



NewsLetter

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Pope Francis Appoints New CDWDS Leadership

On May 27, 2021, Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Arthur Roche as the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, succeeding Robert Cardinal Sarah. Roche served most recently as the Congregation's Secretary since 2012. The Holy Father also named Bishop Vittorio F. Viola, OFM of Tortona, Italy, as the Congregation's new Secretary with the personal title of Archbishop, and Msgr. Aurelio García Macías as the new Undersecretary, with episcopal character.

Archbishop Roche's previous assignments have included General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (1994-2001), Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster (2001-2002), Coadjutor Bishop of Leeds (2002-2004), and Bishop of Leeds from 2004 until his first appointment to the Congregation in 2012. He also served as Chairman of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy from 2002 to 2012. During the implementation process for the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, Roche led a group of international scholars in producing various formation resources to explain and teach the new translation, including the multimedia DVD "Become One Body, One Spirit in Christ."

The Committee on Divine Worship and its Secretariat congratulate Archbishop Roche, Archbishop Viola, and Bishop-Elect García on their appointments and looks forward to a fruitful collaboration on ongoing liturgical projects and to continue deepening the liturgical renewal in the Church in the United States.

USCCB Approves Three Liturgical Items at Plenary Meeting

The Latin Church bishops of the USCCB approved three liturgical texts proposed by the Committee on Divine Worship at the June 2021 plenary meeting: final draft translations of the *Order of Penance*, a series of additional intercessions and Psalter concluding prayers for the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition*, and proper texts for the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. All three were prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) in accord with the translation principles of *Liturgiam authenticam*.

The *Order of Penance*, approved by a vote of 182-6 with two abstentions, contains no changes to the ritual of the Sacrament of Penance since its post-Conciliar *editio typica* in 1973, but is simply a retranslation. The Committee hopes that the preparation of this text will also provide the opportunity to reprint the ritual edition and to renew

catechetical efforts toward greater and more fruitful participation in this sacrament. Minor changes to the sacramental formula of absolution are included, subject to final approval by Pope Francis as part of the confirmation process. U.S. adaptations approved for the *Order of Penance* incorporate existing complementary norms regarding the confessional and general absolution. In addition, one older translation of the Act of Contrition has been added to the ritual edition as a new adaptation, as it is more familiar to many penitents in this country.

Progress continues on the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition* as a large volume of texts were approved by the bishops, 186-3 with one abstention. These are the intercessions for Morning and Evening Prayer in the Four-Week Psalter (volumes III and IV), Proper of Saints, Commons, and Office for the Dead. Concluding prayers in the Psalter during Ordinary Time and the optional shorter form of Evening Prayer intercessions found in Appendix II of the breviary were also approved. It is hoped that final votes, including on U.S. proper texts and adaptations, longer and shorter Scripture readings, and rubrics and errata, will be completed by 2023.

Finally, proper texts for the recently instituted Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church were approved by a vote of 188-2. Although this memorial's Mass formulary is already found in the *Roman Missal*, the ICEL fascicle included translations of texts for the *Liturgy of the Hours*, as well as citations for the *Lectionary for Mass* and the *Roman Martyrology*.

Texts will be submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the requisite confirmation before being published and implemented in the United States.

June 2021 Meetings of the Committee on Divine Worship

The Committee on Divine Worship met on June 4 and June 15, 2021 via an online meeting platform. The first meeting was to review proposed modifications to the three liturgical texts for the June 2021 USCCB plenary meeting – the *Order of Penance*, *Liturgy of the Hours: Additional Intercessions and Psalter Concluding Prayers*, and texts for the *Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church* – while the second meeting focused on an assortment of items.

At the June 15 meeting, members approved English and Spanish translations of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA), as rearranged from the *editio typica* to the format known in the United States since 1988. Also approved were the ICEL Gray Book translations of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside Mass*. All three texts will be submitted to the USCCB Administrative Committee for inclusion on the November 2021 plenary meeting agenda. Joining the OCIA are expected to be English and Spanish texts of the revised *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, proposed by the Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance. The text has been significantly reduced in size and focuses on specific issues that would constitute particular law for this country.

Members discussed the ongoing recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its past, present, and future impact on liturgical celebrations, as well as the recent *motu proprio* from Pope Francis on the inclusion of women in the instituted ministries of lector and acolyte. The Holy Father asked Conferences of Bishops to develop suitable guidelines for those ministries, and the Committee had an initial discussion on discerning the best way forward in working with other USCCB committees and offices toward this goal. Finally, the Committee was consulted by the Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance on recent developments concerning low-gluten altar breads used at Mass; reviewed proper texts for the proposed U.S. optional memorial of St. Teresa of Calcutta; and responded to a request for another proper calendar inscription, which was declined.

The Committee's next meeting, expected to be the first held in person in two years, is scheduled for November 14, 2021 in Baltimore.

Pope Francis Institutes New Lay Ministry of Catechist

On May 10, 2021, Pope Francis issued the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Antiquum ministerium* by which he formally established the lay ministry of Catechist in the universal Church.¹ As the Holy Father notes: “The ministry of Catechist in the Church is an ancient one.” The more recent history of this ancient ministry is critical to understanding its present renewal.

Various constitutions and decrees of the Second Vatican Council discuss this important service in the Church. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation notes that catechists “are legitimately active in the ministry of the word” and urges them to adhere to the Sacred Scriptures through meditation and study.² The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy directs that a shorter rite of Baptism be drawn up for use by catechists in the absence of priests and deacons,³ and the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church exhorts bishops to be diligent in their formation.⁴ The fullest treatment of this ministry is found in the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church: “In order to plant the Church and to make the Christian community grow, various ministries are needed, which are raised up by divine calling from the midst of the faithful congregation, and are to be carefully fostered and tended to by all. Among these are the offices of priests, of deacons, and of catechists.”⁵ The decree emphasizes the importance of initial and ongoing formation of catechists as well as the establishment of catechetical schools. Catechists who devote themselves entirely to this ministry deserve a just wage, and it is fitting for duly trained catechists to receive a canonical mission in a publicly celebrated liturgical ceremony.⁶

Following the Second Vatican Council, Saint Paul VI reformed the discipline of first tonsure, minor orders, and the subdiaconate in his Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ministeria quaedam* issued in 1972.⁷ The four minor orders of porter, lector, acolyte, and exorcist, open only to candidates for Holy Orders, were abrogated. In their place, Paul VI instituted the ministries of Lector and Acolyte, open not only to candidates for Holy Orders but also to lay men. In this letter, Paul VI also noted that Conferences of Bishops might establish other ministries if they judged them to be necessary or very useful for special reasons, explicitly naming the ministry of Catechist as one of several possibilities. At the November 1973 plenary meeting, the bishops of the United States resolved to formally request permission from the Apostolic See to establish the ministries of Catechist and music minister,⁸ and that request was sent to the Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship the following month. Meanwhile, a Vatican commission of experts and representatives from various dicasteries of the Roman Curia studied the question of non-ordained ministries in the Church, presenting its findings to the Congregation. In 1977 the Congregation informed Chicago Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, NCCB President, that the introduction of additional ministries was not yet opportune. The Congregation suggested there might be a possibility of an *ad experimentum* permission, but the NCCB did not subsequently make that request.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law treats catechists in its third book, “The Teaching Function of the Church.” According to Canon 785 §1: “Catechists are to be used in carrying out missionary work; catechists are lay members of the Christian faithful, duly instructed and outstanding in Christian life, who devote themselves to setting forth the teaching of the gospel and to organizing liturgies and works of charity under the direction of a missionary.” They should receive suitable formation in catechetical schools or under a missionary, and this formation is under the care of the local ordinary.⁹ In their service which flows from the Sacraments of Initiation, catechists are coworkers of the priestly order and are called to give witness in both word and life.¹⁰

¹ English translation: [Vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210510_antiquum-ministerium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210510_antiquum-ministerium.html).

² *Dei Verbum*, no. 25.

³ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 68.

⁴ See *Christus Dominus*, no. 14.

⁵ *Ad gentes*, no. 15. Paul VI speaks similarly in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, no. 73.

⁶ See *Ad gentes*, no. 17.

⁷ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 64 (1972), p. 529-540.

⁸ See February 1974 *Newsletter* (vol. 10, no. 2), found in *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter, 1965-2000*, pgs. 415-416.

⁹ See *Code of Canon Law*, can. 785 §2; 780.

¹⁰ See *Code of Canon Law*, can. 759; *Ad gentes*, no. 17.

In this latest development, Pope Francis has established a ministry of Catechist as one of the formal lay ministries of the Church open to both women and men, the others being Lector and Acolyte. These three ministries are received after careful discernment and diligent preparation through a public rite of institution. They are exercised in a stable way on behalf of the local Church by mandate and under the direction of the diocesan bishop. Just as not all those who proclaim the Scriptures in the liturgy or serve at the altar are called to the instituted ministries of Lector and Acolyte, so also with the ministry of Catechist. From among those already exercising catechetical ministry, some are called forth to the lay ministry of Catechist, especially those with special skill and experience, who exercise leadership among other catechists, and who have demonstrated a definite and stable commitment to this ministry.

Archbishop Salvatore (Rino) Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, and Bishop Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst, its delegate for Catechesis, presented the Apostolic Letter in a press conference on May 11, 2021. Archbishop Fisichella noted that the ministry of Catechist “must express itself not primarily in the liturgical sphere, but in the specific sphere of the transmission of the faith through proclamation and systematic instruction.” He noted that the rite of liturgical institution is a pontifical rite, namely, one carried out by a bishop.¹¹

While the ministry is not primarily liturgical, various rituals do call for the participation of a catechist. Any qualified catechist may carry out these roles, but an instituted Catechist could be particularly appropriate for this kind of ministry. For example, in the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*, a catechist teaches during the periods of inquiry and the catechumenate and takes part in the judgement prior to admission to the catechumenate and election (nos. 13, 16, 38, 43, 75, 121-122). At the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, catechists may join the celebrant in signing the forehead and the senses (nos. 55, 56), and at the Rite of Election, a catechist may present each group of catechumens to the bishop (no. 130). The bishop may depute catechists to carry out minor exorcisms and blessings during the period of the catechumenate (nos. 12, 34.5). Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death has been designed particularly for use by catechists and laypersons (no. 372). In the *Order of Confirmation*, a catechist may present candidates to the minister of Confirmation immediately following the Gospel (no. 20).

According to Canon 230 §3: “When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer Baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion, according to the prescripts of the law.” When ministers are absent or impeded and the need of the Church warrants it, catechists and other lay persons may preside at Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, the Liturgy of the Hours, penance services, blessings, and funeral rites.¹² They may even confer Baptism using the Order of Baptism of Children to Be Used by Catechists in the Absence of a Priest or Deacon.¹³ This rite omits the exorcism, the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens, the anointing with Chrism, and the “Ephphatha” rite. Once again, any qualified catechist might be deputed to provide these ministries, but an instituted Catechist, a proven leader who has been publicly recognized by the bishop, could be an especially appropriate person to assist pastors in this way.

It remains for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to promulgate the Rite of Institution of Catechists. In the meantime, those exercising catechetical ministry may be blessed using Chapter Four of the *Book of Blessings*, “Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists” (nos. 491-508), although this blessing does not constitute institution into the new liturgical ministry. Conferences of Bishops have also been charged with crafting a complementary norm that delineates the age, qualifications, formation, and appropriate exercise of this ministry; the appropriate Committees of the USCCB have begun work on this task.

¹¹ [PCPNE.va/content/pcpne/en/attivita/catechesi/AntiquumMinisterium/fisichella.html](https://www.pcpne.va/content/pcpne/en/attivita/catechesi/AntiquumMinisterium/fisichella.html).

¹² See Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (1988), no. 30-31, found in *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, appendix IV; see also *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1248 §2; *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, no. 258; *Rite of Penance*, no. 37, *Book of Blessings*, no. 18d; *Order of Christian Funerals*, no. 14.

¹³ See *Code of Canon Law*, can. 861 §2 and 230 §3; *Order of Baptism of Children*, nos. 132-156.