

Hallmarks of Well Celebrated Parish Liturgy

'Good celebrations can nourish and foster faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it.' (Sing to the Lord: music in divine worship #5)

The statement above, taken from the document: Sing to the Lord: music in divine worship, indicates that the liturgy can vary in quality. For this reason, the following list, hallmarks of parish liturgy well celebrated, has been drawn up so that faith communities can reflect on their own celebrations of the liturgy. It is an outline of principles that can guide and support any group which is striving towards an improved celebration of the liturgy.

Generic statements

- Liturgy, well celebrated, is life giving. It strengthens faith, deepens hope, and prepares us for mission.
- Liturgy is a celebration of the community with people taking up different roles to make this celebration possible.

Liturgy

1. Good liturgy flows and is celebrated reverently - but not rigidly
2. There is a sense of beauty to the Liturgy, and this finds its echo in the liturgical environment
3. There is a warmth which extends to all and is felt a welcome inclusion of all people (this includes old, young, very young, hearing impaired, vision impaired, disabled, people who are hurting, poor, wealthy, Māori (tangata whenua) and immigrant peoples)
4. Symbolism is clear

Welcome

5. People are actively, warmly, and generously welcomed to each liturgy. People understand that hospitality and welcome is a ministry shared by all.
6. Children are made welcome
7. All people experience a sense of welcome
8. Special needs (such as some form of impairment) are attended to

Kaupapa Māori / Māori Dimension

9. Kaupapa Māori / Māori Dimension is given expression
10. An understanding and appreciation of the Treaty of Waitangi is evident

Participation

11. People understand their role as participants in the Mass
12. People participate well in the sung parts (including in the song at the procession to Communion)
13. People participate well and give full voice to the spoken parts
14. A sense of unity is evident
15. People participate in the silences (before the collect, after reading 1, after reading 2, after the homily, during the prayer of the faithful and after Communion)

Musicians and Music

16. The singing has vitality and engages all people – people are drawn in
17. One Mass setting is used for the whole Mass, the people know it and sing it
18. Songs or hymns that accord with their function are used in the Mass
19. Musicians are trained in their role as liturgical musicians and receive ongoing formation
20. Musicians support and do not dominate the singing
21. Musicians join with the assembly in the prayers and responses of the Mass

Priest

22. The priest speaks clearly with warmth and vitality and is easily understood, (see list below)
23. The priest looks up and engages/connects with people when reading or praying.
24. The priest easily conveys the meaning of texts he reads
25. The priest warmly encourages people to take up their role as ‘active participants’ and ‘priestly people’.
26. While it is important the priest brings his personality to the liturgy, he does not allow his personality to dominate, since liturgy leads us to Christ.

Homily

27. Homily breaks open the Word for people to see its relevance in their lives today
28. People engage with the homily
29. Homily is an appropriate length
30. Homilist uses good vocal techniques (see list below)

Readers

31. Readers are involved in ongoing training.
32. Readers prepare to read before coming to Mass
33. The Word is consistently well proclaimed (see criteria below)
34. Reader has a sound understanding of the text they proclaim.
35. Reader pronounces difficult words correctly and with ease.
36. Readers consistently and actively seek feedback from a peer.
37. People comprehend what is read

Prayer of the Faithful

38. The petitions allow people to exercise their priestly ministry and pray for the needs of the world.
39. The petitions need to include the universal church, the needs of the world as well as local needs.
40. The petitions are read clearly and concisely and with understanding (see criteria below).
41. The petitions are addressed to the people (not to God) and are invitations to the people to pray.
42. Petitions are short and unnecessary wordiness is avoided
43. After each intention is read, there is silence before the response which allows people time to pray for the intention.

Communion

44. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion participate in ongoing formation, seeking to deepen their understanding
45. Ministers project a sense of confidence and dignity.
46. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are attentive to sound hygiene without allowing it to interrupt or become part of the Rite of Communion
47. Extraordinary Ministers are involved with Communion of the sick

Children

48. Children are made welcome
49. Children's Liturgy of the Word is offered as needs indicate
50. Leaders of Liturgy of the Word with Children participate in ongoing formation
51. One of the Eucharistic Prayers for Children is used at regular intervals

Sacristans

52. Are well organised and prepared for each Mass
53. Work well with the priest
54. Ensure all appropriate cleaning is done after Mass, including that the chalice is properly washed with hot water and detergent.
55. Are attentive to sound personal hygiene practices.

Eucharistic Prayer

56. Symbolism of the Eucharistic Prayer is evident
57. People understand that this is their prayer, and they pray it (silently with the priest)
58. People are aware of the names and parts of the Eucharistic Prayer
59. The acclamations are well sung by all
60. Musical introductions to the three acclamations are very short or even not present

Power Points

61. Words are clearly displayed, easily legible and correctly spelt (NZ or British spelling)
62. Only words that support people's participation (for example, songs) are displayed and blank screens are used between, (for example, between songs).
63. The power point does not distract from, but supports the liturgy
64. If artwork is used, it is of rich artistic quality (avoids words) and it supports the liturgy.
65. All appropriate copyright accreditation is provided (including for artwork that is used)

Microphone

66. The sound system is effective
67. Microphones do not intrude
68. Musicians use microphones sparingly – their main task to support the singing of the assembly

Liturgical Environment

69. The environment supports the liturgy.
70. Devotional images are located out of the sanctuary and do not dominate liturgical space.
71. The environment in the Church is clean and clutter free.
72. Under the guidelines of Kaupapa Māori / Māori Dimension, a Māori Dimension is incorporated into the environment.
73. Those caring for the liturgical environment have ongoing formation, understand the liturgical seasons and changes to the environment that these seasons require.
74. Banners, flowers, and artwork support the liturgical season. They generate beauty; not clutter.
75. The environment provides a sense of welcome.
76. Outside the church is well cared for, attractive and also has a sense of welcome

General

77. Adult formation is regularly provided.
78. People have an awareness that we go out from the Mass as servants to take up Christ's Mission.
79. Strong sense of pastoral care within the parish.
80. Parish priest loves and serves the people of the parish.

Vocal Principles

Parts that are spoken during Mass use the best principles of spoken language. These include:

- Ample volume
- Voice projection
- Correct phrasing
- Use of punctuation to guide expression
- Variation in pitch
- Pace that allows comprehension – unhurried
- Moments of silence
- Correct pronunciation
- Eye contact, looking up from the text and at people
- Good posture
- Understanding - The reader has and projects a clear understanding of the text
- Presence – The reader is engaged with and committed to, words that are being spoken