



LITURGICAL RENEWAL (2026-2027)

RENEWED AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

Phase I – Introductory Rites, Welcoming, and Participation

Beginning Date: February 2026

Full Implementation by July 1, 2026

Since being reconstituted in July of 2024, the Diocese of San Jose Liturgical Commission has:

- reviewed the Worship objectives of the 2023 Diocesan Pastoral Plan,
- studied the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) in-depth,
- considered liturgical practices in use that may be inconsistent with the GIRM or that may be in disunity with other dioceses in the United States,
- discussed methods and implications of establishing liturgical norms for the Diocese, and
- decided on preparing separate recommendations for Bishop Cantú for liturgical norms for the Diocese for each of the four parts of the Mass that would be implemented sequentially.

This first set of recommended liturgical norms relate specifically to the Gathering Rite of the Mass and generally to hospitality and welcoming, Church environment, and the establishment of liturgy committees in each parish in the Diocese.

To implement these recommended norms, the Liturgical Commission urges that three levels of catechesis be developed:

- in-depth, GIRM-based, presiding and organizational catechesis for clergy;
- catechesis on how to implement the liturgical norms for members of parish liturgy committees and liturgical ministers;
- general liturgical catechesis for members of the Assembly.

With the need to develop and deploy these three levels of catechesis, the Liturgical Commission anticipates that this first set of norms would be implemented starting in Lent of 2026. In the meantime, the Liturgical Commission will next review and prepare recommended norms for the Liturgy of the Word and the roles, responsibilities, and training of liturgical ministers.

| TOPIC/GIRM# citation (2010 Roman Missal—USCCB website) | Implementation Recommendations & Considerations |
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| HOSPITALITY & WELCOMING | |
| <p>Welcoming people to the church</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a hospitality ministry to welcome people from all perspectives and life experiences, and to assist members of the Assembly and ministers before, during and after Mass. • Create an environment for worship to enhance the liturgical experience in light of the liturgical seasons and rituals. (<i>Advent, Lent, other</i>) |
| <p>Ministry of the Assembly</p> <p>95. In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people of God’s own possession and a royal Priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the unblemished sacrificial Victim not only by means of the hands of the Priest but also together with him and so that they may learn to offer their very selves.^[82] They should, moreover, take care to show this by their deep religious sense and their charity toward brothers and sisters who participate with them in the same celebration. They are consequently to avoid any appearance of singularity or division, keeping in mind that they have only one Father in heaven and that hence are all brothers or sisters one to the other.</p> <p>96. Moreover, they are to form one body, whether in hearing the Word of God, or in taking part in the prayers and in the singing, or above all by the common offering of the Sacrifice and by participating together at the Lord’s table. This unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and bodily postures observed together by the faithful.</p> <p>97. The faithful, moreover, should not refuse to serve the People of God in gladness whenever they are asked to perform some particular service or function in the celebration.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechize members of the Assembly on how we come together and become one Body, one worshipping community in Christ. |
| <p>42. The gestures and bodily posture of both the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers, and also of the people, must be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to making clear the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to fostering the participation of all.^[52] Attention must therefore be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and by the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.</p> <p>A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechize members of the Assembly to help them understand their role in the worshipping community as vital for the Mass. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass should be understood as worshipping in community and not as our personal time with Jesus. Catechesis should address the Assembly's role in the liturgy. • We genuflect to the real presence of Christ in the Tabernacle upon entering the body of the Church and at the end of Mass. • While Mass is in progress, we bow to the altar, which during that time has primacy of focus. |
| <p>43. The faithful should stand from the beginning of the Entrance Chant, or while the Priest approaches the altar, until the end of the Collect;</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind members of the Assembly about the unifying nature of posture in reverently standing together for the entrance procession, Penitential Rite, Gloria (except when omitted during Advent and Lent), and Collect. |

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| Arrangement of seating on the sanctuary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care should be taken in placing the President’s Chair, chairs for the assisting Deacons, as well as chairs for concelebrants in the Sanctuary to avoid having them sit directly in front of the Tabernacle, thereby obstructing the view of the Tabernacle by members of the Assembly. |
| Use of ritual books over use of binders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ritual books—Roman Missal, Lectionary, and Gospel Book—should preferentially be used during liturgies, as symbols of permanence and sacredness; ritual books should be used as indicated in each book. Binders should be used when needed to facilitate bilingual or other special celebrations. Electronic devices are not to be used in worship, because they are fleeting and ephemeral. |
| Church Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environment in Church connects, engages, and draws in the Assembly to the liturgical season and celebration. It should be creative, tasteful, interesting, and not overly done. The environment during Ordinary Time can also be engaging for the Assembly. For instance, parishes should consider using different shades of green in the worship space, creatively changing the environment at various times during the long period of Ordinary Time to reflect changes in time, such as using light greens in Spring, darker greens in Summer, and autumn greens in Fall. |

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| <p>117. The altar is to be covered with at least one white cloth. In addition, on or next to the altar are to be placed candlesticks with lighted candles: at least two in any celebration, or even four or six, especially for a Sunday Mass or a Holyday of Obligation, or if the Diocesan Bishop celebrates, then seven candlesticks with lighted candles. Likewise, on the altar or close to it, there is to be a cross adorned with a figure of Christ crucified. The candles and the cross with the figure of Christ crucified may also be carried in the procession at the Entrance. On the altar itself may be placed a Book of the Gospels distinct from the book of other readings, unless it is carried in the Entrance Procession.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire top surface of the Altar is to be covered with a white cloth, on which a Corporal will be placed during Mass. • Parishes may use altar cloths to cover the altar that correspond to the liturgical season, as long as there is a white cloth on top covering the entire altar surface. • Within the Sanctuary, there must be only <u>one</u> crucifix, on which there must be the figure of Christ Crucified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is <u>not</u> a permanent crucifix in the Sanctuary with the figure of the crucified Christ, then the processional cross, provided it has the figure of Christ Crucified, may be placed in a stand near the altar to serve this purpose. • If there <u>is</u> a permanent crucifix in the Sanctuary with the figure of the crucified Christ, then at the conclusion of the entrance procession the processional cross must be placed in a respectful location out of the view of the Assembly, such as in the Sacristy or behind a wall or banner. • Also, if there <u>is</u> a permanent crucifix in the Sanctuary, another crucifix on the altar is not permitted. • All candles used in the Sanctuary, including at the Tabernacle and Altar must be made out of wax and have a live flame that will burn down in the passage of time. This also applies to the Paschal candle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechesis for the Assembly should include teaching about the importance of these visible symbols of the passage of time through the liturgical year. • All flowers and green plants used in the Sanctuary must be live (or in the case of flowers those that have been live and cut), not silk, plastic, or artificial. |

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| INTRODUCTORY RITES | |
| <p>40. Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are in principle meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holydays of Obligation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presiders should work collaboratively with music ministers to help them understand how music supports the liturgy as a ministry, not as a performance. |
| <p>46. The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.</p> <p>In certain celebrations that are combined with Mass according to the norms of the liturgical books, the Introductory Rites are omitted or take place in a particular way.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presiders, Liturgy Committee members, Music Ministers, Liturgical Ministers, and Hospitality Ministers should collaborate as they prepare liturgies, especially during Advent and Lent when the Mass introduction and the Penitential Rite can creatively engage and involve the Assembly. Refer to the special section below for information about Parish Liturgical Committees. |
| <p>Procession</p> <p>47. When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins. Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers.</p> <p>See GIRM 120, 172 See GIRM 117 – Processional cross</p> <p>173. When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the Book of the Gospels on the altar, after which, together with the Priest, he venerates the altar with a kiss.</p> <p>If, however, he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Priest in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.</p> <p>Lastly, if incense is being used, he assists the Priest in putting some into the thurible and in incensing the cross and the altar.</p> <p>194. In the procession to the altar, in the absence of a Deacon, the reader, wearing approved attire, may carry the Book of the Gospels, slightly elevated. In that case, the reader walks in front of the Priest but otherwise walks along with the other ministers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entrance procession always includes a processional cross, upon which there is the figure of the crucified Christ, and candle bearers. The Gospel Book, in good condition, is always carried in the entrance procession by the Deacon, if present, or if not, by a lay minister, such as the Lector. Lectionaries and electronic devices are not to be carried out in procession. The Gospel Book should be carried elevated sufficiently high as to allow the carrier to see under the bottom of the Book, so that it can be seen by members of the Assembly as it processes into the body of the Church. Upon reaching the Altar, the Deacon or Lector should place the Gospel Book flat onto the Altar and then make a profound bow. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the proclamation of the Gospel, it is recommended that the Book of Gospels be placed in a suitable place where the assembly can see it, such as a holder in front of the ambo, or a special and worthy stand within the body of the Church. The entrance procession should include: the processional cross bearer; two candle bearers; other altar servers, if any; the Deacon carrying the Gospel Book, or, if a Deacon is not present, a lay minister, such as the Lector, carrying the Gospel Book; Priest concelebrants; Presider. If a second Deacon is present to assist at the Mass, he would process in behind the Deacon carrying the Gospel Book. Other Lectors or Extraordinary Ministers of Communion should not be part of the entrance process. |

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| <p>Genuflections and Bows</p> <p>274. A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.</p> <p>During Mass, three genuflections are made by the Priest Celebrant: namely, after the elevation of the host, after the elevation of the chalice, and before Communion. Certain specific features to be observed in a concelebrated Mass are noted in their proper place (cf. nos. 210-251).</p> <p>If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. Otherwise, all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession. Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting.</p> <p>See additional guidance on bowing in GIRM 275</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the entrance procession reaches the base of the Sanctuary, the altar servers carrying the Processional Cross and Candles, bow their heads, but do not genuflect, and immediately enter the Sanctuary to place the items they are carrying in their proper places. • The Deacon or Lector carrying the Gospel Book does not bow or genuflect but immediately enters the Sanctuary to place the Book on the Altar. (GIRM 173) • If the Tabernacle is in the Sanctuary, then the Presider, Priest Concelebrants, if any, and second Deacon, if any, genuflect, or if physically unable to genuflect profoundly bow, before entering the Sanctuary. • If the Tabernacle is not located in the Sanctuary, then those entering the Sanctuary would profoundly bow. |
| <p>The Entrance</p> <p>48. This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from the Missal or the antiphon with its Psalm from the Graduale Romanum, as set to music there or in another setting; (2) the antiphon and Psalm of the Graduale Simplex for the liturgical time; (3) a chant from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) another liturgical chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p>If there is no singing at the Entrance, the antiphon given in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation (cf. no. 31).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entrance song/hymn is prayer that gathers and unifies the Members of the Assembly into a worshipping community. • Members of the Assembly can only participate in songs and hymns if the music is familiar to them. • Liturgical music selection needs to consider the specific Mass community, what repertoire they know, and which songs and hymns appropriately support the liturgy and liturgical season. • Planning for when and how to introduce new songs and hymns is important so as to fully engage the Assembly. • Either a Commentator or a Music leader welcomes the Assembly and engagingly extends an invitation for them to participate in singing. • Music ministers should conclude the entrance song or hymn shortly after the Presider reaches the Presider's Chair. • In the absence of music ministers, the Presider can intone a well-known gathering song which the Assembly can sing during the entrance procession. • Alternatively, the Presider can prepare the Entrance Antiphon and invite the entire community to join in reciting it. |

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| <p>49. When they have arrived at the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers reverence the altar with a profound bow.</p> <p>Moreover, as an expression of veneration, the Priest and Deacon then kiss the altar itself; the Priest, if appropriate, also incenses the cross and the altar.</p> <p>See GIRM 172 – Mass w/ Deacon</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Pastoral Plan process, many expressed a desire for more reverence during Mass. Reverencing the Altar is one of many opportunities for members of the Assembly to witness and experience how reverent our worship is. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should not be hurried nor done in a perfunctory manner, but with care and reverence. |
| <p>Veneration of the Altar and the Book of Gospels</p> <p>273. According to traditional practice, the veneration of the altar and of the Book of the Gospels is done by means of a kiss. However, where a sign of this kind is not in harmony with the traditions or the culture of some region, it is for the Conference of Bishops to establish some other sign in its place, with the consent of the Apostolic See.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice and tradition in the Diocese of San Jose is that the Presider, Concelebrants, and assisting Deacons venerate the altar and the Book of the Gospels with a kiss. |
| <p>Greeting</p> <p>124. Once all this has been done, the Priest goes to the chair. When the Entrance Chant is concluded, with everybody standing, the Priest and faithful sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross. The Priest says: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The people reply, Amen.</p> <p>Then, facing the people and extending his hands, the Priest greets the people, using one of the formulas indicated. The Priest himself or some other minister may also very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The greeting and introduction are a continuation of the gathering of the people into a worshipping community. It may provide context but should not be used for telling jokes or personal comments which can be perceived by some as being irreverent or insensitive. |
| <p>50. When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of the Cross. Then by means of the Greeting he signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.</p> <p>After the greeting of the people, the Priest, or the Deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: The introduction referred to is still part of the gathering rite, and it may include such context as placement of the Mass in the liturgical season or alerting the Assembly that a baptism will be occurring or introducing themes the Assembly will hear in the readings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not the same as the provision for a brief introduction to the readings themselves during the Liturgy of the Word in GIRM 128. |
| <p>The Penitential Rite</p> <p>51. After this, the Priest calls upon the whole community to take part in the Penitential Act, which, after a brief pause for silence, it does by means of a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the Priest’s absolution, which, however, lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance.</p> <p>See also GIRM 125- Mass w/o Deacon</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three forms of the Penitential Rite in the Roman Missal. It is up to the Presider as to which form will be used. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms A and B are prayed by the Presider. Following Form A (the Confiteor), the Kyrie is recited or sung. • In Form C, the Presider may allow the Deacon to proclaim or intone the invocations after which the Assembly recites “Lord have mercy,” “Christ have mercy,” “Lord have mercy.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Presider may also allow the Cantor to intone the invocations which are a litany of praise. • Presiders should discuss with the Deacon whether and how he will be involved in the Penitential Rite. |

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| <p>51. (Cont.) Sprinkling Rite From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter Time, instead of the customary Penitential Act, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place as a reminder of Baptism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Presider should determine whether the Kyrie is to be sung/chanted or recited. • As an alternate to the Penitential Rite, the Presider may from time-to-time have a Sprinkling Rite, which may be accompanied by a hymn that can be repeated until the sprinkling is completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that an aspergillum, which has a handle with a metal ball or container at the end with perforations to allow Holy Water to be absorbed, be used in the Sprinkling Rite. • The Sprinkling Rite must not take place during the Gloria. • The Presider may include concelebrating priest(s) and, with good reason, deacons, if assisting at the Mass, but not a lay person, to participate in the Sprinkling Rite by sprinkling members of the Assembly. |
| <p>The Kyrie, Eleison 52. After the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy), is always begun, unless it has already been part of the Penitential Act. Since it is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy, it is usually executed by everyone, that is to say, with the people and the choir or cantor taking part in it. Each acclamation is usually pronounced twice, though it is not to be excluded that it be repeated several times, by reason of the character of the various languages, as well as of the artistry of the music or of other circumstances. When the Kyrie is sung as a part of the Penitential Act, a “trope” precedes each acclamation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presiders are encouraged to use different forms of the Penitential Rite and to prepare different invocations for Form C so that it does not become rote. |
| <p>53. The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is a most ancient and venerable hymn by which the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other. It is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other. It is sung or said on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, and also on Solemnities and Feasts, and at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.</p> | |

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| <p>54. Next the Priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the Priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of being in God’s presence and may call to mind their intentions. Then the Priest pronounces the prayer usually called the “Collect” and through which the character of the celebration finds expression. By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit,[56] and is concluded with a Trinitarian ending, or longer ending, in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the prayer is directed to the Father: Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever; • If it is directed to the Father, but the Son is mentioned at the end: Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever; • If it is directed to the Son: Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. <p>The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation Amen.</p> <p>At Mass only a single Collect is ever said.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a brief moment of silence after the Presider says “Let us pray” to allow members of the Assembly to call to mind prayers and intentions. • Catechize members of the Assembly that the Collect gathers all of their prayers held in the silence of their hearts. • The Collect must always be as prescribed by the Roman Missal. • No additional prayers or replacement prayers are permitted. |

| PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEES | |
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| Every parish should have a Liturgy Committee to assist the Pastor and Liturgy Director, if any, with preparing liturgies. Each parish should define the length of the term of members. | The Liturgical Commission (LC) will assist Pastors who request assistance in forming and training Parish Liturgy Committees. |
| <p>Role of the Parish Liturgy Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop liturgical practices for the Parish; • Prepare liturgies for liturgical seasons; Prepare special liturgies for the Parish; • Recruit, train, and oversee Lectors, Ministers of Holy Communion, and Hospitality Ministers; • Oversee environment teams; • Oversee Music Ministers; • Plan continuing formation for liturgical ministers; • Plan evenings of reflection and/or retreats for liturgical ministers; • Plan formation opportunities for members of the Assembly, including understanding the Mass. | Catechesis will include the role of the Parish Liturgy Committee in the Pastoral Plan objectives of liturgical renewal. |
| <p>Membership on Parish Liturgy Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastor, Parochial Vicar(s), Deacon(s); • Liturgy Director; • Trainer or representative of Lectors; • Trainer or representative of Ministers of Holy Communion; • Trainer, Lead, or representative of Hospitality Ministers; • Music Director, or Leader of Music Group, or representative of Music Ministers; • Membership should be inclusive of cultural communities of the parish • Representative of the Environment Team. | |
| The Liturgy Committee operates under the direction and supervision of the Pastor. The Pastor can chair meetings of the Liturgy Committee or select a member of the Committee to serve as the Chair. Regularly scheduled meetings are preferable. Agendas and Minutes of each meeting should be prepared. | |