

**Liturgical Requirements: St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh, Co. Cork.  
Context and Text.**

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## The Liturgy of the Church versus Popular Piety

Both the Liturgy of the Church and all genuine forms of popular piety constitute legitimate Christian worship<sup>(1)</sup> However, in the order of importance, the Church's Liturgy is pre-eminent worship – all expressions of popular piety are, in fact, to be ordered to it and, if necessary corrected by it. <sup>(2)</sup>

The Liturgy of the Church pertains to worship which is essentially public.<sup>(3)</sup> Its celebration is central to the continual generation of the sustenance of the Church<sup>(4)</sup>. In familiar terms the Church's Liturgy is the celebration of the seven sacraments, the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the celebration of the rites relating to the care of the dead, and the celebration of the other prescribed public rites of the Church<sup>(5)</sup>.

Worship which, on the other hand, is manifestly private in nature – this is always optional and secondary<sup>(6)</sup>. Though encouraged and advised it is not, *per se*, essential worship<sup>(7)</sup>. Amongst expressions of popular piety there includes: Eucharistic adoration, the recitation of the rosary, and the veneration of holy images and statuary <sup>(8)</sup>.

In the creation of or reordering of any place of worship, great care must be taken to express and uphold such distinction within Roman Catholic worship<sup>(9)</sup>.

## The Christian Assembly

The Liturgy of the Church is celebrated by Christ who is present and active in the Christian assembly<sup>(10)</sup>. The Christian assembly comprises of men, women and children who have been born into Christian discipleship through the sacrament of baptism<sup>(11)</sup>. Within this liturgical assembly some men give unique priestly service.

To celebrate the Church's Liturgy is to engage in everyday human action which takes on profound, extraordinary meaning. The Church's Liturgy is, in fact, action to its core; it is God reaching out to the human family and it is, in their turn, the human family reaching out in response to God.

In the creation of or reordering of any place of worship, great care must be taken to express and uphold whom it is that celebrates the Church's Liturgy. It is Christ! <sup>(12)</sup>. Here, Christ is celebrant in and through

1, Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory on Popular Piety* (London: Catholic Truth Society Publications 2002) Paragraph 50, 52, 58.

2. Ibid. paragraphs 5, 11-12, 21, 46, 58, 74

*Sacrosanctum Concilium, Vatican II Constitution: The Basic Sixteen Document, Decrees, Declarations*, revised translation, Austin Flannery, ed. (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996) paragraph 13

3. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter- *Spiritus et Sponsa* (London: Catholic Truth Society Publication 2003) Paragraph 2

4. Ibid 7, 10, 26.

John Paul II *Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist and the Church* (London Truth Society Publications 2003) paragraphs 11-12

5. *Spiritus et Sponsa*, paragraph 14.

6. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory on Popular Piety*, paragraph 11.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid paragraphs 164-165, 197-202, 18, 243 286, 287.

9. Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy, *The Place of Worship, Pastoral Directory on the Building and Reordering of Churches*. (Dublin: Veritas, 1994) paragraph 2.1

10. “[ ] Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a pre-eminently sacred action. No other action of the Church equals its effectiveness by the same title nor to the same degree.” *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, paragraph 7.

Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005) paragraph 91.

11. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 2.2

12. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 27, 29.

All of the baptised and not just in and through those who give ordained priestly service (13). Secondly, it must be remembered that church buildings are places, primarily, of divine-human action. This is action which all of the baptised gathered are to take up.(14).

### Communal and Inclusive Worship

A church building is a successful place of liturgical worship only if it inspire, enables and supports liturgical action by all members of the Christian assembly (15). In this regard, the place of worship must be conducive to the following:

- A genuine human encounter with everyone present in order to disclose the broader divine-human encounter taking place.(16).
- A genuine experience of community so as to resonate with the Triune God, who is the original community. (17)
- A genuine manifestation of communal participation so as to illustrate the communal nature of everyday Christian and human living (18).

In the creation of or reordering of any place of worship these three objectives can be facilitated through the following provisions:

- A well appointed entrance which eliminates discrimination of access according to physical capabilities (19).
- A narthex gathering space where worshippers can develop friendship and reach out in mutual support (20).
- A nearby vestry room which will aid processions through the assembly (21).
- The allocation of sufficient and well –maintained restrooms (22).
- Flexible seating options which allow comfortable posture, rearrangement, and at least some worshippers to face one another (23).
- Wide processional routes to facilitate necessary assembly movement in circular direction (24).
- Multiple suitable locations set aside for users of wheelchairs and walking aids(25).
- Radio and Loop amplifier systems to intensify oral and aural participation (26).
- Sufficient heating provision, plus draught and external-sound proofing (27).

13. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 2.4,3.4

14. *Ibid*, paragraphs 11.2.

15. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 5, 91, 288.

16. “[This] special closeness which comes about in Eucharistic ‘communion’ cannot be adequately understood or fully experienced apart from ecclesial communion. I emphasise this repeatedly in my Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. The Church is the Body of Christ: we walk ‘with Christ’ to the extent that we are in relationship ‘with his body’” John Paul II Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* 2004-2005 (Dublin, Veritas, 2004) paragraph 20.

17. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 95.

*Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist and the Church*, paragraph 16.

18. “Since the celebration of Mass by its nature has a ‘communitarian’ character, both the dialogues between the priest and the faithful gathered together, and the acclamations are of great significance; in fact, they are not simply outward signs of communal celebration, but foster and bring about communion between priest and people”. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 34.

19. *Spiritus et Sponsa*, paragraph 12

20. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 105,d.

*The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 7.1 – 7.10.

21. International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Ceremonial of Bishops* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989) paragraph 53.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 44.

22. *Ibid*. paragraph 293.

*The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 7.15, 9.4.

23. *Ibid*, paragraphs 8.4-8.6, 12.9

24. *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 10.1-10.3.

25. See extract below from : “Statement to Host Parishes for the Special Olympics World Summer Games.”

26. *Ibid*.

27. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 3.2.

- Multi-option, artistically-designed illumination system, which has the underlying capacity to foster participation (28).
- Fire prevention technology, which can tolerate the use of incense (29).
- The place for the assembly (both for the ordained and the non-ordained) and the focal places of ritual action namely: the baptistery, the ambo, and the altar to be located in a single cohesive space and to be accessible in a physical and visible sense by all persons (30).
- The distances between the places for the assembly and the focal places for ritual action should be kept to that minimum which the sciences know can sustain relatedness and connectivity (31). This arrangement of space should not be punctuated by barriers of any kind, for these serve to compromise the unity of the assembly and the dynamics of inclusive participation (32).
- Enhanced provision of space at the focal points of ritual activity in order to allow for the greater extent of gesture and movement which are prescribed in the Church's rites. (In addition to the focal places of ritual action listed above there is added; the bishops' cathedra and the presider's chair, the places for Holy Communion, the place for the deacon, the place for ordained celebrants, the place for the cantor, choir and musicians, the place for acolytes and servers, the places for the elect and for the dressing of neophytes according to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the place for a wedding party in the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the place for a coffin or coffins during the celebration of the Rite of Christian Funerals, the places for celebrating reconciliation in the Sacrament of Penance, the places for prostration in the celebration of the Sacrament of Orders or according to the rites of Religious Profession (33).

### **Liturgy is Profound, Communal Action**

Ultimately, the Church's Liturgy is profound human action, which is done in a communal manner and given to God in response to God's eternal outpouring of life on the human family (34). In this sense, 'Liturgy,' is a verb, not a noun (35). As a 'super' verb, 'Liturgy' is the composite term for several specified verbs, for example: leaving home, coming in, exchanging greetings, developing friendships, becoming community, working in the sacristy, sitting down, standing together, sitting together, speaking reading, responding together, listening together, imagining, seeing, smelling, serving, carrying, walking, processing together, setting the table, shaking hands, embracing, initiating, sustaining the Church, forgiving, marrying, ordaining, breaking bread, pouring wine, tasting, eating together, drinking together, kneeling, praying silently, dismissing, commissioning, tidying-up, going home, being a disciple of Christ's in everyday of one's life.

The Church's Liturgy, then, is always the combination of manifold sacred actions done in a choreographed way by a gathered assembly. This combination of divine-human activity forms one act of essential prayer in which all the faithful hierarchically participate both personally or symbolically (36).

28. Ibid.

29. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 276 – 277.

30. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraph 50.

*The Place of Worship*, paragraph 11.5, 11.7, 27.7.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 294-295

31. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 310.

32. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 11.7.

33. Ibid, paragraphs 11.3-11.4, 27.7.

Space for Sacrament of Baptism – see *The Place of Worship* paragraph 17.9

Space for Sacrament of Marriage – see the Liturgical Commission of the Irish Hierarchy, *The Celebration of Marriage, Gnás an Phosta* (Dublin, Veritas, 1980) Pastoral Notes on Seating.

Space for Ordained Concelebrants – see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 294.

34. “The acclamations and the responses of the faithful to the priest's greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that the gathered faithful are to contribute in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the entire community may be clearly expressed and fostered”. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 35.

35. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, paragraph 14.

36. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 95-96

In no way is the Church's Liturgy to be considered the sum of individual's prayers being done at the one time in the one place – this, instead, is the impetus underlying popular piety and devotion.

In the creation of or reordering of any place of worship, therefore, it should be foremost in the purpose and applications of those responsible that they are providing for a series of extensive ritual activities in which all persons present are to participate physically, sometimes symbolically (37). In this regard, a church building, in its entirety, is to be a locus par excellence of divine-human (liturgical ) action. By no means should a church building perpetuate the lesser dynamics of 'stage' and 'audience' (38).

### **Secondary needs: Popular Devotion and the Place of Eucharistic Reservation**

First in the ranks of popular piety and devotion is private prayer before the reserved Blessed Sacrament. Properly understood, this prayer flows from (it does not anticipate) the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Mass, and is a contemplation of the scripture, prayer and actions of that particular Eucharistic Liturgy (39). Such prayer takes place in the place of reservation. This place is situated away from the focal points of ritual liturgical activity (40). If, however, the tabernacle is situated in close proximity to these, it must not be allowed compromise the rule of liturgical primacy (41).

Therefore, in the creation of or reordering of any place of worship, the architect must ensure that, even if maintained in a central position, the tabernacle will neither dominate nor distort the proper dynamic of liturgical worship. Not to take this care would be to misunderstand the foremost task of the Church in a church building (to do the Liturgy) and to deeply mislead the faithful (42).

### **Liturgical Requirements within St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh**

As mother church of the Diocese of Cloyne, St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh, is to be the model venue for liturgical celebration in the Diocese of Cloyne (43).

In this regard, and in light of what has been highlighted hitherto above, the following await attention:

- The provision of a principal entrance which allows access to all people (44).

37. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 95-96

38. For requirements in designing the place of Baptism – see *The Place of Worship* paragraphs 17.1-17.9, 17.12-17.17.

For requirements in designing the cathedra – see *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraphs 42, 47.

See also, *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 12.1-12.10.

In a Cathedral church, both the presider's chair and the cathedra are to be provided – see *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 12.10

For requirements in designing the place for the cantor – see *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraph 51.

For requirements in designing the ambo – see *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 13.1-13.4.

For requirements in designing the altar - see *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 14.1-14.18. See also, *The Roman Pontifical, Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Draft Translation (Washington: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 2003) paragraphs 3-4.

For requirements in designing places for celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation – see *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 18.1-18.6, 18-10-18.14.

39. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, paragraph 48.

40. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 16.2 c

41. *Ibid.*, paragraph 16.1

42. *Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist and the Church*, paragraph 50.

“Overlooking [the theological principles, according to which difficulties concerning the relationship between liturgy and popular piety are approached and resolved] leads to nothing but reciprocal and futile ignorance, damaging confusion and contradictory polemics”. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory on Popular Piety*, paragraph 4. Also see paragraphs 53-55, 57.

43. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraphs 44, 46.

44. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 22, 112.

- The Provision of an enlarged baptistery which is in visual relationship to the altar and the assembly and which allows baptism by immersion (45). It should include the Aumbry (46).
- The provision of a vesting room near to the entrance and which is proximate to the baptistery for use during the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (47).
- The provision of moveable seating which is capable of easy rearrangement and which allows a circular movement of processions using space adjacent to the line of pillars. Open space should also be provided for users of wheelchairs and walking aids (48).
- The allocation of larger spaces which are required for the distribution of Holy Communion under both species (49).
- The provision of a prayer conducive lighting system.
- The provision of a new amplified sound system which will provide an intimate projection of sound (51).
- The provision of a new altar, ambo, cathedra, and presider's chair which are executed in solid, prescribed materials (52).
- The provision of new spaces to situate the altar and ambo, the cathedra and the presider's chair. Contrary to present circumstances, this space must provide greater room to carry out the functions required there and must be situated in closer proximity to the assembly gathered (53).
- The provision of easy access to the altar and ambo by users of wheelchairs and walking aids (54).
- The removal of or the reduction of those barriers (excluding the pillars) which inhibit visual and physical connectedness between all members of the assembly.
- The provision of space for cantors, choir and musicians within the assembly (55).
- The provision of new restrooms and the refurbishment of existing sacristy space and ancillary vesting space, plus the addition of hot water supplies (56).
- The provision of accessible space near the tabernacle which allows for private prayer before the reserved Blessed Sacrament. (57).
- The readjustment of architectural focus away from the tabernacle and reredos and onto the altar (58).

44. "We encourage parishes to look to their Liturgies and to reflect on the level of inclusion that they facilitate. In the context of the abilities and disabilities of those who belong to the parish, is the Liturgical experience of the parish sufficiently inclusive? Is it welcoming of those who happen to have some form of disability? This welcome and inclusion involves the following dimensions: Physical accessibility to and within the worship space; Accessibility to ministry within the Liturgy; Communication media employed in the Liturgy (e.g. the loop system); Accompaniment or assisting someone to take part in the Liturgy." Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy, "Statement to Host Parishes for the Special Olympics World Summer Games." (Maynooth: Irish Commission for Liturgy, 2003).

*The Place of Worship*, paragraph 7.13.

45. International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* – Study Edition Reprint (Dublin, London: Veritas, Burns and Oats, 2004) Introduction: paragraph 206.

International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* – Edition for use in the United States- see National Statutes for the Catechumenate, 1986, paragraph 17.

*Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraph 52.

*The Place of Worship*, paragraph 17.12.

46. *Ibid*, paragraph 17.16.

47. *The Place of Worship*, paragraph 9.3

48. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 311.

49. *The Place of Worship*, Paragraph 11.6

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 14, 281-287.

50. *The Places of Worship*, 3.2

51. *Ibid*. paragraph 3.2

52. *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 14.4-14.11, 14.13-14.16, 27.10.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 292, 298-301, 303-310, 326.

53. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraph 48.

54. See extract above from: "Statement to Host Parishes for the Special Olympics World Summer Games."

55. *The Place of Worship* paragraph 8.6

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 294, 312.

56. *The Place of Worship*, paragraphs 9.1-9.5.

57. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, paragraph 49.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraph 315.

58. See Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory of Popular Piety* paragraph 2.92.

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- The renovation of two confessionals as future shrines and the elimination of duplication in Marian shrines. (59)
- The Restoration of the pieta chapel and changing access therein, in view of re-establishing its usage.

Also corrective to Patrick Thompson in his Guide to St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh, revised edition. Cork: Carraig Print, page 16. "From the Nave entrance we have an unbroken perspective to the High Altar, the centre of Worship."  
In addition, see The Place of Worship, paragraph 16.1.  
59. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, paragraph 318.

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