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New Secretary for the Congregation for Divine Worship

It was announced on December 10, 2005, that Pope Benedict XVI has named Archbishop Albert Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don as the new Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, to replace Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino who became the new Bishop of Assisi. The former Apostolic Nuncio to Indonesia and East Timor was ordained a priest in Sri Lanka in June 1975 and appointed auxiliary bishop of Colombo, the country's capital, in June 1991. Four years later he was appointed bishop of Ratnapura. In October 2001, Pope John Paul II called him to Rome to serve as an official of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. In April 2004 he was appointed apostolic nuncio in Indonesia and East Timor, with the rank of archbishop.

BCL Resources for Lent and Easter

A new resource has been added to the BCL website (www.usccb.org/liturgy) under the title RESOURCES FOR LENT AND EASTER. The page begins with a link to Fourteen Questions on the Paschal Triduum, a resource which originally appeared in the March, 2005 edition of the *BCL Newsletter*. Similar resources reflecting on the new rubrics of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia* for the Chrism Mass, the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil follow.

The page also includes the BCL Guidelines on Preaching on Jews and Judaism, entitled *God's Mercy Endures Forever* and excerpts from the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, published by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in 2001. Finally, a selection of Lenten and Easter homilies by Pope John Paul II are linked from this page.

Five More Years of the BCL Newsletter: 2000-2005

A new supplement to the BCL publication *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter* will be offered during the first half of this year by USCCB Publications. It will consist of all issues of the *BCL Newsletter* published between 2000-2005, with a complete index of all forty years of the Newsletter's publication. Discussions concerning the advisability of publishing this resource in print or electronic form are ongoing. Your advice on this matter is needed. If you believe that the BCL should offer a printed (rather than electronic) soft-cover companion to *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter* please let us know by sending an e-mail to: bclpublish@usccb.org.

Popular Devotions and the Season of Lent

Throughout the Season of Lent, parishes throughout the United States will experience rich and diverse devotional practices rooted in traditional ethnic practices. The 2001 *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines* provides guidance for pastors and liturgists as they seek to foster a rich devotional life which draws its inspiration from the Sacred Liturgy and leads those who join in its prayers to that full, conscious, and active participation in the Liturgy which the Conciliar renewal has sought to foster.

The Directory begins by noting that while devotions are essential to each season of the liturgical year, a certain tension exists in the Season of Lent. While the liturgical rhythms of Lent are built around reflections on the Rites of Christian Initiation and our exodus from sin into the promised land won for us by Christ's paschal victory, popular piety tends to concentrate more on the Passion and Death of Our Lord. A remedy for this apparent disjuncture can be found in contextualizing Lenten devotions within the wider frame of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ and the careful and full celebration of the Lenten catechumenal rites.

The Directory is careful to point out, however, that such a disjuncture "need not prevent an effective interaction between Liturgy and popular piety during the forty days of Lent." (126) Indeed, one of the first liturgical acts of Lent, the imposition of ashes, is itself, a pious act. It symbolizes "that attitude of internal penance to which all the baptized are called during Lent" (125) and calls all the Baptized to reflect on their "fragility and mortality, and the need to be redeemed by the mercy of God." (125)

Devotions to the Crucified Christ

Among the Lenten devotions of various ethnic groups are those which venerate the Crucified Christ, particularly on Fridays. Such devotions are a useful preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Passion and Death in Holy Week and are often characterized by hymns and prayers, acts such as kissing of the Cross, processions and blessing with the Cross. (128)

The Directory cautions, however, that the Passion and Death of the Lord must always be seen in relation to his Resurrection from the dead, for "in the Christian faith, the Cross is an expression of the triumph of Christ over the powers of darkness." (128)

Devotions to the Lord's Passion

Other devotions center on particular aspects of the suffering and death of the Lord, including devotions to the *Ecce Homo*, to the five wounds of Christ, to the instruments of the Passion, and to the Holy Shroud. In regard to these devotions, the Directory notes that "it is always useful to emphasize the whole event of the Passion, as is the case in biblical and patristic tradition." (129)

The reading of the Lord's Passion during Lent, either individually or communally on Wednesdays and Fridays, is another valuable way of reflecting on the Paschal suffering and death of the Lord. Such reflections 'inspire true devotion, compassion and solidarity for the Innocent who was unjustly condemned, gratitude for the infinite love of Jesus for all, commitment to imitating his example of meekness, patience, mercy, and forgiveness.' (130)

The Stations of the Cross

"Of all the pious exercises connected with the veneration of the Cross, none is more popular among the faithful than the *Via Crucis*. Through this pious exercise, the faithful movingly follow the final earthly journey of Christ: from the Mount of Olives, where the Lord, in a place called Gethsemane (Mk 14, 32), was taken by anguish (cf. Lk 22, 44), to Calvary where he was crucified between two thieves (cf. Lk 23, 33), to the garden where he was placed in freshly a hewn tomb (John 19, 40-42)." (131)

With its origin in medieval processions between Churches commemorating the various stages of the *via dolorosa*, the Stations of the Cross is itself a sort of pilgrimage to the land of "the dolorous journey of Christ" (132) The stations have taken on various forms, but always conclude "in such fashion as to leave the faithful with a sense of

expectation of the resurrection in faith and hope” (135) Since the middle of the seventeenth century, this devotion has consisted of fourteen stations, and is indulged by the Holy See. To this end, some modern stations, however, have even included an additional “fifteenth station” meditating on the Resurrection of the Lord, sometimes in the reserved Eucharist.

The Via Matris

A complimentary devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows is popular in many cultures. “As Christ was the *man of sorrows* (Is 53, 3)...so too, Mary is *the woman of sorrows* whom God associated with his Son as mother and participant in his Passion.” (136) The *Via Matris* devotion often reflects on the *seven sorrows* of the Blessed Virgin Mary, beginning with the prophecy of Simeon (cf. Lk 2, 34-35), and concluding with the death and burial of her Son.

Fast and Abstinence

From the earliest days of the Church, an important devotional practice has been that of fasting and abstinence from meat during Lent. These practices direct our attention to our yearning for the life that is to come (126) and remind us of our hungering for the Lord, as well as our unity with those who are hungry and suffering throughout the world.

Conclusion

The devotional life of each of the Baptized provides an indispensable means of preparing human hearts for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and the living of the Christian life. When, at times in the history of the Church, such devotions have been ignored by Pastors of the Church, a deep divide between the Sacred Liturgy and private devotional life of the faithful has resulted. The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* urges pastors to foster a deep and wide devotional life while, at the same time, always assuring that such devotions are intimately connected with the Sacred Liturgy, which is the source and the summit of the entire Christian life.

Seasonal Adaptations of the Papal Liturgy

The recent announcement of the intention of Pope Benedict XVI to celebrate Easter Morning Mass with the traditional rite of the *Resurrexit*, have resulted in numerous queries concerning seasonal adaptations which have been incorporated into the Papal Liturgy. Examples of such adaptations are, therefore, provided for the information of our readers, along with the cautionary note that such rituals are proper only to the Papal Liturgy and may not be used by any priest outside of that context.

Two elements were added to the Papal Liturgy at Christmas Time, the first of which has also been approved for use in all Churches in the Dioceses of the United States of America: the proclamation of the historical birth of the Savior, taken from the *Roman Martyrology*, and the placing of flowers by a group of young children from different countries before the statue of the Child Jesus while the Gloria is sung.

At the Chrism Mass, the sequence for the blessing of oils is such that, following the presentation of each oil and a brief invitation, the prayer of blessing is prayed. The oil of catechumens is accompanied by catechumens, the oil of the sick, by those who are infirm, and Holy Chrism is accompanied by candidates for Confirmation and deacons preparing for priestly Ordination.

At the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday night, those present are asked to make a charitable donation as the Pope washes feet.

At the Mass on Easter morning, the *Resurrexit* rite has been restored and renamed *Peter, Witness of the Resurrection*. “At the beginning of the Mass two deacons open the doors of the venerable icon of Christ the Savior (*Achiropita* = not made by human hands), after which one of the deacons proclaims in song the news of the Lord’s Resurrection: first to the assembly with the chant *Surrexit Dominus de sepulcro, qui pro nobis pependit in ligno*, and then to the Holy Father with the words *Surrexit Dominus vere et apparuit Simoni*. This ancient rite of

the Pope's witness before the icon of the Savior, suitably enhanced and adapted in keeping with the spirit of the conciliar liturgical reform, became after the year 2000 one of the rites proper to the papal liturgy."¹

A Remembrance of the Sacrament of Confirmation has been inserted into the papal liturgy for the Vigil of Pentecost, beginning with the lighting of the candles of the faithful, taken from seven burning braziers. Invocations to the Holy Spirit are then concluded with the recitation of the Apostles' Creed.

Fulfilled in Your Hearing Re-Visited

In 1982, the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a document entitled, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*. Over the past twenty-three years, this practical guide for preaching within the context of the Sunday Eucharist has enjoyed considerable success and has been reprinted on several occasions. The Priestly Life and Ministry Committee has received a number of requests to promote another re-printing as well as to develop a Spanish translation of the document.

In consideration of this request, the Committee consulted with four other Conference committees, namely, Liturgy, Doctrine, Pastoral Practices, and Diaconate, and decided not simply to re-print the 1982 document but to develop a new document. All five committees agreed that there were some compelling reasons to go in this direction. Among these factors are: the promulgation of a revised edition of *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal* and other developments in liturgical practice since 1982; a more developed understanding of the place of the Sunday homily within the Sunday Eucharist; shifting pastoral realities; the promulgation of *The Code of Canon Law* and complementary norms for preaching; the increase in the number of deacons; the publication of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The National Directory for Catechesis*; and, the widespread use of the document in both initial and ongoing formation programs.

At the November, 2005 plenary meeting of the USCCB, the body of Bishops voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee to move forward in the development of a new document. Priestly Life and Ministry will serve as the lead agent, working in collaboration with the Conference committees named above. Each of the five committees will review, and be asked for approval of, a final draft. Bishop Michael Cote, a member of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee, will serve as the chairman of the working group developing the document. The final product will be a document of the USCCB.

The scope which this revision takes will prescind from *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* itself. Its focus will be on preaching at the Sunday Eucharist. The plan is for a handy, user-friendly document aimed at the practitioners of the craft of preaching at the Sunday Eucharist, specifically, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. It is anticipated that the document will be printed in both English and Spanish. The document will establish continuity with *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, and will address the theology of the liturgical homily, the spirituality of the preacher, the context for preaching today, special issues related to preaching today, and practical helps and resources for more effective preaching, including a bibliography.

The five Committees hope to be able to move this project along across this next year and conclude the project by November 2006. Once the committees have completed a draft it will be submitted to the Bishops and to other resource groups for consultation, before being brought as a final document to the USCCB for a definitive vote. One of the perennial goals set by the bishops has been to promote the effectiveness of the homily at the Sunday Eucharist. This project will be a significant step in helping to achieve that goal.

¹ Office of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff, *Liturgy and Beauty: Experiences of Renewal in Certain Papal Liturgical Celebrations*, 2000.