

SAMPLE LITURGICAL ASSESSMENT

St. Cunegunde Parish

Liturgical Assessment
December 9 & 16, 2018
Advent 2 and 3

Full, conscious and active participation

- I was not greeted by greeter / usher at either 4 p.m. or 9:30; at 9:30 I had to seek out an usher for a worship aid. At 7:30 I was greeted by 2 ushers.
- There was prelude music appropriate to the season. At the 7:30 it ended a little soon.
- The Advent “wreath” (candles on 4 pillars) was small and hard to see.
- The participation aids are helpful.
- The assembly at the 4 p.m. sang mostly everything well, except the first Communion song, “God Beyond All Names.” The assembly tried to sing at the 7:30 but did not do well on either the Communion or closing songs. Singing at the 9:30 was mixed; north seating section did not sing much.
- First Communion song at the 9:30 was a solo—took our song from us. At the 7:30 the Communion song started well after the procession and ended early.
- Intercessions were a mix of prepared and spontaneous; at the 4 p.m. there seemed to be those offered by the deacon and “our intercessions” offered by the cantor & assembly. In general, it is hard to hear many of the spontaneous petitions, and the ones offered by people were more personal than general.

Structure of the Liturgy

- The season was obvious; the opening call to worship, using the text of the second reading, served to set this season apart.
- The placement of the presider’s chair is fine; perhaps the extra furniture, like the deacon’s chairs, could be removed when they are not being used.
- The ministers all came from the assembly, except for the servers, who were in the sanctuary.
- The baptismal font is indeed prominent.
- The eucharistic elements were substantial and visible to the whole community; there is a nicely laid out gift table in the midst of the assembly.
- The Gospel book has its own stand where it is prominently displayed. The Gospel was not proclaimed from the ambo.
- The music supported the ritual actions for the most part, as when the music accompanying the children’s dismissal recalled the opening song. There were times, though, that the Communion song did not (see above).
- There was no Creed.

Liturgical Ministers

- For the most part the ministers seemed well-prepared. The 4 p.m. lector seemed not to be aware that her mic wasn’t on during the call to worship. The call-to-worship lector at 9:30 seemed overly expressive, like reading a children’s story.
- The ministers appeared to come from the midst of the assembly, and seemed representative of the parish membership. They dressed and acted appropriately.
- The cantor at the 7:30 seemed unsure but the people sang; this cantor also gave few cues or eye contact. Cantors sang into mic a bit too much on acclamations. Several times at the 7:30 I was unsure of when to come in on the songs. The cantors did not use the ambo for the psalm. It was hard to hear the choir at the 9:30; the keyboard player served double duty as cantor at the 9:30.
- The deacons are gracious and well-prepared. Don’ preaching was good and strong, and they both proclaimed the Gospel well. They both use a prescriptive formula, “The Lord is with you” that limits the meaning of the ritual greeting.
- Father Joe uses his singing well.
- Missing servers at two of the masses made for some awkwardness.
- Deacons and Communion ministers made good eye contact and touch during the Communion procession.

Actions

- At the beginning, the presider sat in the sanctuary while the deacon or a lector left the sanctuary to retrieve a candle for the Advent wreath.
- Comments were few and brief. Fr. Joe's announcements about his sore throat and its consequences (homily, Communion) were appropriate.
- Hosts were not taken from the tabernacle for Communion with the possible exception of 9:30 (my view was obscured).
- Cleanup after Communion seems to take a long time.
- Communion ministers receive after Communion.
- Gifts brought up to foot of sanctuary; money came up sort of separately and was not acknowledged.
- We stood during the Eucharistic Prayer but not during the Communion procession.
- We were seated for prayer after Communion.
- Announcements were made at the appropriate time.

Ritual options

- Father Joe made good use of ritual options like the greeting "from God who was and is and is to come . . ." and the EP for reconciliation. At final blessing used "may God . . . bless us formula. Perhaps extends sign of peace too long by leaving sanctuary.
- The dismissal of the children for their Liturgy of the Word was appropriately done.
- There was a double acclamation after the Gospel
- Many in the assembly extend hand in *orans* posture during the Lord's Prayer.
- Dismissal of Communion ministers at the end is done well.

Aesthetics

- This is a difficult environment to work with; you do the best you can. The color blue was used as the Advent color.
- There is some minor clutter in the sanctuary: the book storage at the base of the pillars and the prominent position of the candle snuffer are the most notable.
- Fake flowers at the base of the Paschal candle.
- The loudspeaker at the north end is not too audible for the people sitting there.
- I'm not sure of the function of the file cabinets at the north end of the church.
- The temperature is a bit chilly; people may be more inclined to take off their coats otherwise.
- There is some feedback in the sound system when the preacher wanders.

Relation to Life

- A sense of mission was especially obvious in all the homilies: Don' ties to the Giving Tree, Fr. Joe's reference to the "yes" cards at the reconciliation service.
- A sense of mission was obvious in the announcements—the parish is obviously engaged in many different kinds of outreach.
- There wasn't a strong sense of mission in the music selections for these Sundays.

Community

- There was a "hum" of greeting and activity before the 4 p.m. and 9:30 Masses.
- Spoken participation was adequate.
- Sung participation varies; people appear to be trying, but perhaps not familiar with all the music.

Other Comments

- Was the song after the reading a Psalm? I wasn't sure.
- I appreciated the use of real bread.
- While overall the music is well-performed, I could wish for more variety in texture from one verse to the next on many of the songs.
- The music repertoire is different from that of many other parishes; we sang few hymns on the Sundays I was present.
- Copyright information missing from some of the songs in the worship aids and it was unclear whether there was permission to reprint most of the music.