

## **ASSESSMENT TOOL OF THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE PARISH FOR PARISH WORSHIP COMMISSIONS**

### **Introduction**

In 2005, the *Celebrating the Faith Task Force* called on the Director of Liturgy and the Diocesan Liturgical Commission to develop a “process of assessing Sunday Eucharist in parishes and strategies to improve them.” This document is our response to the first part of that mandate.

This tool is intended to be used by parish worship commissions and pastors to assess the liturgical life of their community (especially as it related to Sunday Mass), prioritize needed improvements, and make plans for the future. The tool is also intended to be used by schools, Newman Centers, campus ministries, and religious communities—any assembly that celebrates the Church’s liturgies in the Diocese of Davenport.

There is no perfect liturgy here; and communities may have legitimate reasons why a local practice is not in perfect accord with the liturgical documents. At the same time, improper liturgical practices may slowly develop over time—and an evaluation such as this one will help parishes ensure that their liturgies are celebrated with intention and purpose, in accord with the universal Church, rather than simply out of habit.

It is hoped that this tool will be a source of helpful information to commission members. The relevant liturgical documents are cited, and readers are encouraged to refer to the primary sources if there is any doubt as to meaning or intent. However, intimate knowledge of the documents referenced below is not a requirement to use this form. The Diocesan Director of Liturgy and the members of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission are available to assist parishes in the use of this instrument.

The tool may be used in its entirety, or the parish may decide to study only particular aspects of its liturgical life at any one time. In completing this form, please use the following definitions:

Yes	=	this is consistently the norm or practice at the parish
No	=	this is not the norm or usual practice at the parish
N/A	=	not applicable

In addition, there is space at the end of each section for comments and questions—and its use is encouraged.

What does a “No” mean?

Parishes may answer “no” to a question for a number of reasons. It may be possible that a priest or parish was not aware of the particular norm. Or, it may be impossible for a community to follow exactly what is called for in the books. It may also be the case that a parish, at some point, chose not to follow a particular law or practice. In any case, you may find it helpful to comment on the reason(s) for the “no” – and have a conversation as to why you ought (or ought not) change what you are doing. If a parish has consciously decided not to follow a particular norm, then a parish ought to ask itself: Why have we chosen not to follow the liturgical documents? How does the parish’s practice reflect the *values* underlying that norm? Are we being influenced more by personal preference than by what the Church asks of us? Parish liturgical leadership can then discern which area(s) require(s) more urgent attention and which can wait, taking into consideration the priorities given in the liturgical books.

What does a “Yes” mean?

Certainly not perfection! We may be doing everything that we ought to be doing; but we can always improve on “how” we are doing things. Again, it will be up to the parish’s liturgical leadership—in keeping with the liturgical books—to decide what areas are priorities and what areas can wait for another day.

A note on vocabulary:

In keeping with the GIRM, we have chosen to use the title “priest celebrant” for the priest who is presiding over the liturgical assembly. In order to differentiate instituted acolytes and lectors from other lay ministers, we use the terms “reader” and “altar server” for persons who exercise those ministries in a parish (though the GIRM, presuming instituted ministers, uses lector and acolyte). The more familiar as well as the formal names for the parts of the Mass are used together.

*This document is based on assessment tools developed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Their questions were combined and, in many cases, adapted—and other questions added—by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission to serve the needs of this local church. The Appendix is the work of the Diocesan Liturgical and Building Commissions.*

#### **List of Abbreviations: Documents referenced in this Assessment Tool**

<b>BLS</b>	<i>Built of Living Stones</i>
<b>CB</b>	<i>Ceremonial of Bishops</i>
<b>CIC</b>	<i>Code of Canon Law</i>
<b>CSL</b>	<i>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy</i>
<b>FIYH</b>	<i>Fulfilled in Your Hearing</i>
<b>GFT</b>	<i>Gather Faithfully Together</i>
<b>GILH</b>	<i>General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours</i>
<b>GIRM</b>	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
<b>GNLY</b>	<i>General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar</i>
<b>IOM</b>	<i>Introduction to the Order of the Mass (USCCB)</i>
<b>LMI<sub>n</sub></b>	<i>Lectionary For Mass: Introduction</i>
<b>MD</b>	<i>Misericordia Dei</i>
<b>NDRHC</b>	<i>Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America</i>
<b>NS</b>	<i>National Statues for the Catechumenate (U.S.)</i>
<b>OCF</b>	<i>Order of Christian Funerals</i>
<b>PCS</b>	<i>Pastoral Care of the Sick</i>
<b>RBapC</b>	<i>Rite of Baptism for Children (GI – General Introduction)</i>
<b>RCIA</b>	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
<b>RConf</b>	<i>Rite of Confirmation</i>
<b>RMarr</b>	<i>Rite of Marriage</i>
<b>RS</b>	<i>Redemptionis Sacramentum: Instruction on the Eucharist</i>
<b>STL</b>	<i>Sing to the Lord</i>

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## I. Preparations Before the Liturgy

A. Environment	Yes	No	N/A
<b>Objects used in the Liturgy</b>			
1. The Lectionary, Gospel Book, and Missal are in good condition, dignified, and worthy for liturgical celebration. (GIRM 349)			
2. The vessels for Eucharist are of good quality, made for liturgical use, not easily broken (e.g., glass, earthenware, clay), and blessed before use. (GIRM 328-32; RS 117 & 118) If parishes have vessels that do not meet these criteria, there are plans for replacement of vessels over time and in keeping with the parish budget.			
3. The liturgical vesture is of good quality and worn appropriately (in proper order and neatly). (GIRM 335-347; RS 122-128) The stole is intended to be worn <i>under</i> the chasuble or dalmatic. Parishes with vestment sets that use the stole over the chasuble and dalmatic have plan to replace existing vestments as they wear out with the style called for in the texts.			
4. There are enough programs/hymnals for all members of the assembly.			
5. The worship aids facilitate the participation of the members of the assembly. Texts of the Scriptures are not included, unless more than one language is being used. The assembly is encouraged to listen to the proclaimed word, not to read along.			
6. Incense is appropriately used on some (more solemn) occasions. (GIRM 276-277)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			
<b>The Liturgical Space</b>			
7. The number of Masses scheduled is based on need. Ideally, the church should be at least 50% full at each Sunday Mass.			
8. The configuration of the church invites full, active, and conscious participation of the faithful, conveys the image of the gathered assembly, and facilitates the liturgical action. (GIRM 288 & 294; BLS 49-53)			
9. The ambo, altar, baptismal font, and presider's chair are designed and placed appropriately. (GIRM 296-310; BLS 56-69) The reader is referred the Appendix ( <i>Liturgical Environment Self Study</i> ) for assistance in answering this question.			
10. The liturgical environment is clean and well cared for, free of clutter and crowding. (GIRM 292-293) For example, the sanctuary contains only what is necessary for the Eucharistic liturgy and the altar does not have anything on it except the altar cloth (and candles), and (if used) the Book of the Gospels, until the Preparation of Gifts and Altar. (GIRM 73, 305, 306)			

<p>11. The liturgical environment is enhanced by appropriate decoration in the sanctuary area, the assembly area, and even outside the church building in such a way that the decorations do not impede or distract from ritual actions. (GIRM 289, 292; see also BLS 122-129)</p>			
<p>12. The lighting and sound systems are adequate and fully functional. (BLS 221-225; 228-233)</p>			
<p>13. The church is fully accessible to those with special needs. (BLS 42) [for example: hearing-assistive devices for the hearing-impaired, ramp access for those in wheelchairs]</p>			
<p>14. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a place that is noble, prominent, and suitable for prayer in accord with the norms of the local bishop. (GIRM 314-316; RS 130)</p>			
<p>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</p>			

<b>B. Assembly</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Identity / Formation</b>			
1. Efforts have been made to help the members of the assembly understand that they are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people God has made God's own. (CSL 14; RS 36)			
2. Efforts have been made to help the assembly become aware that by virtue of their baptism it is their right and duty to participate in liturgical celebrations. (CSL 14; RS 37)			
3. Efforts have been made to help the members of the assembly understand that they are called to offer themselves as a living and holy sacrifice of praise through prayer and worship. (RS 37)			
4. Efforts have been made to instill in the faithful that sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the mystery of faith that is the Eucharist. (RS 40)			
5. Efforts have been made to help the assembly see their participation in the Eucharist as not only sharing in a meal, but also a sharing in the sacrifice of Christ. (RS 38)			
6. The manner in which the liturgy is celebrated reflects the above understandings.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			
<b>Participation</b>			
7. The faithful understand the importance of their role as members of the assembly; that they are not there "as strangers or silent spectators", but through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they take part in the liturgy conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full involvement, (CSL 48) doing all, but only, what is theirs to do (CSL 28).			
8. The assembly actively and knowingly participates in the liturgy through their listening, their singing and taking part in the responses, and through their actions (movement, gestures, postures). (CSL 14 & 30; RS 39)			
9. The assembly appreciates that active participation includes a participation in sacred silence. (GIRM 45; RS 39)			
10. The liturgy is properly adapted to the needs of the faithful, with respect to cultural and ethnic traditions. (CSL 37-40; RS 39)			
11. Members of the assembly are NOT embarrassed or made to feel out of place if they do not show desired external conformity.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>C. Ministries</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Liturgical ministries appropriate to the laity (e.g., reader, music minister, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, hospitality minister, altar server) are distributed among a number of trained liturgical lay ministers. (GIRM 97; RS 43)			
2. The lay liturgical ministers reflect the assembly in age, gender, and ethnic background.			
3. Lay liturgical ministers exercise only one ministry at a given liturgy. (CSL 28; RS 44)			
4. All lay liturgical ministers have received liturgical formation and are properly trained to perform their ministry. (CSL 29; RS 46) They are familiar with the Church's documents and norms, particularly those relating to their role.			
5. Lay liturgical ministers are "deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy," and perform their office with "sincere devotion and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry." (CSL 29) There is a sense of prayer and reverence among the liturgical ministers.			
6. The priest(s) and deacon(s) are imbued with the spirit of the liturgy and exercise their liturgical role with sincere decorum and devotion. (CSL 14 & 17) Each does all, but only, what is his to do.			
7. By exercising their ministry, all the liturgical ministers (lay and ordained) enhance the full and active participation of the faithful, each in their own way. All the liturgical ministers see themselves primarily as servants of the assembly's communal worship.			
8. All ministers, lay and ordained, strive to be transparent—so their ministry becomes an opportunity to encounter Christ. They do not draw attention to themselves and away from the mysteries they serve (for example, by overly dramatic readings or by distracting/idiosyncratic actions and/or speech).			
9. The priest(s) and deacon(s) strive to deepen their own liturgical knowledge and ability. (CSL 16 & 17; RS 33)			
10. There is a competent person responsible for liturgy preparation and coordination in the parish.			
11. This person has the support of the pastor, other clergy, and liturgy committee to carry out her or his responsibilities.			
12. Language that is inclusive and uses a rich variety of theologically sound metaphors for naming God is used in the texts composed by the parish (e.g., introductions, intercessions, preaching).			
13. The liturgy is characterized by "noble simplicity." The extremes of excessive informality and ostentation are avoided. Intentional attention is paid to flow and beauty.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>D. Music</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>The Choice of Music</b>			
1. The liturgical music is suitable sacred music. (RS 57; see also GIRM 39-41 and STL 67, 125, 127)			
2. Liturgical music, appropriate for the part of the Mass for which it is chosen, is provided for: (CSL 112; GIRM 40; STL 68, 110, 127-29) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Entrance Procession</li> <li>· Responsorial Psalm</li> <li>· Eucharistic Acclamations</li> <li>· Communion Procession</li> <li>· Glory to God (<i>Gloria</i>)</li> <li>· Gospel Acclamation</li> <li>· Lamb of God</li> </ul>			
3. The choice of music gives primacy to the Gospel and Eucharistic acclamations and to the dialogues. The doxology to the Lord's Prayer is sung if the prayer itself is also sung. (STL 115-17; GIRM 40; IOM 126)			
4. The liturgical music serves the liturgical year, and reflect the principle of progressive solemnity. (STL 110-14)			
5. The liturgical music is able to be sung and understood by the assembly gathered. (STL 27, 130-32)			
6. The music is performed competently. (STL 50)			
7. The liturgical music lifts the hearts of the faithful to offer praise and thanksgiving to God. (GIRM 39)			
8. The liturgical music repertoire of the parish reflects the variety of styles and forms that enrich church music today. (STL 134-36)			
9. The parish musician has a plan to add/develop a repertoire of solid liturgical music. (STL 134-36)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			
<b>The Music Ministers</b>			
10. The choir understands their role as ministers who support the assembly's singing. (STL 28-33)			
11. There is a clearly visible, well-prepared cantor. (STL 34-40)			
12. The musicians lead first by example rather than merely by directing and instructing.			
13. The cantors, song leaders and other musicians project a welcoming and hospitable presence.			
14. There is ongoing study of the documents relating to music in our liturgy. (STL 51)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>E. The Liturgical Year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Sunday is experienced as THE Christian feast day. (CSL 106; GNLY 4-7)			
2. The liturgy committee (or equivalent) has studied <i>Dies Domini</i> (by Pope John Paul II).			
3. The Paschal Triduum has become the center of the parish's liturgical life and is prepared with great care. (GNLY 18-21; BLS, 81- 84)			
4. The Lent and Easter seasons are prepared according to the norms laid out in <i>The Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts</i> and in the rubrics of the new Roman Missal.			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

## II. The Proper Celebration of the Mass

<b>A. Immediate preparations before Mass</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Sacristans put everything in place well before the Mass is scheduled to begin.			
2. The choir is in place and musical instruments and other equipment set up well before the liturgy begins.			
3. Other ministers arrive sufficiently early to allow time for last-minute preparations or changes, as well as quiet prayer before the Mass begins.			
4. Ministers of hospitality are present in the gathering space or at entrances to the church, and they extend a sincere and warm welcome to everyone who comes.			
5. There is silence and an atmosphere of prayer created before Mass. (GIRM 45)			
6. The appropriate gesture of reverence is made by all those entering the church or crossing in front of the sanctuary. That is, all bow to the altar. If the tabernacle is present in the sanctuary, then all genuflect.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>B. Introductory Rites</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. The rites preceding the Liturgy of the Word introduces, gathers, and prepares the assembly for the celebration of the liturgy. (GIRM, no. 46)			
2. The entrance procession begins at the back of the church and includes the servers, readers, and clergy. If possible, at least a cross-bearer, two altar servers, readers, deacon (if present), and priest celebrant are included. (GIRM, nos. 120 & 171) If candles are used, they are carried on either side of the cross (or just behind, if there is insufficient space in the aisle). If used, the server with the censer precedes the cross.			
3. The deacon, if present, carries the Book of the Gospels. In his absence, it is carried by a reader. The Lectionary is not carried in procession. (GIRM 120, 172) Neither is processed out at the conclusion of the liturgy.			
4. The entrance procession is carried out in a dignified manner.			
5. The introductory rites normally include: an Entrance Song or Antiphon, the Greeting, an Act of Penitence or Sprinkling Rite, the Glory to God ( <i>Gloria</i> ; omitted in Advent and Lent), and the Opening Prayer (Collect). (GIRM 46)			
6. The entrance song is chosen to reflect the character of the season, the occasion, and the assembly; it serves to unite the assembly in a spirit of common prayer.			
7. The text of the entrance song is respected. That is, if the structure of the hymn calls for it, then all the verses are sung.			
8. The sign of the cross and the liturgical greeting are the first words spoken by the priest celebrant, without additional “secular” words of greeting.			
9. The introductory words of the priest celebrant are clear and concise.			
10. The introduction to the Act of Penitence (Penitential Rite) is clear and concise.			
11. Forms I (the <i>Confiteor</i> , or I Confess) and II of the Act of Penitence are proclaimed by the priest celebrant. If Form III ( <i>Kyrie</i> with invocations) is chosen, the opening and closing are prayed by the priest celebrant but the invocations are made by the priest celebrant, deacon, or other suitable minister (Order of Mass; CB 132) The <i>Kyrie</i> (Lord, have mercy) is never used alone.			
12. If the option to use other invocations is used in the Act of Penitence, Form III, the invocations are “christocentric” and in praise of God’s saving action in Christ (and not a listing of sins).			
13. The concluding words of the Act of Penitence are spoken or sung <i>without</i> making the sign of the cross.			
14. The Rite of Sprinkling used on occasions when it is especially significant (e.g., Easter Season) and is done in a way that its meaning is evident to all.			

15. On the days on which it is called for (e.g., Sundays outside of Lent and Advent), the Glory to God ( <i>Gloria</i> ) is sung in such a way that the assembly can express joy and praise.			
16. Time is allowed between the invitation to the Collect (opening prayer) and the spoken prayer for members of the assembly to collect their thoughts and prayers and silently express them. (GIRM 54)			
17. The Missal is treated with reverence throughout the entire liturgical celebration.			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>C. Liturgy of the Word: Readings (First, Psalm, Second)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Means are provided to encourage parishioners to reflect on the Scripture readings before coming to the Sunday liturgy. (GFT 41)			
2. The readings are proclaimed at the ambo and follow the prescribed norms for the day. (GIRM 57-60; RS 61-63; LMIn 22)			
3. The Scriptures are always proclaimed, as written, from the appropriate books (and not missalettes, loose papers, or the like). On rare occasion and for pastoral need (such as in bilingual liturgies) a dignified binder may be used.			
4. The Lectionary and Book of the Gospels are treated with reverence throughout the entire liturgical celebration.			
5. The readers are well-prepared and read with expression.			
6. There is an ongoing program of preparation, study, and practice for readers.			
7. There are two readers who proclaim the first two readings.			
8. The responsorial psalm (the one assigned or a seasonal psalm) is sung at the ambo by the psalmist (cantor). (GIRM 61)			
9. Songs or hymns are not used in place of the responsorial psalm (GIRM 61)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>D. Liturgy of the Word: Readings (Gospel)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. The gospel acclamation is sung by all, and led in a lively and spirited way; the gospel verse is sung by cantor or choir. (GIRM 62)			
2. If the Book of the Gospels is used, the Gospel procession is carried out in a dignified manner while the gospel acclamation is being sung. (GIRM 132-33) Minimally, the procession includes the deacon or the priest celebrant. More appropriately, two servers with the processional candles (and another with incense, if being used) accompany the cleric. (GIRM 133-4, 175)			
3. A deacon or, in his absence, a priest proclaims the Gospel. (GIRM 59) The priest celebrant proclaims the gospel only if there is no deacon or concelebrating priest to do so.			
4. The assembly actively listens to the Word being proclaimed, rather than following along in a missalette. (GFT. No. 52)			
5. The priest celebrant and other liturgical ministers model active listening by visibly paying attention to the readers.			
6. There is significant time for prayerful silence after each reading and the homily. (GIRM 56; RS 39) Any sense of haste or busyness is avoided.			
7. All who proclaim the Scripture readings and the homilist can be clearly heard and seen by all in the assembly, including those who may be hearing impaired.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>E. Liturgy of the Word: Preaching</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>In General</b>			
1. The homily provides nourishment for the Christian life of the faithful and is rooted in the readings, or the liturgy or the feast being celebrated. (GIRM 65; RS 67)			
2. The homily is preached by an ordained minister who has the faculty to preach; laypersons, including seminarians, do not proclaim the homily. (GIRM 66; RS 64-66)			
3. The homilist(s) involve(s) other members of the community in the preparation of the homily, as recommended. (FIYH 106; GFT 58)			
4. The homilist prepares his own homily; homilies written by another source (such as a homily preparation service) are not used.			
5. The homily is NOT set off from the rest of the Mass by the making of the sign of the cross or other action.			
6. Catechumens are dismissed appropriately, after the homily. The dismissal emphasizes their growing unity with the Christian community and the importance of their continued reflection on the Scripture readings. The dismissal is done in a way that speaks to the whole assembly of the value of the gift of faith.			
<b>In Specific</b> (Answers in this section may reflect a particular homily or may refer to preaching in general at the parish; please specify how you are answering this section. A more detailed homily evaluation form is available if desired.)			
The homily is <i>personal</i> . Did the preacher (or does the preacher usually) come across as a real person, genuine and sincerely concerned for the community?			
The homily is <i>liturgical</i> . Did the preacher (or does the preacher usually) speak and act in a way that helped you worship?			
The homily is <i>inculturated</i> . Did the preacher (or does the preacher usually) make helpful connections between the Scriptures and “real life” today—especially the “real life” of <i>this</i> parish?			
The homily is <i>clarifying</i> . Did the preacher (or does the preacher usually) make a single, clear point?			
The homily is <i>actualizing</i> . Did you experience (or do you usually experience) the good news of salvation as a result of this preacher’s homily(ies)?			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>F. Liturgy of the Word: Creed and Intercessions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. The Creed used is the approved liturgical text. (GIRM 67-68; RS 69)			
2. The Creed is recited slowly and deliberately, not in a rushed or perfunctory manner. During the creed, all are led to bow at the appropriate words by the example of the presider and other ministers. (GIRM 137)			
3. The Prayer of the Faithful is general in nature, includes timely issues of the day (reflecting the important needs of church, nation, world, the suffering, and the local community) and is appropriate in content. (GIRM 69 & 70) On occasion, the dead are also remembered. The response is brief and familiar.			
4. There is a brief pause after each petition to enable assembly members to make the prayer their own before speaking the response.			
5. The Prayer of the Faithful is proclaimed from the ambo, or some other suitable place (for example, if being sung by the cantor, the intentions may be announced from the cantor's stand). (GIRM 71)			
6. If a deacon is present, he announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful (GIRM 171d).			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>G. Liturgy of the Eucharist: Preparation of the Gifts &amp; Altar</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p>1. The bread and wine used for Eucharist truly have the appearance of food and are made of appropriate material. (GIRM, 320-322; RS 48)</p> <p>Recipes for substantial bread must be both licit and valid. The bread is to be made from only wheat flour and water; no leavening or sweetening agents are to be added. The wine is to be made from grapes, natural and unadulterated.</p>			
<p>2. Enough bread and wine is prepared for the faithful to receive Communion consecrated at that Mass. (GIRM 85; RS 49)</p>			
<p>3. The Eucharistic Bread used by the priest celebrant is large enough that at least some parts coming from the fraction may be distributed to some of the faithful during Communion. (RS 49)</p>			
<p>4. The bread, wine, and collection are brought forward at the same time by members of the assembly (other than the ushers). The procession is done in a way that emphasizes that these are truly the gifts of the faithful, representative of the true gift that God expects from us. (GIRM 73; RS 70) The actions are allowed to speak for themselves, without additional commentary.</p> <p>RS 70: <i>“Moreover, external gifts must always be a visible expression of that true gift that God expects from us: a contrite heart, the love of God and neighbor by which we are conformed to the sacrifice of Christ, who offered himself for us.”</i></p>			
<p>5. Only bread and wine (and the monetary or other gifts of the faithful for the poor or for the Church as appropriate) are brought up in procession. The gifts other than the bread and wine are put in a suitable place away from the altar (GIRM 73).</p>			
<p>6. The gestures of placing the bread and wine on the altar (and pouring the unconsecrated wine into chalices) are done simply. The bread and wine are placed on the altar by the priest celebrant; the chalice(s) are prepared by the priest celebrant or by the deacon if one is present. (GIRM 42, 75, 141-2, 178)</p>			
<p>7 Wine is poured into chalices at the Preparation of Gifts (not after consecration). (RS 106) This may be done at the credence table.</p>			
<p>8. The private prayers of the priest celebrant are said <i>inaudibly</i>.</p>			
<p>9. The community stands <i>after</i> the priest celebrant completes the invitation to the Prayer over the Gifts (“Pray, brothers and sisters...”).</p>			
<p>10. There should be one large paten for all the hosts—not a separate paten for the priest. (GIRM 331)</p>			
<p>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</p>			

H. Liturgy of the Eucharist: The Eucharistic Prayer	Yes	No	N/A
1. In preparing for the Mass, sufficient attention is given to the vast selection of prefaces and Eucharistic Prayers, emphasizing various themes, which is offered in the Roman Missal.			
2. The priest celebrant prays the Eucharistic Prayer in a manner that engages the assembly in the prayer. The assembly perceives him praying in the name of all. (GIRM 78) For example, is the direction of the priest celebrant's gaze consistent with prayer, or is he looking at the people? Does he wait for posture changes or does he begin speaking while people are still moving?			
3. The priest celebrant pauses for a moment after the Prayer over the Gifts and after the Great Amen to help convey the distinct importance and unity of the Eucharistic Prayer.			
4. The priest celebrant refrains from <i>any</i> commentary at any point during the Eucharistic Prayer itself.			
5. The celebrant's posture and gestures are simple and dignified as called for in the rubrics. For example, does he refrain from breaking the host or making an exaggerated gesture of "giving" the host and chalice at the institution narrative? (RS 55)			
6. The priest celebrant respects the differences in the four elevations called for during the Mass. At the preparation of the gifts, the elements are " <i>slightly raised</i> above the altar" (GIRM 141); at the consecration, the consecrated elements are <i>shown</i> to the people (Order of Mass); during the doxology the chalice and paten are " <i>elevated</i> " (GIRM 180), at the invitation to Communion, the consecrated host over a paten or chalice is held " <i>slightly raised</i> " before the people (Order of Mass).			
7. The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed without musical accompaniment, except for the acclamations which are integral to the prayer. (GIRM 32; RS 53)			
8. The Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Holy [ <i>Sanctus</i> ]; Memorial Accl.; Amen) are sung well by the assembly. (GIRM 79b, 148, 151)			
9. The assembly's attitude is one of active and prayerful participation.			
10. The particular norms for the United States and for this diocese regarding the posture of the assembly are followed (e.g., kneeling until the conclusion of the Amen).			
11. The people do not sing/say the doxology; the priest celebrant does not sing/say the Amen. (GIRM 78, 79h)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>I. Liturgy of the Eucharist: Preparation for Communion</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Is the sign of peace given by the assembly to those nearest them? (GIRM 82; RS 72)			
2. The priest celebrant remains in the sanctuary during the sign of peace, unless there is a special reason not to do so (e.g., a funeral). (GIRM 154)			
3. The practice of the sign of peace embodies its meaning as an expression of peace and reconciliation, signifying our unity as members of the Body of Christ, as we move towards Communion (as opposed to becoming simply a time for socializing).			
4. The Lord's Prayer is prayed with intention. The use of a particular gesture unifies rather than divides the community. Neither the holding of hands nor the <i>orans</i> (hands held palm up in front) position is prescribed by the rubrics. If parishes have adopted these practices they should ask themselves if people find them unifying or divisive/distracting.			
5. The breaking of the bread is carried out reverently and understood to signify that though the faithful are many, they are made one in Christ. (GIRM 83; RS 74)			
6. The Lamb of God ( <i>Agnus Dei</i> ) accompanies the breaking of the bread; the chant is prolonged as necessary to complete the action. (GIRM 83) The breaking of the bread does not begin until the <i>Agnus Dei</i> is begun, and the singing (or reciting) continues until the fraction is completed. If extra time is needed the given text may be repeated (GIRM 366) or additional Christological invocations used (STL 188).			
7. The hosts for Communion are consecrated at the Mass being celebrated, and extra hosts are not taken from the tabernacle unless absolutely necessary. (GIRM 85; RS 89)			
8. In order not to multiply the wordiness of the liturgy, the priest celebrant is careful to say the private prayers of the priest <i>inaudibly</i> . GIRM 84, 156)			
9. The invitation to Communion ("Behold the Lamb of God...") is made in a simple and dignified way according to the rite, without addition or commentary. (GIRM 157)			
10. The parish is sensitive to the needs of those with celiac disease (gluten-sensitive enteropathy) and accommodations consistent with church teaching are made.			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>J. Liturgy of the Eucharist: Communion Rite</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. All who will distribute Communion, ordinary and extraordinary ministers alike, have cleansed their hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer prior to handling the hosts or vessels. (see diocesan policy on <i>Planning for Pandemic Influenza</i> , §II-9200)			
2. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) are well-prepared and use the proper ritual words for distribution of Holy Communion. (NDRHC 28, 41, & 43)			
3. The EMHCs enter the sanctuary after the priest has received Communion.			
4. The EMHCs (and deacon) receive Communion from the presider, and not in the manner of concelebrants—receiving before distributing Communion in order to show that ministry is most appropriately giving what one has received.			
5. Given the size of the assembly, there are enough ministers of Holy Communion at each Sunday Mass. (NDRHC 27 & 30)			
6. The Communion stations and ministers are arranged in a way that facilitates a unified and dignified Communion procession. If possible, the procession should move towards the altar for Communion, rather than towards the back of the church.			
7. If needed, ushers assist the procession reverently and attentively.			
8. Music properly accompanies the Communion procession. That is, the communion song begins when the priest celebrant drinks from the chalice and concludes after the last person has received (GIRM 86)			
9. For the Communion song, it is preferable that the congregation sing a refrain with a cantor or choir singing the verses so as not to encumber the congregation with books or scripts during the procession (IOM 137.3)			
9. Both species (bread and wine) are offered to the assembly. (GIRM 281; NDRHC 20 & 21)			
10. Most members of the assembly receive from the chalice.			
11. Members of the assembly remain standing during the entire Communion procession—and understand why this is the preferred posture (GIRM 43). While this is the stated posture in the documents, according to diocesan policy persons may sit or kneel after returning from Communion. Parishes should strive for unity in posture.			
12. The posture for reception of Holy Communion (standing) and the sign of veneration (simple bow of the head) which have been determined by the USCCB are followed. (RS 90)			
13. Any hosts that are not consumed are reserved in the tabernacle immediately following Communion (GIRM 51, 163, 183)			
14. Any of the Precious Blood remaining is immediately consumed and not disposed of in the sacrarium. (GIRM 52, 55, 163, 183, 284; NDRHC 52 & 55; RS 107) A cleric consumes at the altar. An EMHC consumes at a side (credence) table. Ministers are never to consume while walking.			

<p>15. Communion vessels are reverently purified immediately following Mass in a manner consistent with the liturgical directives. (NDRHC 53; GIRM 163) While purification immediately after Communion is allowed, it is preferable to perform such tasks after the conclusion of the liturgy in order to limit distractions.</p>			
<p>16. After Communion, there is a significant period of profound silence. A hymn of praise may also be sung by everyone. (GIRM 88; RS 88)</p>			
<p>17x. It is clear that the Prayer after Communion concludes the entire Communion Rite. (GIRM 89; RS 88)</p>			
<p>18. Announcements and other activities take place after the Prayer after Communion. (GIRM 90, 166)</p>			
<p>19. The choir and other musicians receive Communion with the assembly.</p>			
<p>20. If non-communicants present themselves for a blessing, it is given in an appropriate manner. For example, saying simply “May the Lord bless you” is appropriate. Making the sign of the cross over the person (unless one is a priest or deacon) is not. No one should bless with the Host in the manner of Benediction.</p>			
<p>21. No one gives communion to him- or herself (including by intinction) (RS 94, 104)</p>			
<p>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</p>			

<b>K. Concluding Rites</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Announcements are made after the Prayer after Communion and apart from the ambo. (GIRM 90)			
2. An effort is made to keep any announcements brief, clear, and pertinent.			
3. In cases of need or pastoral advantage, and in keeping with church legislation, the option for involving qualified lay persons to preach brief reflections or instructions at this time of Mass is utilized.			
4. The blessing is given in a reverent and intentional manner.			
5. Solemn blessings are employed on occasions when they are appropriate and meaningful.			
6. The music (sung or instrumental) that accompanies the recessional is appropriate for sending forth.			
7. The assembly is dismissed with a sense of mission.			
8. The assembly is encouraged to remain until the recessional hymn (or procession, if there is no hymn) is concluded.			
NOTES & COMMENTS			
<b>After Mass...</b>			
9. There is ongoing mystagogical catechesis on the liturgy.			
10. The celebrants and other liturgical ministers lead by example to embody the connection between Eucharist and mission, liturgy and life.			
11. The liturgical ministers help the members of the assembly to see and understand the Eucharist as an invitation and challenge to bring all aspects of their daily lives into conformity with Christ.			
12. The parish provides opportunities for members of the assembly to engage in genuine Christian witness outside the liturgy, acting upon the commission at the end of Mass.			
13. The parish recognizes the Christian witness given by its members in all forms of service, whether or not sponsored by the Church.			
14. There is a place and period of time following the liturgy for people to meet and visit with one another.			
15. There are persons assigned to the task of putting the church environment in order for the next Mass.			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

### III. Sacramental and Other Liturgical Celebrations of the Parish

<b>A. Infant Baptism</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. The celebration of baptism takes place at Sunday Mass at least several times during the year. (RBapC 9)			
2. Except for a good reason, the Rite of Baptism is celebrated only once on a given day in the same church. (RBapC.GI 27) The purpose of this legislation is to avoid the scheduling of multiple “private” baptisms and to emphasize the communal nature of the sacrament.			
3. The processional nature of the Rite of Baptism is respected. (RBapC 26)			
4. There are persons from the parish who can assist with the flow of the rite. (RBapC 15)			
5. There are lectors and musicians to assist in the celebration when Baptism is celebrated apart from Mass. (RBapC.GI 7)			
6. There is a team of parishioners and parish staff to prepare parents for the baptism of their children. (RBapC.GI 7)			
7. There is an opportunity to meet with the parents soon after the baptism of their infant for some mystagogical reflection.			
8. The font allows for the possibility of baptism by immersion. (BLS 69.2; RBapC GI 22)			
9. Families are encouraged to have their children baptized by immersion. (CIC 854; see also RCIA, NS 17 “baptism by immersion is the fuller sign....”)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>B. Confirmation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Confirmation is celebrated in a way that invites/involves the parish community. (RConf 4)			
2. The Sacred Chrism is displayed in a place of honor in the Sanctuary for the ritual celebration.			
3. Liturgical ministers for the celebration are taken from those who have been trained to perform their specific ministry (i.e. lectors, extraordinary ministers, hospitality ministers etc.) These ministers are not the confirmandi themselves. (CSL 28)			
4. There is an opportunity for some mystagogical reflection with the confirmandi and their sponsors soon after the celebration.			
5. Liturgical catechesis for the whole parish has prepared parishioners to appreciate the true nature of this celebration as a sacrament of initiation. (CSL 19 & 59; see also Pope Paul VI Apostolic Constitution of the Sacrament of Confirmation)			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>C. First Communion</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Respecting its nature as a sacrament of initiation, First Communion takes place within the midst of the Sunday Assembly during the Easter season. (RS 87)			
2. First Communion is preceded by the Sacrament of First Penance. (RS 87)			
3. First communicants receive Communion from the priest. (He may be assisted by the deacon or another minister with the chalice. (RS 87)			
4. First Communion always takes place during the celebration of Mass. (RS 87)			
5. Because of the close link of this sacrament to Baptism, the sprinkling rite and/or renewal of baptismal promises are used at the celebration.			
6. The candidates for First Communion have received liturgical catechesis and are ready to take their place as full, conscious, and active participants of the Sunday assembly.			
7. Liturgical ministers for the celebration are taken from those who have been trained to perform their specific ministry (i.e. lectors, extraordinary ministers, hospitality ministers etc.) These ministers are not the first communicants themselves. (SC 28)			
8. There is an opportunity for some mystagogical reflection with both First Communicants and their parents soon after the celebration.			
9. Liturgical catechesis for the whole parish has prepared the parishioners to appreciate the true nature of this celebration as a sacrament of initiation. (CSL 19 & 59)			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>D. RCIA</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. There is an RCIA process in the parish. (CSL 64-66)			
2. The process includes an ongoing (year round) pre-catechumenate. (RCIA 7.1 & 36-37)			
3. The process includes an ongoing (year round) catechumenate. (RCIA 75 and NS 6)			
4. There are a few dates each year for celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of the Catechumenate. (RCIA 18.3)			
5. There are members of the parish (priest, deacon, lay) trained to serve on the RCIA team. (RCIA 9-16)			
6. The various rites take place in the midst of the Sunday liturgical assembly: (RCIA 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rite of Acceptance and/or Rite of Welcome (RCIA 45 &amp; 412)</li> <li>· Dismissal of catechumens at Sunday and Holy Day Masses, and at school Masses (RCIA 83.2)</li> <li>· Rite of Sending to the Rite of Election (RCIA 107)</li> <li>· The Scrutinies on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent (RCIA, 146)</li> <li>· The Presentation of the Creed and Lord's Prayer (RCIA 157 &amp; 178)</li> <li>· The Easter Vigil (RCIA 207)</li> </ul>			
7. The entire church space is used well in celebrating the rites (e.g., Processions; Placement of catechumens/candidates in the midst of the assembly)			
8. The parish musician is involved in preparation of the rites and is developing a repertoire of ritual music for the assembly for these rites. (See various major rituals)			
9. The parish community receives ongoing catechesis regarding their role in the initiation of those seeking to come to the Church. (RCIA 9)			
10. Children of catechetical age in need of baptism or being received into the full communion of the Church are formed through the process of the RCIA. (RCIA 252)			
11. Children of catechetical age in the RCIA celebrate the rites with the adults.			
12. Children of catechetical age receive all three sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and First Communion) at the Easter Vigil. (NS 18; CIC, c.852)			
13. The font allows for baptism by immersion for adults and children. (RCIA 213; NS 17)			
14. The Baptism of those seeking to come into full communion is respected. Reception of these Christians does not take place at the Easter Vigil, which is reserved for the baptism of catechumens. (NS 30-33)			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>E. Rite of Marriage</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Appropriate decisions are made with regard to celebration of the Rite of Marriage within Mass or outside of Mass. (RMarr 8)			
2. There are liturgical ministers from the parish prepared to fulfill the role of: (CSL 28; see rubrics of RMarr) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· cantor</li> <li>· lector(s)/musician</li> <li>· usher/greeter</li> <li>· extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (at Mass)</li> </ul> Friends or family of the bride and groom may fulfill these ministries so long as they are properly trained and commissioned (at least for the single occasion).			
3. Steps have been taken to encourage the full, conscious and active participation of the assembly gathered for the wedding celebration. (CSL 14 & 82)			
4. The liturgical music serves the rite and is appropriate for liturgy, in accord with the Diocesan document "Music Guidelines for the Celebration of Marriage" (updated 2011). (STL 216-224)			
5. The parish liturgical musician is involved in the decision making process with regard to music. (STL 218)			
6. The liturgical season is taken into consideration in preparing the liturgy. (RMarr 11)			
7. There is an opportunity for some mystagogical reflection soon after the rite is celebrated.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>F. Order of Christian Funerals</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. There is a bereavement committee trained to assist the family of the deceased in preparing the Funeral liturgy. (OCF 9 & 17)			
2. The parish liturgical musician has consciously made an effort to develop a repertoire of music familiar to the parish that will serve the needs of the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> . (OCF 30-33; STL 244-257)			
3. The various times for prayer are provided by the appropriate parish minister needed in each situation: (OCF 50) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Prayers for the dying</li> <li>· Gathering in the presence of the body</li> <li>· Vigil</li> <li>· Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer</li> <li>· Transfer of the Body to the Church/Place of Committal</li> <li>· The Funeral Mass</li> <li>· The Committal</li> </ul>			
4. There are liturgical ministers from the parish to perform the various ministries needed at the Vigil: (OCF 15 & 64) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Leader of prayer</li> <li>· Lector</li> <li>· Cantor/Leader of Song</li> </ul>			
5. There are liturgical ministers from the parish to perform the various ministries needed at the Funeral Mass: (OCF 15 & 150) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ushers/greeters</li> <li>· Cantor/Musician (OCF 153)</li> <li>· Lector</li> <li>· Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion</li> </ul> <p>Friends or family of the deceased or bereaved may fulfill these ministries so long as they are properly trained and commissioned (at least for the single occasion) and are able to do so given the circumstances.</p>			
6. Liturgical catechesis has been provided to the entire parish community concerning the nature and celebration of the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> . (CSL 19 & 59) Those involved in funeral ministry follow the diocese's <i>Policies and Pastoral Guidelines Relating to Funerals</i> (updated 2011).			
7. The liturgical music serves the rite and is appropriate for use in the liturgy. (OCF 30)			
8. The liturgical signs and symbols used affirm Christian belief and hope in the paschal mystery. (OCF 21)			
9. A homily, and not a eulogy, is preached at the Vigil and at the Funeral Liturgy. (OCF 27, 61, 141)			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

<b>G. The Rite of Penance</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Chapter 1, The Rite for Individual Penitents</b>			
1. A chapel is properly appointed for individual penitents. (BLS 104 & 105)			
2. The penitent has the option to choose either face-to-face or anonymous confession. (BLS 103; CIC 964)			
3. The opportunity for individual confession is regularly scheduled and clearly published. (RPen 13)			
4. There is a bible available for the proclamation of Scriptures during the celebration.			
<b>Chapter 2, The Rite for Several Penitents with Individual Absolution</b>			
5. There are regularly scheduled times for the communal celebration of the Rite of Penance (especially during Advent, Lent, and for First Reconciliation).			
6. The service is prepared in harmony with the Rite (Chapter II) and the liturgical season. (RPen 13)			
7. Liturgical music is carefully chosen to enhance the rite and the communal nature of this celebration. (STL 229)			
8. There are properly trained lectors to proclaim the various scripture readings and litanies.			
9. There are enough confessors to assist so that the rite can be celebrated by all gathered. (RPen 22)			
<b>General Absolution</b>			
10. Recourse is not made to general absolution except in situations of grave necessity. What is considered "grave necessity" was defined by Pope John Paul II in <i>Misericordia Dei</i> (2002). Only if the danger of death is imminent, confession cannot be heard in an appropriate way and within an appropriate time, and the penitent is at risk for being deprived of sacramental grace for "a long time" may recourse to general absolution be made. (MD 4) The situations allowing for general absolution do not exist in the Diocese of Davenport.			
11. The penitents receiving general absolution are informed of their responsibilities regarding future confession. That is, individual confession is to be made "as soon as there is an opportunity to do so before receiving another general absolution." (MD 8)			
12. Report of the use of general absolution is made to the bishop's office.			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			



<b>I. Liturgy of the Hours</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. There is an opportunity for the celebration of Morning Prayer with some regularity to serve the needs of the parish. (GILH 1, 9, & 21)			
2. There is an opportunity for the celebration of Evening Prayer with some regularity to serve the needs of the parish. (GILH 1, 9, 21, & 37)			
3. Liturgical ministers are present to lead the celebration: (GILH 253-261) · Leader of prayer · Lector · Cantor/Musician · Greeters (if necessary)			
4. Catechesis for the Liturgy of the Hours is ongoing to invite parishioners to develop an understanding and appreciation for the nature of this liturgical prayer.			
5. There is an effort made by the liturgical music minister to develop repertoire that will serve the unique needs of this liturgical prayer. (STL 230-240)			
<b>NOTES &amp; COMMENTS</b>			

<b>J. Devotional Prayer</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. The place of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is available to parishioners. (BLS 71)			
2. The <i>Rite of Exposition</i> is celebrated at some time each year. (RS 139)			
3. When the <i>Rite of Exposition</i> is celebrated, great care is taken to ensure that someone is always present before the Blessed Sacrament. (RS 138)			
4. Other devotional celebrations are scheduled, for example: · Stations of the Cross · The Rosary and other Marian Devotions · Corpus Christi Procession			
NOTES & COMMENTS			

**Appendix: Liturgical Environment Self-Study**

*The Instruction on Putting into Effect The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states, “In building new churches and in repairing or adapting old ones great care must be taken to ensure that they lend themselves to the celebration of divine services as these are meant to be celebrated, and to achieve the active participation of the faithful” (#90). With this in mind, the Diocese of Davenport is making available this Liturgical Environment Self-Study. The self-study provides a resource for pastors, parish pastoral councils and liturgy commissions to reflect on before they begin planning for a new worship space, renovation of existing space, or a critique for present parish worship space when a new building or renovation is not being planned.

The column on the left is divided into topic sections. For the most part, the text in each section is taken from *Built of Living Stones* (BLS), 2000. *Built of Living Stones* provides principles for those involved in preparing liturgical space. Other liturgical documents that correspond to each topic are referenced at the end of each section. These documents include: *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL), 1963; *The Instruction on Putting into Effect The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (ICSL), 1964; *Instruction on Eucharistic Worship* (IEW), 1967; *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, (HCOM), 1973; *Notitiae*, newsletter of the Congregation for Divine Worship, 10:80 (1974), #4; *Code of Canon Law* (CCL) revised 1983; 1982; *Ceremonial of Bishops* (CB), 1984; *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA), 1988; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* (NSC), 1988; and the *Book of Blessings* (BB), 1989; *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar* (RDCA), revised 1989, *General Introduction to the Lectionary at Mass* (GILM), 1998; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), retranslated 2011; (*Circular Letter Concerning*) *the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* (PCEF); *Sing to the Lord* 2007.

The column on the right provides space for individuals to write notes, observations or remarks based on how their worship space is aligned with or deviates from the liturgical documents. An honest assessment of current conditions will be helpful to the parish, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and the Diocesan Building Commission when renovation and/or building plans are being made.

<b>Liturgical Documents</b>	<b>Parish Remarks / Questions</b>
<p><b>Narthex (Gathering Space)</b>                      (The narthex) serves as gathering space and as the entrance and exit to the building. The gathering space helps believers to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of the liturgy, and after the liturgy, it helps them return to daily life to live out the mystery that has been celebrated. In the gathering space, people come together to move in procession and to prepare for the celebration of the liturgy. It is in the gathering space that many important liturgical moments occur: men and women participate in the Rite of Becoming a Catechumen as they move towards later, full initiation into the Church; parents, godparents, and infants are greeted for the celebration of baptism; and Christians are greeted for the last time as their mortal remains are received into the church building for the celebration of the funeral rites.                      In addition to its religious functions, the gathering</p>	

<p>space may provide access to the vesting sacristy, rooms for choir rehearsal, storage areas, restrooms, and rooms for ushers and their equipment. Adequate space for other gatherings will be an important consideration in planning the narthex and other adjoining areas. (BLS 95-96)</p>	
<p><b>Assembly (Nave)</b> The space within the church building for the faithful other than the priest celebrant and the ministers is sometimes called the <i>nave</i>. This space is critical in the overall plan because it accommodates a variety of ritual actions: processions during the Eucharist, the singing of the prayers, movement during baptismal rites, the sprinkling of the congregation with blessed water, the rites during the wedding and funeral liturgies, and personal devotion. This area is not comparable to the audience's space in a theater or public arena because in the liturgical assembly, there is no audience. Rather, the entire congregation acts. The ministers of music could also be located in the body of the church since they lead the entire assembly in song as well as by the example of their reverent attention and prayer. Two principles guide architectural decisions about the form and arrangement of the nave: (1) the community worships as a single body united in faith, not simply as individuals who happen to find themselves in one place, and the nature of the liturgy demands that the congregation as well as the priest celebrant and ministers be able to exercise their roles in a full and active way; and (2) the priest celebrant and ministers together with the congregation form the liturgical assembly, which is the Church gathered for worship. (BLS 51-52) [cf. ICSL, 98, IEW 24, GIRM 293-94]</p>	
<p><b>Chair for the Priest Celebrant</b> The chair for the priest celebrant stands as a symbol of "his function of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer." (GIRM 310) An appropriate placement of the chair allows the priest celebrant to be visible to all in the congregation. The chair reflects the dignity of the one who leads the community in the person of Christ, but is never intended to be remote or grandiose. The priest celebrant's chair is distinguished from the seating for other ministers by its design and placement. "The seat for the Deacon should be placed near that of the</p>	

<p>celebrant.” (GIRM 310) [cf. BLS 63, ICSL 92, GIRM 294]</p>	
<p><b>Seats for Other Liturgical Ministers</b>  The seats for the other ministers should be arranged so that they are clearly distinguished from the seats for clergy and, so that the ministers are easily able to fulfill the office assigned to them. (GIRM 310)</p>	
<p><b>Music Ministers</b>  It is important to recognize that the building must support the music and song of the entire worshipping assembly. In addition, some members of the community have special gifts for leading the assembly in musical praise and thanksgiving (STL 48). The skills and talents of these pastoral musicians, choirs, and instrumentalists are especially valued by the Church. Because the roles of the choirs and cantors are exercised within the liturgical community, the space chosen for the musicians should clearly express that they are part of the assembly of worshipers. In addition, cantors and song leaders need visual contact with the music director while they themselves are visible to the rest of the congregation. Apart from the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, which normally occurs at the ambo, the stand for the cantor or song leader is distinct from the ambo, which is reserved for the proclamation of the word of God. (BLS 89) [cf. ICSL 97, GIRM 294]</p>	
<p><b>Musical Instruments</b>  Musical instruments, especially the pipe organ, have long added to the beauty and prayerfulness of Catholic worship. Planning sufficient space for the organ and other instruments that may be used to accompany the assembly’s prayer is an important part of the building process. This includes the design of the organ casework, if such is used, or the placement of the pipes of large instruments. An acoustical specialist and musicians working together can arrive at a placement that allows the pipes to be seen and heard well without becoming a distraction or competing with the other artwork and iconography. The placement of the organ also must ensure that the instrumentalists have a clear visual connection with the director of music and, if necessary, with the cantor or song leader.  Some instruments are used only occasionally for more solemn and festive occasions. For this reason there is a need for flexibility in the arrangement of the space allotted for music so that there will be adequate room to accommodate them when they are included in the worship services (BLS 226-</p>	

227; STL 95-100) [cf. ICSL 97]	
<p><b>Visibility</b></p> <p>Visibility speaks more to the quality of view than merely the mechanics of seeing. A space must create a sense that what is seen is proximate, important and personal. The arrangement of the space should consider levels of priority in what is seen, allowing visual flow from one center of liturgical action to another. Furthermore, the sense and variety of light, artificial or natural, contribute greatly to what is seen. (EA 50) [cf. BLS 212; 228-233]</p>	
<p><b>Audibility</b></p> <p>Audibility of all (congregation and ministers) is another primary requirement. A space that does not require amplification is ideal. Where an amplifying system is necessary, provision for multiple microphone jacks should be made (e.g., at the altar, ambo, chair, font space immediately in front of the congregation, and a few spots through the congregation*). Since the liturgical space must accommodate both speech and song, there must be a serious acoustical consideration of the conflicting demands of the two...A room designed to deaden all sounds is doomed to kill liturgical participation. (EA 51; STL 101-104) [cf. BLS 212; 221-225]</p> <p>* Current technology makes it possible for a number of these microphone jacks to be eliminated (it is preferable that a microphone not rest on the altar if possible). However, parishes should keep in mind the celebration of the various rites, especially the RCIA, where microphones may need to set up in different locations for full participation to take place.</p>	
<p><b>Altar</b></p> <p>At the Eucharist, the liturgical assembly celebrates the ritual sacrificial meal that recalls and makes present Christ's life, death, and resurrection, proclaiming "the death of the Lord until he comes" (1Cor 11:26; cf. Rev 19:9). The altar is "the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist" (GIRM, 296) and the point around which the other rites are in some manner arrayed. (<i>Mediator Dei</i>, 21) Since the Church teaches that "the altar is Christ" (RDCA, ch. 4, no.4), its composition should reflect the nobility, beauty, strength, and simplicity of the One it represents. In new churches there is to be only one altar so that it signifies to the assembly of the faithful "the one Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church" (GIRM</p>	

<p>303).</p> <p>The altar is the natural focal point of the sanctuary and is to be “built separate from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible” (GIRM 299). “In keeping with the Church’s traditional practice and with what the altar signifies, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone and indeed of natural stone. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, wood which is dignified, solid and well-crafted may be used, provided that the altar is structurally immobile. As to the supports or base for supporting the table, these may be made of any material, provided it is dignified and solid” (GIRM, 301; see RDCA, ch. 4, no. 9). Parishes building new churches must follow the directives of the diocesan bishop regarding the kind of altar chosen and suitable materials for new altars (BLS 56-57). [cf. BLS 56-60, ICSL 91, IEW 24, GIRM 296-308, RDCA ch. 4, nos. 1-5]</p>	
<p><b>Cross</b></p> <p>The cross with the image of Christ crucified is a reminder of Christ's paschal mystery. It draws us into the mystery of suffering and makes tangible our belief that our suffering when united with the passion and death of Christ leads to redemption (BB 1233). There should be a crucifix positioned “either on the altar or near it... clearly visible to the assembled people” (GIRM 308). Since a crucifix placed <i>on</i> the altar and large enough to be seen by the congregation might well obstruct the view of the action taking place on the altar, other alternatives may be more appropriate. The crucifix may be suspended over the altar or affixed to the sanctuary wall. A processional cross of sufficient size, placed in a stand visible to the people following the entrance procession, is another option. If the processional cross is to be used for this purpose, the size and weight of the cross should not preclude its being carried in procession. If there is already a cross in the sanctuary, the processional cross is placed out of view of the congregation following the procession. (BLS 91) [cf. ICSL 94, GIRM 117]</p>	
<p><b>Candles</b></p> <p>Candles, which are signs of reverence and festivity, are required at every liturgical service (GIRM 307). The living flame of the candle, symbolic of the risen Christ, reminds people that in baptism they are brought out of darkness into God’s marvelous</p>	

<p>light (1 Pt 2:9). For the celebration of the Eucharist it is appropriate to carry candles in the entrance procession and during the procession with the Book of the Gospels (GIRM 120, 133). At least two candles are placed near the altar in the sanctuary area. If there is a lack of space, they may be placed on the altar. Four or six candles may be used for the celebration of Mass and for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. If the bishop of the diocese celebrates, seven candles should be used. Candles placed in Floor-standing bases or on the altar should be arranged so they do not obscure the view of the ritual action in the sanctuary, especially the action at the altar. Candles for liturgical use should be made of a material that provides “a living flame without being smoky or noxious.” To safeguard “authenticity and the full symbolism of light,” electric lights as a substitute for candles are not permitted (<i>Notitiae</i>). [cf. BLS 92-3, ICSL 94]</p>	
<p><b>Paschal (Easter) Candle</b> The paschal candle is the symbol of “the light of Christ, rising in glory,” scattering “the darkness of our hearts and minds (<i>Roman Missal</i>, the Easter Vigil, no. 14). Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choices of size, design and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed. During the Easter Vigil and throughout the Easter season, the paschal candle belongs near the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary. After the Easter season it is to be moved to a place of honor in the baptistry for use in the celebration of baptisms. During funerals, the paschal candle is placed near the coffin as a sign of the Christian’s passover from death to life (PCEF 99; BLS 94).</p>	
<p><b>Ambo</b> The central focus of the area in which the word of God is proclaimed during the liturgy is the <i>ambo</i>. The design of the ambo and its prominent placement reflects the dignity and nobility of that saving word and draws attention of those present to the proclamation of the word (GILM, 32). Here the Christian community encounters the living Lord in the word of God and prepares itself for the “breaking of the bread” and the mission to live the word that will be proclaimed. An ample area around the ambo is needed to allow a gospel procession with a full complement of ministers bearing candles and incense. The <i>General</i></p>	

<p><i>Instruction to the Lectionary</i> recommends that the design of altar and ambo bear a “harmonious and close relationship” to one another (GILM 32) in order to emphasize the close relationship between word and Eucharist. Since many people share in the ministry of the word, the ambo should be accessible to everyone, including those with physical disabilities. (BLS 61) [cf. BLS 62, 211-212; ICSL 96, GIRM 309]</p>	
<p><b>Baptistry</b> The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration (RCIA 25). Initiation into the Church is entrance into a eucharistic community united in Jesus Christ. Because the rites of initiation of the Church begin with baptism and are completed by the reception of the Eucharist, the baptismal font and its location reflect the Christian’s journey <i>through</i> the waters of baptism <i>to</i> the altar. This integral relationship between the baptismal font and the altar can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as placing the font and altar on the same architectural axis, using natural or artificial lighting, using the same floor patterns, and using common or similar materials and elements of design.</p> <p>The location of the baptismal font, its design, and the materials used for its construction are important considerations in the planning and design of the building. It is customary to locate the baptismal font either in a special area within the main body of the church or in a separate baptistry. Through the waters of baptism the faithful enter the life of Christ (RCIA 213). For this reason the font should be visible and accessible to all who enter the church building. While the baptistry is proportioned to the building itself and should be able to hold a good number of people, its actual size will be determined by the needs of the local community. Water is the key symbol of baptism and the focal point of the font. In this water believers die to sin and are reborn to new life in Christ. In designing the font and the iconography in the baptismal area, the parish will want to consider the traditional symbolism that has been the inspiration for the font’s design throughout history. The font is a symbol of both tomb and womb; its power is the power of the triumphant cross; and baptism sets the Christian on the path to the life that will never end, the “eighth day” of eternity where Christ’s reign of peace and justice is celebrated.</p>	

(BLS 66-68) [cf. BLS 69, ICSL 99, RCIA 22, 25, NSC 17]	
<p><b>Ambry</b></p> <p>The consecrated oil of chrism for initiation, ordination, and the dedication of churches, as well as the blessed oils of the sick and of catechumens, are traditionally housed in a special place called an ambry or repository (BB1125). These oils consecrated or blessed by the bishop at the Mass of Chrism deserve the special care of the community to which they have been entrusted (CCL c. 847 #2). The style of the ambry may take different forms. A parish church might choose a simple, dignified and secure niche in the baptistry or in a wall of sanctuary or a small case for the oils. Cathedrals responsible for the care of a larger supply of the oils need a larger ambry. Since bright light or high temperatures can hasten spoilage, parishes will want to choose a location that helps to preserve the freshness of the oil. (BLS 117)</p> <p>[cf. BB 1125-26]</p>	
<p><b>Reservation of the Eucharist</b></p> <p>It is more in keeping with its meaning as a sign, that the tabernacle in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved not to be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated. Moreover, the tabernacle should be placed, according to the judgment of the diocesan Bishop: either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in the most suitable form and place, not excluding an old altar which is no longer used for celebration; or even in another chapel suitable for adoration and the private prayer of the faithful, and which is integrally connected with the church and is conspicuous to the faithful. (GIRM 315)</p> <p>[cf. BLS 70-80, ICSL 95, IEW 53, HCOM chap.3, #9]</p>	
<p><b>Tabernacle</b></p> <p>The Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church which is noble, worthy conspicuous, well decorated and suitable for prayer.</p> <p>As a rule there should be only one tabernacle, immovable made of solid and unbreakable material and not transparent, and locked so that the danger of desecration is avoided as much as possible. (GIRM 314) According to received custom, a designated lamp should burn continuously near the tabernacle, fed either by oil or wax, through which the presence of Christ is both indicated and honored. (GIRM 316)</p>	

[cf. BLS 72, IEW 57]	
<p><b>Reconciliation Chapel</b></p> <p>In planning the reconciliation area, parishes will want to provide for a sound-proof place with a chair for the priest and a kneeler and chair for the penitent. Since the rite includes the reading of Scripture, the space should also include a bible. Appropriate artwork, a crucifix symbolic of Christ's victory over sin and death, icons or images reflective of baptism and the Eucharist, or Scriptural images of God's reconciling love help, to enhance the atmosphere of prayer. Warm, inviting lighting welcomes penitents who seek God's help, and some form of amplification as well as braille signs can aid those with hearing or visual disabilities. Additional rooms or spaces will be needed as confessional areas for communal celebrations of penance, especially in Advent and Lent. (BLS 105)</p>	
<p><b>Sacristy</b></p> <p>A sacristy or vesting space should be located to favor the procession of cross, candles, book and ministers through the midst of the congregation to the altar area.</p> <p>[cf. BLS 234]</p>	
<p><b>Images for the Veneration of the Faithful</b></p> <p>In the early liturgy, the Church participates in a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy, which is celebrated in the holy city Jerusalem, towards which she tends as a pilgrim and where Christ sits at the right hand of God. By so venerating the memory of the saints, the Church hopes for some small part and company with them (CSL 8). And so, in keeping with the Church's very ancient tradition, images of the Lord, the Virgin Mary (RDCA ch.4, no 10), and the saints may be displayed in sacred buildings for the veneration of the faithful, and may be so arranged that they guide the faithful to the mysteries of the faith which are celebrated there. For this reason, care should be taken that their number not be increased indiscriminately, and that they are situated in such a way that they do not distract the faithful's attention from the celebration (CSL 125). There is to be only one image of any given saint as a rule. In general, the devotion of the entire community as well as the beauty and dignity of the images are to be the criteria for their adornment and arrangement in a church. (GIRM 318)</p> <p>[cf. BLS 135-138]</p>	

<p><b>Stations of the Cross</b></p> <p>Whether celebrated by a community or by individuals, the Stations of the Cross offer a way for the faithful to enter more fully into the passion and death of the Lord and to serve as another manifestation of the pilgrim Church on its homeward journey. Traditionally the stations have been arranged around walls of the nave of the church, or, in some instances, around the gathering space or even the exterior of the church, marking the devotion as a true journey. Often churches have images as well as the crosses that mark the fourteen stations. While the depictions of the passion are desirable, only the crosses are needed. The images that accompany the crosses are optional. (BLS 133, incl. n.153) [cf. BLS 132-134]</p>	
<p><b>Decorations</b></p> <p>Plans for seasonal decorations should include other areas besides the sanctuary. Decorations are intended to draw people to the true nature of the mystery being celebrated rather than being ends in themselves. Natural flowers, plants, wreaths and fabric hangings, and other seasonal objects can be arranged to enhance the primary liturgical points of focus. The altar should remain clear and free-standing, not walled in by massive floral displays of the Christmas crib, and pathways in the narthex, nave, and sanctuary should remain clear. (BLS 124)</p> <p>The use of living flowers and plants, rather than artificial greens, serves as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community. Planning for plants and flowers should include not only the procurement and placement but also the continuing care needed to sustain living things. (BLS 129)</p> <p>[cf. CSL 122-128, BLS 122-129]</p>	
<p><b>Vestments &amp; Vessels</b></p> <p>There is no particular style for sacred furnishing for the liturgy (GIRM 325). Sacred Vessels may be in a shape that is in keeping with the culture of each region, “provided the individual vessels are suitable for their intended liturgical use and are clearly distinguishable from vessels intended for everyday use” (GIRM 332). Materials used for sacred vessels such as the chalice and paten should be worthy, solid, and durable, and should not break easily. Chalices and cups used for the distribution of the Precious Blood should have bowls made of nonabsorbent material. Vessels made from metal are gilded on the inside if the metal ordinarily rusts.</p>	

<p>The vestments worn by ministers symbolize the ministers' functions and add beauty to the celebration of the rites. "For making sacred vestments, in addition to traditional materials, natural fabrics proper to each region may be used ... the beauty and nobility of each vestment [derives] not in an abundance of overlaid ornamentation, but rather in the material used and in the design" (GIRM 343-344). [cf. GIRM 327-347; BLS 164-65]</p>	
<p><b>Books</b> Any book which is used by an officiating minister in a liturgical celebration should be of a large (public, noble) size, good paper, strong design, handsome typography and binding...Each should be visually attractive and impressive. [cf. GIRM 349]</p>	