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The Liturgical Legacy of Pope John Paul II

During the twenty-six years of his reign, from October 16, 1978 through April 2, 2005, Pope John Paul II was tireless in the attention he gave to the continued and steady implementation of the liturgical reform initiated by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962 – 1965) in the Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, of December 4, 1963. Firmly believing in the importance of the liturgy as the summit and source of the Church's life, he gave constant attention to the ongoing reform of the liturgical life of the Church, according to the principles found in *Sacrosanctum concilium*.

It is fitting, therefore, that his passing took place in the midst of the Year of the Eucharist, marked by the publication of his last Encyclical letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, on April 17, 2003, and the subsequent instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments entitled *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (March 25, 2004). Such initiatives will be appropriately recalled at the Synod on the Holy Eucharist planned for October of this year.

Pope John Paul's efforts were aimed at enabling all to appreciate the deepest spiritual dimensions of the Sacred Liturgy. In the course of his long pontificate, he marked both the twenty-fifth and fortieth anniversaries of the publication of the conciliar constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, by the publication of the letters *Vicesimus quintus annus* and *Spiritus et Sponsa*, respectively.

In his more recent letter, the Holy Father expressed his ardent desire that "a "liturgical spirituality" be developed that makes people conscious that Christ is the 'first liturgist' who never ceases to act in the name of the Church and in the world through the Paschal Mystery continuously celebrated, and who associates the Church with himself, in praise of the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit."

Liturgical Books

Numerous and significant milestones were, likewise, realized during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II in regard to the renewal of liturgical books with the publication of the following Latin typical and USA vernacular editions:

Ordo Lectionum Missae, editio altera (January 21, 1981)

Lectionary for Mass (USA) (1998 and 2000)

Book of the Gospels (USA) (2000)

Ordo Coronandi Imaginem Beatae Mariae Virginis (March 25, 1981)
Order for the Crowning of an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary (USA) (1987)

Rites of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick (USA) (1983)

Caeremoniale Episcoporum (September 14, 1984)

De Benedictionibus (May 31, 1984)

Liturgia Horarum, editio altera (1986)

Books of Blessings (USA) (1989)

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, second edition (USA) (1988)

Misal Romano, Ordinario della Missa (USA) (1989)

Collectio Missarum de Beata Maria Virgine (1987)

Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary (USA) (1990)

Order of Christian Funerals, second edition (USA) (1989)

Ritual de Exequias Cristianas (USA)

Appendix: Rites of Cremation (USA) (1999)

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (USA)¹ (1989)

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, second edition (USA) (2005)

De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum, et Diaconorum June 28, 1989

Ordination of a Bishop, Priests and Deacons, second edition (USA) (2003)

Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium, editio altera (March 19, 1990)

Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia (March 18, 2002)

Among the many encyclicals, instructions and other documents on liturgical matters written or approved by the Holy Father are the fourth and fifth instructions of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the proper implementation of the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council. *Varietates Legitimae*, (March 29, 1994) addressed the inculturation of the liturgy. *Liturgiam authenticam* (March 28, 2001) expanded upon and replaced the 1969 instruction *Commes le prevoit*, on the translation of the Latin editions typicae into vernacular languages. The challenge of revisiting and revising all vernacular translations in the light of the principles set forth by this instruction will set the agenda for generations yet to come.

Each Holy Thursday, the Holy Father would send to all bishops and priests a reflection opening up the riches of the Eucharist. Throughout the years, Pope John Paul II provided regular guidance on pastoral and liturgical questions through his talks to the Bishops of the United States of America in the course of their visits ad limina apostolorum.²

¹ The USA edition was developed as a direct result of a Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest published by the Congregation for Divine Worship issued on June 2, 1988.

² These visits took place every five years beginning in 1979.

In one of the most challenging talks given to the Bishops of the United States, the Holy Father addressed the bishops from Michigan and Ohio on May 21, 1998 and reflected on the Liturgy, prayer, and the parish priest, suggesting that

Prayer for the needs of the Church and the individual faithful is so important that serious thought should be given to reorganizing priestly and parish life to ensure that priests have time to devote to this essential task, individually and in common. Liturgical and personal prayer, not the tasks of management, must define the rhythms of a priest's life, even in the busiest of parishes.

In the end, Pope John Paul II followed his predecessors in seeking to make the goals of the liturgical reform, as envisioned by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, a living reality in the Church. It is appropriate to recall and recommit ourselves to that essential vision as the Church mourns the death of Pope John Paul II:

The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever it can to promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all mankind into the Church's fold. Accordingly it sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy. (Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 1)

Reflections by the New Chairman of the BCL

On March 14, 2005, the newly composed Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy met in Washington, D.C. At the beginning of the meeting, Bishop Donald Trautman, Bishop of Erie, addressed the group in his capacity as chairman.

We have just prayed the very words used by the Council Fathers of Vatican II. Their prayer called for openness to the Holy Spirit and the courage to do what is right for God's people. Our collegial deliberations in this Committee must also be marked with these same traits.

The challenge we face together is to find a balance between tradition and inculturation, a balance between preservation and change, a balance that calls for both transcendence and immanence, a balance between theological concerns and pastoral concerns, a balance between faithfulness to the received text and intelligibility and proclaimability. Seeking balance in liturgical matters is often difficult.

In the words of Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (no.15), "Bishops are the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, just as they are the governors, promoters and guardians of the entire liturgical life of the Church entrusted to them." In implementing these words, the bishop members of the BCL will have different points of view, different emphases, and different approaches. We will strive for consensus, but let us not be afraid to express our views, but then lock arms in unity for the common good.

Most of us recall the strident debates and divisions of the past on liturgical matters. We need honest, candid dialogue and unity through consensus. We must not let forces outside of the Bishops' Conference divide us. I speak of certain news media and special interest groups.

We want to be faithful to the norms and principles from the Holy See, but as pastors of the Church we must apply them with prudence and insight, given pastoral realities in our midst. Going from liturgical principle to pastoral practice calls again for balance and sensitivity.

There will never be a perfect, absolute translation. There will never be a perfect, absolute liturgical rite. Translations and liturgical rites are conditioned by culture, pastoral experience, theological insight and ecclesiastical realities. To bring the mystery of God to the various times and cultures of the Church, to various temperaments and traditions of our people, will always require an ongoing liturgical renewal.

We must recognize that some of our translation problems will center on paraphrasing and literal word-for-word rendering of the received text in Latin. Both extremes must be avoided. A paraphrasing is not faithful to the Latin; a literal translation can sound stilted and artificial. English words alone do not constitute English language. English words must be put in the proper word order. Context and idiom must be respected. Often the meaning of the Latin is obscure and open to various interpretations. At other times the Latin is so succinct that, though its meaning is clear, straight translation is impossible.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission offers us this wisdom: “A translation is always more than a simple transcription of the original text. The passage from one language to another necessarily involves a change of cultural context.” (The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, P.B.C., 1993, IV.B.)

March, 2005 Meeting of the Committee on the Liturgy

The USCCB Committee on the Liturgy met on March 14, 2005 in Washington, D.C. to consider a wide range of ongoing projects as follows:

USCCB Modifications to the Ordo Missae

The committee reviewed a number of adaptations to the Ordo Missae of the Missale Romanum that will be presented to the June plenary session of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, including:

- The editorial placement of the Rite of Blessing and the Sprinkling of Holy Water before the Penitential Rite.
- The provision of two additional introductions to the Penitential Rite and permission for the use of the priest's own introductions to this rite “in similar words;”
- The addition of seven additional versions of Penitential Rite form C;
- The addition of the memorial acclamation “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again;”
- The provision of four alternate introductions to the Lord's Prayer;
- The provision of two alternate dismissals to the Mass.

These modifications are contained in the current 1985 Sacramentary for use in the dioceses of the United States of America as approved by the National Conference of Bishops and confirmed by the Holy See (Prot. No. 1762/73, February 4, 1976). The Committee suggested that since the use of these options has shaped the liturgical formation of two generation of Catholics, their disappearance from the Mass could cause confusion and consternation as people try to adjust to new translations. The adaptations must be approved by the USCCB at its plenary meeting and confirmed by the Holy See before their inclusion in the translation of the Ordo Missae, editio tertia.

Renewal of an Indult Regarding Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

On March 22, 2002, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments granted an indult to the USCCB to allow extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to purify the sacred vessels used during the liturgy. In a letter accompanying the indult (Prot. No. 1382/01/L, March 22, 2002), the Congregation approved the indult *ad experimentum* for three years.

With the impending expiration of the indult, the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy surveyed the Bishops of the United States regarding the practice of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion purifying sacred vessels. An overwhelming majority of Bishops deemed the practice pastorally useful and free from abuse.

The Committee, therefore, recommended that the President of the Conference, Bishop William Skylstad, request a permanent indult from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for this continued practice. Accordingly, in a March 9, 2005 letter to Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, a renewal of the indult was requested.

ICEL and the Missale Roman

The Committee heard a report from Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., the USCCB liaison to ICEL, concerning the most recent meeting of the mixed commission in Melbourne, Australia on February 1-6, 2005. Archbishop Alfred Hughes represented Cardinal George at this meeting. The Committee discussed two issues: (a) ICEL's plan to conduct a second consultation with the Bishops of the English-speaking world on the translation of the Order of Mass; and (b) the completion of base text translations of the entire Roman Missal by the spring of 2006.

In a subsequent letter of March 15, 2005 to Bishop Arthur Roche, Bishop of Leeds and ICEL chairman, Bishop Trautman summarized the reflections of the members of the BCL, noting a "concern with the present pace of the work." At the same time, Bishop Trautman observed that the Committee remains convinced that "the work of ICEL in translating the *Missale Romanum* comprises one of the greatest challenges and most important priorities for the Church in the English-speaking world today. I urge you and your fellow commissioners to devote every possible resource to expedite the completion of this project."

Bi-Lingual Edition of the Rite of Confirmation

At the recommendation of the Hispanic Liturgy Subcommittee, the Bishops' Committee approved the work of the Secretariat on a bi-lingual edition of the Rite of Confirmation, to be published by USCCB Publications later this year. This edition is the next step in the attempt to produce a full set of bi-lingual editions of all the books of the Roman Ritual for use in the dioceses of the United States of America.

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

On November 7, 1989, a Spanish-English edition of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* was approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and subsequently confirmed by the Holy See. Beginning in 2001, a revision of this text was undertaken, resulting in a newly composed introduction, and an expansion of the book's pastoral, theological and liturgical notes. The effectiveness of ritual distinctions regarding lay presiders, the selection and use of Sunday collects, and efforts to clarify the distinction between the Sunday Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word, the Sunday Celebration of the Hours, and the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside Mass were also addressed, along with certain questions of translation and layout.

The USCCB approved the revised text on November 11, 2003 by a vote of 221 to 20. It was then submitted by Bishop Wilton F. Gregory to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in a letter of February 26, 2004. The Congregation responded on October 23, 2004 (Prot. 500/04/L). In that letter the Congregation indicated that the Conference did not need to submit the text for the recognitio, but instead granted an indult to permit Holy Communion to be distributed as a part of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. The Congregation expressed appreciation for the consultation and made helpful suggestions.

At their March, 2005 meeting, the members of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy approved the publication of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest as a bi-lingual resource of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

Revision of the Lectionary for Mass

At the March 2005 meeting of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, a second phase of the review process for the Lectionary was re-visited. At an earlier meeting, the Committee reviewed the Sunday Advent readings; at the March 2005 meeting, the Committee reviewed the weekday Advent readings.

The readings had been annotated with observations taken from a major evaluation of the Lectionary completed by the bishops in 2003. These were then reviewed by speech experts, liturgists and pastoral ministers. Finally, the suggested changes were re-examined by a biblical expert and then, submitted to the Bishops' Committee for review. The Committee will continue more closely its work on the Advent readings at the June 2005 meeting of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

At their March, 2005 meeting, the members of the Committee on the Liturgy extended the review process to the balance of the Lectionary for Mass. Membership of the review committee was to be expanded with the addition of two bishops and another scripture scholar. The work of this group will then be evaluated by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. Disputed questions will be resubmitted to the review committee. Finally, all of the changes will be submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for approval. When the recognitio of the Holy See is obtained then the changes will be published in a revised edition of the Lectionary.

While, the readings for the Sundays and weekdays of Lent are now being prepared for review, it is clear that this project will take considerable time to complete. Through this refinement of the USA edition of the Lectionary for Mass, the Committee intends to improve the accuracy and proclaimability of this liturgical book.

January Meeting of the Hispanic Liturgy Subcommittee

The Hispanic Liturgy Subcommittee met from January 25-27, 2005 at the Claretian Renewal Center in Los Angeles, CA. Bishop James A. Tamayo conducted the meeting in the absence of Bishop Ricardo Ramírez, Chairman.

After a detailed review of the Spanish text of the Ritual para la Confirmación (Rite of Confirmation) approved for use in the dioceses of Mexico, the group agreed that this text was suitable to serve as the Spanish text for the USCCB publication of the bi-lingual Confirmation ritual.

A report was received on final work on the Spanish language Leccionario for the dioceses of the United States, which is expected to be presented to the plenary session of the USCCB in the near

future. The sub-committee members also reviewed a draft of the Ratio Translationis for English speaking conferences in the hopes of beginning a re-examination of the principles followed by the Hispanic Liturgy Subcommittee in applying the instruction Liturgiam authenticam to its work. While the significant discrepancies between English and Spanish style were discussed, the necessity of a Spanish style sheet was set as an important future goal of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee has begun planning a Spanish language edition of the Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia. Spanish language translations of the propers for the national calendar for the United States of America will also be examined.

Finally, work continues in obtaining current editions of the texts for patronal feasts of Spanish-speaking countries. The Subcommittee is convinced that the availability of these texts is important for use in liturgical celebrations in parishes of Spanish-speaking Catholics in the country.

CDF Note on the Minister of the Anointing of the Sick

On February 11, 2005, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a note “on the Minister of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick” (Prot no. 41/74) which stated:

- The Code of Canon Law in canon 1003 § 1 (cf. canon 739 § 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches) repeats exactly the doctrine expressed by the Council of Trent (Sessio XIV, canon 4: DS 1719; cf. also the Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1516), that only priests (Bishops and presbyters) are ministers of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- This doctrine is definitive tenenda. Thus, neither deacons nor laypeople can exercise this ministry, and any such action would constitute simulation of the sacrament.

The note was signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation and Archbishop Angelo Amato, SDB, Secretary to the Congregation. A commentary, which accompanied this note, traced the sources of this teaching, noting that administration of the sacrament has always been reserved to a Bishop or a priest. The commentary also notes that:

- This doctrine enjoys such a high level of theological certitude that it must be qualified as a doctrine “definitive tenenda”;
- The sacrament would be invalid if a deacon or a layperson attempted to administer it and such an act “would constitute the canonical delict of simulation in the administration of a sacrament, punishable according to canon 1379 of the Code of Canon Law (cf. CCEO, can 1443);
- “In this sacrament, it is Jesus Christ who works; the priest is the living and visible instrument.” He both represents Christ and makes Christ present in a special way, such that the anointing of the sick has a particular dignity and efficacy, different from a sacramental.
- The priest also acts in persona Ecclesiae. The prayer of the “priests of the Church” (James 5:14) includes the prayer of the entire Church.



In the humble signs of bread and wine, changed into his body and blood, Christ walks beside us as our strength and our food for the journey, and he enables us to become, for everyone, witnesses of hope. If, in the presence of this mystery, reason experiences its limits, the heart, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, clearly sees the response that is demanded, and bows low in adoration and unbounded love.

Let us make our own the words of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an eminent theologian and an impassioned poet of Christ in the Eucharist, and turn in hope to the contemplation of that goal to which our hearts aspire in their thirst for joy and peace:

Come then, good Shepherd, bread divine,
Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us, still keep us thine;
So we may see thy glories shine
in fields of immortality.
O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,
Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is with thee.

Pope John Paul II,
Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 62