and are inspired by its teaching³³. There are also some permissions granted to priests by local Churches to celebrate Mass at home of an individual ill person once, twice or thrice a year and, in addition to this, when his or her life is in danger. The times in the course of the liturgical year which seem particularly suited for this kind of a liturgical celebration would be: Advent, Lent, the Day of the Apostleship of the Sick (6th July) as well as the periods of prolonged illness³⁴. One-off permissions must be granted for the Masses at home of the sick in local Churches of Częstochowa (1986) and Płock (1991)³⁵. Moreover, the dioceses of Gdańsk, Częstochowa and Włocławek (in 1973, 1986 and 1994 respectively) have put the pastors in charge of the proper formation of the sick persons willing to host the

³² *Statuty archidiecezjalnego synodu poznańskiego*, p. 9, 86; *Trzeci synod archidiecezji warszawskiej*, p. 114; *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 59–60; *Duszpasterski synod archidiecezji krakowskiej 1972–1979. Przebieg prac synodalnych. Dokumentacja synodu* (8/05/1979), vol. 1, Kraków 1985, p. 301; *Drugi synod archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej*, p. 38; *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej*, p. 114; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 121, 238; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 157; *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej*, p. 184; *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzeskiej*, p. 25, 79; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 59, 209; *Synod archidiecezji wrocławskiej 1985 – 1991 (6/12/1993)*, Wrocław 1995, p. 321; *Trzeci synod diecezji kieleckiej*, p. 215, 207, 260; *Drugi synod diecezji włocławskiej*, p. 46.

³³ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214–215 (no. 2e).

³⁴ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 191; *Statuty drugiego synodu gdańskiego*, p. 107; *Duszpasterski synod archidiecezji krakowskiej*, p. 265, 518 (vol. 1); *Synod archidiecezji wrocławskiej*, p. 287, 296.

³⁵ *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 96; *Uchwały czterdziestego drugiego synodu płockiego*, p. 35.

liturgical celebration at their home as well as of ensuring the appropriate preparations made in the venues of such Masses³⁶.

3.3. MASSES FOR THE DEAF-MUTE

The participation of the deaf-mute persons in the Holy Mass emphasizes the importance of the task of rendering the liturgical gestures, symbols, postures and ministries even more visible and transparent. However, the main transmitters of the liturgical contents are still words (in the narrow and the broad meaning of this term). This is the legacy of the Second Vatican Council to deepen our understanding of the liturgy by simplification and greater readability of its symbols. One can say that the Mass for the deaf-mute is not only special by name – it truly requires some special abilities of the pastor³⁷. Local Churches, drawing from their pastoral experiences, help their priests to become aware of the main goal of these celebrations, namely to enable the deaf-mute participants of the liturgy to integrate the external body postures with the internal disposition of the spirit. The contents and the form of the homily is to serve this purpose³⁸. Some detailed guidelines were issued in the Diocese of Katowice in 1975 and in the Province of Cracow in 1983. One of them was about simultaneous uttering of the words of the liturgical texts and displaying the same contents using the sign language either by the celebrant himself or by a certain appointed translator. Another adjustment mentioned in the documents of local Churches was to allow the priest to select readings on his own and to display the liturgical texts using projectors, whiteboards or mass sheets. Preachers were reminded to facilitate the reception of their homilies by rendering them simple in content and easy in their form as well as by making use of the drama or referring to real-life examples that the listeners might easily understand.

³⁶ *Statuty drugiego synodu gdańskiego*, p. 107; *Chrystus światłem Maryja wzorem*, p. 96; *Drugi synod diecezji wrocławskiej*, p. 119.

³⁷ W. Świerżawski, *Misterium Eucharystii i mistyka eucharystyczna*, in: *Msza święta*, p. 150–151; R. Pierskała, op. cit., p. 240–241; H. Lenz, op. cit., p. 7–8; Kopeć, *Liturgia źródłem*, p. 20–21; H. Sobeczko, *Pełne i owoce uczestnictwo*, p. 107–108; *Żądło*, *Pojmowanie uczestnictwa w liturgii*, p. 324–325; A. Cuva, *La participation des fidèles à la liturgie selon la constitution „Sacrosanctum Concilium”*, „*La Maison-Dieu*” 241 (2005), p. 146–147.

³⁸ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 199; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 241; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 213; *Trzeci synod diecezji kieleckiej*, p. 259.

There was a suggestion to place a special information board in the porch of the church and to use some visualizations during the sermon. When it comes to the ministries of the reader or the commentator at the Masses for the deaf-mute, special care must be taken to prepare them properly and to give them an exposed, prominent place during the liturgy. Other modifications mentioned in the documents are the same as in the case of the Masses with children³⁹. In the ecclesial province of Cracow the seminarians have been instructed since 1983 how to serve as readers at the Masses for the deaf-mute persons⁴⁰.

3.4.MASSES FOR OTHER SPECIAL GROUPS

There are many other congregations which might be called, in the light of the pastoral pragmatism, special groups⁴¹. On the level of the local Churches there are some rules governing the application of special norms for them. In larger communities a monthly Mass for the blind is recommended. In psychiatric hospitals there should be separate provisions for the patients heavily impaired by their illness and for those who would be able to take part, at least from time to time, in the regular Sunday gathering of the parish community. In addition to this, certain guidelines have been issued regarding Masses for special groups which are celebrated by prison chaplains in penitentiary institutions. Some basic recommendations given here include adjusting the contents of the homily to the life experience of the inmates and preparing in the right way the room where the liturgical celebration should take place⁴².

In the pastoral practice of the particular Churches one might count among the Masses for special groups the celebrations, which are a prepa-

³⁹ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 199, 204; *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej*, p. 110.

⁴⁰ *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej*, p. 111.

⁴¹ T. Dola, *Eucharystia źródłem*, p. 208–210; B. Nadolski, *Współnotwórczy charakter*, p. 42–43; J. Janicki, *Obrzędy Mszy świętej*, p. 292–293; W. Kazimieruk, *Istotne aspekty*, p. 96–98; I. Celary, *Eucharystia źródłem*, p. 186–187; B. Nadolski, *Eucharystia Komunii*, p. 41–42; K. Matwiejuk, *Formacyjny wymiar liturgii*, p. 142–143; A. Żądło, *Pojmowanie uczestnictwa*, p. 326–327.

⁴² *Statuty archidiecezjalnego synodu poznańskiego*, p. 78; *Statuty drugiego synodu gdańskiego*, p. 110; *Czwarty synod diecezji tarnowskiej*, p. 240, 242; *Pierwszy synod diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzesckiej*, p. 28; *Uchwały synodu archidiecezji w Lubaczowie*, p. 214–215; *Trzeci synod diecezji kieleckiej*, p. 259.

ration for the children going to their First Communion. These are usually Eucharistic celebrations scheduled for the commencement of the formation program and then they run on monthly basis. Their pastoral objective is to familiarize the children with the liturgy of the Church with parents and elder siblings participating⁴³. Taking the documents of the universal Church as the main point of reference, these liturgical assemblies can be perceived as meetings of the faithful on a different formation level which serve to enrich and inspire those who are at the beginning of this path – the children. This enrichment is, however, mutual and the parents as well as the elderly siblings also advance in their Christian formation⁴⁴.

One could count among the special groups also such assemblies, which consist of retired parishioners, drivers, farmers, young professionals, healthcare system employees or university graduates. Their Masses might take place on yearly or, in some cases, monthly basis. A good time for such celebration would be an ordinary weekday and a vital part thereof is a special homily prepared for this occasion⁴⁵. On the level of the universal Church there is much emphasis put on the importance of these Masses in the life of the particular Churches and the fact that the participants of such liturgies are first of all parishioners in a close relationship with other members of the parish community. Some modifications can be introduced as long as they serve a genuine religious, pastoral or formative purpose⁴⁶. One example of this kind of celebrations could be found in the local Church of Katowice in 1970s when Masses used to be said in private flats with the faithful from the neighborhood attending⁴⁷. Some justification for such practices can be seen in the teaching of the universal Church that encourages some groups within the parish to meet for pastoral reasons⁴⁸. However, the liturgical assemblies mentioned here must be seen in the historical context of the past times when the authorities did their best to impede construction of new church buildings.

⁴³ *Statuty drugiego synodu gdańskiego*, p. 54; *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej*, p. 52, 59; *Synod archidiecezji wrocławskiej*, p. 448.

⁴⁴ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214 (no. 2d).

⁴⁵ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 176, 184, 255; *Pierwszy synod prowincji krakowskiej*, p. 107–108; *Drugi synod diecezji lubelskiej*, p. 198.

⁴⁶ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214 (no. 2b, d).

⁴⁷ *Wiara, modlitwa i życie*, p. 265.

⁴⁸ *Instrukcja dotycząca odprawiania Mszy świętej dla grup specjalnych*, p. 214 (no. 2b).

To sum up, it must be said that the Masses for special groups are both a pastoral opportunity and a challenge for particular Churches.

1. Fifteen local synods that took place till 1994 addressed the issue. These include such dioceses as: Włocławek, Poznań, Gdańsk, Warszawa, Katowice, Kraków, Gniezno, Tarnów, Częstochowa, Lublin, Koszalin-Kołobrzeg, Lubaczów, Płock, Kielce and Wrocław. Among these there were two synods in the particular Churches of Włocławek and Poznań. The local Church of the ecclesial province of Cracow had both the archdiocesan synod and the metropolitan one. Moreover, the synod for all the Polish dioceses gave some guidelines for all the local Churches in the country.

2. The importance and the meaning of these Masses must be clearly manifested. In the same time a special care must be taken to choose a right venue, time and to make a proper selection of liturgical texts and various parts of the order of Mass. One of the circumstances to be taken into account here is the fact that these celebrations refer directly to the life experiences of their participants. Moreover, their engagement in the lay apostolate within their parishes, Catholic movements, professional environments must be fostered. Also, these Masses enable a good formation before receiving certain Sacraments. The liturgical celebrations for special groups may become an opportunity to deepen the Eucharistic life, to develop the pastoral work, to exchange experiences and to strengthen the co-operation between pastors, parish groups, families and individuals engaged in the apostolate.

3. On the level of local Churches a particular importance was given to the homily, the venue of celebration and the variety of the liturgical ministries performed by members of the assembly. When it comes to the sermon, the documents encourage the pastors to apply a communicative style of preaching and to make use of some help in passing the message – especially in the Masses for the deaf-mute. There is a gradual shift in attitude towards celebrations in other place than a church or a chapel. They often seem pastorally beneficial, especially in the case of the sick. It is good to have a chapel included in plans of new parish buildings. Among various liturgical ministries those of a reader and a commentator gain a particular importance in the case of the Masses for special groups – especially the deaf-mute persons. Some other recommendations consist in displaying the liturgical texts using projectors or making use of a sign-language translation during the Masses for the deaf-mute. Some other modifications which include choosing an alternative set of readings or

sung parts of the Liturgy of the Word or introducing a procession with gifts seem to be just briefly mentioned in the documents. Some other possibilities, such as a careful and liturgically aware composition of the bidding prayers, still need to be evaluated.

4. There is a variety in the frequency of the Masses for special groups recommended by local Churches. Sometimes there is a suggestion to celebrate daily or several times a week. In some other cases the documents recommend to organize such liturgies once a month, once a year or even once in few years. The factors that influence the frequency might be: the size of the group, the intensiveness of the formative program and the pastoral needs (especially in the case of the Masses for the sick).

5. The Masses for special groups on the level of particular Churches highlight the importance of experiencing the Sunday and festive liturgy in the environment of one's parish community. This is due to the fact that the Masses for special groups are particularly encouraged to take place on weekdays and not on Sundays. Hence, the celebrations during the week may serve as good preparation for the coming Sunday or festive Eucharist celebrated in the large parish community, preferably with some disabled people attending.

Abstract. The post-Vatican II emphasis on the proper participation of the faithful in the Holy Mass, the deepened understanding thereof and some properly applied modifications aimed in enabling the full participation determine the purpose and the importance of the Masses for special groups. The formative value of these liturgical celebrations is manifested in their influence on spiritual growth and the preparation to the Christian apostolate. Masses for special groups ought to encourage the local Churches to facilitate such celebrations every time, when there is a pastoral need for them. These Masses celebrated for small groups give an opportunity to appreciate such liturgical signs as, for example, the Procession with the gifts. The proper pastoral use of the celebrations for particular groups is a result of observing the guidelines for this kind of Masses and working towards the pastoral goals they are to achieve. The details concerning the celebration depend on the profile of the particular group but the purpose – the active participation – always remains unchanged.

Key words: Holy Mass; liturgical assembly; particular Church; special group; adjustments in the liturgy; participation in the liturgy; pastoral considerations; Masses celebrated outside a church or a chapel; Mass for the sick; Mass for the elderly; Mass for the deaf-mute; Mass for the disabled; Mass for the prisoners; Mass for various social groups; Mass for various professional groups; evangelization retreats; days of recollection; ecclesial movements; preparation before receiving Sa-

craments; liturgical commentaries; liturgical ministries; Liturgy of the Word; homily; procession with gifts; bidding prayers.

Streszczenie. Msze z udziałem grup specjalnych w życiu Kościoła partykularnego. Silna sugestia wyartykułowana po *Vaticanum II* dotycząca właściwego uczestnictwa wiernych we Mszy świętej, pogłębienia jej rozumienia, jak i pewne – właściwie zastosowane zmiany – mające na celu umożliwić pełne uczestnictwo, determinuje cel i doniosłość Mszy świętych dla grup specjalnych. Formacyjna wartość tych liturgicznych celebracji jest ukazana w ich wpływie na duchwy wzrost oraz przygotowanie do chrześcijańskiego apostołatu. Msze święte dla grup specjalnych powinny dodać lokalnym Kościołom odwagi, by ułatwić takie celebracje zawsze, gdy zachodzi ich pastoralna potrzeba. Warto zauważyć, że msze celebrowane dla małych grup dają możliwość docenienia takich liturgicznych znaków jak, na przykład, procesja z darami. Właściwe pastoralne wykorzystanie celebracji dla poszczególnych grup jest wynikiem przestrzegania wytycznych dla tego rodzaju Mszy, oraz wysiłku wobec pastoralnych celów, które mają być osiągnięte. Szczegóły dotyczące celebracji zależą od charakteru poszczególnej grupy, a cel – aktywne uczestnictwo – pozostaje zawsze niezmienny.

Słowa kluczowe: Msza święta; zgromadzenie liturgiczne; Kościół partykularny; grupa specjalna; dostosowanie liturgii; udział w liturgii; racje duszpasterskie; Msza poza kościołem i kaplicą; Msza z udziałem chorych; Msza z udziałem starszych; Msza z udziałem głuchoniemych; Msza z udziałem niepełnosprawnych; Msza z udziałem więźniów; Msza z udziałem grup stanowych; Msze z udziałem grup zawodowych; Rekolekcje ewangelizacyjne; dni skupienia; ruchy eklezjalne; przygotowanie do sakramentów; komentarz liturgiczny; posługi liturgiczne; liturgia słowa; homilia; procesja z darami; modlitwa powszechna.