

“Progressive solemnity” refers to a liturgical principle where the degree of musical and ceremonial richness in a Mass is adjusted to reflect the importance of the liturgical day or season. It acknowledges that not all celebrations are of equal solemnity, and thus, the music and other ceremonial aspects should be appropriately scaled. For example, a simple weekday Mass might have minimal singing, while a major feast day might involve a full choir, incense, and a fair amount of chanting from the Missal. Progressive solemnity can also apply to other aspects of the liturgy, such as the number of readings, prayers, and lighted candles.

At Corpus Christi, progressive solemnity can be seen most clearly during our weekend Masses. For example, our 5pm Anticipated Mass of Sunday has little chanting from the Missal as compared to our 8am Sung Mass. Our 8am Sung Mass, meanwhile, does not include incense or chanting of the Our Father, as our 11am Solemn Mass does.

The same principle can be applied to Solemnities, as well. For example, our 8:30am daily Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – a holy day of obligation – on Friday, August 15th, will be much simpler as compared to our 6pm Mass that same day.

Progressive solemnity can also help the pace of the liturgy. When Mass is spoken, responses during the Mass can easily become automatic and too quick. When Mass is sung, though, responses during the Mass necessarily slow and, thus, become more deliberate and reverent.

In essence, progressive solemnity is both a practical and a pastoral approach that helps the Church celebrate her liturgical year with appropriate reverence and joy. *I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you ... O God, my God* (Psalm 43:4).

Father Frei