

Appendix E

Liturgical Celebration to Mark the Formal Opening of a Parish

The Mass to mark the formal opening of a parish should be as inclusive of the whole parish community as possible. Those entrusted with planning this celebration might consider the use of the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water, a procession with the Book of Gospels, and Holy Communion under Both Kinds. These elements highlight the essential bonds of communion within the parish – Baptism, the proclamation of the Word of God and participation in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord in the Mystery of the Eucharist. If the liturgical calendar permits, the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary for Mass* texts can be taken from the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions (For the Holy Church), which might be more suited to the occasion.

It is most important that for this celebration of the Formal Opening of a Parish that there is a blend of liturgical ministries from all the former parishes that have now become the new parish. The liturgical music that is planned should be familiar to all those assembled for the celebration of Mass. Hospitality on this occasion includes signage for rest rooms and other directional information for those who may be in the church building for the first time. Finally, and perhaps a sensitive point, greeters and ushers should assist with arranging for seating for all in all parts of the church building.

Introduction after the Greeting

After the greeting, the priest celebrant might possibly speak to the assembly in these or similar words:

We gather today to give thanks to God for bringing us to this new day in our life as a parish. We have passed through grief and loss and have arrived at the beginning of a new life. As we are now united as one people in this sacred place, we are reminded that in Baptism we are already united as the one Body of Christ.

Through this celebration of the Mystery of Christ's dying and rising, in Word and in Sacrament, may the Lord form us into _____.

Rites for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

This rite is found in Appendix II of the Roman Missal.

Possible Petitions to be included in the Prayer of the Faithful

That the Lord Jesus would pour out His Holy Spirit upon Fr. (NAME PASTOR), our new pastor, our deacons, religious and lay ministers. May they be filled with the fire of God's love to lead us all into a new and deeper communion with Christ and with one another. Let us pray to the Lord.

That Christ will make us, the new parish of (NAME PARISH), a light to the community of (NAME TOWN), witnessing to the joy of our faith that comes from participation in the sacraments, the hearing of the Word of God and service to one another. Let us pray to the Lord.