



# NewsLetter

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## **Pope Benedict on the Earthly Liturgy and the Word of God**

*During his recent Apostolic Journey to France, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the earthly Liturgy of the Church and its relationship to the heavenly liturgy, and on the necessity of reflecting on Sacred Scripture in the Liturgy of the Hours. The excerpt from his homily at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on September 12, 2008 during the celebration of Vespers with priests, religious people, seminarians, and deacons, is provided for the benefit of our readers:*

God's Word, the Eternal Word, who was with him from the beginning (cf. Jn 1:1), was born of a woman, born a subject of the law, "to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (cf. Gal 4:4-5). The Son of God took flesh in the womb of a woman, a virgin. Your cathedral is a living hymn of stone and light in praise of that act, unique in the annals of human history: the eternal Word of God entering our history in the fullness of time to redeem us by his self-offering in the sacrifice of the Cross. Our earthly liturgies, entirely ordered to the celebration of this unique act within history, will never fully express its infinite meaning. Certainly, the beauty of our celebrations can never be sufficiently cultivated, fostered and refined, for nothing can be too beautiful for God, who is himself infinite Beauty. Yet our earthly liturgies will never be more than a pale reflection of the liturgy celebrated in the Jerusalem on high, the goal of our pilgrimage on earth. May our own celebrations nonetheless resemble that liturgy as closely as possible and grant us a foretaste of it!

Even now the word of God is given to us as the soul of our apostolate, the soul of our priestly life. Each morning the word awakens us. Each morning the Lord himself "opens our ear" (cf. Is 50:5) through the psalms in the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer. Throughout the day, the word of God becomes the substance of the prayer of the whole Church, as she bears witness in this way to her fidelity to Christ. In the celebrated phrase of Saint Jerome, to be taken up in the XII Assembly of the Synod of Bishops next month: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (*Prol. in Is.*). Dear brother priests, do not be afraid to spend much time reading and meditating on the Scriptures and praying the Divine Office! Almost without your knowing it, God's word, read and pondered in the Church, acts upon you and transforms you. As the manifestation of divine Wisdom, if that word becomes your life "companion," it will be your "good counselor" and an "encouragement in cares and grief" (Wis 8:9).

## The Use of the Divine *Tetragrammaton* in the Liturgy

On page 29 of last month's *Newsletter*, it was reported that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a letter on June 29, 2008 which included a number of directives on the translation and the pronunciation of the Divine Name as signified in the sacred *tetragrammaton* in the Liturgy. The Directives have elicited many questions and much conversation, as well as some misunderstanding of the intentions and the scope of the Directives.

The letter explains that the Divine Name as revealed in the Old Testament, יהוה (YHWH), has been held as unpronounceable as an expression of reverence for the greatness of God. The directive notes that "in recent years the practice has crept in pronouncing the God of Israel's proper name," known as the holy or divine *tetragrammaton*, written with four consonants, YHWH, in the Hebrew alphabet. In order to vocalize it, it is necessary to introduce vowels that alter the written and spoken forms of the name (*i.e.* "Yahweh" or "Jehovah"). Citing theological and philological reasons, and in keeping with tradition, the letter reminds the bishops that "from the beginning... the sacred *tetragrammaton* was never pronounced in the Christian context nor translated into any languages into which the Bible was translated." Historically the Divine Name was rendered in Hebrew as *Adonai*, in Greek as *Kyrios*, and in Latin as *Dominus*. This is evident in the Bible in both Septuagint and the Vulgate texts of the Bible (the *New American Bible*, used in the *Lectionary for Mass*, follows the same principle in translation). Liturgical texts have always followed that tradition.

In a letter to the Bishops of the United States, Bishop Arthur Serratelli, Chairman of the Committee on Divine Worship, stated "While the directives contained here do not force any changes to official liturgical texts, including our continuing work of the translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*, which already follow the spirit of the directives, there may be some impact on the use of particular pieces of liturgical music in our country as well as in the composition of variable texts such as the General Intercessions for the celebration of the Mass and the other sacraments."

Several readers have posed a question regarding several passages in the *Lectionary for Mass* which appear to make use of the Divine Name. In three separate instances, the Name "Yahweh" appears as part of a hyphenated construction of the name of a particular place, *e.g.*, "Yahweh-yireh" (Genesis 22:14, Easter Vigil, Second Reading, long form, #41; Thursday of the 13<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time, Year 1, #380) or "Yahweh-shalom" (Judges 6:24, Tuesday of the 20<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time, Year 1, #420). As proper names of places (that do not refer directly to God), changes to these constructions will not be necessary.

The staff of the Secretariat of Divine Worship has been in conversation with publishers of liturgical music regarding the recent directives. Composers of liturgical hymns and songs which are affected by the directives are in the process of creating alternate texts so that familiar songs will be usable in light of the directives. Publishers have informed the Secretariat that 2009 annual music resources were already in production when the directives were released, so they will not reflect the adapted texts. Publishers plan to make revised arrangements available online as soon as they are available.

Bishop Serratelli suggests that the Directives provide the Church with "an opportunity to offer catechesis for the faithful as an encouragement to show reverence for the Name of God in daily life, emphasizing the power of language as an act of devotion and worship." One can also appreciate the opportunity to appreciate the unbroken practice of our Jewish brothers and sisters in showing reverence for the Divine Name. The Directives from the Congregation will help the faithful to understand better that tradition.

The full text of the letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments remains available on the Committee on Divine Worship's website.

## September 2008 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Hispanics and the Liturgy

The Subcommittee on Hispanics and the Liturgy, chaired by Auxiliary Bishop Octavio Cisneros of Brooklyn, met at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, DC on September 11-13, 2008. Topics for discussion included the Order of Blessing of a Child in the Womb, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, and the Spanish-language translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*.

### **Rito de Bendición de una Criatura en el Vientre**

The USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities had been asked by a number of dioceses for an Order of Blessing of a Child in the Womb in English and in Spanish. In examining texts containing blessings such as the *Book of Blessings (De Benedictionibus)* and *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, the Committee was unable to find an existing blessing for a newly conceived child. In March 2008, a blessing was prepared and submitted to the Committee on Divine Worship for consideration.

The Order of Blessing of a Child in the Womb/Rito de Bendición de una Criatura en el Vientre was prepared to support the parents awaiting the birth of their child, to encourage prayers in the parish for and recognition of the precious gift of the child in the womb, and to foster respect for human life within society. The proposed blessing is distinct from the Blessing of Parents before Childbirth found in the *Book of Blessings*.

Approval was recently received by both the Committees on Pro-Life Activities and Divine Worship. The Subcommittee members completed a final review of the proposed Rito de Bendición de una Criatura en el Vientre and approved the text. To be used in the dioceses of the United States of America and included in the *Book of Blessings* and the *Bendicional* when those texts are revised, the text requires the approval of two-thirds of the Latin Rite members of the USCCB at its upcoming plenary meeting in November, and subsequent *recognitio* by the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

### **Cantemos Al Señor: La Música en el Culto Divino**

In an effort to have a text of *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* available to the Spanish-speaking Catholics in the United States, the Secretariat of Divine Worship has prepared a Spanish-language translation of the liturgical music document passed by the body of Bishops at its November 2007 plenary meeting. The resulting text, *Cantemos Al Señor: La Música en el Culto Divino*, was given a final review and approved by the Subcommittee. The text will soon be published by USCCB Publishing in a Spanish-only edition and made available for purchase.

### **Misal Romano**

Following the promulgation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*, in 2002, each Episcopal Conference was tasked with creating a vernacular translation to be used in their respective country. The third edition of the English-language *Roman Missal* is being prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). Each Spanish-speaking country is in the process of producing its own translation which must then be approved by the respective Episcopal Conference and granted *recognitio* by the Holy See.

The Subcommittee on Hispanics and the Liturgy devoted much time during the meeting to the consideration of the text of the Spanish-language *Misal Romano* for use in the dioceses of the United States of America. The members examined in detail sample pages of text of the Order of Mass from the *Misal Romano* approved for use in other countries, as well as sections from the Proper of Seasons which already existed in draft form in Spanish.

Next, a review the texts of U.S. feasts was undertaken, as these will also be prepared in Spanish for inclusion in the *Misal Romano*. Finally, the Subcommittee discussed the compilation, already underway, of texts of the major feasts of Spanish-speaking countries for use in proposed appendix to the *Misal Romano* for the dioceses of the United States of America.

The Subcommittee will meet again in January 2009.

## USCCB Establishes Task Forces to Address Priorities

During the November 2007 USCCB plenary meeting, the body of Bishops decided to reorganize the committees and offices of the Conference, and establish five priority goals that would be addressed between 2008 and 2011. To further that goal, five Task Forces have been established that center on those major priorities. The Task Forces cover 1) faith formation focused on sacramental practice, 2) the implementation of the pastoral initiative on marriage, 3) priestly and religious vocations, 4) the life and dignity of the human person, and 5) the recognition of cultural diversity with special emphasis on Hispanic ministry in the spirit of *Encuentro 2000*.

Each Task Force – composed of Bishops from already existing USCCB standing Committees – will determine what goals and objectives the USCCB will work on for the next three years. Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., USCCB President, has appointed the Bishop-Chairmen of each Task Force; in addition, staff coordinators and support staff have been assembled from the staff of the Conference.

The Committee on Divine Worship is contributing its members, staff, and resources to four of the five Priority Task Forces, as shown in this table:

<b>PRIORITY TASK FORCE</b>	<b>Divine Worship Committee Member</b>	<b>Divine Worship Secretariat Staff</b>
Faith Formation & Sacramental Practice	Archbishop Wilton Gregory	Msgr. Anthony Sherman
Strengthening Marriage	Archbishop George Niederauer	Rev. Richard Hilgartner
Promotion of Vocations	Bishop Kevin Farrell	Sr. Doris Turek, SSND
Life and Dignity of the Human Person	<i>No representative</i>	<i>No representative</i>
Recognition of Cultural Diversity	Bishop Octavio Cisneros	Sr. Doris Turek, SSND

Of special interest is the Task Force on Faith Formation and Sacramental Practice, chaired by Bishop J. Peter Sartain of Joliet, Illinois. Many Bishops have expressed a desire to develop a comprehensive plan to address the challenge of implementing the translation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal*. This desire has manifested itself in a primary goal of the Task Force: to facilitate the introduction, reception, and implementation of the English translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia* to the Church in the United States. The next step of this Task Force will be to align this goal with measurable objectives and strategy.

The energies and assets of the various Conference offices will be available to help implement this goal. At the same time, the Conference is working together with the many resources being prepared by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions as well as by an international group seeking to produce materials that could be used by any English-speaking Conference of Bishops. It is hoped that all of this will provide sufficient materials to successfully implement the new translation.

**NEW FROM THE UNITED STATES  
CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

**Sing to the Lord**  
*Music in Divine Worship*  
*Pastoral Liturgy Series 4*  
*Sing to the Lord* addresses the practical concerns of pastoral leaders—appropriate ministers, cultural diversity, instrumentation, formation, acoustics, and copyrights. It also outlines considerations for preparing and judging music for worship with an in-depth review of the musical structure of Liturgy.  
 No. 7-022, 96 pp., \$9.95



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**2010 Liturgical Calendar On Sale**

The 2010 edition of the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* is available for purchase from the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship. The calendar lists each day’s celebration, rank, liturgical color, Lectionary citations, and Psalter cycle.

Calendars – either in 8½ x 11” paperback or e-mailed in Microsoft Word format – are on sale for \$10.00 each. Checks are to be made out to the “Committee on Divine Worship” and mailed to the Secretariat at 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington DC 20017, ATTN: Sr. Clelia Cecchetti, SP.