



# NewsLetter

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## **Pope Francis Adds Sts. John XXIII and John Paul II to Calendar**

Following his canonization of Pope Saints John XXIII and John Paul II, Pope Francis has decided to inscribe them both into the General Roman Calendar. A decree to this effect was issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on May 29, 2014.

St. John XXIII will be celebrated as an Optional Memorial on October 11, while St. John Paul II will be inscribed on October 22, also as an Optional Memorial. Because the latter feast has been on the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America since 2012, there will be no change in that regard.

The Holy See also published in Latin and Italian the proper liturgical texts for St. John XXIII's memorial. Due to the late notification concerning this inscription, and the need to translate and approve authoritative English and Spanish texts, it will not be possible to use the proper texts when celebrating the Optional Memorial of St. John XXIII in English or Spanish in 2014. Until these texts are approved, liturgical ministers should use the Mass formularies available in the *Roman Missal* under the Common of Pastors: For a Pope.

## **CDWDS Confirms Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos for U.S. Proper Calendar**

On July 25, 2014, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments confirmed the inscription of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos into the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States (Prot. n. 654/13/L), as well as the Latin and English liturgical texts that accompany his Optional Memorial on October 5 (Prot. n. 447/14). Liturgical texts in Spanish are awaiting approval and will follow in due course.

For the benefit of our readers, Bl. Francis' biography in the Liturgy of the Hours is reprinted below; the other liturgical texts are available at [www.USCCB.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/blessed-francis-xavier-seelos.cfm](http://www.USCCB.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/blessed-francis-xavier-seelos.cfm):

### **Biography**

Born in Füssen, Germany in 1819, he entered the diocesan seminary and, coming to know the charism of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, joined it and was sent to North America. Ordained a priest in 1844, he began his pastoral ministry in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as assistant pastor of his confrere Saint John Neumann, serving also as Master of Novices and dedicating himself to preaching. He became a full-time itinerant missionary preacher, preaching in both English and German in a number of different states. He died in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 4, 1867.

## **Implementation Delayed for the *Leccionario de la Misa***

The decree of publication for the *Leccionario de la Misa*, issued on February 2, 2014 (and published in the January 2014 *Newsletter*) has been rescinded to allow for additional corrections to the text. Since *recognitio* was granted to the text by the Holy See in June 2013, numerous difficulties with the text of the *Leccionario* have been discovered and need to be resolved before publication can proceed. A new implementation date will be given as soon as possible.

## **September 2014 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish**

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish held its biannual meeting at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, DC on September 11-12, 2014. Members and consultants present were offered reports by Bishop Octavio Cisneros, Subcommittee Chairman, and Sylvia Sánchez, Multicultural Specialist of the Secretariat of Divine Worship. Rev. Michael J. Flynn, Executive Director of the Secretariat, welcomed the Subcommittee with “words of solidarity.” Due to his years of pastoral experience in Florida, he realizes and appreciates the importance of Hispanic Liturgy for the Church in the United States. He remarked, “To have a glimpse into the future of liturgy for Hispanic Catholics, I rely on the expertise, wisdom, and experience of this group.”

### ***Misal Romano, Tercera Edición***

Subcommittee members reviewed and approved a number of images of artwork that will be included in the future U.S. edition of the *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición*. In addition, the report by Ms. Sánchez noted the completion of the first phase of chant settings for the *Misal Romano*, namely the Prefaces. Phase two of the project – preparing chant settings for the Order of Mass and the three Nuptial Blessings – is underway.

Discussion continued from the previous meeting about elaborating a catechetical strategic plan on the liturgy, and more specifically on the Mass. Besides the videos that are being planned, the Subcommittee will invite the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia* (National Hispanic Institute of Liturgy) to collaborate on this endeavor.

### **Other Liturgical Books**

In light of the possibility of a future revision of the English *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA), the Subcommittee briefly examined its Spanish counterpart, the *Rito de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos* and agreed to discuss the text at the next meeting in January 2015. The 2014 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions will be dedicated to the topic of the RCIA, and in particular, the future of both the U.S. adaptations to the ritual text and the *National Statutes on the Catechumenate*. The Subcommittee also agreed unanimously to undertake again the goal of issuing the *Bendicional* (Book of Blessings) with proper blessings for the United States, following the last communication with the Holy See on this matter in 2013.

The Subcommittee will next meet on January 27-28, 2015 in San Antonio, Texas.

## **Bishop Daniel E. Thomas Appointed 8th Bishop of Toledo**

On August 26, 2014, Pope Francis appointed Bishop Daniel E. Thomas, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, as the eighth Bishop of Toledo. He succeeds Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, who was installed as Archbishop of Hartford in December 2013.

Bishop Thomas, who has served as a member of the Committee on Divine Worship since November 2010, will be installed as Bishop of Toledo on October 22 at the Cathedral of Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. The Committee on Divine Worship congratulates Bishop Thomas on his new episcopal ministry, and wishes him every prayer and blessing as he transitions into his new responsibilities.

## The Role of Instituted Ministers in the Liturgical Life of the Church

Along with the ordained clergy – bishops, priests, and deacons – whose special responsibility is to preside or to assist at liturgical celebrations, there are also numerous duties for lay ministers spelled out in the various liturgical rites and their introductions. This distribution of ministries is by no means a mere concession to the laity, but flows from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which stated, “In liturgical celebrations each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 28). Although ordained ministers have indispensable roles to play, lay persons also have specific roles in the celebration of the liturgy. In addition to full and active participation in the many portions of the liturgy assigned to the assembled faithful as a whole, they also participate either through the instituted ministries granted to them by the bishop, or through ministries deputed to them by the pastor or bishop. Offered here is some background and reflection on the formally instituted ministries of lector and acolyte.

The ministries of lector and acolyte are mentioned even in ancient liturgical texts, but our present understanding of them as formal, instituted ministries dates from the 1972 *motu proprio* of Pope Paul VI entitled *Ministeria quaedam* (MQ). In this important document, Paul VI instituted a new framework for the sequence of ministries leading to Holy Orders, a structure which is still in place today. One of the most significant changes stipulated in MQ was to define the beginning of the clerical state as the ordination to the diaconate. The *motu proprio* further states that the former minor orders would henceforth be called ministries, and that the major order of the subdiaconate was to be discontinued in the Latin Church. Its former liturgical functions were distributed between the ministries of lector and acolyte. Recipients of the ministries of lector and acolyte are no longer ordained, they are instituted.

Since service in these instituted ministries is a prerequisite for ordination, the majority of instituted lectors and acolytes are either seminarians or candidates for the permanent diaconate. Nonetheless, the instituted ministries “may be committed to lay Christians; hence they are no longer to be considered as reserved to candidates for the Sacrament of Orders” (MQ, art. 3). The local ordinary may receive petitions from aspirants wishing to embrace these instituted ministries. Aspirants must be of a suitable age and possess right qualities (as determined by the various Conferences of Bishops), and must have “a firm will to give faithful service to God and the Christian people” (MQ, art. 8). Indeed, though lectors and acolytes principally serve in the liturgy, it is clear from the relevant documents that both ministries have a missionary dimension of service to the whole People of God and to others interested in the faith.

### Instituted Acolytes

“The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the Priest and Deacon. It is his place principally to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an extraordinary minister” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM], no. 98). In the absence of a priest or deacon, he may also be delegated to expose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration and replace it in the tabernacle afterward, although he may neither bless the people with the Eucharist, nor incense the Eucharist (see Introduction to *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, no. 26). Acolytes may also instruct other members of the faithful (such as altar servers) to help assist the priest and deacon by carrying the processional cross, candles, Missal, etc. (see MQ, art. 6). On a deeper level, through their attentiveness and constant study of the matters of divine worship, acolytes are called to foster “a sincere love for Christ’s Mystical Body, God’s holy people, and especially for the weak and the sick” to whom they bring the Holy Eucharist when illness prevents the sick from coming to the church themselves (*Institution of Acolytes*, no. 4; see MQ, art. 6).

At Mass, the acolyte may carry the cross in procession; he then either places it on or near the altar as the proper altar cross, or otherwise puts it away in an appropriate place. Since the acolyte’s principal duty is to assist the priest and deacon in any way required, he should be seated in the sanctuary where he may easily approach them (see GIRM, nos. 188-189). After the Universal Prayer, it is for the acolyte to prepare the altar with the Missal, chalice, and other vessels; to assist the priest in receiving the gifts of bread and wine; and to hand the thurible to the priest if incense is used, and afterward to incense the priest and the assembled faithful (see GIRM, no. 190).

The instituted acolyte may be designated as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, should there not be enough priests and deacons to distribute the Eucharist. If Communion is given under both kinds, the acolyte may minister the Precious Blood in the absence of a deacon (see GIRM, no. 191).

Following the distribution of Holy Communion, he may assist the priest or deacon in purifying the sacred vessels. In the absence of a deacon, the acolyte may be designated to purify the vessels himself, though this is done at the credence table, not at the altar. At the end of Mass, the acolyte processes with the priest and other ministers in the same order and manner as at the entrance (see GIRM, nos. 192-193).

### **Instituted Lectors**

An instituted lector “proclaim[s] the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the Universal Prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings” (GIRM, no. 99). Outside the liturgy itself, they help train other lay readers to proclaim the readings at Mass, “instruct children and adults in the faith, and prepare them to receive the Sacraments worthily” (*Institution of Lectors*, no. 4). Lectors must “meditate assiduously on Sacred Scripture” (MQ, art. 5), even outside liturgical settings; they must be nourished by the living Word of God, “grow in its wisdom and faithfully proclaim it to [the] people” (*Institution of Lectors*, no. 6).

For the celebration of Mass, instituted lectors (or any other lay reader) may walk in front of the priest, and carry the *Book of the Gospels* in the absence of a deacon (see GIRM, no. 194). Approaching the altar with the priest and other ministers, the lector makes a profound bow with the other ministers (or they genuflect if the tabernacle is in the sanctuary). If the lector is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, however, he approaches the altar without bowing or genuflecting and places the book on it. As a sign of the ministry given to him by the bishop, an instituted lector “takes his own place in the sanctuary with the other ministers” (GIRM, no. 195).

At the Liturgy of the Word, instituted lectors go up to the ambo and proclaim the readings that precede the Gospel. When a psalmist or cantor is not present, they may also lead the recitation or singing of the Responsorial Psalm. In the absence of a deacon, lectors also read the petitions of the Universal Prayer, following the introduction by the priest. Finally, at a Mass where there is no singing, the lector may recite the Entrance and Communion Antiphons from the *Roman Missal* if the faithful do not do so themselves (see GIRM, nos. 196-198).

### **Vesture**

When serving in the liturgy, not only acolytes but also instituted lectors wear the alb, the “sacred garment common to all ordained and instituted ministers of any rank” (GIRM, no. 336). An often-overlooked provision from the Introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass* even suggests a possible distinction in vesture between instituted and non-instituted readers: “During the celebration of Mass with a congregation, a second priest, a deacon, and an instituted [lector] must wear the distinctive vestment of their office when they go up to the ambo to read the word of God. Those who carry out the ministry of reader just for the occasion or even regularly may go to the ambo in ordinary attire, but this should be in keeping with the customs of the different regions” (no. 54).

### **Conclusion**

Being formally instituted by the bishop into the ministry of lector or acolyte entails a special commitment to and training for that ministry, and the ministry should be exercised regularly by the recipient. The presence of instituted ministers, however, is not a prerequisite for the celebration of the Mass. The GIRM and other documents are clear that other appropriately trained men and women may be deputed as readers, altar servers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion when the need arises (see GIRM, nos. 100, 101, and 162). Although a few important functions are reserved for the instituted acolyte, and there may be a distinction of vesture between instituted and non-instituted readers, the vast number of non-instituted ministers, legitimately and effectively assisting in various liturgical roles, are a living reflection of the liturgy as “an action of the whole Church, [in which] each one should carry out solely but totally that which pertains to him, in virtue of the place of each within the People of God” (GIRM, no. 5).