



OFFICE OF LITURGY

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

Parish Liturgy Assessment Tool

for Use by Pastors and Parish Liturgical Committees

Documents to be used in conjunction with this assessment tool:

BLS	<i>Built of Living Stones</i>
CIC	<i>Code of Canon Law</i>
CSL	<i>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy</i>
GILH	<i>General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours</i>
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
GPLY	<i>General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar</i>
NDRHC	<i>Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America</i>
OCF	<i>Order of Christian Funerals</i>
PCS	<i>Pastoral Care of the Sick</i>
RBapC	<i>Rite of Baptism for Children (GI-General Introduction)</i>
RCIA	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
OConf	<i>Order of Confirmation</i>
OCM	<i>Order of Celebrating Matrimony</i>
RS	<i>Redemptionis Sacramentum: Instruction on the Eucharist</i>
STTL	<i>Sing to the Lord</i>

I. Preparations Before Mass

A. Environment

1. The number of Masses scheduled is based on actual need.
2. The Lectionary, Gospel Book, and Missal are in good condition and are suitable for the celebration of the liturgy. (GIRM, 349)
3. The vessels for Eucharist are of good quality, made for liturgical use, not easily broken (*i.e.*, not made from glass, earthenware, or clay), and blessed before use. (GIRM, 329; RS, 117 and 118)
4. The liturgical vesture is of good quality and worn appropriately. (GIRM, 335-347; RS, 122-128)
5. Vestments are properly stored and regularly cleaned.
6. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a chapel that is noble, prominent, and suitable for prayer. (GIRM, 314-316; RS, 130)
7. The liturgical environment is clean and well cared for. (GIRM, 289, 292, 293)
8. The liturgical environment is enhanced by appropriate decoration in the sanctuary area, the assembly area, and outside the church building. (GIRM, 289, 292, 293; BLS, 122-129)
9. The lighting and sound systems are adequate and fully functional. (BLS, 221-225; 228-233)
10. The ambo, altar, baptismal font, and presider's chair are designed and placed appropriately. (GIRM, 288-318; BLS, 56-69)
11. There are enough programs/hymnals for all members of the assembly.
12. The bread and wine used for the Eucharist truly have the appearance of food and are made of appropriate material. (GIRM, 320-322; RS, 48)
13. Enough bread and wine is prepared for the faithful to receive Communion consecrated at the same Mass. (GIRM, 85; RS, 49)
14. There is an atmosphere of prayer and an observing of silence before Mass, both in the church and the sacristy. (GIRM, 45)
15. 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 and 294; BLS, 49-53)
16. The church is fully accessible to those with special needs. (BLS, 42)

Notes

B. Assembly

1. Through liturgical catechesis, the assembly has become conscious that they are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people God has made His own. (CSL, 14; RS, 36)
2. Through liturgical catechesis, the assembly is aware that, by virtue of their baptism, it is their right and duty to participate in liturgical celebrations. (CSL, 14; RS, 37)
3. Through liturgical catechesis, the assembly understands that they are called to offer themselves as a living and holy sacrifice of praise through prayer and worship. (RS, 37)
4. Through liturgical catechesis, the assembly sees their participation in the Eucharist as not only sharing in a sacred meal, but also a sharing in the sacrifice of Christ. (RS, 38)
5. The faithful are encouraged to participate in the liturgy through acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and canticles, as well as actions or movements and gestures. (CSL, 30; RS, 39)
6. The assembly willingly participates by actively listening, singing wholeheartedly, and being present to the action of the liturgy. (CSL, 14 and 30)
7. The assembly understands and appreciates that active participation includes an observance of sacred silence. (GIRM, 45; RS, 39)
8. The liturgy is properly adapted to the needs of the faithful, respecting cultural and ethnic traditions which are appropriate within liturgical celebrations. (CSL, 37-40; RS, 39)
9. The faithful understand that, at the liturgy, they are not to participate “as strangers or silent spectators,” but conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full involvement. (CSL, 48)
10. Efforts have been made to instill in the faithful a sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the mystery of faith that is the Eucharist. (RS, 40)

Notes

C. Ministries

1. Liturgical ministries appropriate to the laity (e.g. lectors, music ministry, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, hospitality ministers, altar servers) are distributed among a number of trained liturgical lay ministers. (GIRM, 97; RS, 43)
2. The liturgical ministers reflect the assembly in age, gender, and ethnic background.
3. Except in cases of necessity, liturgical ministers normally exercise only one ministry at a given liturgy. (CSL, 28; RS, 44)
4. All liturgical ministers have received liturgical formation and are properly trained to perform their ministry. (CSL, 29; RS, 46)
5. 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)
6. There is a sense of prayer and reverence among the liturgical ministers.
7. By exercising their ministry, liturgical ministers seek to enhance the full and active participation of the faithful.
8. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are asked to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion only in cases of genuine necessity.
9. Priests and deacons are imbued with the spirit of the liturgy and exercise their liturgical role with sincerity, decorum, dignity, humility, and devotion. (CSL, 14 and 17, GIRM 93)
10. Priests and deacons strive to deepen their own liturgical knowledge and grow in developing a proper *ars celebrandi*. (CSL, 16 and 17; RS, 33)

Notes

D. Music

1. The liturgical music is truly sacred music, reflecting the Word of God. (RS, 57)

2. Appropriate liturgical music is provided for: (CSL, 112; GIRM, 40; STTL 139-175)
 - Entrance Procession
 - Glory to God
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Gospel Acclamation
 - Eucharistic Acclamations
 - Lamb of God
 - Communion Procession
3. The liturgical music serves the unique feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. (STTL, 112)
4. The liturgical music fosters the participation of the gathered assembly. (STTL, 122)
5. The parish musician has a plan to add or further develop a repertoire of solid liturgical music. (STTL, 27)
6. The music is performed competently. (STTL, 50)
7. The choir understands their role as ministers who both support the assembly's singing and perform more technically challenging compositions drawn from the treasury of sacred music. (STTL, 28-33)
8. There is a well-prepared cantor who encourages, but neither overpowers nor takes the place of the singing of the congregation. (STTL, 33-40)
9. The liturgical music lifts the hearts of the faithful to offer praise and thanksgiving to God. (GIRM, 39)
10. In the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, preference is given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those which are to be sung by the Priest or the Deacon or a reader, with the people replying, or by the Priest and people together. (GIRM, 40)
11. The repertoire of liturgical music reflects a variety of styles and forms which can enrich the celebration of the liturgy, while recognizing and reflecting the importance of Gregorian Chant as the model for all sacred music. (STTL, 67-85)
12. The organ is given "pride of place" amongst the musical instruments used in the liturgy, is regularly maintained, and is played by musicians who have received adequate training in the unique demands of this instrument. (GIRM, 393)
13. Other instruments used in the liturgy are truly "apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt." (GIRM, 393)

Notes

II. Celebration of Sunday Mass

A. Introductory Rites

1. The rites preceding the Liturgy of the Word introduce, gather, and prepare the assembly for the celebration of the liturgy. (GIRM, 46)
2. The entrance procession begins at the back of the church and includes at least the crossbearer, acolytes, lectors (if appropriate), and presiding minister. (GIRM, 120 and 171)
3. The entrance procession is carried out in a dignified manner.
4. The introductory rites normally include: (GIRM, 46)
 - Entrance Chant or Song
 - Greeting
 - Act of Penitence or Sprinkling Rite
 - Gloria (as required)
 - Opening Prayer (or collect).
5. The entrance rite is balanced musically in relationship to the other parts of the liturgy.

Notes

B. Liturgy of the Word

1. The readings are proclaimed at the ambo and follow the prescribed norms for the day. (GIRM, 57-60; RS, 61-63)
2. The lectors are well prepared and read with appropriate expression.
3. There are two lectors who proclaim the first two readings.
4. A deacon or priest proclaims the Gospel. (GIRM, 59)

5. The assembly actively listens to the Word being proclaimed.
6. There is time for prayerful silence after each reading and the homily. (GIRM, 56; RS, 39)
7. The responsorial psalm is sung at the ambo or from another suitable place, such as the area for the choir. (GIRM, 61)
8. The responsorial psalm is said or sung using one of the translations of the psalms approved for liturgical use. A song or paraphrase of the psalm is not used in place of the psalm. (GIRM, 61)
9. If a gospel book is used, there is a gospel procession to the ambo while the gospel acclamation is being sung. (GIRM, 132-133)
10. The homily provides nourishment for the Christian life of the faithful and is rooted in the readings, the liturgy, or the feast being celebrated. (GIRM, 65; RS, 67)
11. The homily is proclaimed by an ordained minister who has the faculty to preach. (GIRM, 66; RS, 64-66)
12. The Creed follows the duly approved liturgical texts (Nicene or Apostles' Creed). GIRM, 67; RS, 69)
13. The General Intercessions are "sober, composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and are expressive of the prayer of the entire community." (GIRM, 69-71)

Notes

C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. The bread, wine, and offerings for the church or the poor are brought forward at the same time by members of the assembly. Other items or symbolic gifts are not brought up at the collection. (GIRM, 73)
2. Wine is poured into chalices at the Preparation of the Gifts and not after it has been consecrated. (RS, 106)
3. The Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Amen) are sung well by the assembly. (GIRM, 79b, 148, 151)

4. The celebrant/presider prays the Eucharistic Prayer in a manner which engages the assembly in the prayer. (GIRM, 78)
5. The Sign of Peace is given by the assembly only to those nearest to them and in a sober manner. (GIRM, 82; RS, 72)
6. The faithful share in some of the hosts broken by the celebrant. (RS, 49)
7. The breaking of the host is carried out reverently and is understood to signify that, though the faithful are many, they are made one in Christ. (GIRM, 83; RS, 74)
8. 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)
9. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are well prepared and use the proper ritual words for distribution of Holy Communion. (NDRHC, 28, 41, and 43)
10. Given the size of the assembly, there are enough ministers of Holy Communion at each Sunday Mass. (NDRHC, 27 and 30)
11. Holy Communion is offered to the assembly under both species (bread and wine), if possible and when pastorally advisable. (GIRM, 281, NDRHC, 20 and 21)
12. Any hosts that are not consumed are reserved in the tabernacle immediately following the distribution of Holy Communion.
13. Any Precious Blood remaining after the distribution of Holy Communion is immediately consumed at the altar and not disposed of in the sacrarium. (GIRM, 163; NDRHC, 52 and 55; RS, 107)
14. Communion vessels are purified after Communion or immediately following Mass. (NDRHC, 53)
15. After Communion, there is a period of silent prayer or a hymn of praise is sung by everyone. (GIRM, 89; RS, 88)

Notes

D. Concluding Rite

1. Announcements are made after the Prayer after Communion and at a place other than the ambo. (GIRM, 90)
2. The blessing is given in a reverent and intentional manner.
3. The dismissal given is taken from one of the four options listed in the Roman Missal.
4. Altar linens (*e.g.*, purificators, corporals) are rinsed in the sacarium after each Mass and then laundered.

Notes

III. Sacramental Celebrations of the Parish Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

1. The RCIA is observed in the parish. (CSL, 64-66)
2. The RCIA process includes an ongoing (year round) pre-catechumenate. (RCIA, 7.1 and 36-37)
3. The RCIA process includes an ongoing (year round) catechumenate. (RCIA, 75 and NS, 6)
4. There are a few dates scheduled 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 are celebrated by the parish: (RCIA, 9)
 - Rite of Acceptance and/or Rite of Welcome (RCIA, 45 and 412)
 - Dismissal of catechumens at Sunday and Holy Day Masses (RCIA, 83.2)
 - Dismissal of catechumens at school Mass if catechumens are present (RCIA , 83.2)
 - Rite of Sending to the Rite of Election (RCIA, 107)
 - The Scrutinies on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent (RCIA, 146)
 - The Presentation of the Creed and Lord's Prayer (RCIA, 157 and 178)
 - Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil (RCIA, 207)

7. The parish musician is involved in the preparation of the RCIA rites and developing a repertoire of ritual music used for these liturgies.
8. The parish community receives ongoing catechesis regarding their role in the initiation of those seeking to come to the Church. (RCIA, 9)
9. The font allows for baptism by immersion, if possible. (RCIA, 213; NS, 17)
10. Children of catechetical age in need of baptism or reception into the full communion of the Church are formed through the RCIA process. (RCIA, 252)
11. Children of catechetical age in the RCIA celebrate rites with the adults, when appropriate.
12. Children of catechetical age usually receive all three sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion) at the Easter Vigil. (NS, 18 CIC, c.852)

B. Rite of Infant Baptism

1. Baptism is celebrated only once on a given day. (RBapC.GI, 27)
2. The processional nature of the Rite of Baptism is respected. (RBapC, 26)
3. There are lectors and musicians to assist in the celebration when Baptism is celebrated apart from Mass. (RBapC.GI, 7)
4. There is a team of parishioners and parish staff to prepare parents for the baptism of their children. (RBapC.GI, 7)

Notes

C. First Communion

1. Respecting its nature as a sacrament of initiation, First Communion takes place on a Sunday 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. (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 is sometimes used at the celebration.
6. The candidates for First Communion have received an adequate 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 a specific ministry (*i.e.*, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, hospitality ministers, etc.) These ministers are not ordinarily the first communicants themselves. (CSL, 28)
8. 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 and 59)

Notes

D. Rite of Confirmation

1. Confirmation is celebrated in a way that involves the entire parish community. (OConf, 4)
2. Liturgical ministers for the celebration are taken from those who have been trained to perform a specific ministry (*i.e.*, lectors, extraordinary ministers, hospitality ministers etc.) These ministers are not ordinarily the confirmandi themselves. (CSL, 28)
3. Liturgical catechesis for the whole parish has prepared parishioners to appreciate the true nature of this celebration as a sacrament of initiation. (CSL, 19 and 59; see also Pope Paul VI, *Divinae consortium*)

Notes

E. Rite of Marriage

1. Appropriate decisions are made with regard to celebrating the rite of Marriage either within Mass or outside of Mass. (OCM, 29)
2. There are liturgical ministers from the parish who are prepared to fulfill the roles of:
 - cantor
 - lector(s)/musician
 - usher/greeter
 - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if necessary)
3. Steps have been taken to encourage the full, conscious and active participation of the assembly gathered for the wedding celebration. (CSL, 14 and 82)
4. The liturgical music serves the rite and is appropriate for liturgy. (OCM, 30)
5. The parish liturgical musician is involved in the decision-making process with regard to music. (STTL, 218)
6. The liturgical season is taken into consideration when preparing the liturgy. (OCM, 32)

Notes

F. Order of Christian Funerals

1. There is a bereavement committee or team trained to assist the family of the deceased in preparing the funeral liturgies. (OCF, 9 and 17)
2. The parish liturgical musician has developed a repertoire of music which is familiar to the parish and will serve the needs of the Order of Christian Funerals. (OCF, 30-33)
3. The following various times of prayer for the deceased and the mourners are provided by the parish, when pastorally appropriate: (OCF, 50)
 - Prayers for the dying
 - Gathering in the Presence of the Body
 - Vigil
 - Morning Prayer/Evening Prayer

- Transfer of the Body to the Church/Place of Committal
- The Funeral Mass
- The Committal

4. There are liturgical ministers from the parish to perform the various ministries needed at the Vigil, when appropriate: (OCF, 15 and 64)

- Leader of prayer
- Lector
- Cantor/Leader of Song

5. There are liturgical ministers from the parish to perform the various ministries needed at the Funeral Mass: (OCF, 15 and 150)

- Ushers/greeters
- Cantor/Musician
- Lector
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (when necessary)

6. Liturgical catechesis has been provided to the entire parish community concerning the nature and celebration of the Order of Christian Funerals. (CSL, 19 and 59)

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 the Christian belief and hope in the Paschal Mystery. (OCF, 21)

Notes

G. The Rite of Penance

1. A chapel is properly appointed for individual penitents. (BLS, 104 and 105)

2. The place where the Rite of Penance is celebrated provides for 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.
5. There are regularly scheduled times for the communal celebration of the Rite of Penance (especially during Advent, Lent, and for First Reconciliation).
6. Communal celebrations of the Rite of Penance, including those which take place at First Reconciliations, are prepared in harmony with the Rite of Penance (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. (STTL, 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 in a timely manner. (RPen, 22)

Notes

H. Communal Anointing of the Sick

1. There is an opportunity for the communal anointing of the sick at appropriate times during the year. (PCS, 131-134)
2. Liturgical catechesis is provided for the parishioners to understand the nature of the rite and to help them discern their appropriate participation in the sacrament. (CSL, 19 and 59)
3. Liturgical music is carefully chosen to enhance the rite.

Notes

IV. Other Liturgical Celebrations and Considerations

A. Liturgy of the Hours

1. There is an opportunity for the celebration of Morning Prayer which serves the needs of the parish. (GILH, 1, 9, and 21)
2. There is an opportunity for the celebration of Evening Prayer which serves the needs of the parish. (GILH, 1, 9, 21, and 37)
3. The following ministers are present to lead the celebration: (GILH, 253-261)
 - Leader of prayer
 - Lector
 - Cantor/Musician
 - Greeters (if necessary)
4. Catechesis on the Liturgy of the Hours is ongoing and invites parishioners to develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, this liturgical prayer.
5. There is an effort made by the liturgical music minister to develop a repertoire that will serve the unique demands of this form of liturgical prayer. (STTL, 230-240)

Notes

B. Devotional Prayer

1. The reserved Blessed Sacrament is available to parishioners for private prayer. (BLS, 71)
2. The Rite of Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is celebrated at least once a year. (RS, 139)
3. When the Rite of Exposition is celebrated, great care is taken to ensure that someone is always present before the Blessed Sacrament. (RS, 138)
4. Other devotional celebrations are regularly scheduled, including:
 - Stations of the Cross
 - Other Marian Devotions

- Corpus Christi Procession

Notes

C. Liturgical Year

1. Sunday is experienced as the primary Christian feast day. (CSL, 106; GNLY, 4-7)
2. 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)
3. The Lenten and Easter seasons are prepared according to the norms given in the *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*.

Notes
