



NewsLetter

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**USCCB Secretariat of
Divine Worship**
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: (202) 541-3060
Fax: (202) 541-3088
www.USCCB.org

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USCCB Approves Five Liturgical Action Items at Plenary Meeting

At the November 2022 USCCB plenary meeting, the nation's Latin Church bishops approved five liturgical texts proposed by the Committee on Divine Worship: English and Spanish editions of the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care*; English and Spanish editions of *Lay Ministry to the Sick*, a new ritual book for use by lay ministers; and proper liturgical texts for the Optional Memorials of Pope St. Paul VI (May 29) and Our Lady of Loreto (December 10). These will all be sent to the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for confirmation.

Anointing of the Sick

The English translation of the new Anointing ritual, prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), was approved by a vote of 196-4 with one abstention. This text is expected to replace *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*, in use since 1983. Also approved was a Spanish translation, 200-3 with three abstentions, drawn from a base text confirmed for use in Mexico.

This new Anointing ritual matches its Latin typical edition much more closely than the current book. Even so, the bishops approved the addition of a few adaptations for the new U.S. edition. These include four appendices intended to make the book more pastorally useful to priests and deacons ministering to the sick: Model Rites for the Visitation of the Sick; the Shorter Order of Adult Initiation for use in danger of death (taken from the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* [OCIA]); Prayers after Death (from the *Order of Christian Funerals* [OCF]); and a brief Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum, and Anointing, to be used when a person's death is imminent.

Also notable in the new text is the absence of a chapter found in the current version of the book, "Anointing within a Hospital or Institution." This abbreviated ritual for Anointing is not present in the Latin edition, since it indicates that the rite to be used is determined not by the person's location but rather by the person's condition. Nevertheless, the USCCB approved an adaptation to the instructions that permits the priest to omit a few elements from the full Anointing rite when there is a large number of sick persons in separate rooms of a hospital or institution.

Lay Ministry to the Sick

The rubrics in the current edition of *Pastoral Care of the Sick* were designed to reflect the potential use of certain rites by clergy and lay ministers alike. However, the Latin edition is written with a presumption that the book will mainly be used by priests, only indicating in the introductory material which rites might also be used by deacons or lay ministers. ICEL's new translation follows the Latin edition in this regard, so the book is intended primarily for use by priests. But since some of the rites can clearly be delegated to lay ministers, the Committee proposed the creation of a separate ritual

edition containing excerpts from various liturgical books that a layperson might lawfully use in ministry to the sick. As mentioned in the June 2022 *Newsletter*, the book consists of texts drawn from the full Anointing rite (Visitation of the Sick and the Commendation of the Dying), the OCIA (Initiation in Danger of Death), the OCF (Prayers after Death), and *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* (Communion and Viaticum to the Sick). The English and Spanish texts were approved in identical votes of 196-8 with two abstentions.

Saint Paul VI and Our Lady of Loreto

Finally, the ICEL Gray Book of proper texts in honor of Pope Saint Paul VI and Our Lady of Loreto was unanimously approved by a vote of 204-0. These consist of Collect prayers and entries for the *Lectionary for Mass*, *Liturgy of the Hours*, and *Roman Martyrology*.

November 2022 Meeting of the Committee on Divine Worship

The Committee on Divine Worship met in Baltimore, Maryland on November 13, 2022. This was the final meeting under the chairmanship of Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, to whom all in attendance expressed their thanks and appreciation for his leadership the past three years, especially in the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. His report was supplemented by others from the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, Secretariat of Divine Worship, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, and *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*. Following the reports, members reviewed the modifications proposed to the Committee's action items at the November 2022 USCCB plenary meeting.

Discussion for much of the meeting was devoted to different aspects of the forthcoming *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition*. First, the Committee approved the final translation of the Ordinary section, prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). Located just before the four-week Psalter, this section includes all the directions and fixed texts for daily recitation of the Divine Office. Members then reviewed and approved a draft text of the breviary texts for saints and blessed on the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States. Finally, an update was given on the body of hymns for the *Liturgy of the Hours*, confirmed by the Holy See in May 2020. The Secretariat is currently finishing editorial work on a hymnal, to be titled *The Divine Office Hymnal*, and it will be published by GIA Publications in the first half of 2023 for optional liturgical use. Various editorial questions concerning the hymnal project were raised to the Committee's attention for their guidance.

The ICEL Gray Book of proper liturgical texts for the Optional Memorial of St. Faustina Kowalska (October 5) was approved by the Committee; this includes items for the *Liturgy of the Hours*, *Roman Missal*, *Lectionary for Mass*, and *Roman Martyrology*. The three liturgical texts approved by the Committee at the meeting will be submitted to the Administrative Committee for inclusion on the June 2023 plenary meeting agenda.

Finally, the Committee held brief general discussions regarding the current *Book of Blessings* and the development of proper liturgical calendars at the national and diocesan levels.

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2023 in Orlando, Florida.

Laura Bertone Elected FDLC Chairperson, Appointed Committee Consultant

During the 2022 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, held October 4-6 in New Orleans, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions' (FDLC) Board of Directors elected Ms. Laura Bertone as its new Chairperson for a one-year term. Bertone is the Director of the Office of Worship of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. As the position of FDLC Chairperson serves as an *ex officio* consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship, she was also immediately appointed to that role, succeeding Rev. James W. Bessert.

The Committee thanks Fr. Bessert for his contributions and congratulates Ms. Bertone on her election and welcomes her valuable input as a new consultant to its future deliberations.

Reflections on Part Three of *Desiderio desideravi*

In the third and final part of his Apostolic Letter *Desiderio desideravi*, Pope Francis examines the subject of the art of celebrating, or the *ars celebrandi*. He connects this topic with the one that immediately precedes it, formation by the liturgy through symbols. Celebrating with art preserves and deepens symbolic action and understanding, and in this way, all those who participate in the liturgy may be formed more deeply by it. He first treats the *ars celebrandi* in general, then that of the faithful, and finally that of the priest.

***Ars celebrandi* in General (nos. 48-50)**

The authentic meaning of the *ars celebrandi* is rooted in the liturgy's theological sense, especially as it is articulated in the early paragraphs of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a theme which the Holy Father discussed in the first section of this letter. The theological sense is the higher reality which the norm of the rite protects and serves. The intrinsic connection of the norm and the higher reality indicates that a celebration with art is more than the observance of rubrics and much less an imaginative creativity without rules.

The art of celebrating requires three different kinds of knowledge. First, to celebrate with art requires familiarity with the action that is taking place. In the liturgy, the Paschal Mystery of Christ is made present, and the Church participates in it and experiences it. To forget the Paschal Mystery is to forget the interior reality that the exterior sign expresses and the higher reality that the norm of the rite serves. Second, one must be familiar with the way that the Holy Spirit acts in the liturgy. Otherwise, the liturgy is encumbered by subjectivism, that is, the influence of individual tastes, and cultural elements foreign to authentic inculturation invade it. Finally, the *ars celebrandi* requires familiarity with symbolic language, how it works and what it brings about.

This art cannot be improvised but rather must be executed with care and diligent dedication. In addition to observing the norm of the rite and understanding the liturgy's theological sense, celebrating with art requires technical knowledge (one which is consistent with the rite and its theological sense), but most of all inspiration. When the art inspires, it possesses and shares itself with the one carrying it out, rather than the artist possessing and owning the art, imposing himself upon it. Again, the Holy Father cites Romano Guardini, who emphasizes the importance of the "great" in prayer, namely, existential engagement with the person of Christ, and the discipline, sacrifice, and serious work – carried out in obedience to the Church – that this kind of prayer requires, especially in light of the individualism and subjectivism of our contemporary context.

***Ars celebrandi* of the Faithful (nos. 51-53)**

The topic of the *ars celebrandi* applies not only to the ordained but also to all the baptized. In the liturgy, there are gestures and words which belong to the assembly, and through them, the assembly as one body participates in the celebration. By together doing the same gesture and speaking with one voice, the individual participants discover themselves as members of one body and grow in this membership. These words and gestures are not explanations of an ideal but actions that integrally form the faithful with certain feelings, attitudes, and behaviors.

Pope Francis singles out the symbolic gesture of silence and its place of "absolute importance." The faithful are called to enact this symbol with great care, which is not a refuge from the "distraction" of the liturgical act but a symbol of the multifaceted presence and action of the Holy Spirit who is forming the assembly. Through the silence of the Penitential Act, those gathered are led to sorrow for sin and a desire for conversion, and in the Liturgy of the Word, to hearing and prayer. The silence of the Eucharistic Prayer disposes the assembly to the reception of Holy Communion, and silence after Communion leads them to discover what the Holy Spirit would carry out in them.

The gestures and words of the liturgy, while frequently the same, are always new since they are carried out by individuals in the varied moments of their lives. When these gestures and words are done carefully, with attention to their exterior and interior, they have the capacity to mold the interior of the individual which then expresses itself exteriorly toward God and neighbor.

***Ars celebrandi* of the Priest (nos. 54-60)**

Ordained ministers must have a special concern for the *ars celebrandi* because of the great impact their manner of celebrating has upon the worship of a community. Ordained ministers are not immune from the individualism and

subjectivism of contemporary society, and these worldviews often express themselves liturgically, through the ordained minister's "heightened personalism" or "mania to be the center of attention." These styles are often pronounced when liturgical celebrations are transmitted via the internet, television, or radio, an area which, according to the Holy Father, needs further reflection.

Because of the unique role that priests carry out in Sunday Mass, the Holy Father directs his attention specifically to them in the rest of this section, though his remarks have significance for all the ordained. The ministry of presiding, the priest's unique participation in the celebration, is a fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which he received through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and this task is not only one that he carries out but also one that forms him. To preside with art requires that the priest realize that by the Lord's mercy he has become a "particular presence of the Risen Lord," one mode of Christ's presence which makes the Christian assembly distinct (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7). Because of this, his words and gestures have "'sacramental' weight," and through them, Christ expresses his eager desire to eat the Passover with the faithful, a desire which should overpower the priest. The priest himself has been plunged into the loving relationship between the heart of Christ and the hearts of the faithful. Understanding himself as a mode of Christ's presence – with the Lord in the "leading role" and not his "immaturities" – makes a liturgical "directory" unnecessary since he is aware of the liturgy's highest norm, namely, the reality of the Eucharist. Again, this act cannot be improvised but must be done with care.

The Blessed Virgin Mary has a special care for those who preside since she is the guardian of the gestures of Christ. She watched over those first Eucharistic celebrations, and as she protected the Word made flesh in her womb, so she continues to protect those gestures entrusted to the apostles which form the body of her Son in the womb of the Church. She not only cares for these gestures but also for the priests who repeat them. As a particular presence of the Risen Lord protected by the Virgin Mary, priests are also called to entrust themselves to the Holy Spirit who brings the gift received at ordination to fulfillment and allows them to exercise the ministry of presiding with fear, humility, and an eager desire to be consumed by those they serve.

The priest discovers the meaning of presiding at liturgy through participation in the celebration itself, through formation *by* the liturgy. Here, he is not mentally adhering to a concept but in a humble and self-effacing way immersing himself in the liturgy's words and gestures, and these form him. The words of the liturgy require an art of speaking, or *ars dicendi*, which attends to the different genres of the texts being proclaimed. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest recalls Christ's sacrifice before the Father in the name of his holy people so that this sacrifice may be made present. This remembrance demands that the priest join the offering of himself to Christ's offering and that he share in Christ's sacrificial desire for the people he serves.

Conclusion (nos. 61-65)

The Holy Father concludes his Apostolic Letter by encouraging all those responsible for the liturgical formation of the People of God to be rooted in the theological sense of the liturgy expressed in the first paragraphs of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The pope notes that the Church cannot return to that ritual expression which the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council called to be reformed. The reforms which followed the Council are rooted in the principles articulated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and were affirmed by Popes St. Paul VI and St. John Paul II. By revising the norms which govern the celebration of these former rites, Pope Francis is seeking to reestablish a unity of worship in the Church, so that she may lift up one and the same prayer in a variety of languages.

Pope Francis also offers two practical ways forward: the annual celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the liturgical year and its weekly celebration in the Sunday Eucharist. Participation in the liturgical year is an ongoing formation in the liturgy; it is an "itinerary" which the Church follows over and over again. The weekly celebration of the Paschal Mystery on Sunday is a gift that forms the Church through the word of Christ and communion in his Body and Blood, and for this reason, it is safeguarded by a precept. The celebration of Sunday and of the liturgical year are two practical ways to renew wonder at the theological sense of the liturgy, a vital liturgical formation, and a celebration with art. The Holy Father ends with a plea to leave behind polemics and tensions in order to listen to the Holy Spirit. He calls the Church to communion with one another, wonder at the presence of Christ's Paschal Mystery, and surrender to the embrace of Christ's eager desire – all under the watchful eyes of Mary.