

LITURGY  
COMMITTEE



HOLY CROSS  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

# HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC

DURHAM, NORTH  
CAROLINA



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Liturgy Committee is a advisory group that supports the spiritual life of our parish by enhancing the prayer and worship experiences of the entire faith community. Rooted in a deep reverence for the sacred liturgy, this committee meets monthly to reflect on, assess, and plan the liturgical and sacramental life of Holy Cross Catholic Church.



THIS COLLABORATIVE TEAM INCLUDES LEADERS FROM VARIOUS LITURGICAL MINISTRIES:

- Sacristans
- Ushers
- Altar Servers
- Music Ministers
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- Lectors (Readers)
- Liturgical Scheduler
- Hospitality and Welcome Ministry
- Liturgy Coordinator
- Deacon
- Pastor

## 2. MISSION AND PURPOSE

The goal of the Liturgy Committee is to assist the Pastor in fostering the spiritual growth of the parish through meaningful, well-prepared, and prayerful liturgical celebrations. The committee works collaboratively to ensure that every liturgy is reverent, welcoming, beautiful, and rooted in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.



# 3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Plan, implement, and evaluate parish liturgies throughout the liturgical year, with special focus on the major seasons: **Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter**

Support coordination among all liturgical ministries to promote unity, clarity of roles, and excellence in worship

Review and uphold liturgical procedures in accordance with:

- The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)
- Guidelines from the Diocese of Raleigh
- Pastoral and cultural considerations unique to the Holy Cross parish community



Through prayerful collaboration, discernment, and attention to detail, the Liturgy Committee seeks to ensure that every celebration reflects the richness of Catholic worship and invites the faithful into a deeper encounter with Christ.

# 4. FOUNDATIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL LITURGICAL MINISTERS

## ALL WHO SERVE IN LITURGICAL MINISTRY AT HOLY CROSS ARE ASKED TO:

Through prayerful collaboration, discernment, and attention to detail, the Liturgy Committee seeks to ensure that every celebration reflects the richness of Catholic worship and invites the faithful into a deeper encounter with Christ.

Maintain a **prayerful disposition** before, during, and after every liturgy

Arrive **early and prepared** for assigned roles

Dress in a way that reflects the **dignity of the sacred space and ministry**

Follow the guidance of the **Pastor, Deacon, and Liturgy Coordinator**

Respect cultural, linguistic, and generational diversity within the parish

Seek ongoing **formation and training**

Serve with humility, flexibility, and a spirit of collaboration

The Pastor's pastoral vision emphasizes that ministers should be visible signs of Christ's hospitality and reverence, helping the assembly pray rather than drawing attention to themselves.

# 5. SACRISTANS

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Sacristans are caretakers of the sacred. Through quiet, behind-the-scenes service, they help create an environment where the liturgy can unfold with peace, beauty, and order.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Prepare the sanctuary, altar, and sacristy before each liturgy

Set out sacred vessels, linens, hosts, wine, and liturgical books

Ensure candles, holy water, and sound systems are properly prepared

Assist clergy and altar servers as needed

Secure and reverently care for all sacred items after Mass

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor desires sacristans to work with calm attentiveness rather than haste, allowing the sanctuary to feel prayerful rather than rushed. Preparation is to be done quietly, reverently, and with intention.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, sacristans are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – especially paragraphs on preparation of the altar and sacred vessels (GIRM 73–79, 117–120)

**Built of Living Stones** (USCCB) – guidance on sacred space, furnishings, and art

**Book of the Gospels: Introduction** – proper care and placement of the Book of the Gospels

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – local norms for the sanctuary and sacristy

Parish sacristan manual and seasonal preparation checklists

# 6. USHERS

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Ushers serve as the first ministers of welcome, helping the assembly feel at home in the House of God.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Greet parishioners and visitors warmly

Assist with seating and accommodations

Support accessibility for those with mobility needs

Coordinate the collection and presentation of the offertory

Maintain order and assist during emergencies

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor encourages ushers to see their role as a ministry of prayerful presence, not only fellowship or crowd management. Ushers are reminded to:

Participate fully in the Mass rather than remain solely in conversation or movement

Maintain a quiet, non-distracting presence within the worship space



## COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The only time the collection basket is brought forward is during the Youth Mass, when faith formation children will process with the gifts

At all other Masses, ushers are to **immediately take the collection to the vesting sacristy for processing and placement in the safe**

## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, ushers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – especially norms on the procession of gifts and the role of the assembly (GIRM 73–75, 140–147)

**Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship** – understanding how movement and hospitality support sung prayer

**USCCB – Welcoming and Belonging resources** for parish hospitality

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – parish safety and accessibility guidance

Parish emergency procedures and hospitality training materials

# 7. ALTAR SERVERS

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Altar servers assist the priest and deacon at the altar, modeling reverence and attentiveness for the entire assembly.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Assist with the procession, preparation of the altar, and liturgical actions

Handle sacred items respectfully

Follow cues from the priest, deacon, or lead server

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor desires altar servers to move slowly, confidently, and prayerfully, avoiding rushing or unnecessary movement.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, servers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – roles of ministers and altar servers (GIRM 100-107, 187-193)

**Ceremonial of Bishops** (when applicable) – guidance on solemn liturgies

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – server training materials

Parish altar server handbook and seasonal walk-through guides

# 8. MUSIC MINISTERS

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Music ministers lead the sung prayer of the assembly and help give voice to the Church's worship.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Select and prepare music aligned with the liturgical season and readings

Lead the assembly in full, active, and prayerful participation

Collaborate with clergy and the Liturgy Coordinator

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor encourages music that is **accessible, prayerful, and rooted in the sacred texts of the Mass**, ensuring the assembly can sing rather than perform.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, music ministers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship** (USCCB) – primary Church document on liturgical music

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – sung parts of the Mass and musical priorities (GIRM 39–41, 47–48, 61, 74)

**National Pastoral Musicians Association (NPM)** – formation and best practices ([www.npm.org](http://www.npm.org))

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – local music ministry norms

Parish repertoire lists and seasonal planning guides

# 9. EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Extraordinary Ministers assist in the reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ when needed, helping ensure that Communion is offered prayerfully, calmly, and with deep respect for the sacred.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Approach the altar with reverence and prayerful focus

Distribute Communion slowly, clearly, and respectfully

Sanitize hands immediately after the distribution of Communion, following the Pastor's request

Assist with the reverent care of the sacred vessels as directed

## HOMEBOUND MINISTRY PROTOCOL

Homebound Ministers will be called forward after Communion to fill their pyx and receive a blessing

As part of their ministry formation, Homebound Ministers are to:

- Proceed directly to the homebound following Mass
- Follow proper procedures for the **reverent handling and purification of the pyx** upon return

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor emphasizes reverence, eye contact, calm presence, and careful hygiene, allowing each communicant a moment of sacred encounter while honoring both the sacredness of the Eucharist and the well-being of the faithful.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, ministers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – distribution of Holy Communion (GIRM 160–162, 284–287)

**Redemptionis Sacramentum** – safeguarding the Eucharist

**Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America (USCCB)**

**Order of Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside Mass** – for homebound ministry

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – EMHC training and commissioning requirements

Parish EMHC handbook and homebound ministry protocols

# 10. LECTORS (READERS)

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

Lectors proclaim the Word of God, allowing Christ to speak to His people through Scripture.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Prepare the assigned readings prayerfully and in advance

Proclaim clearly, confidently, and at a measured pace

Maintain proper posture and presence at the ambo

**Orchestrate movements to and from the ambo with dignity and safety**

**Use the handrails installed at the steps for personal safety and example to others**

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor desires proclamation that is prayerful, not performative, with attention to pacing, clarity, and graceful movement within the sanctuary.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, lectors are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – Liturgy of the Word and role of the lector (GIRM 55-71, 128-134, 194-198)

**Lectionary for Mass: Introduction** – principles for proclaiming Scripture

**Book of the Gospels: Introduction** – reverent handling and procession

**Fulfilled in Your Hearing** (USCCB) – formation for lectors

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – lector training resources

Parish lector practice guides and pronunciation tools

# 11. INCENSE (PASTORAL PREFERENCE)

At Holy Cross, incense is used selectively to highlight the solemnity of particular celebrations, in keeping with the Pastor's pastoral vision.

## WHEN INCENSE IS USED

Easter and Christmas liturgies

Funerals, specifically during the Final Commendation



## MANNER OF INCENSING

Following the example of the Bishop, **the altar and the faithful are incensed**

**The Priest is not incensed**

These practices help preserve both reverence and clarity in the ritual actions of the liturgy.

# 12. LITURGICAL SCHEDULER

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

The Liturgical Scheduler serves the unity of the parish by ensuring that every ministry is supported and no role is overlooked.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Create and maintain ministry schedules

Communicate clearly with ministers

Adjust schedules as needed for pastoral or parish needs

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor values fairness, transparency, and communication, ensuring that service is shared and no one feels overburdened.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, schedulers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar** – understanding seasons and solemnities

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – awareness of required and optional ministries

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – parish scheduling guidelines

Parish master calendar and communication protocols

# 13. HOSPITALITY AND WELCOME MINISTRY

## SPIRITUAL ROLE

This ministry embodies the Church's call to welcome the stranger as Christ.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Greet parishioners before and after Mass

Assist newcomers with parish information

Support special parish celebrations and events

## PASTOR'S PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The Pastor encourages this ministry to be intentional about follow-up, helping visitors feel personally invited to return and connect.



## FORMATION NOTES

In addition to parish training, hospitality ministers are encouraged to learn from the following Church and diocesan resources:

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)** – role of the assembly and flow of the liturgy

**USCCB – Welcoming and Belonging** parish resources

**Built of Living Stones** – guidance on sacred space and hospitality

**Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship** – parish hospitality and accessibility guidance

Parish welcome packets and newcomer follow-up procedures

# ONLINE RESOURCES (LINKS)

For ease of access, the following official Church and ministry formation resources are available online:

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB):	<a href="http://www.usccb.org">www.usccb.org</a>
Diocese of Raleigh – Office for Divine Worship:	<a href="http://dioceseofraleigh.org/divine-worship">dioceseofraleigh.org/divine-worship</a>
National Pastoral Musicians Association (NPM):	<a href="http://www.npm.org">www.npm.org</a>
Liturgy Training Publications (LTP):	<a href="http://www.ltp.org">www.ltp.org</a>
GIA Music:	<a href="http://www.giamusic.com">www.giamusic.com</a>
Oregon Catholic Press (OCP):	<a href="http://www.ocp.org">www.ocp.org</a>
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC):	<a href="http://www.fdlc.org">www.fdlc.org</a>
Adoremus – Sacred Liturgy Resources:	<a href="http://adoremus.org">adoremus.org</a>

These links support all ministries in ongoing formation, training, and fidelity to the Church’s liturgical norms.