



DIOCESE OF
SAN JOSE

Renewed at the Table of the Lord

Liturgical Renewal Phase 1 – Introductory Rites: Welcoming & Participation
Sunday after Easter, April 12, 2026 – July 1, 2026

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This is a journey we are walking together, and we want everyone to feel supported. Questions are welcome! You can submit them to liturgicalcommision@dsj.org and we will update this document regularly as questions are submitted.

UNDERSTANDING LITURGICAL RENEWAL

Why are we doing this?

This is an invitation to spiritual renewal — to experience the Mass more deeply and participate more fully in the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic life. It connects to our diocesan Pastoral Plan and our Journey to 2031. Just as Our Lady of Guadalupe leads us closer to her Son, this renewal helps us discover how the Mass forms us, nourishes us, and sends us forth to love and serve.

Why are we doing this at the same time as Sowing Seeds of Faith?

Liturgical Renewal and Sowing Seeds of Faith are not competing initiatives — they are two expressions of the same call to renewal, both rooted in our diocesan Pastoral Plan, *Renewed in Christ, Together in Mission*.

As Bishop Cantú has emphasized, liturgical renewal is essential to the spiritual renewal of the diocese. Corresponding to the Pastoral Plan's priority for Worship, its purpose is to invite the whole Body of Christ into a deeper knowledge of the liturgy, of the Eucharist as the source and summit of all we do, and our shared role as an assembly, as disciples in the world.

Sowing Seeds of Faith works alongside this: providing the resources: prayer, time, talent, and treasure needed to carry out and implement the Pastoral Plan. Both flow from the same vision — vibrant, transformed, missionary parishes gathered around the Table of the Lord. Both lead us toward 2031.

They also reinforce each other. Disciples renewed at the Mass are better equipped to build up the communities that Sowing Seeds of Faith is resourcing. And those stronger communities create the conditions for even deeper renewal. The two initiatives are not parallel tracks — they are an ongoing, continuous cycle, and each strengthens the other.

We recognize that parishes engaged in Wave 1 of Sowing Seeds of Faith are involved in significant planning and communications for that campaign. The timing of these initiatives is not meant to overwhelm, but to build a foundation together. Your pastor and parish team will decide how best to sequence and communicate both processes in your local context. The diocese is committed to supporting you with pastoral sensitivity throughout.

What is the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)?

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) is the official document of the Catholic Church that provides detailed instructions for celebrating Mass. It guides priests, deacons, and the entire assembly on the proper order, prayers, gestures, and practices for the liturgy. Our liturgical renewal aligns our diocesan practices more closely with the GIRM, ensuring we celebrate Mass with reverence and unity throughout the universal Church.

Why does the Church care so much about how we celebrate Mass?

The Mass is the most sacred action of the Church — it is where heaven meets earth, where Christ becomes truly present, and where we encounter God most profoundly. Because the Mass is so important, the Church gives us careful guidance to ensure it is celebrated with reverence, beauty, and unity. These practices help us worship God worthily and allow the full grace of the sacrament to transform us. When we celebrate Mass well, we honor God and open ourselves more fully to His presence.

What does "full, conscious, and active participation" really mean?

The Second Vatican Council called all members of the Church to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the liturgy. This does not mean everyone must be a lector or choir member. Rather, it means bringing our whole selves to Mass: being fully present (not distracted), being conscious of what is happening and why (understanding the prayers and gestures), and actively engaging our hearts, voices, and bodies in worship. It means the Mass is not something we watch — it is something we enter into together as the Body of Christ.

Why is it important to have unified practices across the diocese?

When we celebrate Mass in the same way across our diocese — following the same postures, gestures, and responses — we witness to the world that we are truly one Body in Christ. Unity in our worship strengthens unity in our mission. It also helps parishioners feel at home when they visit other parishes and reflects our communion with the universal Church. This unity does not eliminate the beauty of cultural expressions, but it ensures we are grounded in the common practices of our Catholic faith.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN YOUR PARISH

What will change in my parish?

Some practices will become more unified across the diocese to align with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Your pastor will explain any specific changes. Most importantly, we are all invited to participate more actively through singing, responding, and engaging our whole selves in worship. Phase 1 focuses on the Introductory Rites — how we gather, ask for mercy, and prepare to hear God's word. The changes are meant to deepen your experience of the Mass, not make it more complicated.

Can I still arrive right when Mass starts?

You are always welcome at Mass, no matter when you arrive! However, one of the invitations of this renewal is to consider arriving 5-10 minutes early. This gives you time to quiet your heart, to prepare to encounter the Lord, and recognize that you are gathering with your parish family. The Mass truly begins before the entrance procession — it begins with our preparation: stopping the noise of the week, reflecting on where we are spiritually, and offering the Lord the sum of all we are to help pave the way to transformation. Arriving early helps us enter more fully into the celebration and better fulfill our ministry as members of the assembly.

Do I have to sing? I don't like my voice / I can't carry a tune.

God does not ask us to be professional singers; He asks us to be prayerful ones. When we sing at Mass, we are not performing; we are praying; sometimes a hymn or melody powerfully expresses what we experience in our spiritual journeys. Saint Augustine taught that those who sing pray twice. Your voice matters to God and to your parish family, regardless of how it sounds. Think of it this way: when your family gathers for a birthday, everyone sings Happy Birthday together, even those who cannot carry a tune. We sing because we are family. The Mass is no different. If you truly cannot sing due to illness or disability, you can pray the words in your heart and offer your silent presence as a gift. But if you can sing, even a little, the Church needs your voice. Together, our voices become one voice praising God.

Is this mandatory?

Approximately 95% of the practices are mandatory because they align us with the Church's liturgical norms in the GIRM. The remaining 5% are recommended diocesan practices. All of this is being done to help us worship with greater unity and reverence. While the specific practices are not optional, the spirit of this renewal is one of invitation — we are being invited to encounter Christ more fully in the Mass.

TIMELINE & SCOPE

How long will this renewal take?

This is a two-year journey through the Mass. Phase 1 (Introductory Rites) launches April 12, 2026, and continues through summer 2026. Phase 2 (Liturgy of the Word) begins in fall 2026. Phase 3 (Liturgy of the Eucharist) starts in Lent 2027. Phase 4 (Communion and Concluding Rites) launches in fall 2027. Each phase includes education, practice, and time for adjustment before moving to the next part of the Mass.

What happens after Phase 1 is complete?

After Phase 1 reaches full implementation on July 1, 2026, the Introductory Rites practices will become part of how we celebrate Mass. In fall 2026, we will begin Phase 2 focusing on the Liturgy of the Word. Each phase builds on the previous one, gradually deepening our understanding and participation in the entire celebration of Mass. By fall 2027, we will have journeyed through all four phases together.

I have questions about parts of the Mass that are not covered in the current phase. Where do I address those?

We want to hear your questions, all of them, not just the ones that fit the current phase. Over the next two years, we will walk through the entire Mass together, and every question deserves a thoughtful answer at the right time.

Please send your questions or thoughts to the Liturgical Commission at liturgicalcommission@dsj.org. Your question will be noted and addressed in the phase of the renewal that covers that part of the Mass. Nothing will be overlooked. We are simply walking through this journey one step at a time, and your question is helping us prepare for what comes next.

GETTING HELP & SUPPORT

What if I have questions or concerns?

- Visit the liturgical renewal hub: www.dsj.org/liturgical-renewal
- Contact
Fr. Jeff Fernandez, Director of Worship
jeff.fernandez@dsj.org or (408) 983-0136

Kristine Lalaquit, Administrative Assistant
kristine.lalaquit@dsj.org or (408) 983-0139