



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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Volume LVIII

September 2022

Reflections on Part Two of *Desiderio desideravi*

In the second part of his Apostolic Letter *Desiderio desideravi*, Pope Francis treats the topic of liturgical formation. At the heart of his analysis is the question, “How do we recover the capacity to live completely the liturgical action?” (no. 27). The Holy Father first examines our contemporary context and then proceeds to discuss two aspects of liturgical formation: formation for the liturgy and formation by the liturgy.

Contemporary Context (nos. 27-34)

According to Pope Francis, our postmodern context lacks a horizon or frame which gives people direction, value, and meaning. Consequently, the worldviews of individualism, subjectivism, and abstract spiritualism have become more influential (cf. spiritual worldliness, nos. 18-20). In the liturgical sphere, these circumstances render us less capable of symbolic action and understanding, fundamental characteristics of the liturgical act. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church encountered and spoke to this modern world, and its response intentionally began with the liturgy, highlighting its importance and unique place in the life of the Church. Contemporary tensions around the liturgy, which frequently consist in not accepting or superficially understanding the liturgical reforms which followed the Council, distract us from the necessary question: “How can we grow in our capacity to live in full the liturgical action? How do we continue to let ourselves be amazed at what happens in the celebration under our very eyes?” (no. 31). For the Holy Father, the answer to this question is a serious and vital liturgical formation.

Paradoxically, the postmodern context which renders liturgy difficult may only be healed by the liturgy itself. Only the community of Pentecost and its celebration “can open the cramped space of spiritual individualism” (no. 32). This celebration is the privileged place of encounter with Christ in which we become persons who are fully human and open to full relationships with God, creation, and others. To become fully human and to be open to full relationship, this is the critical matter for Pope Francis concerning liturgical formation. The Holy Father cites the German liturgical theologian, Romano Guardini (1885–1968), who writes, “[C]arried along by this inner transformation of our time, we must learn anew how to relate religiously as fully human beings.” Only liturgical formation accomplishes this goal, without which the reforms of texts and rites are not very helpful.

Formation for the Liturgy (nos. 35-39)

The first aspect of liturgical formation that the Pope treats is formation *for* the liturgy. Here, it is necessary to spread the knowledge of the liturgy’s theological sense – beyond academic environments, in accessible ways, to all the faithful. This theological

sense is fundamental for the understanding, practice, and celebration of the liturgy. Pope Francis recalls the assembly of the Church on the Lord's Day and other occasions. In these celebrations, ordained ministers accomplish a task of "the first importance," leading the Church, the "celebrating subject," into an experience of the Paschal Mystery. Study and frequent participation in the liturgy help the ordained minister to accomplish this task.

In seminaries, the liturgy must occupy a central place in both study and practice. In study, the liturgical celebration has the power "to offer an organic and unified vision of all theological knowledge" (no. 37), for all theological disciplines are connected to the liturgy. In practice, placing the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist at the center of the community's life creates "a comprehensive, organic, and integrated pastoral practice" (no. 37), for every aspect of the Church's life finds its source and summit in the liturgy. It is necessary that this celebration of the liturgy be not only excellent according to the rubrics but also authentic and alive. Through this kind of celebration, theological knowledge comes to fulfillment in communion with God, and the ordained minister becomes capable of accompanying others along the same path. For all members of the Church, liturgical formation is ongoing.

Formation by the Liturgy (nos. 40-47)

The second aspect of liturgical formation is the formation received by participation in the liturgy. Formation *for* the liturgy is ordered toward formation *by* the liturgy. Again, Pope Francis reiterates that knowledge of the mystery of Christ is not about the mental assimilation of concepts but rather existential engagement with his person. Therefore, the liturgy does not consist in knowing, and its purpose is not primarily pedagogical, even though it has great pedagogical value. Its primary purpose is praise and thanksgiving for the Pasch of Christ, and its goal is to conform us to him. In addition to not being about knowledge, the liturgy takes place sacramentally, according to the method of Incarnation. It is carried out not with abstractions but with creation. Christ assumes all of creation, and all that he has assumed is placed at the service of an encounter with him, a truth which the Holy Father notes is beautifully expressed in the prayers of blessing baptismal water, consecrating chrism, and presenting gifts of bread and wine at the Eucharist. A liturgy that glorifies God is one that reveals God and allows the faithful to partake of the Paschal Mystery.

Authentic participation in the liturgy requires a capacity for symbolic action and symbolic understanding. Making and reading symbols is the task of the entire Church, a task which is complicated by the postmodern context. This difficulty is also experienced with the symbol of the body, an intimate union of interior and exterior, i.e., soul and body. The interior soul is expressed exteriorly, and in this exterior expression the soul is seen. This fact of the intimate union of soul and body makes the human creature unique. To ignore the soul is to ignore this uniqueness as well as the transcendent dimension of life in which both God and ourselves are known. The symbolic power of created things is also experienced with great difficulty. Consequently, the Pope notes, "To have lost the capacity to grasp the symbolic value of the body and of every creature renders the symbolic language of the Liturgy almost inaccessible to the modern mentality" (no. 44). Nevertheless, we cannot dispense with symbols – the way in which God has chosen to encounter us – and must recover our capacity to understand and enact symbols.

This recovery may take place in three ways. First, one must reject the temptation to reduce symbols to abstractions and the act of reading symbols to a mental process. Symbols are incarnate and reading them occurs in a living experience. Second, one must have confidence in creation, its divine origin, its assumption in the Incarnation of the Word, and its purpose – from the very beginning – as an instrument of salvation. Third, this recovery occurs through a particular kind of formation. Here, the Holy Father uses the example of a child learning the sign of the cross from a relative, teacher, or pastor. This symbol is taught by one who takes the child's hand, makes the gesture, and slowly articulates the words which accompany it. In this way, the child assimilates the symbol. It becomes a habit and grows in meaning. The symbol belongs to the one making it, and the one making it belongs to the symbol. The symbol forms the one making it, and by the symbol the one making it is formed. This formation does not require much speech or total understanding, but only that the person making it has the humility of a little one, "the attitude that opens up into wonder" (no. 38).

Understanding the *Order of Penance*: Reconciling Individual Penitents

Chapter three of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, “The Other Sacraments and the Sacramentals,” opens in no. 59 with a theological definition of the Sacraments:

The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God; because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called “sacraments of faith.” They do indeed impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity.

As the Church in the United States prepares to welcome the new translation of the *Order of Penance*, it may be helpful to examine this definition more closely and – in its light – the celebration of the sacrament, especially its most common form of celebration, the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents.

The Purpose of the Sacraments

The definition begins by articulating the goal of the sacraments: “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God” (no. 59). The purpose of the sacraments is sanctification, and this sanctifying purpose has three aspects: individual, communal, and doxological.¹ First, sacraments *make individuals holy*. This holiness, which is imparted to individual persons, is not, however, merely individual. Thus, the second aspect of the sanctifying purpose is to *build up the body of Christ*, a phrase added to the text of no. 59 during the Council’s second session. The Fathers at the Second Vatican Council sought to emphasize this aspect of the liturgy in particular, and their desire finds especially eloquent articulation in no. 26 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the ‘sacrament of unity,’ namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it.” With those sacraments that do not appear as communal because of their nature and circumstance, for example, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, it is particularly important to stress this communal aspect of sanctification.

Finally, the sanctifying purpose concerns not only people but also God: sacraments are ordered toward the *worship which is to be given to God*. In particular, the Sacrament of Penance restores men and women to God’s worship, whose perfect expression is the Eucharist. More broadly, the members of the Church worship God in sacramental liturgy: they not only receive sacraments but also celebrate them. According to Josef Jungmann in his commentary on the Constitution, “The cultic character of the sacraments (and sacramentals) is made evident by the fact that their accomplishment, in which the grace of God descends to man, is comprised within a framework of prayer, with which they return to God in supplication and thankfulness.”² Sacraments sanctify individuals, this sanctification has communal effects, and it is inextricably bound up with the glorification of God.

Sacramental Purpose in the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents

This threefold purpose, which sacramental grace brings about, is also expressed by sacramental signs. In the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents, the purpose of individual sanctification is perhaps the most obvious, expressed throughout the entire rite: “May God grant that you may truly know your sins and his mercy” (*Order of Penance*, no. 42, Reception of the Penitent); “I absolve you from your sins” (no. 46, Formula of Absolution); and “The Lord has forgiven your sins” (no. 47, Dismissal of the Penitent). Nevertheless, this Order for individuals also expresses the ecclesial purpose of the sacraments, the fact that this liturgy is performed by the Church, manifests it, and has effects upon it. The sacrament is usually celebrated in a confessional in a church or oratory, that place where the Christian faithful gather (no. 12). Some elements of the rite, especially the short readings

¹ This analysis and what follows depends in part upon Pierre-Marie Gy, “Chapitre III: Les autres sacrements et les sacramentaux,” *La Maison Dieu* 77 (1964): 133-136; Frederick McManus, “The Constitution on Liturgy Commentary, Part Three,” *Worship* 38 (1964): 515-518; and Josef Jungmann, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” trans. Lalit Adolphus, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, 5 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 1:46-47.

² Jungmann, 47.

from Sacred Scripture, use first person plural pronouns to describe the mighty works of God: “It was *our* infirmities that he bore, *our* sufferings that he endured” (no. 72, Is 53:4a, emphasis added). The Prayer of Absolution, in particular, expresses the sacrament as an act of the Church: “through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace” (no. 46).

Finally, the sacrament’s doxological purpose is also articulated. As previously noted, the mere fact that sacramental grace is given within the context of liturgical prayer expresses its doxological character as well as its relationship to the most perfect praise offered in the Eucharist. This character is further highlighted by the place of celebration, a confessional within a church or oratory, and, when prescribed by the local Ordinary, liturgical vestments (no. 14). The Proclamation of Praise of God especially highlights this aspect of the sacrament: “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. / For his mercy endures for ever” (no. 47). The penitent’s first act after receiving sacramental absolution is to respond “Amen” and then to give praise, already carrying out that restoration to worship which the sacrament has brought about.

The Importance of Sacramental Signs

What sacramental grace brings about in reality is expressed in sacramental signs. This meaning is expressed not only through the signs of matter and form but also through all the signs of the liturgical celebration of a sacrament. It is this rich complex of sacramental signs that disposes the faithful to receive the grace of God more fruitfully. Indeed, the fruitful reception of grace is one of the chief concerns of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, expressed at the conclusion of the paragraph being considered: “They do indeed impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity” (no. 59). In the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents, all of the signs that express the individual, communal, and doxological purpose of the sacrament, these very signs dispose the faithful to receive the grace which the signs of matter and form bring about; they also express it.

Understanding the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents in light of the threefold purpose articulated by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy shows what is at stake in the liturgical celebration of Penance. To neglect the fullness of the liturgy of penance, even while observing the laws for valid celebration, still communicates grace, but it does not “most effectively dispose the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 59). The sacrament validly carried out is not fully expressed in sacramental signs. While the priest may omit or shorten some parts of the rite in imminent danger of death or when pastoral need dictates (*Order of Penance*, no. 21), to do so outside of these circumstances in ways not foreseen by the rite impacts sacramental fruitfulness. The concern of the minister should always be not only that grace be given, but also that the recipient is disposed to the grace given, and that this grace is fully expressed and most fruitfully received.



Archbishop Rembert Weakland, Former Committee Chairman, Passes Away

Milwaukee Archbishop Emeritus Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B. passed away on August 22, 2022 at the age of 95. He served as Chairman of the Committee on the Liturgy from 1978 to 1981, and returned as a member from 1996 to 1999. Just after the Second Vatican Council, Weakland was the founding Chairman of the Committee’s Music Advisory Board, established to consult on liturgical music. For the repose of his soul, we pray:

Almighty ever-living God,
to whom we never pray without hope of your mercy,
be gracious to your servant Archbishop Rembert,
who departed this life confessing your name,
and admit him to the company of your Saints.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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Volume LVIII

October 2022

Archbishop Blair Addresses the 2022 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

The 2022 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions took place in New Orleans from October 4-6, under the theme “Ars Celebrandi: Something More is Required.” Major presentations were given by the Very Rev. Patrick Beidelman (Archdiocese of Indianapolis), Rev. Bruce Cinquegrani (Diocese of Memphis), and Sr. Judith Kubicki, CFFS. The participants were also addressed during the meeting by Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, Committee Chairman; his remarks are reprinted for the benefit of our readers:

Since the last meeting, much has transpired in the liturgical realm: the new *editio typica* for the institution of catechists; the recent implementation of the new translation of the rites of Ordination and the upcoming implementation of the new translation of the *Order of Penance*; approval by the U.S. bishops of the revised National Statutes on the Catechumenate and the new translations of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* and *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*; and lastly, the norms implementing *Magnum principium*, the Holy Father’s *motu proprio* on liturgical translation.

New texts, new translations of old texts, and new processes for the translation of new and old texts: all these things are of importance. However, one development from the past year will arguably have a broader effect than any of those I’ve just mentioned, namely, the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis, *Desiderio desideravi*, on the liturgical formation of the People of God. This is not to minimize the importance of the translation and implementation of rites, but this activity is not our ultimate purpose. The goal for which we must strive, as the Holy Father states in his letter, is to live the liturgical action fully and to help others to do so (nos. 27, 31). If we do not foster and facilitate authentic participation in the Church’s worship, then our translation and implementation efforts fall short of their ultimate purpose.

How appropriate the Holy Father’s letter is to this national meeting, focused as it is on the topic “*Ars Celebrandi: Something More is Required.*” I’d like to offer some reflections on *Desiderio desideravi*, and ask the question: “What is at the heart of liturgical participation?” In other words, what is the “something more” that is required?

Is that “something more” simply a matter of *preparation and careful observance of rubrics*? In his letter, the Holy Father indicates that “every aspect of the celebration must be carefully tended to and every rubric must be observed” (no. 23). Why? Because, he notes, “the rite is in itself a norm, and the norm is never an end in itself,

but it is always at the service of a higher reality that it means to protect” (no. 48). The norm of the rite – expressed in its rubrics – preserves higher realities. Whenever we depart from the rite – whether in large or small ways – we are in danger of obscuring, misrepresenting or even vitiating the gift that God wants to give through the ministry of the Church. Hence the Holy Father’s rather strong words that to do so is to rob the assembly what is owed to it; namely, the ritual celebration of the Paschal Mystery established by Christ and the Church (no. 23). Rubrical observance is a necessary condition for authentic liturgical participation, one that we cannot do without, even though it is not sufficient in itself.

What about knowledge? Is *knowledge of the liturgy* – of its theological foundation, its history, its texts, its signs and symbols – is that the “something more”? In the second section of his letter, which deals with liturgical formation, the Holy Father calls the whole Church to promote among the faithful a knowledge of the liturgy, particularly its theological foundation, in an accessible way that is more than academic (no. 35). Yet while this too is important, knowledge about the liturgy is in itself insufficient. What Pope Benedict once said comes to mind, that the gospel is not so much informational as transformational. And liturgy, Pope Francis observes, is not merely mental adherence to something (no. 12), but an integral encounter of the Church with the mystery of Christ and his saving work.

The “something more” then cannot be reduced to rubrics or even knowledge. What about *technique*? Having observed the rubrics, having understood the liturgy’s theological foundation, perhaps all that remains is to carry out the liturgy with dignity and a certain finesse? Indeed, the Holy Father calls us to carry out every gesture and word of the liturgy “with art” (no. 53). But the art of celebration that he has in mind – while not excluding dignified movement and eloquent proclamation – isn’t reducible to either of them. He writes, “For an artisan, technique is enough. But for an artist, in addition to technical knowledge, there has also to be inspiration, which is a positive form of possession. The true artist does not possess an art but rather is possessed by it” (no. 50). The art that he has in mind cannot be learned in a technical course. It’s something more.

So then, liturgical rubrics, knowledge, and technique are not enough. Each is necessary but insufficient for authentic liturgical participation. We might say if rubrics were sufficient, then Christ could be reduced to an external ritual. If knowledge about the liturgy were chief, Christ could be reduced to an abstraction. And if technique were supreme, then the liturgy would be voided of what Pope Francis says is essential, namely, “Christian faith is either an encounter with Him alive, or it does not exist” (no. 10).

According to the Pope the “something more” that is required for the encounter with the living Christ, is *astonishment*. He describes it as “astonishment at the fact that the paschal mystery is rendered present in the concreteness of sacramental signs” (no. 24). He goes on to characterize it as “marveling at the fact that the salvific plan of God has been revealed in the paschal deed of Jesus, and the power of this paschal deed continues to reach us in the celebration of the ‘mysteries,’ of the sacraments” (no. 25). The Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. The Word has given up his body and poured out his blood for us. He has died and risen and now sits at the Father’s right hand. By the power of the Holy Spirit, everything of the Incarnate Word has passed into the sacraments – his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling.

And yet, even for those of us who work so closely and so frequently with the liturgy, familiarity can breed, certainly not contempt, as the saying goes, but a certain lukewarmness. Before this great mystery, Pope Francis asks, “How can the misfortune of distancing ourselves happen to us?” (no. 24). We know from experience that it does happen. And when it does, when we stand before this great mystery with indifference, we become, the Pope says, “impermeable to the ocean of grace that floods every celebration” (no. 24).

How then do we preserve our sense of wonder? How do we foster it if it has grown cold? The answer is only by complementing and prolonging the prayer of the liturgy with the quiet of personal prayer. At the recent consistory, the Holy Father encouraged the cardinals-elect to complement the powerful flame of the Spirit of God with the quiet, gentle, and longer lasting charcoal fire of the risen Christ’s final appearance to the disciples in the Gospel of John. There, the disciples, “amazed and moved, savor their closeness to their Lord.” Pope Francis points out that “this fire burns in a particular way in the prayer of *adoration*, when we silently stand before the Eucharist and

bask in the humble, discreet and hidden presence of the Lord.” To foster and preserve the “something more” requires this personal and deep prayer.

So, to return to our initial question: “What is at the heart of liturgical participation?” What is the “something more” that’s required? Without minimizing the importance of thorough preparation and careful observation of rubrics, knowledge of the liturgy, and technical skill, the heart of liturgical participation is wonder fostered through prayer. My hope for you who participate in this National Meeting is that, together with the insights, the fellowship, and the good time you enjoy together, you will depart from here with a renewed astonishment at Christ and his Paschal Mystery. I pray that you will leave here renewed in wonder.

Carmen Aguinaco Presented with McManus Award

During the 2022 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions in New Orleans, the annual Frederick R. McManus Award for contributions in furthering the liturgical renewal in the United States was presented to Ms. Carmen F. Aguinaco, former Multicultural Specialist of the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship (2016-2021). Excerpts from her acceptance address are reprinted for the benefit of our readers:

Good evening. Board of Directors, thank you for a totally undeserved award. I receive it in the name of the Hispanic community who have taught me so much about faith, prayer, and liturgy for over more than 40 years. We Hispanics relate better to stories than to abstract concepts. So, I will start with a short story that seems to me to reflect well what I have been trying to do through my work in liturgy, as well as what I sense liturgy is about.

Micaela was a simple woman studying in an adult Education Center in a suburb of Chicago. She had never completed her elementary education. She was bright, dedicated, and enthusiastic. Working hard, she was able to complete her elementary certificate, and went on to obtain her GED, all in a very short time. One day she commented: “You know, I love my husband, and I know he loves me. But we don’t have the language to express it. And that is one of the reasons I come to these classes.”

It seems to me that something similar is what happens with people who love God. Most Hispanics love God and want to express their love. They want to taste the love of God expressed in the liturgy, but, without the ritual books, without the actual liturgy well celebrated, they don’t have the language. They seek ways; sometimes they try to express their love by imitating popular culture... or other ritualistic practices; but, somehow, that is never completely satisfying.

The language of entertainment and table talk does not quite express the love for the Most High, for “His Majesty,” as Saint Teresa of Avila used to say. Moreover, all too often, the Hispanic community in the United States had been deprived of the possibility of celebrating both in the language of their heart and in the timeless language of the Church in its most reverent and dignified expressions. The resources were not equally accessible, and the formation simply had not been there.

The process of consultation for the V Encuentro really emphasized the need of the Hispanic community to become “fluent” in this language of the liturgy as a question of survival for both their Catholic faith and their Hispanic identity. Liturgy is essential for the identity of a people for whom the Gospel has been intrinsically linked to culture. At the present moment, it becomes a question of survival because, if the next generations do not find that same language, they will lose who they are as Hispanics... and as Catholics. They will lose their roots and become spiritually homeless because they won’t be able to recognize the language of the heart they once learned from their mothers and grandmothers, godparents, aunts, uncles. Such language goes beyond mere Spanish grammar and vocabulary. It includes a whole world of symbols, sounds, senses.

I am not a liturgist by trade. I went to the Secretariat of Divine Worship almost by accident, almost as a little “adventure” in response to a call to serve the Church after what I thought was my first retirement. It is probably unprecedented for the FDLC to give an award for “advancing the cause of liturgy after Vatican II” to a person

who is not a liturgist, or even a theologian! So, I am as surprised and shocked as some of you may be. I am also deeply humbled. But I myself love God and, in the language of the liturgy, I found a way to express it that was not my own, and that I often did not even comprehend. That the language was a mystery does not really matter, or rather, it matters a great deal because that mystery is what transports us to the heart of God.

In my work, I was simply trying to provide the beloved Hispanic Catholic community with a “language” that is Hispanic, but that goes beyond Spanish words, so that they could express their love for God. What I found was actually the language taught by God’s own love in the beauty, light, awe, and reverence that transcends words, while including them. This is a language that includes music, light, incense, processions, gestures, united to the words of ancient and ever new collects, Eucharistic prayers, responses that seem to be, not so much fixed in time, but outside of time and space while happening in time and space. Having been evangelized by a Mediterranean culture that often echoed their own indigenous roots, Hispanic Catholics depend greatly on the senses and use symbols for their regular expression. The incarnational and enculturated approach of the Spanish catechists (the ones who accompanied the conquerors and explorers into the New World), sought to use symbols and images that people could understand and could, in many cases, be easily integrated into their own mindset and imagination. The early missionaries did not know the native languages and so, they used their own creativity in creating illustrated catechisms, and dramas that still survive in the practices of popular religiosity, such as *Posadas*, *Via Crucis*, *Pastorelas*, *cascarones*, *villancicos*, *aguinaldos*, *griterías*, and so on and so forth. *Flor y Canto* is not just the name of the hymnal book from OCP, but the whole sense of how the people express their love for God and for the mystery. Flowers and birds are prominent in Hispanic religious iconography: symbols of color and life, and of the music that is lifted up in praise.

I had been writing my whole life, but now I was in front of a completely different challenge: not so much to create a language but to support the understanding of the language of the liturgy. My work was, of course, immersed in words, grammatical rules, and best expressions. But in the course of working on the *Misal*, the *Bendicional*, the *RICA*, and other ritual books, I went deeper and deeper into my love, not just for the Spanish language, but for all that surrounds the rites, symbols and sounds that, together, constitute the language of dialogue between God and people.

So, at the end of over six years and well into my second “quasi-retirement,” have I become a liturgist deserving of such a wonderful award? Of course not! I was simply a scribe following the directions of the Secretariat of Divine Worship and of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, to whom I am forever indebted. I have, in a way, become a sort of modern medieval monk chasing elusive commas or chasing them away, as the case may be. An awesome task in any case and a great privilege and grace. Fr. Andrew Menke jokingly once said I should be paying the USCCB for reading the Bible and getting an education... and, seriously, I really should! Except that I would never have enough money or time to do that. I am forever grateful to Fr. Michael Flynn, who first hired me. My deepest gratitude goes to Fr. Menke, who had to endure my ignorance and gently introduced me into the mysteries of a new language and whose friendship honors me; to Fr. Randy Stice for his continued friendship and support, and to the staff of the Secretariat of Divine Worship. To all the great colleagues and friends who extended their hospitality to me throughout these years, my deepest gratitude and admiration.

I am also grateful to Archbishop Gregory Aymond, who first invited me to the Subcommittee, Bishop Octavio Cisneros who brought me into this work, Bishop Daniel García and the Subcommittee, the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia* and the FDLC for the work done in formation in liturgy for Hispanics. And to Rita Thiron, for her friendship and great times while conducting the workshops on the *Misal* and for her personal support to all these endeavors.

A grateful remembrance goes to my two predecessors, Sr. Doris Turek, who passed away a few years ago, and Sylvia Sánchez, good friends who showed me enthusiasm for and commitment to the liturgy. And, finally, to my sisters, Pilar and Virginia, who are here with me today, as they have always been. They have always generously supported any and all of my adventures. They really have the language of the heart. And to all of you who have helped me to learn a great deal of that language and have allowed me the great privilege of being able to contribute some little commas and periods to it. Thank you!



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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Volume LVIII

November 2022

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.



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3211 Fourth Street, NE
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Tel: (202) 541-3060
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www.USCCB.org

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Volume LVIII

December 2022

Bishop Steven J. Lopes Assumes Committee Chairmanship, Appoints Members for 2022-2025

Following the conclusion of the November 2022 USCCB plenary meeting, Bishop Steven J. Lopes of the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter succeeded Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair as the new Chairman of the Committee on Divine Worship. Bishop Lopes will serve for three years, until November 13, 2025.

In his first act of business, the Chairman re-appointed five Committee members to another three-year term:

- Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City
- Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila of Denver
- Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington
- Bishop John T. Folda of Fargo
- Auxiliary Bishop Timothy C. Senior of Philadelphia

Three new members were also appointed:

- Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, who previously served on the Committee from 2013 to 2019; he taught liturgy and sacramental theology at the University of Dallas and Holy Trinity Seminary before his ordination as a bishop in 2010.
- Auxiliary Bishop Mario A. Avilés, CO of Brownsville, who will also serve as the new Chairman of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish; he is a member of the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri and, before episcopal ordination in 2018, served on its Permanent Deputation and for a time as Procurator General.
- Auxiliary Bishop Michael G. Woost of Cleveland; the newest Latin Church bishop of the USCCB (ordained in August 2022), he has taught liturgical and sacramental theology at St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland for over twenty years.

They will replace outgoing members Bishop Joseph M. Siegel of Evansville, Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Monterey, and Bishop Daniel H. Mueggenborg of Reno.

The appointment of consultants to the Committee is still being finalized and will be announced in a future *Newsletter*. However, Bishop Lopes has named Archbishop Blair, the previous Committee Chairman, as a consultant. Archbishop Blair is the USCCB's representative to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, and will therefore be able to keep the Committee apprised of developments in the work of ICEL.

Understanding the *Order of Penance*: Reconciling Several Penitents

The September 2022 *Newsletter* examined the most commonly celebrated form of the Sacrament of Penance, the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents, in light of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy's definition of the sacraments in no. 59. This paragraph describes the sacraments' sanctifying purpose, of which one aspect is ecclesial, namely, to *build up the body of Christ*. The paragraph also highlights how sacramental grace is given and fruitfully received: "They do indeed impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity." These two elements – the ecclesial purpose and the fruitful reception of grace – also characterize another form of celebration in the *Order of Penance*, the Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution. This form, which is celebrated almost entirely in common, adopts and expands the basic structure of the form for reconciling individual penitents in order to express more clearly the sacrament's ecclesial purpose and to dispose penitents more fully to the reception of sacramental grace.

A Communal Celebration

In the decree promulgating the *Order of Penance* in 1973, Jean Cardinal Villot, Vatican Secretary of State, notes that, in addition to the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents, an Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution has been prepared "to highlight the communal aspect of the Sacrament." According to the Introduction of the ritual book, "a common celebration more clearly manifests the ecclesial nature of Penance" (no. 22).

What is the ecclesial nature of this sacrament? According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity,' namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it" (no. 26). This paragraph, which diminishes neither the individual aspect of liturgical participation nor the singular role of ordained ministers in liturgical celebrations, highlights the role that each member of Christ's Body exercises in liturgy. The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents enacts and expresses this truth ritually. As a body, the Christian community listens to God's word, prays for one another, and praises God for his mercy (cf. *Order of Penance*, Introduction, no. 22). The prayer of the community strengthens the repentance of individuals, and, in a reciprocal way, the newly reconciled members enrich the Church. These common gestures express the social aspect of personal sin and reconciliation: "each individual's sin in some way affects others" and "every soul that rises above itself, raises up the world" (St. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*, no. 16). Even those who will receive the sacrament at another time may take part in the liturgy (cf. *Order of Penance*, Introduction, no. 22), since their prayer supports their brothers and sisters who will approach the Sacrament, and they themselves are strengthened as their companions are raised up.

The Basic Structure of Reconciling Individual Penitents Is Expanded

The Introduction of the *Order of Penance* treats the two Orders individually: Reconciling Individual Penitents at nos. 15-21 and Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution at nos. 22-30. These two sections include headings that display the basic structure of each Order. Similar headings are present in the Orders themselves, with major headings distinguished from minor headings by size, color, or style in the various editions of the book to be published in the dioceses of the United States.

The Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents consists of five main parts: the Reception of the Penitent; the optional Reading of the Word of God; the Confession of Sins and Acceptance of Satisfaction; the Prayer of the Penitent and Absolution; and the Proclamation of Praise of God and the Dismissal of the Penitent. The Introduction of the *Order of Penance* delineates another part which precedes the five listed above: the Preparation of the Priest and the Penitent (cf. no. 15). The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents consists of four main parts: the Introductory Rites; the Celebration of the Word of God; the Rite of Reconciliation; and the Concluding Rites. A number of subheadings are given beneath each of these main parts. In addition to the options provided in this latter Order, the many beautiful examples of Penitential Celebrations found in Appendix II of the *Order of Penance* – ordinarily used to foster the spirit and virtue of penance and prepare the faithful for a fuller celebration of the sacrament itself – may be adapted for use in a service for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.

The basic structure of each Order is presented here, in parallel columns for the sake of comparison:

<i>Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents</i>	<i>Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution</i>
I. Reception of the Penitent	I. The Introductory Rites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgical Song • Greeting • Prayer
II. Reading of the Word of God (optional)	II. The Celebration of the Word of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading(s) • Homily • Examination of Conscience
III. Confession of Sins and Acceptance of Satisfaction	III. The Rite of Reconciliation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Confession of Sins • Individual Confession and Absolution
IV. Prayer of the Penitent and Absolution	
V. Proclamation of Praise of God and Dismissal of the Penitent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclamation of Praise for God’s Mercy • Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving
	IV. The Concluding Rites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blessing and Dismissal

As this comparison makes clear, the basic structure of Reconciling Individual Penitents is present in the Order for Reconciling Several Penitents, albeit in an expanded and largely communal form. This amplification and its celebration in common not only manifest the ecclesial nature of the sacrament but also dispose those gathered to receive sacramental grace fruitfully.

The Introductory Rites are amplified through song, procession, an optional instruction, and prayer. These elements do not affect the valid conferral of sacramental grace, but they do dispose the assembly to repentance. The art of music – whether by making it or hearing it – engages the human heart in a deep way, inviting individuals to conversion. In this first part of the Order, song leads to prayer: the invitation by the priest, the silent prayer of the community, the spoken oration of the priest, and the community’s concluding “Amen.”

The Celebration of the Word of God, which is optional in the Order for Reconciling Individuals, normally takes place in the communal celebration “because through his word God calls people to penance and leads them to a true conversion of heart” (no. 24). When there is more than one reading, a psalm, song, or period of silence may be placed between them. Through these the faithful come to know the word of God more deeply and give heartfelt assent to it (cf. nos. 24, 51). Finally, there is usually a homily and a period of silence for an examination of conscience. The period for the examination may replace the homily (cf. no. 26).

The third major part, the Rite of Reconciliation, begins with the common recitation of a formula of general confession (an option immediately before the confession of sins in the Order for Reconciling Individual Penitents). This formula may be followed by a litany or song but is always concluded by the common recitation of the Our Father with a concluding prayer by the priest. In a certain sense, this sequence is an expanded Prayer of the Penitent, beginning with the formula of general confession, continuing in the litany or song, and culminating with the Our Father and prayer. Confession and absolution then take place individually, with the other elements for Reconciling Individual Penitents, including the penitent’s act of contrition, not used. After individual confessions, the Proclamation of Praise for God’s Mercy occurs in an expanded and common way, using a psalm, hymn, or litany, such as the Cantic of Mary or Psalm 136. The priest concludes this common prayer with an oration of thanksgiving. The fourth part, the Concluding Rites, are expanded with a blessing.

A Rare Canticle in the *Liturgy of the Hours*

Early in every new year, those who pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* encounter a canticle based on 1 Timothy 3:16. This canticle appears only three times in the liturgical year: at First Vespers of both Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord, and then again on August 6, at Vespers for the Feast of the Transfiguration. Each of the three occasions has its own unique antiphon. The antiphon and canticle for Epiphany in the current U.S. edition of the *Liturgy of the Hours* is below, with the new translation of the canticle as in *The Abbey Psalms and Canticles* to the right:

Ant. 3 The star burned like a flame, pointing the way to God, the King of kings; the wise men saw the sign and brought their gifts in homage to their great King.

Canticle See 1 Tim 3:16

The mystery and glory of Christ

R. Praise the Lord, all you nations.

Christ manifested in the flesh,
Christ justified in the Spirit.

R. Praise the Lord, all you nations.

Christ contemplated by the angels,
Christ proclaimed by the pagans.

R. Praise the Lord, all you nations.

Christ who is believed in the world,
Christ exalted in glory.

R. Praise the Lord, all you nations.

R. O praise the Lord, all you nations.

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit.

R. O praise the Lord, all you nations.

He was seen by angels,
proclaimed among the Gentiles.

R. O praise the Lord, all you nations.

He was believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.

R. O praise the Lord, all you nations.

Ant. The star burned like a flame, pointing the way to God, the King of kings; the wise men saw the sign and brought their gifts in homage to their great King.

The *Gloria Patri* is inserted after the final refrain, followed by the repetition of the antiphon. Presumably the refrain is treated in each of its repetitions as another strophe, although when the office is chanted or recited in common there might be a variety of ways to approach the text. Perhaps because of its unusual format, with a refrain nested inside the beginning and concluding antiphon, different editions of the *Liturgy of the Hours* in other languages and from other Conferences of Bishops have treated this canticle in a variety of ways, from an editorial perspective.

The refrain in the U.S. breviary mirrors the Latin of the four-volume typical edition (*Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes*). Interestingly, however, the Vatican's second edition of the *Ordo Cantus Officii* (2015) provides a different refrain in each of the canticle's three instances, namely, a segment of the canticle's antiphon. This variation is also reflected in the *Antiphonale Romanum*, vol. II (2009), published by the monks of Solesmes.

1 Tim 3:16 begins: "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion" (RSV). The brief canticle that takes up the rest of the verse concisely and beautifully points to the economy of our salvation. In a plan laid down from all eternity, our Savior became flesh and was manifested to us. We commemorate this manifestation in a special way in the celebrations of the Lord's Epiphany, Baptism, and Transfiguration. May the celebration of the *Liturgy of the Hours* continue to help the Church praise and honor her Lord, the King of kings.