

Appendix D

HYMN ANALYSIS TEMPLATE (Internal Formation Tool)

Title: _____

Category: C1 / C2 / C3 / C4

Communion Suitability: Yes / No

Pastoral Framing Note

The following hymn analysis is offered as an **internal formation tool**, applying the theological and liturgical principles outlined in the Parish Hymnody Study and its companion documents. It is intended to assist pastors, musicians, and parish leaders in understanding how hymn texts function within the Sacred Liturgy, particularly with regard to **doctrinal clarity, liturgical voice, and ritual purpose**.

This analysis is **not a judgment on the spiritual value of the hymn**, nor on the faith, sincerity, or generosity of those who cherish it. Many hymns examined here have accompanied Catholics through moments of deep grace, personal conversion, grief, and service. Their devotional impact is real and deserves respect.

The classifications and conclusions presented are **liturgical in nature**, not personal or historical evaluations. They reflect the Church's understanding that **devotional or inspirational songs and liturgical texts serve different purposes**, and that not every meaningful religious song is suited to every moment of the Mass.

These analyses are **not prescriptive mandates**, nor are they intended for public comparison, debate, or enforcement. They are best read **slowly, prayerfully, and within the broader pastoral context** established by the full set of documents. Their purpose is to deepen discernment, foster shared language, and support thoughtful, charitable decision-making in parish music ministry.

Above all, this work seeks to help those entrusted with the Church's sung prayer listen more closely to **how the Church herself prays**, so that future choices may arise from fidelity, reverence, and pastoral care rather than reaction or preference.

This analysis applies the criteria outlined in the Parish Hymnody Study and its companion documents.

1. TEXT SUMMARY

A brief, neutral summary of what the hymn says.
(2–4 sentences)

2. DOCTRINAL ANALYSIS

Explain how the hymn aligns with or diverges from Catholic doctrine.

Consider:

- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Sacramental theology
- Liturgical voice
- Scriptural grounding
- (1–3 paragraphs)

3. LITURGICAL SUITABILITY

Assess whether the hymn fits any liturgical moment.

Consider:

- Does it express the Church's voice?
- Does it reflect the mystery being celebrated?
- Does it avoid unauthorized divine speech? ¹
- Does it support the liturgical action?
- (1–2 paragraphs)

4. PASTORAL NOTES

Acknowledge the hymn's devotional value, history, or emotional resonance.
(1 paragraph)

5. FINAL JUDGMENT

Category: C1 / C2 / C3 / C4

Communion: Suitable / Not Suitable

One-sentence summary of the reason.

These analyses presume familiarity with the foundational documents of the Parish Hymnody Study and should not be read in isolation.

ENDNOTES

1. The Catholic liturgy does not permit the assembly to take on the voice of Christ or the Father.

See GIRM 29–30, 38, 91, 147; USCCB, *Sing to the Lord* §§115–117;

USCCB, *Catholic Hymnody at the Service of the Church* (2020), “Doctrinally Inappropriate Texts.”

2. (Optional) Scriptural references used or implied in the hymn.

3. (Optional) Relevant passages from the Missal, Lectionary, or Church documents.

4. (Optional) Historical notes on the hymn’s origin or devotional use.