

Preparing for a Mass with Bishop Lohse

When the Bishop comes to celebrate Mass or participate in a parish or school event, careful preparation helps ensure that the celebration is prayerful, orderly, and worthy of the sacred liturgy. The following guidelines are intended to assist parishes, schools, and parish staff in preparing for the bishop's visit.

A Liturgy Planning Guide (LPG) should be completed and submitted two weeks in advance of the Mass for every Mass at which the bishop will preside or participate. The LPG may be found [here](#). The form is fillable and may be saved and then sent back to the Office of Worship at jherold@diokzoo.org. Please note that an MC for the bishop will be scheduled by the Office of Worship.

The Table of Liturgical Days (see last page) determines the choice of Mass. If the Table allows a votive or ritual Mass on the day of the Liturgy, and it is appropriate, then please indicate which Mass will be celebrated.

The readings will typically be the readings of the day. If you are utilizing a votive, ritual, or Mass of various needs, please select the proper readings from the lectionary. If there is a pastoral need to select a different reading for the Mass, please reach out to the Office of Worship before filling out the LPG. Always give the Lectionary number for the readings

It is appropriate for the bishop to give the homily. However, if you have asked the bishop to present at an event after the Mass, a different clergy member needs to present the homily. The bishop will either do a homily or a talk at an event, not both.

If Communion is to be distributed under both species, please make sure there are sufficient ministers for distribution, space to distribute, and a careful plan for distribution. Someone should be prepared to discuss with the MC the distribution plan for Communion on the day of the liturgy.

Announcements should be **brief and limited to what is genuinely necessary**. As a general rule, announcements should be kept to **three minutes or less**.

It is appropriate for a deacon to serve with the bishop at every Mass. If you do not have a deacon assigned at your parish and are not able to schedule a deacon for the Mass, the concelebrating priest will (vested as a priest) assist at the Mass with the deacon roles, i.e., proclaim the Gospel (including asking for the blessing before proclaiming and bringing the Gospel to the Bishop for veneration), assist at the Altar (preparing the Altar at the preparation of the gifts, placing and removing the pall).

Do not presume that listing a reception or dinner on the LPG means the bishop is aware of it. Please work directly with the Office of the Bishop to arrange and notify of any expectations of attendance at receptions, luncheons, dinners, etc.

All ministers should know their responsibilities before the day of the Mass. Readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, servers, musicians, and others involved in the liturgy should be properly prepared.

Bilingual Masses

For Bilingual Masses, please note in an email with the LPG (or on the LPG) which parts of the Mass are to be celebrated in each language. The homily will be primarily in English with Spanish emphasis and repetition. If there is a need for something different, please contact the Office of Worship. If readings are read in different languages, please have someone proclaim from their primary language

Distribution of Holy Communion

Extra care should be given to the distribution of Holy Communion.

The number of ordinary and extraordinary ministers should be appropriate for the size of the congregation and the circumstances of the celebration. Ministers should be properly prepared, deputed to serve, and know where they are to serve.

The bishop should be given a clear and appropriate role in the distribution of Holy Communion. Parish personnel should coordinate beforehand regarding the number and placement of Communion stations and the responsibilities of extraordinary ministers and be ready to share this information with the MC prior to Mass.

The distribution of Holy Communion should be orderly, reverent, and consistent with the norms of the Church.

School Masses

For school Masses, **children who are under second grade should not be invited to come forward for a blessing during the distribution of Holy Communion.** While this is a laudable practice for purposes of hospitality and convenience at a normal Sunday Mass where children are with their parents and spread out, the purpose of coming forward to receive the Lord is obscured by large groups of students approaching together to receive a blessing. Students should be taught to pray the Act of Spiritual Communion silently and desire the day they can come forward to receive. If this is a practice at your school, please have the students approach in a line other than the bishops.

The school and parish should communicate this expectation to teachers, staff, and those coordinating the Mass beforehand so that the Communion procession can proceed smoothly and reverently.

Lectors for school or children's Masses should be from the oldest grade represented and must be able to proclaim with clarity and appropriate volume.

Avoid Extra Additions to the Mass

The Mass should not be altered or lengthened with **extra activities, presentations, recognitions, or other additions that are not part of the liturgy.**

Examples might include:

- Presentations or gifts that are not liturgically appropriate (unless approved by the Office of Worship ahead of time, and only if there is not a reception that this can take place at)
- Extended introductions
- Multiple recognitions, handing out of awards, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- Special ceremonies inserted into the Mass without prior approval
- Non-liturgical performances
- Extended thank-you remarks

If there is a legitimate pastoral reason for something unusual to take place during the Mass, it should be discussed and approved by the Office of Worship during the planning process.

Receptions, Meals, and Other Events

If the parish, school, or organization would like the bishop to attend a **reception, dinner, luncheon, or other event**, this should be communicated to the Office of the Bishop **well in advance**. Do not presume that noting on the LPG means the bishop has been invited or knows about the event. Please do not assume that the bishop will be available after Mass. Advance notice allows the bishop's schedule to be coordinated appropriately.

Homily or Talk — Not Both

When the Bishop is celebrating Mass and is also being invited to participate in a parish or school event, please keep in mind that **he will ordinarily give either the homily at Mass or a talk/presentation at the event, but not both**.

If the Bishop is giving the homily, there should generally not be an expectation that he will also give a second formal presentation at a reception or dinner. Conversely, if he is being asked to give a formal talk at an event, the planning should take into consideration that he may not also be expected to provide an additional presentation beyond the talk.

Communication Is Key

The most important principle in preparing for the bishop's visit is **good communication ahead of time**.

Please communicate in advance about anything that is unusual or different from a normal parish or school Mass. It is much easier to resolve questions before the bishop arrives than on the day of the celebration. When in doubt, ask.

A well-prepared celebration allows everyone—the bishop, clergy, staff, ministers, teachers, students, and parishioners—to focus on what is most important: **the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and our encounter with Christ**.

Preparations the day of the Liturgy

The church should be prepared as it would be for any solemn Sunday or special liturgical celebration. Attention should be given to:

- Altar and Missal
 - The missal should be set for the Mass
 - Bishop will want the missal held by a server during the Opening and closing Prayer
 - The altar should not have anything sitting on it or set before the preparation of the gifts (If multiple vessels are used for consecration, a second corporal could be prepared and placed on the altar ahead of time)
- The ambo and Lectionary
 - Lectionary should be set with readings notated
 - Book of the Gospels is appropriate if the Mass is a solemnity and there is a deacon present
 - If a folder/binder is used for the reading, please have the Gospel proclaimed from a lectionary or Book of the Gospels; whoever reads the Gospel should remember to bring the book to the bishop to venerate with a kiss
- Tabernacle
 - Please make sure there is a working key for the tabernacle
 - A deacon, or a concelebrating priest, should bring the reserved Eucharist to the altar during the Agnus Dei
- Credence table and liturgical vessels
 - Please make sure that all vessels are prepared and on the credence table
 - It is good practice to have a second cruets of water, as the bishop's hands will be washed after distribution of Communion, while the vessels are being purified by the deacon/concelebrating priest
 - If there are multiple ciboria used for distribution, they should be pre-portioned with altar bread; redistribution among ciboria during the fractioning rite should be limited to the reserved hosts from the tabernacle.
 - If multiple chalices are used, all but the primary chalice should be pre-filled
- Vestments
 - The bishop typically will wear the vestments of the parish (if you do not have vestments for the bishop to wear, please reach out to the Office of Worship)
- Seating for clergy and ministers
 - Make sure there is enough seating for all clergy and those assisting
 - Deacon(s) should sit on the side of the bishop
- Lectors
 - Make sure that lectors are well trained to proclaim the readings
 - If there are youth readers at school or children's Masses, lectors should be selected from the oldest age group
- Servers and their responsibilities
 - There should be enough servers for the normal assistance of the Mass; two additional servers, as miter bearer and crosier bearer, is preferred
 - Make sure all servers know their roles
 - Bishop's MC will work with the servers during the Mass, but the servers ought to know the typical aspects of serving at Mass and need limited direction. If there is a Miter Bearer and Crosier Bearer (preferred), they will work closely with the bishop's MC

Quick Preparation Checklist

- ☐ Complete and submit the Liturgy Planning Guide (two weeks in advance).
- ☐ Confirm the readings, music, ministers, and servers.
- ☐ Prepare the church and sanctuary.
- ☐ Confirm that the bishop's vestments, including a properly fitting chasuble, are available.
- ☐ Review the Bishop's role in the Mass with clergy and ministers.
- ☐ Prepare appropriately for the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ☐ For school Masses, ensure student ministers are prepared properly and that all school personnel are aware of any variations to the typical school Mass.
- ☐ Announcements are written ahead of time, are approved, and are kept to three minutes or less.
- ☐ Any special Rites, Blessings, activities, or presentations to the Mass are approved ahead of time with the Office of Worship.
- ☐ Communicate requests for receptions, dinners, or other events to the Office of the Bishop well in advance.
- ☐ Clarify whether the Bishop will give a homily or a talk at a related event.
- ☐ Communicate any unusual circumstances or special requests before the Bishop's visit.

The goal is simple: prepare well, communicate early, and allow the bishop's presence to support the prayer and worship of the parish or school community, and be a blessing to those participating.

Table of Liturgical Days according to their order of precedence

I

1. The Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord.
2. The Nativity of the Lord, the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pentecost. Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter. Ash Wednesday. Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday up to and including Thursday. Days within the Octave of Easter.
3. Solemnities inscribed in the General Calendar, whether of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of Saints. The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.
4. Proper Solemnities, namely: **D1**
 - a. The Solemnity of the principal Patron of the place, city or state.
 - b. The Solemnity of the dedication and of the anniversary of the dedication of one's own church.
 - c. The Solemnity of the Title of one's own church.
 - d. The Solemnity either of the Title or of the Founder or of the principal Patron of an Order or Congregation.

II

5. Feasts of the Lord inscribed in the General Calendar. **D1**
6. Sundays of Christmas Time and the Sundays in Ordinary Time. **V1, D1**
7. Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saints in the General Calendar. **V1, V2, D1**
8. Proper Feasts, namely: **V1, V2, D1**
 - a. The Feast of the principal Patron of the diocese.
 - b. The Feast of the anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral church.
 - c. The Feast of the principal Patron of a region or province, or a country, or of a wider territory.
 - d. The Feast of the Title, Founder, or principal Patron of an Order or Congregation and of a religious province, without prejudice to the prescriptions given under no. 4.
 - e. Other Feasts proper to an individual church.
 - f. Other Feasts inscribed in the Calendar of each diocese or Order or Congregation.
9. Weekdays of Advent from 17 December up to and including 24 December. Days within the Octave of Christmas. Weekdays of Lent. **V1, D1, D2**

III

10. Obligatory Memorials in the General Calendar. **V1, D1, D2**
11. Proper Obligatory Memorials, namely: **V1, D1, D2**
 - a. The Memorial of a secondary Patron of the place, diocese, region, or religious province.
 - b. Other Obligatory Memorials inscribed in the Calendar of each diocese, or Order or Congregation.
12. Optional Memorials, which, however, may be celebrated, in the special manner described in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and of the Liturgy of the Hours, even on the days listed in no. 9. In the same manner, Obligatory Memorials may be celebrated as Optional Memorials if they happen to fall on Lenten weekdays. **V1, V2, D1, D2**
13. Weekdays of Advent up to and including 16 December. **V1, V2, D1, D2**
14. Weekdays of Christmas Time from 2 January until the Saturday after the Epiphany. **V1, V2, D1, D2**
15. Weekdays of the Easter Time from Monday after the Octave of Easter up to and including the Saturday before Pentecost. **V1, V2, D1, D2**
16. Weekdays in Ordinary Time. **V1, V2, V3, D1, D2, D3**

V1 = Ritual Masses (General Instruction of the Roman Missal [hereafter, GIRM], no. 372).

Masses for various needs and occasions and votive Masses, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the direction of the local Ordinary or with his permission (GIRM, no. 374).

V2 = Masses for various needs and occasions and votive Masses, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the discretion of the rector of the church or the priest celebrant (GIRM, no. 376).

V3 = Masses for various needs and occasions and votive Masses chosen by the priest celebrant in favor of the devotion of the people (GIRM, no. 373, 375).

D1 = Funeral Mass (GIRM, no. 380).

D2 = Mass on the occasion of news of a death, final burial, or the first anniversary (GIRM, no. 381).

D3 = Daily Mass for the dead (GIRM, no. 381). When D1 and D2 are not permitted, neither is D3.

From the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar