



NewsLetter

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**Christ is Risen!
He is Truly Risen!
Alleluia!**

Happy Easter from the
Committee
on Divine Worship
and the Secretariat of
Divine Worship

April 2018 Meeting of National Liturgy Secretaries

The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) hosted a meeting of liturgy representatives from its member Conferences of Bishops from April 9-11, 2018 at its headquarters in Washington, DC, the first such gathering since February 2013. Delegates from seven of ICEL's eleven full-member Conferences attended, and the meeting was a welcome opportunity to share information and to join together in prayer.

Rev. Paul Turner of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, who serves as a facilitator for ICEL's translation work, began the meeting with a presentation on the rituals of Penance and Initiation. The process of preparing new editions of both books is underway, but Conferences will have to resolve important questions of how those rites are to be arranged, particularly with regard to situations where pastoral needs or practices are difficult to reconcile with the texts found in the typical editions. Participants shared reflections on the way the rites are celebrated in their own countries and discussed some of the challenges they face.

After the national secretaries provided summaries of recent projects and concerns in their respective countries, ICEL staff provided an overview of their work to translate the 291 Latin hymns found in the *Liturgy of the Hours* (which are also compiled in the lesser-known liturgical book called the *Liber Hymnarius*). The presentation included a "sing-along" to demonstrate the way the translations can be used with both traditional Gregorian melodies and other metrical hymn tunes.

Participants then discussed the implications of *Magnum principium*, the *motu proprio* concerning liturgical translations issued by Pope Francis in 2017. The secretaries expressed a clear sense of gratitude for the work of ICEL, largely because of the complexity of the task of translating liturgical texts, though several representatives noted that the bishops of their Conferences now feel more freedom to modify the translations prepared by ICEL. While it remains to be seen how things will develop in the coming years, it seems possible that English-language liturgical texts will tend to originate from the same base translation, but then undergo more modification locally than has been the case until now, to suit the preferences of the bishops of the various Conferences.

Several other topics were also discussed, including best practices in working together and sharing ideas, questions about electronic media and copyright, and practical logistical arrangements between the Conferences and ICEL.



Left to right: Rev. Daniel Murphy (Ireland), Rev. Randy Stice (U.S.), Rev. Terrence Fournier (Canada), Mr. Martin Foster (England and Wales), Rev. Andrew Menke (U.S.), Sr. Phuthunywa Siyali (South Africa), Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth (ICEL), Rev. Luke Melcher (ICEL), Rev. Paul Gunter OSB (England and Wales), Dr. Paul Taylor (Australia), Rev. Stephen McGrattan (Scotland), and Mr. Peter Finn (ICEL).

“Dominical Letters” in the Liturgical Calendar

For centuries, liturgical calendars have included “dominical letters” (or “Sunday letters”), a feature that helps determine the day of the week a celebration occurs in a given year. In an age of easy access to perpetual calendars in electronic formats, this feature might seem antiquated or even obsolete, but knowing how they work can still be useful at times, and in some cases might even provide a quicker way to find answers to questions about upcoming dates of celebrations. To better facilitate their use, the dominical letters have been included in the General Roman Calendar in the new *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición* for the United States.

The “Table of Principal Celebrations of the Liturgical Year,” which comes immediately after the Calendar in the Missal, provides dates for important celebrations for years to come; the table in the *Misal Romano* runs through 2047. The first column in the table (see next page) lists the year, the second gives the dominical letter, the third indicates the cycle of the Sunday Gospel readings, and subsequent columns list the dates of important celebrations. Focusing on the dominical letters in the second column, one can see that the listing cycles the letters “A” through

“g” in reverse order, with two letters provided for every leap year (which are marked with an asterisk in the first column). For example, the dominical letter is “g” in 2018, and in 2020 they will be “e” and “d.”

Turning to an example of one of the months in the General Roman Calendar, one can see that the month of July in the *Misal Romano* (see below) has four columns of entries: the dominical letters first, followed by the date according to the ancient Roman system, then the modern date in Arabic numerals, and finally the name of the liturgical celebration and its rank.

TABLA TEMPORAL DE LAS PRINCIPALES CELEBRACIONES					
Año	Letra dominical	Ciclo dominical	Miércoles de Ceniza	Pascua	Ju As
2016*	c b	C-A	10 de febrero	27 de marzo	5 de abril
2017	A	A-B	1 de marzo	16 de abril	25 de mayo
2018	g	B-C	14 de febrero	1 de abril	10 de mayo
2019	f	C-A	6 de marzo	21 de abril	30 de mayo
2020*	e d	A-B	26 de febrero	12 de abril	21 de mayo
2021	c	B-C	17 de febrero	4 de abril	13 de mayo
2022	b	C-A	2 de marzo	17 de abril	26 de mayo
2023	A	A-B	22 de febrero	9 de abril	18 de mayo

This listing of the dominical letters within the calendar allows a person to see at a glance where Sunday falls in a given year. For example, since the dominical letter for 2018 is “g,” every entry in the calendar with that letter in the first column is a Sunday. Thus, both July 1 and July 8 fall on a Sunday in 2018. This makes it easy to see that the celebration of Saint Junípero Serra on July 1 will be impeded this year. Knowing the dates of the Sundays, it is also easy to see that the Feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle will fall on a Tuesday this year, with Independence Day following on a Wednesday.

In leap years, when two dominical letters are given in the table of celebrations, the first letter is accurate for the months of January and February, and the second is accurate from March 1 through the end of the year. (Although February 29 has four proper entries in the *Roman Martyrology*, it does not appear in the calendar; its day of the week can be found after identifying the Sunday in February that is nearest to it.)

Although information such as this can easily be found on the Internet or with a cell phone’s perpetual calendar, a deeper understanding of the workings of the liturgical calendar can make searches easier when digital tools are not available. Knowing how dominical letters work can also be a useful tool for those who are tasked with planning ahead, as when preparing a calendar of events in a Catholic school, or in a diocese or a parish.

CALENDARIO ROMANO GENERAL					
JULIO					
g	Cal.	1	[USA] San Junípero Serra, presbítero		
A	VI	2			
b	V	3	SANTO TOMÁS, APÓSTOL		Fiesta
c	IV	4	[USA] Día de la Independencia de los Estados Unidos		
d	III	5	San Antonio Zacarías, presbítero [USA] Santa Isabel de Portugal		
e	Vísp.	6	Santa María Goretti, virgen y mártir		
f	Nonas	7			
g	VIII	8			
A	VII	9	Santos Agustín Zhao Rong, presbítero, y compañeros, mártires		
b	VI	10			
c	V	11	San Benito, abad		Memoria
d	IV	12			

Questions and Answers

A wide variety of liturgical questions come to the Secretariat of Divine Worship on a regular basis, from dioceses, parishes, and individuals. As circumstances allow from time to time, selected questions and answers are reprinted below for the benefit of our readers. (Questions as originally submitted may be edited for clarity.)

Good Friday adoration of the Holy Cross: corpus or no corpus? The Missal would seem to indicate a plain cross. Why not a crucifix?

There is no liturgical legislation that unequivocally answers this question. It is worth noting that in describing the cross placed on or near the altar, the 1975 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) said only a cross (*crux*), while the 2002 GIRM added “with a figure of Christ crucified” (*crux cum effigie Christi crucifixi*) in no. 117 and no. 308. The *Ceremonial of Bishops* also specifies for the procession “an acolyte carrying the cross, with the image to the front” (no. 128). The “Order for the Blessing of a New Cross for Public Veneration” affirms that “the ‘figure of the precious, life-giving cross of Christ’ is preeminent, because it is a symbol of the entire paschal mystery” (*Book of Blessings*, no. 1233). It also seems to suggest that the cross to be blessed will be the one “presented to the faithful for their adoration” on Good Friday (no. 1234), and that “the cross should preferably be a crucifix, that is, have the corpus attached” (n. 1235). Finally, *Built of Living Stones* observes, “The cross with the image of Christ crucified is a reminder of Christ’s paschal mystery. It draws us into the mystery of suffering and makes tangible our belief that our suffering when united with passion and death of Christ leads to redemption” (no. 91). For these reasons, it seems that although there is no definitive support for either position, a stronger case can be made for a cross with a corpus.

We are about to dedicate our new church, and the question of candles arose. Is there a mandatory percentage of beeswax to be in candles used for liturgy?

Prior to the Second Vatican Council altar candles were to be composed primarily or to a significant extent of pure beeswax, with the exact percentage determined by the diocesan bishop. The candle itself was given a mystical meaning: the beeswax symbolized the pure flesh Christ received from his Virgin Mother, the wick symbolized his soul, and the flame his divinity. However, the current legislation is less specific. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) does not address the composition of altar candles. Conferences of Bishops possess the faculty to determine their make-up, but the USCCB has never employed this faculty to permit materials other than wax in the production of candles, so candles for use in the Mass and other liturgical rites must be made of wax and provide “‘a living flame without being smoky or noxious.’ To safeguard ‘authenticity and the full symbolism of light,’ electric lights as a substitute for candles are not permitted” (*Built of Living Stones*, no. 93). This also applies to the so-called electric vigil lights used for devotional purposes. A bishop would have the authority to make an exception to a living flame in cases of necessity, if, for example, a prison or a hospital had a policy absolutely forbidding open flames. It should be noted that while an oil lamp may be used to indicate the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle (see GIRM, no. 316), the U.S. bishops have never given permission for the use of oil lamps at the altar. Candles are symbols of the presence of Christ, the light of the world (Jn 8:12) and of Baptism by which we share in his light (Col 1:12), and are also signs of reverence and festivity.

When I receive Holy Communion on the tongue, should there always be a paten?

In both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite Mass, the Church assumes the use of the Communion plate; the paten is the vessel holding the hosts. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) includes the Communion plate in the list of things to be prepared for Mass (see no. 118c). The instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* also mentions it, citing GIRM, no. 118: “The Communion plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling” (no. 93). Neither document stipulates that it is to be used specifically or only when Holy Communion is received on the tongue.