



NewsLetter

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Archbishop Blair Retires as U.S. Bishop-Member of ICEL, Bishop Lopes Appointed to Succeed Him

On September 5, 2024, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, USCCB President, accepted the resignation of Hartford Archbishop Emeritus Leonard P. Blair, consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship, as the USCCB's bishop-member of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). For nearly 25 years, Archbishop Blair faithfully participated in the work of ICEL as a member of the Roman Missal Editorial Committee, the Editorial Committee, and as the USCCB's representative since 2020.

On the same day, the current Committee Chairman, Bishop Steven J. Lopes of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, accepted Archbishop Broglio's appointment as the USCCB's new bishop-member of ICEL.

September 2024 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish met at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, DC on September 11-12, 2024. The meeting was devoted to continued work on the future U.S. *Leccionario*, proper liturgical texts for new saints inscribed on the General Roman Calendar, and a translation review of the *Ritual de la Penitencia*.

With the majority of non-Scriptural elements for the U.S. *Leccionario* approved, attention turned to the ecclesiastical compositions – Psalm responses and Gospel acclamation verses originally composed in Latin or drawn from other liturgical books – with the goal of choosing those texts best suited or familiar to U.S. Spanish-speaking Catholics. The Subcommittee reviewed tables of existing translations from the Lectionaries approved for Mexico, Spain, and the Southern Cone countries, and made a number of selections and adaptations. Further work on the *Leccionario* now awaits the completion and approval of the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América*, which will serve as the Spanish-language liturgical Bible for the United States.

The Subcommittee reviewed and approved texts for the *Misal Romano* and *Liturgia de las Horas* of six liturgical celebrations inscribed in the General Roman Calendar since 2014: the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, St. Gregory of Narek, St. John De Avila, St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. Faustina Kowalska, and Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. These will be presented for canonical vote in November 2025, potentially with additional texts from other recently-inscribed celebrations.

Finally, members conducted a review of the *Ritual de la Penitencia*. They approved the preparation of a U.S. Spanish edition, drawing from elements of the existing translations from Mexico and Spain. A final translation may be prepared for canonical vote sometime in 2026.

The Subcommittee's next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2025 in Denver, Colorado.

Guidelines for the Use of Sacramental Wine in Catholic Masses at Correctional Institutions in the United States

At its September 2024 meeting, the USCCB Administrative Committee approved the following statement of the Committee on Divine Worship and authorized its publication. The text was originally written by the Bishops' Advisory Committee of the Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition and subsequently reviewed and amended by the Committee. This statement, together with two additional resource documents from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, is available at [USCCB.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-wine-correctional-institutions](https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-wine-correctional-institutions).

Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Valid celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) requires the use of a small amount of wine. It need only be consumed by the priest.

Inmates have no religious obligation to consume any of the consecrated wine which Catholics believe is the Precious Blood of Christ.

The priest offering the Mass must be allowed to consume a small amount of the Precious Blood (wine) as part of the religious ritual. The consumption of wine under these circumstances cannot be considered consumption of alcohol or ingestion of an illegal substance.

In some cases, chaplaincy staff will purchase sacramental wine using normal procurement procedures. In other cases, a visiting minister or religious volunteer with prior authorization will bring the required amount of wine for the priest's consumption during Mass.

In cases where chaplaincy staff is responsible for providing wine to visiting priests, two ounces of sacramental wine should be provided in a closed container for each scheduled Mass.

Wine is to be stored in a secure area inaccessible to inmates, behind two locked doors (e.g., in a locked safe, cabinet, or refrigerator within a locked office).

If an institution does not provide wine or store it on site, all wine brought into the institution by a visiting priest is to be consumed prior to his departure.

Training on the procedures for storing, using, and disposing of sacramental wine will be provided to Chaplaincy Services staff, custody staff, religious contractors, trainees, and volunteers. This will avoid the unnecessary confiscation of essential sacred elements.

Catholics believe that Christ is truly present in the Body and Blood of Christ, the bread and wine consecrated at Mass, and that Christ's presence endures after Mass. Since the Blood of Christ is not ordinarily stored after Mass, all of the Blood of Christ must be consumed by the priest at each Mass.

The Body of Christ (consecrated communion hosts) should be consumed at Mass but may be reserved in an appropriate tabernacle with a vigil light burning nearby to recall the sacred presence. Under no circumstances should consecrated hosts be mixed with hosts that have not been consecrated.

Any sacred altar vessels used to celebrate Catholic Mass are not to be used for other purposes or by other religious groups.

Implementing the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*: National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults

With the upcoming publication of the revised edition of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults in English and Spanish, the Newsletter continues the series exploring this ritual, in particular, what is new and which aspects are in need of renewal in pastoral practice over the last forty years. This third article explores the National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults.

The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* directs, “It is for the conference of bishops to issue statutes which regulate the catechumenate by determining what things must be expected of the catechumens and by defining what prerogatives are to be recognized as theirs” (canon 788 §3). Statutes are defined as “ordinances which are established according to the norm of law in aggregates of persons or of things and which define their purpose, constitution, government, and methods of operation” (canon 94 §1). Statutes on the catechumenate, therefore, govern its practice and establish the obligations and prerogatives of catechumens. The 1988 *National Statutes on the Catechumenate* have served this purpose for nearly forty years. They will be replaced on December 1, 2024 by the revised *National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults*.

Distinctions Between the Ritual Editions and the National Statutes

There are new ritual texts of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA) in English and Spanish for the United States, each approved by the USCCB and confirmed by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (DDWDS). While the text of the Statutes is published in the same book as the ritual as an aid for pastoral ministers, it is important to know that the Statutes are distinct from the ritual editions. First, only the English text of the Statutes was approved by the USCCB, and it was confirmed not by the DDWDS but by the Dicastery for Bishops. While a Spanish translation is provided online and in ritual editions, this serves only as a resource; the English is the definitive, legal text. Finally, while there are both first-use and mandatory-use dates for the OCIA – December 1, 2024 and March 5, 2025, respectively – the new Statutes will enter into force on the first date, and the former Statutes will no longer be in effect. If the current edition of the Initiation rites is used until Lent, its use is governed by the new Statutes as of the First Sunday of Advent 2024.

1988 Statutes vis-à-vis the 2024 Statutes

The most noticeable difference between the Statutes of 1988 and those of 2024 is the number of norms: thirty-seven in 1988 and eighteen in 2024. Nevertheless, the presence or absence of a former norm in the new Statutes does not of itself indicate a change in practice. In 2018, the Chairmen of the Committees on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, Divine Worship, and Evangelization and Catechesis provided guidance for the development of revised Statutes: they should “be shortened to [be] truly legislative, complementary to the universal law, and unique to the U.S. The shorter revised Statutes, moreover, should not repeat what is already contained in the ritual text or the universal law.” This guidance was carried out in the development of the Statutes approved in November 2023, and former norms which failed to meet the above criteria were not included. This background, therefore, shows the limited usefulness of a side-by-side comparison of the 1988 and 2024 Statutes; other works must be consulted, for example, the *Code of Canon Law* and the OCIA, since the revised Statutes do not repeat norms contained elsewhere.

Juridic Forcefulness of the Statutes

Another important consideration is the different force of the various norms, which generally fall into five categories.

- *Descriptive commands* – These are indicated by present tense, indicative verbs. For example, Norm 5 §1: “As a general rule, the preparation of catechumens for the Sacraments of Initiation takes place in a parochial setting or its equivalent.” These norms express the rule for action and admit of the fewest exceptions.
- *Strong commands* – These are indicated by the words “must” or “will.” For example, Norm 1: “The evangelization of unbaptized persons during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will lead them [...]” These norms articulate the general pattern of behavior but take for granted that, in particular cases, the ideal may not always be fully observed.

- *Mild commands* – Other norms include the word “is” and an active or passive infinitive. For example, Norm 3: “The term “catechumen” is to be strictly reserved [...]” Like strong commands, these express the general rule while admitting that it may not always be observed.
- *Facultative norms* – These are indicated by the words “may” or “can.” For example, Norm 9 §1: “In addition to the prerogatives granted in universal law [...], catechumens may [...]” These norms permit an option to a person or group of persons.
- *Exhortative norms* – This final category is indicated by the words “it is recommended” or “it is praiseworthy.” For example, Norm 10: “It is praiseworthy that catechumens be dismissed from the liturgical assembly [...]” These norms express an ideal but leave observance to an individual’s discretion.

In implementing the new Statutes, it is critical to consider each norm’s language which indicates the category to which it belongs. What is the regular pattern of behavior in one community may not be immediately attainable in another, which is, nevertheless, striving toward observance. The language of the norms allows for this flexibility.

New Norms in the 2024 Statutes

There are several new norms in the 2024 Statutes; each will require careful implementation by pastoral ministers.

- Norm 2 directs parochial ministers to *meet with inquirers* early during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate to hear of their first faith, to discern the impact of their encounter with the Lord, and to discuss issues which may impact their celebration of the sacraments. This meeting is distinct from the one which occurs before the celebration of the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate (cf. OCIA, no. 43).
- Norms 7-11 each relate to *catechumens*. Norm 7 directs that unbaptized persons in irregular marriages are not to participate in the Rite of Election until they are free to marry; they may, however, enter the catechumenate. Norm 8 describes the obligations of catechumens, namely, participation in the Liturgy of the Word and ongoing conversion. The prerogatives of catechumens are the subject of norm 9: to participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church, to take advantage of the benefits given to Catholic parents by Catholic schools, and to be buried in Catholic cemeteries. The diocesan bishop can establish other prerogatives. Norm 10 encourages the dismissal of catechumens after the homily and before the Creed. Since liturgical ministries flow from the Sacraments of Initiation, Norm 11 notes that it is not appropriate for catechumens to proclaim the Word or serve at the altar during liturgy. This norm applies not only to the Mass but also to any liturgical celebration.
- Norms 14-16 concern the *registration of Initiation-related acts* and notes that the Register of Catechumens and Register of Reception into Full Communion are to be kept in the parish archives. These registers may be purchased from F.J. Remey Church Goods at RemeyChurchGoods.com. In the current editions of the Registers of Catechumens and Reception, there is not a column for the date and place of birth, so that record should be made in the remarks section. In the Register of Reception, there is also not a column for the place of reception, which should also be noted in the remarks section. The 2024 Statutes specify additional information which is to be noted in each of these registers.
- Norm 17 specifies certain *powers of the diocesan bishop* regarding the Sacraments of Initiation.

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