



- on a stand in the body of the church instead of in the sanctuary.
- After the conclusion of the second reading and an appropriate pause for silence (as mentioned above), the drum can once again be sounded as it was for the opening procession. At this signal, the altar servers with candles proceed to the Book of the Gospels and stand “at attention.”
 - The drum finishes after 15 to 20 seconds, once the servers are in place.
 - After another brief pause of silence, the music minister begins the Gospel acclamation, at which point the deacon or priest leaves his chair to retrieve the Book of the Gospels. One of the most rousing Gospel acclamations is the Caribbean melody “Halle, Halle” (arranged by John Bell and Graham Maule; text Marty Haugen; GIA Publications), which provides another opportunity to include the drum and to energize the assembly.
 - The procession slowly moves to the sanctuary, where the deacon or priest stands in front of the altar showing the Book of the Gospels to the assembly before proceeding to theambo to proclaim the Gospel.

4. A more robust presentation of gifts

A greater sense of stewardship could be instilled in the assembly if the collection and presentation of gifts were more robust. Instead of simply having ushers proceed through the church with baskets, the following can be done:

- A number of baskets could be set up strategically throughout the church before Mass begins.
- As the offertory song is sung (or as the drum sounds once again), the ushers invite people to leave their seats and proceed to the nearest collection basket, where they drop their envelopes. The act of leaving one’s seat to offer a gift creates a greater sense of active participation in the liturgy.
- Tables could also be set up in various corners of the church for canned goods or clothing for the poor. Parishioners can be encouraged to bring these types of donations in addition to or instead of monetary donations.
- When all have returned to their places, the ushers collect the baskets and gather them into one.
- The cross- and candle-bearers then

proceed to the gift table to lead those assembly members who have been chosen to bring forward the gifts and the ushers who bring forward the monetary collection.

5. More robust music

Our church is blessed with many talented music ministers. On the whole, however, the approach to music at most Catholic Masses is not robust in several respects. Here are some suggestions for expanding the robustness of music at Mass:

- **Drums:** I’ve already suggested the possibility of including a drum as part of the call to prayer, Gospel acclamation, and offertory. A drum is a dramatic instrument. It is primal. It speaks to the core of the human person, resonating with our beating hearts. A drumbeat can be included at these and other moments of the Mass as a solo instrument and as an accompanying instrument for hymns when appropriate.
- **More solo instrumentation:** Music ministers need not form bands. However, most congregations have members (especially young people) who are gifted pianists, cellists, flutists, or harpists. These talented people should be invited on occasion or on a regular basis to provide an instrumental solo for reflection, perhaps after the homily, during the presentation of gifts, or after communion. This is a unique opportunity to invite teens and young adults to share their gifts with the church.
- **More chants:** In addition to standard hymns, chants (such as those from the Taizé community) provide a dramatic flavor to the music at Mass. Many chants allow another opportunity for drums. Some chants, such as the African chant “We Will Walk with God/Sizohamba Naye” (John Bell, Alison Adam; GIA) are rousing and provide an opportunity for the assembly to sing in another tongue, thus expressing our catholicity.
- **African American hymnody:** Black Catholics bring a remarkable gift to the church by way of a treasury

of hymns that are soulful, joyful, energetic, and inspirational. Whether or not a congregation has a presence of black Catholics, the music of the African American Catholic experience will enrich any assembly.

- **An occasional sung solo:** Although the music at Mass is not intended to be a performance, there are appropriate moments for a solo voice. Whether it be a meditation song or a verse of a hymn, a solo voice can add flair and even some drama to the musical aspects of the Mass. This is another great opportunity for inviting young people to share their gifts with the assembly.
- **An occasional a cappella refrain:** When singing a hymn with a refrain, it is very effective for the music minister to silence the instrumentation toward the end of the song and allow the refrain to be sung a cappella by the whole assembly before bringing the instrumentation back for one final refrain. Doing so enables the assembly to suddenly become aware of the sound of its voice and can increase the reverence and solemnity of a reflective hymn or increase the energy of a more rousing hymn.

6. A more robust sprinkling rite

We drown in the waters of baptism, dying to sin and bursting forth to new life in Christ. Yet in sprinkling rites, you’re lucky if a tiny drop of water reaches you. During a sprinkling rite, people should actually get wet! Since our baptism is not a once-and-done event, it makes sense to renew it frequently and robustly. Here are a few suggestions for how this can happen:

- Don’t limit the sprinkling rite to the Easter season. While it’s appropriate for the sprinkling rite to be celebrated each Sunday during Eastertide, there’s no reason that we can’t participate in a sprinkling rite at least once a month during Ordinary Time.
- Use a real aspergillum. The old-fashioned metal aspergillum simply doesn’t hold enough water. Many priests now use an aspergillum that is more like a branch or brush that holds

a fair amount of water.

- Utilize more than one person to sprinkle. The priest does not have to be the only one sprinkling the assembly. He can invite a corps of assembly members to come forward (another opportunity to include young people) and have each one take a section of the church to sprinkle. (Note: No rubric in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* directly prohibits laypeople from assisting the priest in sprinkling, and the *Book of Blessings* indicates that for the blessing of a new home, the minister — lay or ordained — sprinkles the house and people. If we can bless ourselves with holy water as we enter the church, why not assist the priest with sprinkling holy water during the sprinkling rite?)

Members of the assembly who wear glasses can be warned ahead of time to remove them because they’re going to get wet!

7. More robust communion bread

We don’t typically use the words “practical” and “sacrament” in the same breath. Sacraments involve signs, symbols, and rituals, most of which are somewhat exotic and even extravagant ways of expressing ourselves. Over the centuries, Catholics have allowed practicality to creep into the sacraments. Case in point? Communion wafers. Yes, they are practical and cost-efficient. However, they do not resemble any kind of bread that we eat in daily life. When it comes to the sacrament that is the source and summit of our lives, we should do away with practicality and use a more robust communion bread with ingredients that follow canon law. A sample recipe for properly prepared communion bread is available at www.richmonddiocese.org/worship/docs/EucharisticBread.pdf.

The following ideas could facilitate a bread-baking ministry in your parish:

- Invite families to take turns preparing communion bread for Sunday liturgies.
- A small number of commercial eucharistic hosts can be kept in

reserve for bringing holy communion to the sick and homebound.

- A more robust communion bread results in a more robust fraction rite, which in turn allows for a more robust Lamb of God litany followed by a more robust communion procession. Recall that a procession is to be a spectacle and not simply the shortest distance between points A and B. While the Lamb of God litany is being sung and the fraction rite is taking place, several rows of people from the front of the church can be invited to process slowly (led by an usher or a banner carrier) down the side aisles to the back of the church and then up the main aisle toward the front of the worship space where they will receive communion. After these few rows have processed in this manner, the remainder of the assembly can come forward, directed by ushers, in the usual manner.
- Extraordinary ministers of holy communion can gather in the sacristy to reverently consume any surplus eucharistic bread.

Having implemented a more robust translation of the Roman Missal, it’s time for us to make our entire celebration of the liturgy — signs, symbols, gestures — more robust. These suggestions are something any parish can do. If your liturgy committee took each suggestion one at a time and focused on its implementation (preparation, catechesis, training) over a period of six to eight weeks, all seven of these ideas could be in place in the next 12 to 14 months. Step by step, your parish’s approach to celebrating liturgy will become more and more robust.

Abbondanza!

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