

# *A Guide for*



# *Liturgical Art & Environment*



Diocese of Prince Albert  
Liturgy Office



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“Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

**“The building gets its name from the people who gather there: Church. We are living stones built into a spiritual house. We are the temple of God, and that temple is holy. We gather as the body of Christ, and he is our priest. We are Church. So is our building.”**

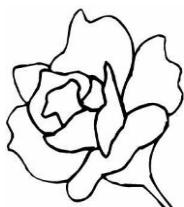
‘Guide for Ministers of Liturgical Environment’  
by Storms and Turner

## **How Is Decorating a Ministry?**

“Welcome to one of the hidden ministries of the Church! Equipped with humility, open hearts and minds, ladders and fish line, fabrics and flowers, you will do your work when the church is empty.” (‘Guide for Ministers of Liturgical Environment’ by Storms & Turner)

“A Church building is never merely functional; it points beyond itself to convey something about God. Building, art and furnishings function symbolically when they share the quality of “transparency,” revealing the Creator behind the created object.” (‘Our Place of Worship’ published by the CCCB)

“The Ornamentation of a Church should contribute toward its noble simplicity rather than to ostentation. Moreover, in the choice of elements attention should be paid to authenticity and there should be the intention of fostering the instruction of the faithful and the dignity of the entire sacred space.” (GIRM #292)



*The use of living flowers and plants, rather than artificial greens, serves as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community. Planning for plants and flowers should include not only the procurement and placement but also the continuing care needed to sustain living things.*

‘*Built of Living Stones*’ #129

## **The Church Building and the Liturgical Year**

“During the liturgical year the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from his incarnation and birth through his passion, death, and resurrection to his ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of his coming glory. In its celebration of these mysteries, the Church makes these sacred events present to the people of every age (see *Sacrosanctum*, Concilium, #102).”

### The Different Times of the Year

- \*Advent
- \*Christmas
- \*Ordinary Time (Winter)
- \*Lent
- \*Triduum
- \*Holy Saturday
- \*Easter
- \*Ordinary Time (late Spring, Summer & Fall)

### Different Liturgical Occasions

- \*The Liturgy of the Hours
- \*Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (The Catechumenate)
- \*Communal Reconciliation
- \*Communal Anointing of the Sick
- \*Marriage
- \*Funerals and Vigils
- \*Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration

“Liturgical environment is never about itself. Its fragile nature reaches out to something that endures, and it honors the one who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”

“Whenever we properly and prayerfully prepare our place of worship, no matter how much or little we budget for it, its beauty will inspire worshippers to draw closer to God and to live by the Gospel.”

‘Guide for Ministers of Liturgical Environment’  
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### **Things to Think About**

“You offer what is most beautiful from the earth to the one you most want to please. But you want your efforts to please God, not to draw undue attention to anyone else.”

“The preparation of a space for worship requires advance planning. When people walk into a decorated space, they are taken aback by the beauty of it in a single instant. But that instant took many hours of preparation.”

“The building gives the community a space where it meets God. In the Catholic tradition, we do not perform weddings in parks or baptisms in lakes. We gather at our churches because they represent people of faith, and they are our principal centers for encountering God together.”

(This section has been taken from “Guide for Ministers of Liturgical Environment” by Storms & Turner)

### **Keep in Mind!**

Be Kind! Always keep in mind that others may have done the decorating differently or used different materials and communication between the committee and the parish is the best thing! Having open minds and hearts to hear others questions or concerns about the building or the décor, helps us to unite together.

Always keep in mind the function of others during celebrations. Many of our Catholic celebrations involve movement. When placing flowers or banners they should never interfere with the movement of other ministers, so they may do their ministries with grace and integrity.

***GIRM #305 states: Moderation should be observed in the decoration of the altar...***

## **Glossary**

**Advent:** The four-week season that begins the liturgical year and prepares the faithful for Christmas.

**Christmas Season:** The season that celebrates the Incarnation. It begins December 25 and concludes with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in mid-January.

**Easter Season:** The most sacred season of the liturgical year which celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus. The Fifty Days of Easter begin with the Easter Vigil and conclude with Pentecost. Easter Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

**Feast:** Commemorations of major saints and some events in the life of Jesus. Feasts rank between memorials and solemnities in terms of liturgical importance and emphasis.

**Holy Week:** The final week before Easter that begins with Palm Sunday and concludes with the Paschal Triduum.

**Lent:** Beginning with Ash Wednesday, Lent is the season of approximately 40 days of prayer, penance, and abstinence that prepares the faithful for Easter.

**Liturgical Books:** Those books that have been officially approved for use at Mass and in liturgy.

**Liturgical Color:** Each season of the liturgical year and in particular solemnities, feasts, and memorials are assigned colors. The color is generally reflected in the vestments of the priest and the decorations of the church.

**Liturgical Year:** The marking of the calendar year with occasions that reveal the grace and mystery of the Trinity.

**Liturgy:** The ritual, communal, public prayer of the Church. The most prominent of liturgies is the celebration of the Mass, followed by sacramental celebrations, the Liturgy of the Hours, Liturgy of the Word, and various devotional liturgies.

**Memorial:** Commemorations of saints who are of importance to the universal Church. Optional Memorials recognize saints who are important to particular regions, communities, or cultures. Solemnities and feasts rank of greater importance than memorials.

**Nave:** The portion of the church reserved for those gathered to worship; the large, open part of the church where the faithful gather for worship.

**Ordinary Time:** The greater part of the liturgical year, weeks marked ordinally, that is “counted,” as in the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

**Ordo:** Latin term meaning “order.” The ordo provides a detailed accounting of the liturgical year that give succinct direction as to the degree of solemnity of the celebration, the liturgical colours, scripture readings, optional parts of the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and other such information.

**Sacramental:** An object or action that reminds one of a sacrament, or helps one live a holy life as a living sacrament; a sign of God’s grace to the world.

**Sanctuary:** The area of the church around the altar, ambo, and presider’s chair.

**Solemnity:** The highest level of importance for a liturgical observance. Solemnities take precedence over all other celebrations.

**Triduum:** Three days marked from sunset to sunset beginning on Holy Thursday, including Good Friday and Holy Saturday and ending on Easter Sunday. During this time, the Paschal Mystery is recalled and celebrated with solemn ritual.

\*This glossary section was taken from the book  
‘Guide for Ministers of Liturgical Environment’  
by Storms & Turner,

For more Glossary definitions please check out the book!

Thank you for your involvement in this ministry.



*Colossians 1:15 offers a thought-provoking perspective on this aspect of your work: Christ “is the image of the invisible God.” Christ was perfectly what ministers of the environment can only strive to create: a visual image that leads humans to God.*

**Note:** Please get in contact with your parish priest, parish liturgy committee or the Diocesan Liturgy Office if you have questions or concerns about things relating to the Liturgical Environment.