



NewsLetter

COMMITTEE ON DIVINE WORSHIP

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Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila
Archbishop of Denver
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Archbishop Leonard P. Blair Assumes Committee Chairmanship

At the conclusion of the November 2019 USCCB plenary meeting, Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford began his Chairmanship of the Committee on Divine Worship. In his first act of business, he appointed five new members of the Committee:

- Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City;
- Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila of Denver;
- Bishop John T. Folda of Fargo;
- Auxiliary Bishop Timothy C. Senior of Philadelphia; and
- Auxiliary Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg of Seattle.

They will join three continuing members: Evansville Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, Burlington Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, and Monterey Bishop Daniel E. Garcia, who will continue to serve as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish. Concluding their service with the Committee on Divine Worship are Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, Bishop David A. Zubik of Pittsburgh, Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, and Auxiliary Bishop Andrzej J. Zglejszewski of Rockville Centre.

Archbishop Blair also appointed four new Committee consultants:

- Rev. Ryan T. Ruiz, professor of liturgy at Mount St. Mary's Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati, Ohio;
- Sr. Marilú Covani, SP, vice president of the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia* and former director of worship of the Diocese of San Bernardino;
- Mr. Christopher J. Carstens, director of sacred worship of the Diocese of La Crosse, editor-publisher of *Adoremus Bulletin*, and adjunct faculty member at the Liturgical Institute in Mundelein, Illinois; and
- Dr. Jennifer Donelson-Nowicka, associate professor and director of sacred music at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York.

Consultants continuing to advise the Committee are Abbot Primate Gregory J. Polan, OSB, of the Benedictine Confederation, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, of Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon, Rev. James W. Bessert, Chairman of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), and Mrs. Rita A. Thiron, FDLC Executive Director.

Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin, Rev. Jan Michael Joncas, Rev. Juan J. Sosa, and Sr. Janet Baxendale, SC have concluded their terms as consultants, and the Committee and the Secretariat thank them for their assistance and their generous service.

Notes on the 2020 Liturgical Year

The Secretariat of Divine Worship draws attention to various noteworthy celebrations of the new liturgical year for the benefit of diocesan liturgy offices, pastors, and other liturgical ministers. It is appropriate for the diocesan bishop, either personally or through his liturgy office, to issue an ordo or other memorandum of the proper celebrations and other liturgical idiosyncrasies of the year, including his judgment on which feast is to be celebrated when some follow consecutively, especially if he wishes to depart from the suggested Mass and Office guidelines presented here.

Holydays of Obligation – In the 2019-2020 liturgical year, three of the six feasts of precept approved for the United States will be observed as holydays of obligation: Nativity of the Lord (2019); Mary, the Holy Mother of God; and the Ascension of the Lord (for dioceses in the ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Omaha, and Philadelphia). The other three will not carry a special obligation to participate at Mass during the week, for three different reasons. The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2019) is transferred to Monday, December 9, but the obligation to attend Mass does not transfer (see below); the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary falls on a Saturday in 2020, and a 1991 NCCB decision regarding holydays of obligation provides that the obligation to attend Mass is abrogated when this celebration falls on Saturday or Monday; and All Saints already falls on a Sunday in 2020.

December 8-9 – The Second Sunday of Advent is celebrated on Sunday, December 8, including Evening Prayer I and II, and anticipated Masses on Saturday evening, December 7. As a result, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transferred to Monday, December 9, although the obligation to attend Mass does not transfer as well. The optional Memorial of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin is not celebrated in 2019.

February 2 – The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord falls on a Sunday in 2020, and its celebration outranks a Sunday in Ordinary Time. As a reminder, the *Roman Missal* calls for the blessing of candles before Mass, with either a procession or solemn entrance occurring after the blessing. The faithful should be encouraged to bring candles to be blessed at the Mass. A parish can distribute candles to those in attendance, and the candles intended for the use of the church throughout the year might also be blessed at Masses on this day.

June 1 – Not long after the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church was inscribed in the General Roman Calendar (in 2018) for observance on the Monday after Pentecost, a notification from the Holy See indicated that this celebration will outrank any other obligatory Memorial that happens to coincide with it in a given year. Therefore, the Memorial of Saint Justin, Martyr, is not celebrated in 2020. Information on the Marian celebration, including proper readings, remains available at [USCCB.org/motherofthechurch](https://www.usccb.org/motherofthechurch).

June 29 – The Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles, falls on a Monday in 2020. In view of previous guidance giving preference to feasts of precept (especially the Sunday liturgy), Masses on Sunday evening, June 28, should be for the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time; however, there is a preference for Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity instead of Evening Prayer II of the Sunday, though there is pastoral discretion in the matter.

July 22, October 11, and October 22 – As mentioned in the November 2019 *Newsletter*, the Preface for the Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene on July 22 has been confirmed and is to be used beginning in 2020. The definitive translation of the proper texts for Saint John Paul II are also used if celebrating his optional Memorial on October 22. Information is available at [USCCB.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar](https://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar). (Although the optional Memorial of St. John XXIII on October 11 is not celebrated in 2020 since it falls on a Sunday, his new proper texts are also available at the link above for future reference and use.)

December 12 – Note that in the next liturgical year (2020-2021), the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe will fall on a Saturday (December 12, 2020), and will thus be celebrated liturgically only until the beginning of the Third Sunday of Advent that evening (that is, anticipated Masses and Evening Prayer I are of the Sunday).

Pope Francis Establishes Yearly January Observance: “Sunday of the Word of God”

Pope Francis issued the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Aperuit illis* on September 30, 2019, establishing that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, celebrated yearly between January 21-27, be observed also as the “Sunday of the Word of God.” Building upon the legacy of both the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (1965), and Pope Benedict XVI’s Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (2010), the Holy Father’s initiative seeks to continually foster the Church’s love of Sacred Scripture while strengthening its efforts in catechesis, evangelization, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

The pope offers some suggestions on how a diocese or parish community could observe the Sunday of the Word of God (no. 3):

The various communities will find their own ways to mark this *Sunday* with a certain solemnity. It is important, however, that in the Eucharistic celebration the sacred text be enthroned, in order to focus the attention of the assembly on the normative value of God’s word. On this Sunday, it would be particularly appropriate to highlight the proclamation of the word of the Lord and to emphasize in the homily the honor that it is due. Bishops could celebrate the Rite of Installation of Lectors or a similar commissioning of readers, in order to bring out the importance of the proclamation of God’s word in the liturgy. In this regard, renewed efforts should be made to provide members of the faithful with the training needed to be genuine proclaimers of the word, as is already the practice in the case of acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Pastors can also find ways of giving a Bible, or one of its books, to the entire assembly as a way of showing the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with sacred Scripture, especially through the practice of *lectio divina*.

The USCCB maintains two websites related to the Bible: USCCB.org/bible provides the daily Mass readings and other reflections, and Catholic.bible contains additional resources for this new observance, focusing on the role of the Word of God in prayer, in ecumenical initiatives, in catechesis, and in the liturgy. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col 3:16), not just for one Sunday but in every moment of life.

Subcommittee Member Appointed Coadjutor Bishop of San Bernardino

On December 2, 2019, Pope Francis appointed Auxiliary Bishop Alberto Rojas of Chicago, a member of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, as the Coadjutor Bishop of San Bernardino. Bishop Rojas has served on the Subcommittee since 2013 and will begin his ministry as Coadjutor Bishop in February 2020. The Committee on Divine Worship, Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, and Secretariat of Divine Worship offer their congratulations and prayers to Bishop Rojas as he undertakes this new episcopal ministry in the Church.

Subscription Renewals for 2020 Newsletter

Renewal forms for the 2020 *Newsletter* will be mailed to current subscribers in January. Subscribers are asked to return the completed renewal form with their payment by March 31, 2020 to ensure continuing service. Please note that the six-digit account number assigned to each subscription should be used for any inquiries regarding the subscription. Anyone who has not received a renewal notice by February 18 should contact David Ringwald at (202) 541-3060 or by e-mail at dringwald@usccb.org.

Anyone wishing to subscribe to the *Newsletter* (available in hard-copy or e-mailed in Word or PDF formats) may contact the Secretariat of Divine Worship at 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017, ATTN: Newsletter Subscriptions. The cost of an individual subscription is \$15 per year. Back issues of the *Newsletter* from 2015 to 2019 are available at \$1 per issue. Special bulk order prices are available for orders of 20 copies or more.

Pope Francis Promotes Display of Nativity Manger Scenes in Apostolic Letter

On the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2019, Pope Francis issued a brief Apostolic Letter on the meaning and importance of the Nativity scene, entitled *Admirabile signum*. The Holy Father signed the letter during a visit to Greccio, Italy, where Saint Francis of Assisi set up the first such scene on Christmas Eve 1223. He encourages all to maintain or re-establish the tradition of setting up a crèche or manger scene, not only in families' homes and in churches, but in other suitable public settings like workplaces, hospitals, and town squares.

After recounting its history, the pope reflects on different aspects of the Nativity scene, including the background, figures, and joy in setting one up. He provides a beautiful summary of the manger scene's importance in no. 3 of the Apostolic Letter:

Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins.

When a Nativity manger scene is set up, it can be blessed using the appropriate order found in the U.S. edition of the *Book of Blessings* (nos. 1541-1569), either within Mass or in the home. A version of the blessing is also found in *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*. In setting up a Nativity scene, may all share in the spirit of Christmas and ponder anew the Holy Family: Saint Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the true Light of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.



MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR
from the Committee on Divine Worship
and the Secretariat of Divine Worship!