

# Guidelines and Recommendations for the Celebration of School Masses in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston



The mission of Catholic schools is unique. Unlike many academic institutions, the mission is not simply to prepare students to become intelligent and industrious citizens of the world. As important as that objective is, Catholic schools have an even greater mission: to empower students to become holy and virtuous citizens of Heaven. In this way, the fundamental responsibility of every Catholic educator is, above all else, to transform their students into saints.

To this end, it is necessary that Catholic schools frequently expose their students to Holy Mass, which the Second Vatican Council affirms is the “source and summit of the Christian life.”<sup>1</sup> Without the Mass, our Christian lives remain incomplete, unfulfilled, and independent of our Lord. With the Mass, we have the hope of communion with Christ both now and forever. For these reasons, schools have an immense responsibility to ensure that students acquire a profound understanding of the Mass’s sacredness, a firm belief in its limitless power, and a childlike dependence on its frequent celebration.

Because the Mass is such a sacred and transcendent encounter with God, it is of the utmost importance that schools carefully abide by the liturgical norms that the Church has established. For this reason, the Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools Office and Office of Divine Worship have collaborated to compose the present document, which outlines the most important liturgical guidelines for the celebration of School Masses. In addition, this document also offers several recommendations aimed at helping schools to provide their students with a most holy and reverent encounter with the Mass.

## I. Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Word

In the Liturgy of the Word, the treasures of the Bible are opened up to the faithful.<sup>2</sup> At every Mass, the congregation reads several selections from Holy Scripture and then listens to a homily which expounds on the teachings found in the sacred texts. In the Liturgy of the Word, Christ is truly present in the Word that is proclaimed,<sup>3</sup> and for this reason, the faithful owe immense reverence to this integral part of the Mass. Below is a list of guidelines that schools should follow when preparing for and celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in Holy Mass.

1. **Upon entering or exiting a church or chapel, all individuals should genuflect in the direction of the tabernacle.**<sup>4</sup> Faculty should teach students how and when to genuflect. As St. Maximilian Kolbe said, “Be a Catholic: When you kneel...do it in such a way that others may be able to recognize that you know before whom you kneel.”

2. **When approaching or passing by an altar, all individuals should bow.**<sup>5</sup> Faculty should teach and remind students, especially those who serve as altar servers, lectors, or gift-bearers, to always bow before the altar during the Mass.
3. **On all Sundays, Solemnities, and Feast Days, the designated Scripture readings of the day must be proclaimed.**<sup>6</sup> It is not appropriate to select different readings from those that the Church prescribes for that particular day.
4. **The Responsorial Psalm is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word, and in most cases, should not be replaced by another song.**<sup>7</sup> When possible, the psalm should be sung by a cantor and not simply read.<sup>8</sup>
5. **Lectors should read from a Lectionary rather than from a loose piece of paper.**<sup>9</sup> If it is not possible to use a Lectionary, lectors may read from a binder that contains the readings.
6. **Children serving as lectors should be of an age and reading level that enables them to clearly convey the dignity of the readings.**<sup>10</sup> Faculty should work with students prior to Mass to ensure that they are properly prepared to proclaim the readings.
7. **All students or faculty who serve as lectors,<sup>11</sup> altar servers,<sup>12</sup> or gift-bearers,<sup>13</sup> must be Catholic.** Non-Catholic students can participate in the Mass by engaging with the prayers and readings, singing hymns, and offering their own private intentions for the Mass.
8. **Preaching within the sacred liturgy is expressly reserved to ordained bishops, priests, and deacons in good standing.**<sup>14</sup> No lay person may ever preach during the Mass. A lay person may give a reflection following the time of Communion, but this reflection is not to take the place of the homily.
9. **Performances, skits, or plays should not occur during the Mass, even if the performances are re-enacting the Mass readings.**<sup>15</sup> Such performances are wonderful opportunities for students to learn about the faith, and schools are encouraged to promote exposure to the arts in a formative manner. These performances, however, should simply take place before or after the school liturgy so as to not distract from the central purpose of the Mass.



## II. Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Mass is the heart of Christian worship, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the heart of the Mass. The climax of the Liturgy of the Eucharist occurs when the priest prays the words of consecration over the bread and wine, and the bread and wine “truly, really, and substantially” become the body and blood of our Lord.<sup>16</sup> The Eucharist is, and forever will be, the greatest gift that Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church, and for this reason, it is essential that schools teach their students how to appropriately worship and receive the Eucharist. Schools should heed the following guidelines for before, during, and after the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

1. **When possible, all members of the congregation should kneel, and not simply stand, during the times of the Mass designated for kneeling.** There are two important points during Mass when the Church prescribes kneeling for those who are able: (1) during the consecration (from after the *Sanctus*, or “Holy, Holy, Holy,” to the *Great Amen* after the Eucharistic Prayer) and (2) in preparation for Communion (from after the *Agnus Dei*, or “Lamb of God” to the reception of Communion).<sup>17</sup>
2. **If it is not possible to kneel, students should stand during the times designated for kneeling and bow after each moment in the Institution Narrative.** This bow should occur at the same time that the priest genuflects after consecrating the Body and the Blood of Jesus.<sup>18</sup>
3. **Only those who are Catholic and who have received their First Communion should receive the Eucharist.**<sup>19</sup> The Church ardently desires that all people be in full communion with her, but until that time, those outside of the Catholic Church should refrain from receiving the Eucharist, an act which expresses complete assent to everything that the Church teaches.
4. **Those who are conscious of grave sin (not in a state of grace) should refrain from receiving Communion until going to Confession.**<sup>20</sup> Whether or not a person is in the state of grace is a determination made by each individual, but it is one which a person can only make correctly with proper formation and education. Catechesis should be offered so that students know it is acceptable for them to refrain from receiving Communion if they are not prepared to do so.



5. **All those who receive Holy Communion must fast for one hour prior to receiving.**<sup>21</sup> The major exceptions to this guideline are for water and medicine. The elderly and infirm are also exempt from the Eucharistic fast. Since ancient times, fasting before receiving the Eucharist has been considered an important means of spiritual preparation and a way of showing reverence for the sacrament.
6. **Students should not chew gum during Mass and especially not while receiving the Eucharist.** Gum is particularly inappropriate during Mass not only because it breaks the Eucharistic fast but also because when a communicant receives the Host with gum in his or her mouth, particles of the Host may become embedded in the gum and later be discarded along with the gum.
7. **In order to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, a lay person must be a confirmed Catholic and must receive proper instruction and training.**<sup>22</sup> Many local parishes offer trainings for Extraordinary Ministers, and the Archdiocese of Boston Office for Divine Worship does as well. For more information, contact the Office of Divine Worship.
8. **Lay persons serving as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are prohibited from imparting blessings during Communion.**<sup>23</sup> The celebrant may invite non-Catholics to join the Communion Procession in order to receive a blessing from a priest or deacon, but if the celebrant does not make this explicit, those who are not properly disposed to receive Communion should remain seated.
9. **All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be mindful to ensure that communicants immediately consume the Host upon receiving it.** If a student receives the Host but does not consume it for whatever reason, the Extraordinary Minister should intervene and consume the Host. This often occurs with non-Catholic students who have not had prior experience with the Mass or who have not received proper catechesis on Communion procedures.
10. **The time immediately following reception of the Eucharist is reserved for quiet, prayerful reflection.** Students may be directed to silently recite a “Prayer After Communion” which can be included in worship aides. Examples of such prayers are found in *Appendix A – Resources on the Eucharist*.
11. **If a student or faculty member offers a reflection after the time of Communion, school administrators should carefully review the content of the reflection.** The reflection may contain an inspiring witness or an invitation to participate in an upcoming faith-based



opportunity. Any general school-related announcements, however should be made following the final blessing and dismissal.

### III. Further Recommendations

In addition to the above guidelines, which are obligatory, there are further steps that schools can take in order to provide their students with a sacred and enriching experience of Holy Mass. The following recommendations are highly encouraged, easily implementable, and drawn from the best practices of schools throughout the Archdiocese.

1. **The Mass needs to be taught – Theology teachers should frequently teach students about the Mass, especially at the beginning of each school year.** Every person who attended Mass as a child knows that the Mass is not always intuitive. Children must be taught what the various parts of the Mass mean and how they are to participate at different points in the liturgy. As students grow in their understanding of the Mass, they will also grow in their appreciation of it.
2. **Schools should provide the presiding priest with a School Mass Planning Sheet prior to the school liturgy.** The School Mass Planning Sheet is especially helpful for those schools not attached to a parish which often bring in different priests to celebrate Mass. An example of this sheet can be found in *Appendix B – School Mass Planning Sheet*, and you can download the blank template for your own use by clicking [here](#).
3. **When at all possible, schools should hold liturgies in a church.** When it is necessary for Mass to be held in a gymnasium or auditorium, schools should carefully consult *Appendix C – How to Make Non-Sacred Spaces More Sacred*.
4. **The teachers responsible for students immediately prior to school liturgies should take special care to prepare their students for Mass.** See *Appendix D – Mass Preparation Checklist* for a list of items that teachers may address with their students prior to Mass.
5. **Mass programs and song sheets should be provided to students for all school Masses.** Mass programs, especially those which include the responses, and song sheets significantly increase school participation in the liturgy. A complete handout of the congregational responses can also be found in *Appendix E – Congregational Responses for Mass Handout*, and it can be downloaded [here](#).



6. **Music should be carefully selected to reflect the sacredness of the liturgy.** For detailed assistance with preparing music for school Masses, see *Appendix F – Music in the Celebration of School Masses* which was prepared by Mr. Richard Clark, Director of Music of the Archdiocese of Boston.
7. **All teachers and faculty members should actively demonstrate how to worship during the Mass by boldly proclaiming the responses, singing hymns, and praying reverently.** Although it may be necessary for certain faculty to carefully monitor student behavior, it is essential that students are able to look to their teachers as models for how to participate in the Mass. As *Gravissimum Educationis* affirms, “let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs.”<sup>24</sup>
8. **When possible, altar servers should wear the proper vestments.** If a school does not currently have access to vestments, it should reach out to a local parish or to the presiding priest.
9. **Prior to the time of Communion, priests should make a simple announcement reminding the assembly that communion is for properly disposed Catholics.** This announcement is also an opportunity for the priest to mitigate any confusion about what non-Catholics should do during the time of Communion.
10. **In order to foster a greater reverence for the Eucharist, schools should expose students to Eucharistic Adoration outside of Mass.** Schools may decide to designate times for Eucharistic Adoration before or after school, or they can occasionally set aside time during the school day for certain classes or grades to worship our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.
11. **Given that Catholics should only receive the Eucharist in the state of grace, schools should provide opportunities for students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.** Although students can never be forced to go to Confession, it is recommended that schools provide students with this opportunity during school hours.
12. **All students or faculty who participate in the Mass as altar servers, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers, gift-bearers, or musicians may be encouraged to wear more formal attire.** Given that it is a sacred responsibility duty to serve during the Mass, administrators may invite these students to wear formal attire for the school liturgy (i.e. shirt and tie for males; appropriate-length dress or skirt for females).



## Appendix A – Resources on the Eucharist

### Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools



*Please note: Although some of the following resources may be utilized in the classroom, not all resources will be suitable for students of varying grade levels. All resources, however, are useful for teachers seeking to grow in their own understanding of and faith in the Eucharist.*

#### I. General Resources on the Eucharist

1. [Code of Canon Law - The Most Holy Eucharist](#) - The Code of Canon Law is the record of ecclesiastical laws governing the Catholic Church. This section from the Code offers further guidelines on the rites and ceremonies of the Eucharistic celebration.
2. [Catechism of the Catholic Church - The Sacrament of the Eucharist](#) - The Catechism is a compendium the Church's teachings on matters of faith and morals. This section from the Catechism offers an exhaustive overview of the teaching on the Eucharist.
3. [Ecclesia de Eucharistia - Pope John Paul II](#) - This papal encyclical on the Eucharist was authored by Pope John Paul II in 2003. The encyclical describes the mystery of the Eucharist and its relationship to the Church.
4. [USCCB - The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers](#) - This Q&A article composed by the USCCB offers excellent answers to difficult theological questions surrounding the Eucharist.
5. [USCCB - Guidelines for the Reception of Communion](#) - These brief USCCB guidelines clearly explain who is able to receive communion and why some members of our community may not receive communion.
6. [USCCB - The Reception of Holy Communion at Mass](#) - This USCCB article offers a thought-provoking reflection on the meaning of the Communion Procession, particularly in regard to how Communion is an "action of a community rather than an individual act."
7. [RCAB - Policy on the Use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion](#) - This RCAB policy is useful for training Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It specifies that, "The liturgical blessing of the Mass is given to all the faithful at the conclusion of the Mass, and extraordinary ministers are not to bless persons (and/or lay a hand/hands upon them) in place of administering the Sacrament." (p.4)



## II. Media Resources on the Eucharist

1. [Bishop Barron - Catholics Misunderstanding the Eucharist \(Video\)](#) - Bishop Robert Barron is an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. Over the past decade, he has become an internationally acclaimed author and speaker. In this video, Bishop Barron reflects on the recent Pew Research Center Survey and offers his insights into how our Church, and in particular those involved in Catholic education, can address this growing lack of faith in the Eucharist.
2. [Word on Fire - What is the Eucharist? \(Videos, Articles, Podcasts\)](#) - Word on Fire is a global media apostolate founded by Bishop Barron. This link directs you to an exhaustive collection of resources on the Eucharist, including videos, homilies, articles, and podcasts.
3. [Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed \(Video Series\)](#) - Altaration is an exceptional video series produced specifically for teenagers. Its objective is to launch young people into a lifelong love of the Mass. Appropriate for middle school and high school audiences, Altaration can be purchased through Ascension Press.
4. [Father Mike Schmitz - Why Non-Catholics Can't Receive Communion \(Video\)](#) - Father Mike Schmitz is an engaging and charismatic youth and adult speaker. He produces YouTube videos weekly on various questions related to the Catholic faith. In this video, Father Mike charitably explains why the Church teaches that non-Catholics cannot receive Communion.
5. [Busted Halo: Sacraments 101: Eucharist \(How We Receive\)](#) - Busted Halo is media resource that helps Catholics understand their faith. This video explains in a fun and easy-to-understand way how to properly receive the Eucharist. A separate [video](#), also from Busted Halo, delves more deeply into other important questions on the Eucharist.
6. [Sophia SketchPad: The Eucharist \(Video\)](#) - The Sophia Institute is a Catholic publishing company that creates online content for teachers to use in the classroom. This video presents the Church's teaching on the Eucharist in an illustrative way suitable for student audiences.
7. [The Eucharistic Miracle of Buenos Aires \(Video\)](#) - This YouTube video tells the story of an authentic Eucharistic Miracle which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1996. Eucharistic Miracles are a tremendous aid to our faith in the Eucharist, and they can often help Catholics, and especially young people, to overcome their unbelief in the Eucharist.
8. ["The Good Witness of Not Receiving Communion" by David Roney \(Article\)](#) - This author and father offers a beautiful reflection on his decision to not receive communion when he believed he was not in a state of grace. Students may benefit from reading this father's enlightening perspective on the Eucharist.





### III. Optional Communion Prayers for Worship Aids

#### Before Communion:

1. *Dear Lord, may I receive you in this Communion  
With open arms,  
And a loving, contrite heart,  
So that I may be filled with Your grace,  
For my good and Your glory! Amen.*

2. *O my God, help me to make a good Communion.  
Mary, my mother, pray to Jesus for me.  
All you holy Angels and saints, pray for me.  
My dear Angel Guardian, lead me to the altar of God.*

#### After Communion:

1. *Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, fill me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Hide me within your wounds.  
Do not allow me to be separated from you.  
From the malicious enemy defend me.  
In the hour of death call me  
and bid me come to you that  
I may praise you for ever and ever.*

2. *My Jesus, I love and adore you. You have come to me; I am one with You. I want you to remain with me forever, in this life and in the next. Thank You for allowing me to share Your divine life. May I become more like You through this sacred Food. Let me never take You for granted, but always pray for those whose lives are dark with sin and ignorance and selfishness. Let me remember, in the words of Saint Paul, that "there, but for the grace of God, I go." Each day, I can become more like You, O Lord. And each day I can pray for those who have never heard the Gospel, or who have heard it and rejected it. Amen.*



## Appendix B – School Mass Planning Sheet Example

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### School Mass Planning Sheet

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#### Logistics

Name of School: *Boston Catholic School*  
Date of Mass: *11/1/19*  
Start Time: *10:00am*  
Preferred End Time: *11:15am*  
Occasion for Mass: *All Saints Day*  
Location of Mass: *School Auditorium*  
Contact: *Tom Johnson, Campus Minister*  
Contact Number: *617-999-999*

#### Liturgical Information

Special Intentions: *In remembrance of Mary Smith, grandmother of student, Jill Smith.*

Will Readings be the Readings of the Day?  Yes  
 No

If No, Explain:

Mass Parts That Will Be Sung:

<input type="checkbox"/> Kyrie Eleison	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gloria
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsorial Psalm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alleluia
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Holy, Holy, Holy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eucharistic Acclamation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Great Amen	<input type="checkbox"/> Our Father
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lamb of God	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Info for Homily: *Our students have spent the past several weeks in Theology class learning about the saints. They have focused specifically on St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. John Paul II, and St. Padre Pio.*

Special Blessing or Dedication?  Yes  
 No

If Yes, Explain: *Students participating in the upcoming mission trip will be commissioned. Further information will be provided.*



## Appendix C – How to Make Non-Sacred Spaces More Sacred

### Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools



Throughout its history, the Catholic Church has invested deeply in the ascetic beauty of its churches and chapels, the ordinary settings of Mass. The reason for this is simple: the beauty and splendor of sacred spaces is an aid to prayer and contemplation of heavenly things. The beauty of churches draws the faithful in and compels them to ponder the transcendent, to reflect on that which is beyond human expression, and to grow in their appreciation of all that is true, good, and beautiful. Thus, when schools are forced to hold Masses in non-sacred spaces such as gymnasiums or auditoriums, it is prudent for them to take additional steps to help their students truly encounter the divine in Mass. Ultimately, there are **three keys** for making non-sacred spaces more sacred for the purposes of school liturgies: (1) proper formation, (2) sacred music, and (3) sacred art. These three keys were developed by Dr. Timothy O'Malley of the University of Notre Dame.<sup>25</sup>

#### 1. Proper Formation of Faculty and Students

- **Teach students about the sacredness of the Mass.** The easiest way to transform a non-sacred space into a sacred space is simply by properly forming students and faculty. If students and faculty truly understand the meaning and liturgical actions of the Mass, they will inevitably adopt attitudes of reverence.
- **Teach students how to reverently enter the space where Mass is being celebrated.** A space can become more sacred simply by the actions that are performed in that space. If students and faculty enter the Mass in silence and reverently genuflect or bow, it will become easier for students to recognize the sacrality of what they are about to participate in.

#### 2. Sacred Music

- **Invest in the formation of the school choir and music ministers.** Music sets the tone for the liturgy. When a school choir sings beautifully, prayerfully, and reverently, it transforms the congregation's experience of the Mass.
- **Select liturgical music that raises hearts and minds to God.** Ultimately, every liturgical song should be an aid to prayer. Music directors should make use of the many traditional



and beautiful hymns that have been part of the Church's liturgies for centuries. For a list of hymns suitable for young voices, see [Music for First Communion and Confirmation: A Catechetical Guide for Liturgical Celebrations](#).

- **Instruct the choir or music ministers to sing as students enter Mass.** This helps students to settle themselves before Mass begins. A well-chosen song can help students to recognize that they have entered a sacred and prayerful space.
- **Encourage student participation in the music through the use of song sheets or a projector.** As the Second Vatican Council affirms, "One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song."<sup>26</sup>
- **School choirs and music ministers should be seated in such a way that they do not distract from the liturgical actions.**<sup>27</sup> Given that different spaces provide different challenges, schools should be mindful to ensure that musicians are appropriately stationed.

### 3. Sacred Art

- **Carefully place crucifixes, iconography, and statues around the space.** The objective is, as much as possible, to make a gymnasium no longer look like a gymnasium or an auditorium no longer look like an auditorium.
- **Consider installing a crucifix above the altar area.** If installed permanently, this crucifix can serve as a beautiful witness to the Catholic faith for other events that take place in the school auditorium or gymnasium.
- **Acquire an altar for the celebration of Mass.** Instead of simply using a table, a school may consider acquiring an altar. Schools might even ask students to participate in building an altar as part of an art or woodworking project.
- **If possible, remove or cover secular signs or objects that may distract from the liturgy.** Given the various difficulties that this task may present, this can simply be done within reason.
- **Though this is not an example of sacred art, schools may also consider inviting the celebrant to use incense during Mass.** When burned, incense produces a sweet-smelling aroma that pleases the senses and enlivens the soul. Since biblical times, the smoke of burning incense has been symbolic of our prayers rising toward Heaven.



## Appendix D: Mass Preparation Checklist

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- Allow for students to go to bathroom before Mass.
- Ask students to leave their cell phones and other devices in the classroom.
- Ensure that students are not chewing gum.
- Ensure that students do not bring snacks or drinks to Mass.
- Instruct students to leave their backpacks and other belongings behind.
- Tell students about the Holy Day or occasion that the Mass is celebrating.
- Inform students about the need to enter the church or Mass location in silence and to genuflect if a tabernacle is present.
- Remind students that upon finding their seat, they should kneel, if possible, and quietly say a prayer.
- Remind students that Communion is the most sacred time of the Mass, and that this is the most important time to be silent and pray.
- Encourage students to participate actively in the Mass.




## Appendix E: Congressional Responses for Mass Handout Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools



Front

### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES FOR MASS

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



<p>† <b>PENITENTIAL ACT</b> I confess to almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do, [Strike chest three times] through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever- Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.</p> <p>† <b>GLORIA</b> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.</p>	<p>For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p> <p>† <b>NICENE CREED</b> I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven</p>
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Back

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

† **INVITATION TO PRAYER**

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

† **PREFACE DIALOGUE**

*Priest:* The Lord be with you.

*People:* And with your spirit.

*Priest:* Lift up your hearts.

*People:* We lift them up to the Lord.

*Priest:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People:* It is right and just.

† **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

† **MYSTERY OF FAITH**

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

*Or:*

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

*Or:*

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

† **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*Priest:* Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.

blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

*All:* Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.



Excerpts from the English translation of The Roman Missal



## Appendix F: Music in the Celebration of School Masses

### Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools



*This detailed appendix was authored by Mr. Richard J. Clark, the Director of Music of the Archdiocese of Boston and Director of Music and Organist of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.*

**THE MASS IS OUR GREATEST PRAYER.** It is our most powerful tool of evangelization and transmission of faith. Pope Francis states, “Liturgy is the first ‘teacher’ of catechism.”<sup>28</sup>

Music at Roman Catholic school liturgies therefore bears enormous responsibility. Such music, according to Pope Francis, must be “holy music, because rituals are holy; endowed with the nobility of art, because God must be given the best; universal, so that everyone can understand and celebrate.”<sup>29</sup>

Preparation of music at school Masses therefore must be taken with great care in accordance with all the recommendations governing music in liturgy, especially those found in the Vatican II document, [\*The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy\*](#), the 2007 USCCB Document [\*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship \(SttL\)\*](#), and the [\*General Instruction on the Roman Missal \(GIRM\)\*](#).

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MUSIC AT MASS?**

The role of music in the Sacred Liturgy is to glorify God and to sanctify the faithful.<sup>30</sup> It is to help us pray the words of the Mass. It is not meant to entertain or to draw attention to itself or to musicians. (SttL §125)

Cultivating the joy of singing in Catholic Schools is of great importance. Student choirs and musicians are in service to the liturgy. In doing so, they are not featured performers but models of prayerful service to others.

Their role is to support the singing of the gathered faithful, to enhance the congregational singing, and at times to sing on their own, fostering internal prayer.

#### **WHAT MUSIC IS APPROPRIATE FOR MASS?**

Music for the liturgy must consider the readings of the day and liturgical season, and must express sound Roman Catholic theology. “The music of the choir must always be appropriate to the Liturgy, either by being a proper liturgical text or by expressing themes appropriate to the Liturgy.” (SttL §30)





Music based on the scriptures, especially the Psalms, is highly appropriate. New settings for the Entrance and Communion Antiphons, especially in the vernacular, are becoming more widely and easily available. These texts often point back to the Gospel and readings of the season.

Worship and Praise music or music based upon individual feelings are more suited to personal devotions or prayer services. While they may foster personal faith, they are not intended for, nor are they appropriate for Mass.

Secular music is never appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. (SttL #246) Popular songs, songs from theater or film, and even non-liturgical or quasi-religious music are never to substitute for music of the Sacred Liturgy. Recorded music is never allowed in the liturgy. (SttL §93)

### **THE THREE JUDGMENTS:**

When choosing music, there are three standards of judgment put forth in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (SttL) that must be considered.

- 1) **The Liturgical Judgment:** is a particular musical composition's form, placement and style congruent with the nature of the liturgy? (SttL #127)
- 2) **The Pastoral Judgment:** The actual gathered community is taken into consideration. Does a particular musical composition help the assembly pray and draw them closer into the sacred mysteries being celebrated? (SttL #130)
- 3) **The Musical Judgment:** is this composition technically, aesthetically, and expressively worthy to carry the weight of the mysteries being celebrated? (SttL #134)

### **STYLE OF MUSIC**

Pope Francis calls Gregorian Chant the “first model.”<sup>31</sup> Every effort should be made to teach simple Gregorian Chants. “Each worshipping community in the United States, including all age groups and all ethnic groups, should, at a minimum, learn *Kyrie XVI*, *Sanctus XVIII*, and *Agnus Dei XVIII*, all of which are typically included in congregational worship aids.” (SttL §75)

Sing to the Lord also states: “A variety of musical styles is recommended at school Liturgies, while care should be taken to include selections from the repertoire typically sung by the wider Church at Sunday Liturgies. In this way, students will be introduced to music they will sing throughout their life, and they will be better prepared for their eventual role as adult members of the worshipping assembly.” (SttL §55)

As the Church encourages cultivating new compositions of diverse styles, school liturgies must include



traditional music of the Church at each Catholic School Mass. This exposes children to the wisdom, art, and faith of generations who came before us. This is as much a part of their education as it is their spiritual formation. Furthermore, it cultivates a core repertoire across cultures and generations.

Regardless of style, all music must be sung and presented prayerfully and with reverence.

### **FULL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

A hymnal or worship program is necessary so students may be “led to that fully conscious, and active participation.” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy §14) Copyright licenses and permissions are necessary, and many parishes have found annual licenses to be both convenient and inexpensive. (A recommended resource is onelicense.net.)

Students should be instilled with an understanding of full and active participation as both external and internal: external in our singing, responses, and recited prayer — internal while engaging our hearts listening to the Word or to music sung by the cantor or choir. Full participation is internal especially in silent prayer, the value of which can never be underestimated. (SttL §118)

### **WHO PREPARES MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY?**

In educational institutions, this is a common question. The ultimate responsibility for preparation of the Sacred Liturgy and the selection of music lies in the Pastor and the celebrant. However, the pastor or celebrant must keep “in mind the common spiritual good of the people of God, rather than his own inclinations.” (SttL § 119) Likewise, music should not be determined by the personal preferences of the school administration.

The Pastor may assign this responsibility to a Music Director or Liturgy Director or a liturgical committee. However, it must “include persons with the knowledge and artistic skills needed in celebration: men and women trained in Catholic theology, Liturgy, and liturgical music and familiar with current resources in these areas.” (SttL §121)

While school music teachers may cultivate singing, they may or may not have liturgical or theological training. Collaboration with pastoral staff may be necessary to ensure proper liturgical preparation. Such collaborations may foster unity within a community and school yielding great spiritual fruit.

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Many Catholic Schools include a large number of students who are not Catholic. However, the Sacred Liturgy must always retain its integrity and be celebrated worthily. In this way, we live out and model the priceless treasures of our faith. The Mass, our greatest prayer, is a jewel in which we glorify God.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [National Pastoral Musicians Planning Calendar](#) – Membership required to access. While lists are for music on Sundays, this may be very helpful during various liturgical Seasons.
2. [Seasonal and Topic Music Listings ~ A Reference for Catholic School Masses](#) - This list of Masses and Hymns suitable for use in Catholic Schools was compiled by the American Federation Pueri Cantores, a Student Choral Organization of the Catholic Church, in recognition of a corporate partnership with the National Catholic Education Association.
3. [Music for First Communion and Confirmation - A Catechetical Guide for Liturgical Celebrations](#) - From the Archdiocese of Boston, this includes a concise liturgical guide, free downloads of core hymns, and practice videos for the Roman Missal Chants and other resources.
4. [Parish Book of Chant – Second Edition](#) - Available as free PDF Download.

*“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy §122)*



## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *Lumen Gentium*,” November 21, 1964, par. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Council, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” December 4, 1963, par. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 274: “Otherwise all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession.”

<sup>5</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 275: “A bow of the body, that is to say a profound bow, is made to the altar.”

<sup>6</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 357: “For Sundays and solemnities, three readings are assigned: that is, from a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Gospel. By these the Christian people are brought to know the continuity of the work of salvation according to God’s wonderful plan. These readings should be followed strictly.”

<sup>7</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 61: “The responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should, as a rule, be taken from the Lectionary.” “It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, at least as far as the people’s response is concerned.”

<sup>8</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 61: “It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, at least as far as the people’s response is concerned.”

<sup>9</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 128: Then the lector goes to the ambo and, from the Lectionary already placed there before Mass, proclaims the first reading, to which all listen.

<sup>10</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 101: They should be truly suited to perform this function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture. Also, in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “I ask that the Liturgy of the Word always be carefully prepared and celebrated. Consequently I urge that every effort be made to ensure that the liturgical proclamation of the word of God is entrusted to well-prepared readers” (par. 45).

<sup>11</sup> See Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism,” par. 133: “The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church.”

<sup>12</sup> See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Guidelines for Altar Servers,” par. 3: “[Altar servers] should have already received holy communion for the first time.”

<sup>13</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 73: “It is praiseworthy for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful.”

<sup>14</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 66: “The homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to the deacon, but never to a lay person.” See also: “Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, par. 64.

<sup>15</sup> See the Lectionary for Masses with Children, par. 52: “The Mass is not an historical reenactment of the events of salvation history and care should be taken not to give the impression that the liturgy of the word is a play...the use of costumes, etc. is more appropriate in the context of other celebrations or services. Care should be taken especially at Christmas and during Holy Week and the Easter Triduum not to stage the various liturgies as plays.”

<sup>16</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 1374.



<sup>17</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 43: “In the dioceses of the United States of America, they should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the Sanctus until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion by reasons of health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or some other good reason. Those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the consecration. The faithful kneel after the Agnus Dei unless the diocesan Bishop determines otherwise.”

<sup>18</sup> See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, par. 43: “Those who do not kneel ought to make a profound bow when the priest genuflects after the consecration.”

<sup>19</sup> See Code of Canon Law, Can. 913 §1: “The administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion.”

<sup>20</sup> See Code of Canon Law, Can. 916: “A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess.”

<sup>21</sup> See Code of Canon Law, Can. 919 §1: “A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.”

<sup>22</sup> See Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, “Policy on the Use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Boston,” p. 2: “Extraordinary ministers must be Catholics, whose qualities of Christian life, faith and morals recommend them. In the Archdiocese of Boston, they must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, be at least sixteen years of age and participate regularly in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. If the extraordinary minister is married, the marriage must be one recognized by the Church.” The same policy continues: “Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological and practical preparation to be able to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence.”

<sup>23</sup> See “Policy on the Use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Boston,” p. 4: The liturgical blessing of the Mass is given to all the faithful at the conclusion of the Mass, and extraordinary ministers are not to bless persons (and/or lay a hand/hands upon them) in place of administering the Sacrament.”

<sup>24</sup> Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education: *Gravissimum Educationis*, par. 8.

<sup>25</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Musicae Sacram*: Instruction on Music in The Liturgy, par. 16.

<sup>27</sup> See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship,” par 95: “Musicians and musical instruments should be located so as to enable proper interaction with the liturgical action, with the rest of the assembly, and among the various musicians.”

<sup>28</sup> Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the ‘Scholae Cantorum’ of the Italian Association of Saint Cecilia. September 28, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), par. 112

<sup>31</sup> Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the ‘Scholae Cantorum’ of the Italian Association of Saint Cecilia. September 28, 2019.

