



NewsLetter

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USCCB Approves *Order of Baptism of Children, Second Edition*

At the November 2017 USCCB plenary meeting, the country's Latin Church bishops approved the Gray Book translation of the *Order of Baptism of Children*, prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), by a vote of 200-23 with three abstentions. The canonical vote is the first taken by the United States concerning an English-language liturgical book since the implementation of *Magnum principium*, Pope Francis' *motu proprio* that granted more authority to Conferences of Bishops in the translation of liturgical texts.

The *Order of Baptism of Children* is a translation of the Latin *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum, editio typica altera*. That ritual – published in 1973 and emended ten years later after promulgation of the current Code of Canon Law – contained minor textual variations from the first edition, most of which were incorporated into later reprints of the 1970 English translation. An emendation ordered by Pope Benedict XVI in 2013 (changing “the Christian community” in the Rite of Reception to “the Church of God”) is included for the first time. The updated translation, done in accord with the principles of *Liturgiam authenticam*, does not change the Baptismal ritual itself.

In addition to minor amendments to ICEL's translation proposed by the bishops for greater clarity in the text, five adaptations were approved. Three adaptations harmonize the English text with the Spanish-language *Ritual para el Bautismo de los Niños*, confirmed for the United States in 2008:

- Before the opening dialogue, a sample introductory monition was composed;
- After each Baptism, a sample acclamation was included in the text; and
- Rubrics were altered to better integrate past decisions of the U.S. bishops concerning permitted ritual variations (i.e., pastoral option for the omission of the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens and of the “Ephphatha” rite, the diocesan bishop's discretion on a more detailed renunciation of superstitions and other false worship, etc.).

Two new adaptations were also approved. As a second option to the standard Litany of the Saints with five names, an extended litany with the list of over 25 saints included in the Easter Vigil litany was incorporated in the Various Texts chapter and could be suitable for more solemn occasions. Finally, an appendix for the Baptism of children within Mass – using the instructions already given in the introduction to the liturgical book (see nos. 29-30) – was composed and inserted as a helpful guide to priests for celebrating the Baptism of one or more children during a Sunday or weekday Mass.

Both the *confirmatio* and the *recognitio* will be sought from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the *Order of Baptism of Children*: the former for the translation and the latter for the adaptations included for use in the United States.

November 2017 Meeting of the Committee on Divine Worship

The Committee on Divine Worship met in Baltimore, Maryland on November 11, 2017. Reports given by Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, Committee Chairman, and Rev. Andrew Menke, Secretariat Executive Director, focused on current and upcoming liturgical projects. The Committee also received reports from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*, with a particular emphasis on plans for catechetical efforts in 2018 for the implementation of the *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición* in the dioceses of the United States.

Implications of *Magnum principium*

Members engaged in a discussion period on the impact and future effects of the *motu proprio* of Pope Francis, *Magnum principium*. It was observed that the change to the Code of Canon Law effected by the *motu proprio* is concerned more with the approval process for liturgical translations than with the process or principles of translation, and that therefore the 2001 instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* would continue to provide the basic guidelines for liturgical translation. Even so, the bishops of the Committee agreed that the increased authority over liturgical translations given to the Conference, while providing more freedom to determine what is appropriate and possible in the vernacular in this country, will call for greater attentiveness on the part of the bishops. Close collaboration with the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) will now be more important than ever.

Other Matters

The Committee reviewed the modifications proposed by bishops of the USCCB to the ICEL Gray Book translation of the *Order of Baptism of Children, Second Edition*. Once these proposals were accepted or rejected, the text was ready for presentation on the first day of the USCCB plenary meeting. Members also discussed a proposal to include a renewal of promises by deacons at the annual Chrism Mass. While overwhelmingly grateful for the service deacons provide in Catholic parishes and institutions throughout the United States, the Committee noted that the Holy See has emphasized the priestly character of this renewal of promises, and decided that it would be better to not pursue an adaptation to the *Roman Missal* of this nature. Finally, the Committee gave preliminary approval to a National Shrine application from Florida, and approved a Secretariat proposal on the distribution of future ICEL Green Books to the Committee and the body of bishops.

The Committee's next meeting will be on June 12, 2018 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Theology in the *Praenotanda*: Blessings and Exorcism

Building upon the ancient axiom that there is a reciprocal relationship between prayer and belief (lex orandi, lex credendi) "Theology in the Praenotanda" – an ongoing series of the Secretariat of Divine Worship – explores that relationship as it is reflected in the Introductions of the liturgical rites of the Church. Each article of the series highlights some of the theological themes that are integral to the celebrations of the rites and provides examples of the way in which the relationship between belief and worship is seen in the text of the rites. Considered here are the praenotanda of the Book of Blessings and of Exorcisms and Related Supplications. While previous articles have examined different sacraments, blessings and exorcisms are examples of sacramentals, "sacred signs which bear a certain resemblance to the sacraments, and by means of which spiritual effects are signified and obtained through the prayers of the Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Glossary).

Book of Blessings (BB)

In the very act of creation, God “who is all good has made all things good, so that he might fill his creatures with blessings and even after the Fall he has continued his blessings as a sign of his merciful love” (BB, no. 1). Blessings are expressions of God’s ineffable goodness: “In a word, God bestows his blessing by communicating or declaring his own goodness” (no. 6). These blessings were and continue to be “a promise of divine help, a proclamation of [God’s] favor, [and] a reassurance of his faithfulness to the covenant he had made with his people” (no. 6). God is the source of all blessings and also the object of humanity’s offering of praise in acknowledgment for the blessings given to them. “Scripture attests that all the beings God has created and keeps in existence by his gracious goodness declare themselves to be blessings from him and should move us to bless him in return” (no. 7). “Blessings therefore refer first and foremost to God... they also involve human beings... [and they] apply to other created things through which, in their abundance and variety, God blesses human beings” (no. 7).

Humanity’s response of praise in the liturgies of the Church originate in the Spirit which Christ sent after his ascension. Through the Holy Spirit, the faithful are able “to offer the Father always and everywhere praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, and through the works of charity, to be numbered among the blessed in the Father’s kingdom” (no. 3). Through the sacraments and sacramentals of the Church the faithful communicate with God and express their confidence in his love and mercy (see no. 9). “The celebration of a blessing, then, prepares us to receive the chief effect of the sacraments and makes holy the various situations of human life” (no. 14). Because God’s blessings are upon all of creation, it is preferable that there be a gathering of the faithful present at the celebration of blessings to represent the wider Church that is part of the blessing and offering of praise to God, “since what is done on behalf of any group within the community redounds in some way to the good of the entire community” (no. 16).

This theological understanding of the relationship between God and humanity in blessings, that is, that God is the source of all blessings and humanity responds to God’s goodness with their offering of praise, is demonstrated in the Church’s celebrations of blessings. They do this by their structure, which typically has two parts. The first part of a celebration of a blessing is a proclamation of the word of God “to ensure that the blessing is a genuine sacred sign, deriving its meaning and effectiveness from God’s word that is proclaimed” (no. 21). The second part is the praise and petition of the faithful. “The central point of this part, then, is the blessing formulary itself, that is, the prayer of the Church, along with the accompanying proper outward sign” (no. 22). While there are many different types of blessings that address the various situations in the lives of the faithful, sometimes involving objects, places, or events, they are always a “means for us to profess that as we make use of what God has created we wish to find him and to love and serve him with all fidelity” (no. 12).

Exorcisms and Related Supplications (ERS)

Exorcisms, like blessings, are rooted in the goodness of God and his creation. “By his providence... God watches over and governs all things, which he has created (cf. Col 1:16), and he has made nothing that is not good” (ERS, no. 1). The original nature of the devil and other demons was good because they too were created by God, however, “because they used wrongly their natural excellence, and did not stand in the truth (cf. Jn 8:44), they did not change into a substance opposed to God, but withdrew from the Supreme Good, to whom they should have clung” (no. 1). In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council, “they became evil by their own action” (no. 1). Man was also created good, but “utterly abused the gift of his freedom, at the persuasion of the Evil One; through the sin of disobedience (cf. Gen 3; Rom 5:12) [humanity] was rendered subject to the power of the devil and of death, becoming a slave of sin” (no. 2).

Despite humanity’s tendency toward sin and the devil’s active opposition to God, the goodness of God persists and is expressed in the salvific activity of Jesus Christ. “By doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil (cf. Acts 10:38), [Jesus] made manifest his work of salvation so that he might free people from sin, from its consequences, and from the prime author of sin” (no. 4). The power and efficacy of Christ’s victory over death and the devil was continued in the ministry of the Apostles (see nos. 5-6). They received the Holy Spirit from Christ so that they too could “cast out unclean spirits” (no. 6). The Church continues this apostolic mission today because evil persists in tempting those living in the world: “sometimes there occur cases of particular torment or

possession which the devil exerts on someone who is a member of the People of God [...] This form of the devil's power over a human being differs from that power which in a human being derives from original sin, which is sin" (no. 10). In such cases, the Church's chief help "is the solemn Major Exorcism, also called 'great,' which is a liturgical action" (no. 11). It is "a petition in the category of sacramentals, and therefore a sacred sign by which 'effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, are signified and are obtained through the Church's intercession'" (no. 11, quoting *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 60). Thus, the Church acts on behalf of the faithful and does so "not in her own name but only in the name of God or of Christ the Lord, whom all things, even the devil and demons, must obey and be subject to" (no. 12). This is carried out by the bishop or by a priest who has been well-prepared for this ministry. Additionally, to best serve the needs of the faithful, the exorcist should consult those who specialize in spiritual, physical, and psychological health (see no. 17). "In every way he should examine precisely whether a person who is said to be afflicted by a demon truly is so afflicted" (no. 14).

In addition to the careful preparation of the exorcist, the rite of exorcism itself "should be performed in such a way that it manifest the faith of the Church and that no one can consider it as a magical or superstitious activity" (no. 19). The *praenotanda* itself aids in the authentic celebration of an exorcism by outlining the rite and the ways in which the symbols and prayers reflect the faith of the Church in God's goodness and love and demonstrate Christ's power over the devil (see nos. 20-30). For example, "[t]he rite begins with the sprinkling of holy water, by which, as a memorial of the purification received in Baptism, the troubled person is defended against the snares of the enemy" (no. 21), and "the Gospel is proclaimed as a sign of the presence of Christ, who through his own word in the proclamation of the Church brings healing to human infirmities" (no. 24). Other elements of a Major Exorcism include the invocation of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands, "so that the devil will depart from the one who through Baptism was made the temple of God" (no. 25), and formulas "by which God is petitioned" and "by which the devil, in the name of Christ, is directly adjured to withdraw from the afflicted person" (no. 28). Trusting in the goodness of God and in the victory of Christ's Paschal Mystery over the forces of evil, the Church offers to its members the ministry of exorcism, overcoming the evil that besets the world and drawing people back into God's embrace.

Exorcisms and Related Supplications Published by USCCB Communications

Exorcisms and Related Supplications, the first English translation of *De Exorcismis et supplicationibus quibusdam*, entered into liturgical use in the United States as of June 29, 2017, and has been published by USCCB Communications. Priest exorcists and other authorized persons may obtain the ritual edition through their Diocesan Bishop. Special order forms, requiring the bishop's signature, have been provided to their offices.

Appendix II of the ritual, "Supplications which May Be Used by the Faithful Privately in their Struggle Against the Powers of Darkness," has also been published as a small book entitled *Prayers Against the Powers of Darkness*, and is available to the public through Catholic bookstores or online at store.USCCB.org.

Powers Against the Powers of Darkness (\$6.95, 3¼" x 5¾") is a powerful treasury of prayers of praise and supplication to God, and prayers invoking the intercession of the saints. There are six sections: 1) Prayers to God; 2) Invocations to the Holy Trinity; 3) Invocations to our Lord Jesus Christ; 4) Invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary; 5) Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel; and 6) Litany. Although small in size, the prayer book will be of great assistance for Christians seeking deliverance and help strengthen their faith in God.

