



## GUARDIANS OF THE SACRED LITURGY - WITHOUT BORDERS

### LITURGICAL LITERACY PROGRAM (LLP)

#### MODULE 1



### ***RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL***

The following are excerpts from the *Code of Canon Law* (1983) concerning the Obligations and the Rights of all the Christian Faithful in particular, the Lay Christian Faithful. There are more but for now, the following are the most relevant to our work as Guardians of the Sacred Liturgy.

#### **CODE OF CANON LAW (1983)**

Can. 204 §1. The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal function, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.

#### **THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF ALL THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Cann. 208 - 223)**

Can. 208 From their rebirth in Christ, there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality regarding dignity and action by which they all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ according to each one's own condition and function.

Can. 209 §1. The Christian faithful, even in their own manner of acting, are **always obliged** to maintain communion with the Church.

§2. With great diligence they are to **fulfill the duties** which they owe to the universal Church and the particular church to which they belong **according to the precepts of the law.**

Can. 211 All the Christian faithful have the **duty and right** to work so that the divine message of salvation more and more reaches all people in every age and in every land.

Can. 212 §1. Conscious of their own **responsibility**, the Christian faithful are **bound to follow with Christian obedience** those things which the sacred pastors, **inasmuch as they represent Christ**, declare as teachers of the faith or establish as rulers of the Church.

§2. The Christian faithful are free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires.

§3. According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they have the **right** and even at times the **duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful**, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.

Can. 215 The Christian faithful are at **liberty freely to found and direct associations** for purposes of charity or piety or for the promotion of the Christian vocation in the world and to hold meetings for the common pursuit of these purposes.

Can. 216 Since they participate in the mission of the Church, **all the Christian faithful have the right to promote or sustain apostolic action even by their own undertakings**, according to their own state and condition. Nevertheless, no undertaking is to claim the name Catholic without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can. 218 Those engaged in the sacred disciplines have a just freedom of inquiry and of expressing their opinion prudently on those matters in which they possess expertise, while observing the submission due to the magisterium of the Church.

#### THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF THE **LAY** CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Cann. 224 - 231)

Can. 225 §1. Since, like all the Christian faithful, lay persons are designated by God for the apostolate through baptism and confirmation, they are **bound by the general obligation** and possess the right as individuals, or joined in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation is made known and accepted by all persons everywhere in the world. **This obligation is even more compelling** in those circumstances in which only through them can people hear the gospel and know Christ.

§2. According to each one's own condition, they are also bound by a particular duty to imbue and perfect the order of temporal affairs with the spirit of the gospel and thus to give witness to Christ, especially in carrying out these same affairs and in exercising secular functions.

Can. 228 §1. Lay persons who are found suitable are qualified to be admitted by the sacred pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which they are able to exercise according to the precepts of the law.

**§2. Lay persons who excel in necessary knowledge, prudence, and integrity are qualified to assist the pastors of the Church as experts and advisors, even in councils according to the norm of law.**

And to emphasize our duties as the People of God *to protect the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the Mass, from any and every irreverence or distortion and that all abuses be thoroughly corrected*, I reiterate what the juridical document, *Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum* says.

***INSTRUCTION REDEMPTIONIS SACRAMENTUM:***

*[183.] In an altogether particular manner, let everyone do all that is in their power to ensure that the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist will be protected from any and every irreverence or distortion and that all abuses be thoroughly corrected. This is a most serious duty incumbent upon each and every one, and all are bound to carry it out without any favouritism. (emphasis supplied)*

*[184.] Any Catholic, whether Priest or Deacon or lay member of Christ's faithful, has the right to lodge a complaint regarding a liturgical abuse to the diocesan Bishop or the competent Ordinary equivalent to him in law, or to the Apostolic See on account of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff. It is fitting, however, insofar as possible, that the report or complaint be submitted first to the diocesan Bishop. This is naturally to be done in truth and charity. (emphasis supplied)*