



Pastoral Letter on the Sacred Liturgy and Liturgical Norms

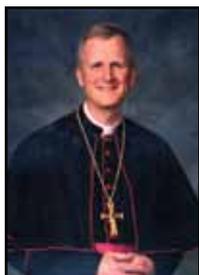
Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.

June 26, 2011

Pastoral Letter on the Sacred Liturgy and Diocesan Liturgical Norms

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
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Cover art: "The Crucifixion," mosaic of the apse,
Basilica of Saint Clement, Rome, Italy



To all the Clergy, Consecrated Religious, and Faithful of the Diocese of Springfield- Cape Girardeau,

As we look forward to next Advent and implementing the new liturgical norms, I want to extend to each of you my deep gratitude for how carefully and prayerfully you approach the Sacred Liturgy within your parishes. I understand in the recent history of the diocese how responsive all of you have been to various directives for the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy as they were promulgated. It is obvious to me that you have experienced liturgical renewal in many ways.

In traveling across our diocese and in visiting many parishes, I always come away impressed with the depth of faith that is evident in so many, especially in the manner in which you celebrate the Eucharist. Please know how grateful I am for the love you demonstrate for the Holy Eucharist and the obvious desire you have to celebrate with *full, conscious, and active participation*.

We find ourselves in a moment of history when the Church is again asking priests to take a leadership role in the continuing liturgical renewal of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let us pray for one another, that this crossroads may lead all of us to a deeper and more intimate encounter with Jesus Christ, that we might be more effective members of His Body in our contemporary world.

We know that the Lord is always advancing toward us as we joyfully await His final coming. The liturgy is that sacred moment and action in which we respond to the Bridegroom like the wise maidens in the parable, ready to greet him and enter "with him into the marriage feast" (Mt 25:10). It is in this spirit of longing for communion with the Living God that I offer this pastoral letter and the accompanying liturgical norms for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau.

As you have followed the norms of the former bishops of this diocese, I hope that each of you will embrace these new norms with that same attitude and dedication. This gives me an occasion to thank you in advance for reviewing your own practices in light of this letter and these norms, and for striving through your love of the Holy Eucharist to ensure that it is the "source and summit of the Christian life," which the Second Vatican Council so beautifully confirmed.

May God continue to bless you as together we undertake this important work of renewal and catechesis for the implementation of the new English translation of the *Roman Missal*.

Given at The Catholic Center in Springfield, Missouri, on June 26, 2011, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

+ *James V. Johnston, Jr.*

**Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau**

The New Translation of the *Roman Missal*

In the coming year and beyond, the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, and all the faithful throughout the English-speaking world, will receive a *gift* and an *opportunity*. The gift will be the new translation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (Third Typical Edition)* in the English language. This is the result of years of scholarly work and prayer. The *Roman Missal* is the text which contains the treasury of prayer for the Catholic Church's most important liturgical worship, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The *Third Typical Edition* was promulgated in the year 2000 and contains prayers for the celebration of recently-canonized saints and additional Mass texts. The new translation will provide us with a beautiful and faithful translation of the Latin original, which contains texts of prayer that express our belief and have been formed by the Holy Spirit. This new translation was guided by the revised principles on translation outlined in the Instruction from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam Authenticam* (March 28, 2001), "On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy." The new translation is not only beautiful, but it evokes a gravity and significance that are worthy of the texts of the Mass.

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The opportunity is given to us to not only prepare for the new missal and changes, but to renew our knowledge of and deepen our love for the divine gifts we receive through the Sacred Liturgy. Therefore, this is a moment of grace and an occasion for a deeper conversion. In the words of Cardinal Francis George, the Archbishop of Chicago and past president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), "[The] kingdom of God is already present in the Mass, and it is through the Mass that we are given by Christ the

grace to be saints, and sent forth to build strong Catholic families, to transform the workplace and the marketplace into paths to salvation and, ultimately, to prepare ourselves to be part of the heavenly liturgy where the risen Christ offers himself eternally to the Father.”ⁱ This pastoral letter is meant to serve as an accompaniment to the catechesis in preparation for the use of the revised *Roman Missal*. The use of the *Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal* must begin this November, 2011, with the Mass of the First Sunday of Advent. Use of some of the musical texts of the Mass may begin this September.

One of the most important responsibilities of the bishop is to serve as the “first steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to him” and to be the “moderator, promoter, and guardian of her whole liturgical life.”ⁱⁱ With this in mind, I wish to highlight aspects of liturgical life within our diocese which will aid all of us in the fruitful celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. In addition, I will also issue normsⁱⁱⁱ to be followed within the diocese that I hope will not only guide us in the public worship of the Church, but also foster a common practice which will deepen charity and communion among us.

It is also important to note that this pastoral letter is to be read alongside the many other recent magisterial documents that have already been issued.^{iv} A great deal of my letter is an application of these documents to our particular Church here in Southern Missouri. The specific norms for our diocese that are issued along with this document will take effect simultaneously with the new missal unless otherwise indicated, although by their nature many of these directives may be applied immediately.

Incorporating and adapting to change is challenging by its very nature. Yet, it is also a necessary part of our journey of faith, the process of conversion, and the organic life of the Church itself. I thank our priests and all the faithful of our diocese who are committed to having their hearts prepared to receive this gift and opportunity with the new *Roman Missal*.



Chapter I: 'He Must Increase'—Servants of the Liturgy

"He must increase, while I must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

These words of St. John the Baptist in reference to our Lord not only serve as a principle for each Christian's spiritual life, but also as a guide for how we must each approach the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy at Mass. The Mass is no mere "worship service" which the worshipping community brings about. Rather, it is the action of the risen Christ, our high priest (cf. Heb 4:14 ff.), giving Himself as a perfect sacrifice to redeem the world. It is His sacrifice on the cross at Golgotha made present, so that we are brought to the events of the evening of Holy Thursday and what followed to Easter Sunday. We call these saving actions/events of Christ the *paschal mystery*. As Blessed Pope John Paul II noted, "When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the memorial of her Lord's death and resurrection, this central event of salvation becomes really present and 'the work of our redemption is carried out.' This sacrifice is so decisive for the salvation of the human race that Jesus Christ offered it and returned to the Father only *after he had left us a means of sharing in it* as if we had been present there."^v

The Sacramental Nature of the Liturgy

It is first and foremost God who acts in the Sacred Liturgy. Pope Benedict XVI noted in a recent Chrism Mass homily, "Sacrament means that it is not primarily we who act, but God comes first to meet us through his action, he looks upon us and he leads us to himself. ... God touches us through material things ... that he takes up into his service, making them instruments of the encounter between us and himself."^{vi}

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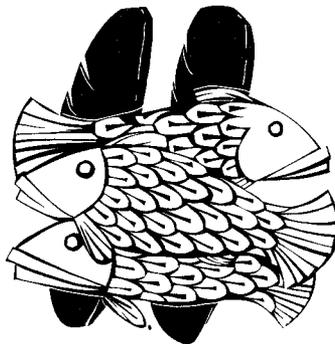
In other words, God mediates His presence and power through the sacraments by means of visible and material signs. The sacraments have their origin with Christ and are handed down and celebrated by the Church in fidelity to Him. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the significance of the liturgical signs which comprise the sacraments: "The liturgical celebration involves signs and symbols relating to creation (candles, water, fire), human life (washing, anointing, breaking bread), and the history of salvation (the rites of the Passover). Integrated into the world of faith and taken up by the power of the Holy Spirit, these cosmic elements, human

rituals, and gestures of remembrance of God become bearers of the saving and sanctifying action of Christ.”^{vii}

Unlike other signs, the liturgical words and actions make present and accomplish what they signify. They allow us to enter into the mystery of God’s life and power: “By means of the words, actions, and symbols that form the structure of a celebration, the Spirit puts both the faithful and the ministers into a living relationship with Christ, the Word and Image of the Father, so that they can live out the meaning of what they hear, contemplate and do in the celebration.”^{viii}

But, in order for the signs to “speak” to us, our minds and hearts must be opened, attuned, and enlightened. Only then are we able “to pass from its signs to the mystery which they contain, and to enter into that mystery in every aspect of [our] lives.”^{ix} The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is an example. They were enabled to recognize Jesus in the simple gesture of the “breaking of bread” after first having their hearts and minds prepared. Jesus opened up the Scriptures and their hearts were set on fire before the signs could speak to them. Likewise, “[t]he Eucharist unfolds in a dynamic context of signs containing a rich and luminous message. Through these signs the mystery in some way opens up before the eyes of the believer.”^x

This has important implications for both clergy and faithful alike. We see that the words, symbols, and actions of the liturgy matter a great deal, for they are “bearers of the saving and sanctifying action of Christ.”^{xi} We also see the importance of approaching our celebrations with an enkindled faith and being well prepared, in order that the power of the liturgy might transform us to live out what we hear, contemplate, and do in the celebration.



Servants of the Liturgy

The true celebrant of the liturgy is the Blessed Trinity. In a key paragraph, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes this foundational truth: “The book of Revelation of St. John, read in the Church’s liturgy, first reveals to us, ‘A throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne’: ‘the Lord God.’ It then shows the Lamb, ‘standing, as though it had been slain’: Christ crucified and risen, the one high priest of the true sanctuary, the same one ‘who offers and is offered, who gives and is given.’ Finally it presents ‘the river of the water of life ... flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb,’ one of the most beautiful symbols of the Holy Spirit.”^{xii}

The Holy Spirit and the Church enable us to participate in this eternal liturgy through the Mass.^{xiii} The liturgy is a gift and mystery entrusted to us that we might in faith join the angels and saints and enter as participants into the perfect self-sacrifice of the Son to the Father in the Holy Spirit. It is Christ who gathers us to Himself in the Holy Spirit and who acts as the true celebrant at every Mass. Realizing that the liturgy of the Mass is first and foremost an action of Christ our High Priest, ordained priests must always remember that they are servants of the Sacred Liturgy.^{xiv}

Priests experience the profound nature of their vocation during the Mass, realizing that they, too, are offering themselves, with and in Christ, for the salvation of others, but also acting in such a way that they “stand in” for Christ, the Head, Shepherd, and Bridegroom of the Church. Through the sacrament of holy orders, “by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, [priests] are marked with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ the Head. ... Through the ministry of priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ, the sole Mediator. Through the hands of priests and in the name of the whole Church, the Lord’s sacrifice is offered in the Eucharist in an unbloody and sacramental manner until He Himself returns.”^{xv} Filled with a sense of “Eucharistic ‘amazement,’”^{xvi} priests are moved to serve the Lord and His people in the liturgy with humble gratitude.

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Pope Benedict provides another reason why being servants of the liturgy is so important: “The primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration

of the rite itself. The *ars celebrandi* [art of celebrating] is the best way to ensure their *actuosa participatio* [active participation]. The *ars celebrandi* is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness.^{xvii} For this reason, “the best catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself celebrated well.”^{xviii}

This is not to say that the priest’s gifts and personality are insignificant. Indeed, the faith and love of the priest, his knowledge and gifts, are all important in leading the assembly. However, these are always at the service of the liturgy, which is first an action of Christ. St. John the Baptist’s words, “He must increase, while I must decrease,” are especially relevant, not only to priests, but also to all of the People of God as they take part in the Mass as members of Christ’s Mystical Body. The gifts of all will be evident and truly enrich our celebrations most when placed at the service of the liturgy in this spirit.

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Chapter II: A Spirit of Wonder and Awe

“Fill them with a spirit of wonder and awe in your presence”^{xix}
(Rite of Confirmation)

These words from the Rite of Confirmation point to another aspect of our worship that must be highlighted and better understood. The Holy Spirit’s gift of *wonder and awe* in the presence of God, is especially related to the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, because it is in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist that the Divine Presence is manifested in an especially privileged way. Jesus Christ becomes fully and substantially present at every Mass—“it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.”^{xx}

Additionally, as I noted in the prior chapter, it is through the Sacred Liturgy that Christ the Redeemer takes us, and all of creation, to Himself, transforming us, presenting us to the Father. Further, the Holy Mass is the union of heaven and earth. This is brought out in the liturgy itself, e.g., the Sanctus. The earthly Church participates in the heavenly liturgy of the angels and saints, as the Second Vatican Council taught: “In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem

toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle."^{xxi} An awareness of the Divine Presence and action cannot but call forth our sense of wonder and awe.

Sacred Mysteries

An aspect of the mysteries that we contemplate and experience whenever we celebrate the Sacred Liturgy is that God is both *immanent* and *transcendent*. Immanence means that in the coming of Christ, God has drawn near to us; indeed, he has become "*flesh and dwelt among us*" (Jn 1:14). He is, and remains, *Emmanuel*, "God with us" (Mt 1:23). We also know that through the sacraments, Christ abides in us as "members" of his Body (cf. 1 Cor 12:12-31), and that Christ is also mysteriously present in the gathered assembly "*where two or three gather in [His] name*" (Mt 18:20).

Transcendence means that God is profoundly beyond us in His majesty, beauty, glory and holiness. But, it also refers to the goal of our life's striving: that we were made for heavenly dwelling places (cf. Jn 14:2), and for an eternal life such that "*eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him*" (1 Cor 2:9).

The Sacred Liturgy has always served to hold both of these realities, the immanence and the transcendence of God, in a proper balance. Because of the modern tendency (often referred to as *empiricism*) to only attend to what can be measured, seen, and understood, the transcendent aspect of liturgy can sometimes be minimized or overlooked. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that the human heart hungers for an experience and encounter with that which is holy. Human beings tend to live "wrapped up in themselves" if they are not reminded of the eternal, the holy, the unseen things, and of heaven itself. Without a periodic encounter with sacred realities, one can be left with the impression that this world is all there is, and the liturgy becomes just another experience (among many) of ordinary life. Without a proper experience within liturgy of both immanence and transcendence, faith can weaken and go underdeveloped.



Drawing on our rich Catholic heritage, we must rediscover the proper balance of immanence and transcendence, and work to “instill anew in all of Christ’s faithful that sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the *mystery of faith* that is the Eucharist, in whose celebration the Church is forever passing from what is obsolete into newness of life.”^{xxii}

A key to this important work is *beauty*. Addressing the relationship between what we believe in faith (*lex credendi*) and what we celebrate in liturgical worship (*lex orandi*), Pope Benedict notes the importance of beauty:

“This relationship between creed and worship is evidenced in a particular way by the rich theological and liturgical category of beauty. Like the rest of Christian Revelation, the liturgy is inherently linked to beauty. ... This is no mere aestheticism, but the concrete way in which the truth of God’s love in Christ encounters us, attracts us, and delights us, enabling us to emerge from ourselves and drawing us toward our true vocation, which is to love. ... Here the splendor of God’s glory surpasses all worldly beauty. The truest beauty is the love of God, who definitively revealed himself to us in the paschal mystery. The beauty of the liturgy is part of this mystery; it is a sublime expression of God’s glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth. ... Beauty, then, is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action. ... These considerations should make us realize the care which is needed, if the liturgical action is to reflect its innate splendor.”^{xxiii}

Related to beauty, it is important that the celebration of the liturgy “foster a sense of the sacred” through “the use of outward signs which help to cultivate this sense,” as well as “an attentiveness to the various kinds of language that the liturgy employs: words and music, gestures and silence, movement, the liturgical colors of vestments.” “Special respect and care must also be given to the vestments, the furnishings, and the sacred vessels, so that by their harmonious and orderly arrangement, they will foster awe for the mystery of God, manifest the unity of the faith and strengthen devotion.”^{xxiv} In other words, the celebration of the liturgy always demands our best effort, and should never be casual, careless, or sloppy (for lack of a better word).

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Adoration and Eucharistic Devotion

The Church has long recognized the importance of Eucharistic Adoration and devotion, and how they strengthen and enrich the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. This wonderful practice is already present in many of the parishes throughout the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. I encourage the promotion of these practices, both for the spiritual life of each person, but also that our liturgical celebrations may be enriched. In this regard, I echo the Holy Father: "Great benefit would ensue from a suitable catechesis explaining the importance of [Eucharistic Adoration], which enables the faithful to experience the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully. ... I also recommend that, in their catechetical training, and especially in their preparation for First Holy Commu-

nion, children be taught the meaning and beauty of spending time with Jesus, and helped to cultivate a sense of awe before his presence in the Eucharist."^{xxv}

Contributing to the importance of Eucharistic Adoration and devotion, as well as to the reverence and awe owed for the sacrament of Christ's sacrifice, is the fitting location of the tabernacle. In this regard, the direction outlined in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* and other documents is to be followed.^{xxvi} Within these norms, it is noted that the judgment of the diocesan bishop is needed to make specific determinations for the varying church buildings of the diocese.^{xxvii} The goal is to foster an even greater reverence and love for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and to open our own hearts to be transformed by Him.

Chapter III: The Better Portion

In Luke's Gospel we read Jesus' words to Martha: "*you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion and she shall not be deprived of it*" (Lk 10:41-42).

The Church Fathers observed that Martha and Mary serve as "types" that describe two kinds of life: action and contemplation. The Christian life, including the Sacred Liturgy, is comprised of both. The Church, in imitation of Mary, is the assembly of those who listen to the words of their glorified Lord (cf. Lk 8:21). Like Martha, the Lord is also served by getting the table properly prepared. Nevertheless, in modern American culture, there is a strong bent toward action over

contemplation. The frantic pace and busyness of life cause many to define themselves by their doing rather than by their being.

A key passage of the Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) reads, "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy."^{xviii} Some have tended to understand this passage only in terms of external actions or functions, focusing on external ministries, often to the neglect of the "better portion," of prayerfully listening to the Lord. Yet, if we fail to develop a proper interior disposition of quiet attentiveness, then following the rubrics, performing functions, using the correct language, and keeping norms, will be sterile. That is why this last chapter addresses a key aspect of the proper celebration of the liturgy.

In a sense, each of the preceding chapters also alluded to this key truth that Mary realized at the feet of Jesus. Christ is the center of the liturgy; it is He who acts, drawing us to Himself and presenting Himself as a gift to the Father through the Spirit in that act of total self-giving love accomplished at His "hour" on Calvary, and made present throughout time through the Mass. "*He must increase, I must decrease.*" We also considered the wonder and awe of that with which we have been gifted, and how we must approach it with docility and love, wonder and obedience. We pondered the importance of opening the heart to the mystery of both the immanence and the transcendence of God, and how reverence, beauty, and a sense of the sacred are essential to this.

With these insights, we must also follow the lead of Mary, the sister who chose the better portion: contemplating Christ, in silence and love. To foster this, we must encourage and promote times of quiet recollection, both prior to and following the celebration of Mass, as well as at the appropriate times within the liturgy. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* encourages silence at a number of points during the Eucharistic celebration (cf. nn. 45, 51, 54, 56, 71, 88, and 147).

All should contemplate Christ, revealed and speaking to us through Sacred Scripture. The mysteries of His life and the deposit of His teaching, as handed on faithfully and taught by the Church, are also an important element for a proper contemplation of Christ. Additionally, the proper interior

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disposition for “full, conscious, and active participation” is fostered by a thorough and informed catechesis on the liturgy and its ritual actions, gestures, and words. Thus, knowledge of Sacred Tradition is essential.^{xxix}

The Importance Of Reverence

Lastly, I cannot fail to mention the importance of *reverence*. Reverence is that deep interior awareness that I am in the presence of God—that He is God and I am His beloved creature, His son or daughter. It is not a servile fear, but an expression of joyful “wonder and awe” in the presence of the mystery of God and His divine love. It is a posture of love toward God and toward my brothers and sisters, who are members of God’s household with me. It is an acknowledgment of God: His presence and holiness. It is the opposite of the casualness that pervades our culture and that can sometimes be tempting to incorporate within the Church’s worship.

We experience and express reverence even outside the liturgy, whenever an awareness of God breaks into our lives: at the birth of a child, the beauty of nature, the vastness of the sea, a night when the stars of the universe overwhelm us, or even in profound suffering. If we are struck with reverence at the most profound moments during life, then it is most fitting that we exhibit and attend to reverence when we encounter the Living God Himself in the liturgy.

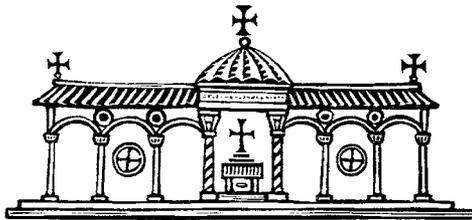
This attentiveness and deeper encounter with God and His love affect our social relations with others, including our works of charity and justice. Pope Benedict noted this in his encyclical, “*Deus Caritas Est*” [“God Is Love”], “The saints—consider the example of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta—constantly renewed their capacity for love of neighbor from their encounter with the Eucharistic Lord, and conversely this encounter acquired its realism and depth in their service to others.”^{xxx} We might say that, in order to be effective as Martha, we must first be attentive as Mary.

In preparing for the liturgy, we do well to learn the lesson of Martha: that Jesus wanted first to give, not to receive. He came to bring salvation, and the best way to serve Him was to listen to His word and put it into practice. Even more so, we profit by turning to another Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the Mother of the Eucharist. She exemplifies in the fullest sense the interior disposition of total docility and receptiveness toward the will of God and the manner of receiving the Word made Flesh. Indeed, when we give our “Amen” at the reception of Holy Communion, we can see this as a moment in which we imitate Mary’s *fiat*, her “yes” to God’s will that she allow the Divine Word to take flesh in her. Our “yes” to the Holy Eucharist similarly allows Him to take flesh in us. May the Mother of God intercede for us as we seek to imitate her in prayer, discipleship, and holiness.

Endnotes

- i Cardinal Francis George, OMI, PhD, from the Foreward to A New Translation for a New Roman Missal, Midwest Theological Forum.
- ii Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, 28 October 1965, no. 15; also, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [SC], no. 41; *Code of Canon Law* [CIC], c. 387; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments Instruction on the Eucharist, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* [RS], On Certain Matters to Be Observed or to Be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, no. 19.
- iii Cf. CIC, canon 838.4.
- iv I think especially of Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* [EdE], On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church; as well as his Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy; Pope Benedict XVI's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* [SCar], The Sacrament of Charity; as well as the aforementioned Instruction on the Eucharist by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*; finally, the revised *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* [GIRM].
- v EdE, 11 (emphasis in the

- original); see also Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 3.
- vi Pope Benedict XVI, Chrism Mass Homily, April 1, 2010.
- vii *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 1189.
- viii CCC, 1101.
- ix Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Stay With Us Lord, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, 17.
- x Ibid, 14.
- xi CCC, 1189.
- xii Ibid, 1137.
- xiii Ibid, 1139.
- xiv GIRM, no. 24.
- xv Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2.
- xvi EdE, 6.
- xvii SCar, 38.
- xviii Ibid, 64.
- xix Rite of Confirmation.
- xx CCC, 1374.
- xxi SC, 8; cited in CCC, 1090.
- xxii RS, 40, 41.
- xxiii SCar, 35.
- xxiv Ibid, 40.
- xxv Ibid, 67.
- xxvi Ibid, 69.
- xxvii GIRM, 314-315; cf. also SCar, 69.
- xxviii SC, 14.
- xxix Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, November 18, 1965, nos. 7-10.
- xxx Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, God Is Love, *Deus Caritas Est*, 18. See also SCar, 89, The social implications of the Eucharistic mystery.



Liturgical Norms for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

June 26, 2011

In its “Decree concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church,” the Second Vatican Council taught that “bishops are the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, as well as being the governors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the Church committed to them” (“*Christus Dominus*,” 15). The instruction “*Redemptionis Sacramentum*” (RS), citing the *Code of Canon Law* (CIC), directs that it pertains to the diocesan bishop “within the limits of his competence, to set forth liturgical norms in his Diocese, by which all are bound.” (RS, no. 21, citing CIC, canon 838 §4). All that is set forth in these norms is to have the force of law, anything whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding. These norms are to take effect at the Mass of the First Sunday of Advent, November, 2011; some, by their very nature, may be implemented immediately.

1. Only the books containing the approved translation of the texts may be used for the celebration of the liturgy. No one is free to add, omit, or change anything in the celebration of the Mass (*GIRM*, 24; *CIC*, canon 846.1; *SC*, 22.3). This applies to the use of both the *Lectionary* and the *Roman Missal* and includes composing prayers or substituting words, texts, and ritual actions of the Mass. Celebrants must become familiar with the limited instances indicated in the liturgical books in which they are permitted to use their own words, and these should express the intent indicated.

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during the
liturgy.***

2. Dress of the faithful should be appropriate and modest, and should reflect the reverence due to God and the act of divine worship.

3. It is important to maintain a spirit of prayer and quiet in our churches. Within the church worship area, pastors will foster a period of quiet for prayer and recollection immediately before and after the celebration of Mass. This must be done with pastoral sensitivity to those who wish to visit at more length and seek opportunities to share friendship and conversation before and after Mass.

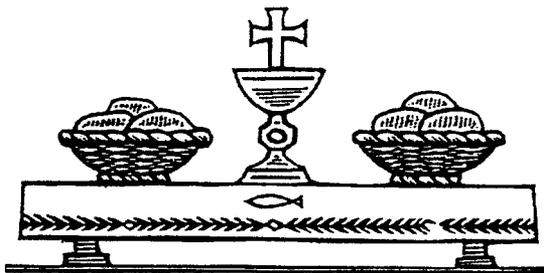
Fortunately, many of our churches have gathering spaces for these opportunities to visit. Devotions such as the rosary are encouraged, however, if these are prayed publicly in churches, care must be taken that they not intrude upon or replace these times for quiet recollection and prayer, and should be scheduled before or after these times.

4. Ministries of hospitality should be encouraged and fostered so as to welcome all, but not intrude upon or disrupt times of prayerful preparation or thanksgiving before or after Mass. In general, parishes should attend to the ministries of hospitality, greeting, and fellowship in appropriate spaces such as the narthex, parish hall, or front of the church building. Occasionally, liturgical celebrations are followed by times in which photographs or the like must be attended to in the church building. These should be considered exceptions to the norm, and carried out with an attitude of restraint to keep noise and commotion at a minimum.

5. Appropriate times of silence should be safeguarded during the liturgy itself, i.e., “within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts. Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner” (*GIRM*, 45). With regard to the time before the celebration, realizing that some action and communication is needed to prepare, ministers and servers are to do so in a spirit of quiet.

6. Pastors are encouraged to see that churches are open for adequate time before and after Mass so that the faithful may have time to pray and offer thanksgiving.

7. Where the Blessed Sacrament is present in the tabernacle in the sanctuary, all are to maintain the genuflection as the traditional sign of adoration and reverence to the Blessed Sacrament (“Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass,” n. 84). In





particular at the end of the entrance procession of Mass, the celebrant and other ministers (apart from the person bearing the *Book of the Gospels*, the cross bearers, and candle bearers) genuflect unless prevented by a physical limitation, in which case they make a profound bow. The same is to be repeated at the end of Mass, prior to the procession from the church (*GIRM*, 274). If it is necessary for some of the faithful to receive Hosts that have

been previously consecrated, priests and deacons are to genuflect a) after opening the tabernacle door before Communion and b) before closing the tabernacle door following the distribution of Holy Communion, unless prohibited by a physical limitation (“Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass,” nn. 84 and 100). This can serve as an important means of affirming and encouraging the people’s faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. When the Blessed Sacrament is not present in the sanctuary space, a profound bow to the altar is required.

8. Deacons are to kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer at the time specified in the norms, unless prohibited by a physical limitation. When a deacon is exercising his ministry at the altar, the deacon receives Holy Communion from the priest, and then assists the priest in distributing Holy Communion as an ordinary minister.

9. Vestments and other furnishings should be beautiful and clean, and conform to liturgical norms. Parishes should make provision for obtaining and maintaining quality vestments in each of the liturgical colors, and furnishings necessary for the fitting celebration of the liturgy.

10. Altar linens and cloths, along with their care and use, are also important. Every altar is to have an appropriate altar cloth. Additional cloths of different colors may be used “provided that the uppermost cloth covering the mensa (i.e., the altar cloth itself) is always white in color” (*GIRM*, 304). Likewise, at every Mass there must be a corporal and purificator(s). Corporals and purificators are sacred linens and are not to be left on the altar following Mass, but should be removed with the sacred vessels and returned to the sacristy. Corporals and purificators are intended to insure that neither particles of the Sacred Host nor any of the Precious Blood is lost, and reverence demands that both be cleaned appropriately. Purificators which have been saturated with the Precious Blood and corporals which could contain particles of the Sacred Host must be hand washed, with the water poured into the sacrarium before they are laundered.

11. Sacred vessels must be noble, dignified, clean, and made of

precious metal. If made from a non-precious metal, then ordinarily they should be gilded on the inside. Breakable or porous materials such as glass, pottery, wood, or stone are not to be used to contain the Body and Blood of the Lord (*GIRM*, 328-330).

12. Language is important in conveying what we believe, including how we speak about the Blessed Sacrament. All should strive to refer to the Eucharist in terms such as “the Body and Blood of Christ”, or “the Sacred Host and Precious Blood,” and not as the “bread” and “wine.”

13. All of the faithful must observe the law on the Eucharistic fast prior to receiving Holy Communion, namely, “One who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before Holy Communion” (*CIC*, canon 919). Elderly people, those who are ill, and their caretakers are excused from the Eucharistic fast (*CIC*, canon 191. 3).

14. As far as possible, it is highly encouraged that the faithful receive Hosts that have been consecrated at the Mass they are attending (*GIRM*, 85). There will be times when it will be necessary that Hosts from the tabernacle be distributed (cf. n. 7 above for the proper reverence to be shown the Blessed Sacrament when this is necessary).

15. In catechesis for First Holy Communion (both children and adults), the communicants must be taught how to properly receive Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hand, and be instructed that they have the option to receive either way. At an appropriate time, all of the faithful are to be catechized in a similar manner.

16. At the discretion of the pastor, servers may accompany those distributing Holy Communion under the species of bread with patens, so as to catch particles of the Sacred Host that might fall, emphasizing the precious nature of the Holy Eucharist. Where this is implemented, servers should be properly trained and taught to maintain

***Christ is the
center of the
liturgy; it is
He who acts,
drawing us to
Himself and
presenting
Himself as
a gift to the
Father through
the Spirit ...
made present
throughout
time through
the Mass.***

***Human beings
tend to live
'wrapped up
in themselves'
if they are not
reminded of
the eternal, the
holy, the unseen
things, and
heaven itself.***

the paten at a level until they place it on the altar or credence table so that pieces of the Host will not fall to the floor. Patens are to be purified with the other sacred vessels according to the prescribed norms.

17. During the celebration of the Mass, when servers are present, the custom may be observed that a server ring a bell or bells a little before the consecration (*epiclesis*) as a signal to the faithful, at the elevation of the Sacred Host and at the elevation of the chalice (*GIRM*, 150). This may also be introduced in those parishes in which this has not been the practice.

18. The preferred location of the tabernacle in churches within the diocese that do not have a Eucharistic chapel close to the sanctuary, is in the sanctuary, elevated and conspicuous, preferably in the center of the apse area (*SC*, 69), keeping in mind that the altar is the center toward which the attention of the faithful turns at the celebration of the liturgy.

19. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion provide a very important assistance in our parishes. This is an area where it is important to provide a careful catechesis on the role of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Their role is specifically for the distribution of Holy Communion only when there are not enough ordinary ministers present. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should never displace ordinary ministers. Likewise, it is the role of the ordinary minister (priest or deacon) to go to the tabernacle for ciboria and to distribute the Hosts from one vessel to another. Extraordinary ministers should wait near the sanctuary until the ordinary ministers have received Holy Communion before they approach the altar for Holy Communion and then receive their vessels.

20. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who visit the sick following Mass assist the pastor in his responsibility toward the sick and shut-ins. In fulfilling this commission, they must place the pyx near the altar (e.g., on the credence table) prior to the beginning of Mass so that the priest or other ordinary minister may place the host(s) in the pyx at the end of the Communion rite or following Mass. They then retrieve them at the end of Mass. Consecrated hosts

may not be placed in the pyx in the Communion procession.

21. Only priests give themselves Holy Communion; deacons and all others are given Holy Communion, including receiving the chalice, and may not take it directly from the altar. Priests who do not concelebrate may not give themselves Holy Communion, but receive it from a minister of Holy Communion.

22. Priest concelebrants are required to maintain several different gestures during the Mass, and are to follow the guidelines, "The Manner of Speaking the Eucharistic Prayer" found in the *GIRM*, nn. 216-236; this includes the extension of both hands together during the *epiclesis*, the right hand extended during the words of consecration, and maintaining of the *orans* gesture during the *anamnesis* and the "communion *epiclesis*," but not during the other parts of the Eucharistic Prayer; they are to genuflect prior to receiving the Precious Blood at the altar unless prevented by physical limitation; in such cases they bow.

23. Reverence for the Blessed Sacrament should continue following Holy Communion. When the Communion rite concludes, all the ministers of Holy Communion should bring their vessels back to the altar so that remaining Hosts or Precious Blood may be consumed, and/or the Hosts may be taken to the tabernacle. Any remaining Precious Blood must never be poured down a sacrarium, much less an ordinary sink. If the vessels are to be purified after Mass, a small amount of water should be added to the chalice to remove the Sacramental Presence. Following Mass, any vessel that was used for Holy Communion and not completely purified by the priest or deacon during Mass is to be promptly purified by them following Mass, by pouring water into the vessel and consuming the water. If the water cannot be consumed, it must be poured down a sacrarium and not an ordinary sink.

24. The *General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM)*, does not indicate a posture for the Our Father other than standing. The principal celebrant and concelebrants are to extend their hands in the *orans* position during the Our Father. The faithful are not to be invited or forced to join hands during the Our Father; many do not wish to join



hands and can feel uncomfortable when this is suggested. Individuals and families may wish to join hands voluntarily.

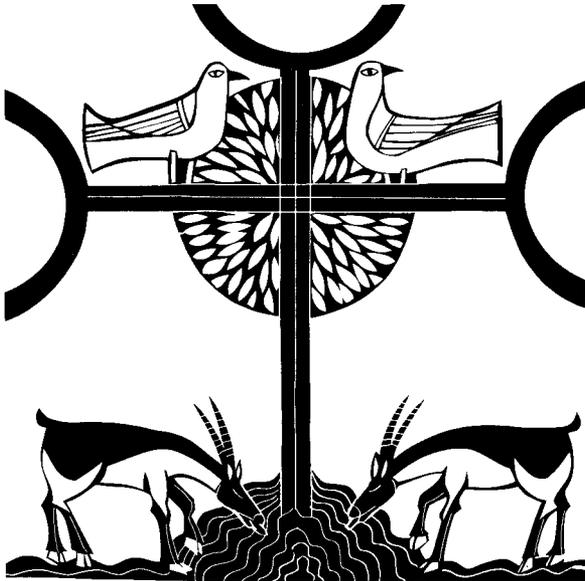
25. The Sign of Peace is a part of the Communion rite of the Mass. Ongoing catechesis is needed to explain the unitive Eucharistic meaning of the Sign of Peace. The Sign of Peace is not a casual greeting or an occasion to enter into a brief conversation, but a sign of the communion that should exist among those who are about to share in the sacrament of unity that is the Holy Eucharist. The Sign of Peace should not be overextended in order to not delay the rite of the breaking of the consecrated bread, and should be offered “only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner” (*GIRM*, 82). The priest is not to leave the sanctuary at this time, unless necessary due to particular circumstances.

26. In our culture, liturgical dancing is not permitted within the Mass (cf. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, “Notitiae,” 11 (1975) 202-205). This does not include hand movements that often accompany children’s songs, as long as these take place in the pews.

27. Music ministry is an essential part of assisting the congregation to participate more fully in the Mass. Music, both instrumental and with voice, should always serve the Sacred Liturgy. Music ministers and the faithful should guard against treating the music of the liturgy as a performance. Applause for music within/during the Mass is to be avoided, with any appropriate recognition/thanks of musicians or other liturgical ministers taking place following the prayer after Holy Communion.

28. Music should be fitting for sacred worship and doctrinally sound. Pastors should encourage all music ministers to deepen their understanding of the three judgments—liturgical, pastoral, and musical—as described in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (nn.126-136) in order to select music that is truly worthy of the Sacred Liturgy.

29. Musicians should strive to present to the assembly the broad representation of the Catholic Church’s treasury of hymns and sacred music. For the Entrance Chant and the Communion Chant, parishes are encouraged to periodically use the musical settings of the antiphons found in the *Roman Gradual* and the *Simple Gradual* instead of a hymn, allowing for a fuller provision of Sacred Scripture within the liturgy (*GIRM*, nn. 41, 48, and 87). Parishes are also encouraged to make use of the musical settings found in the *Third Edition of the Roman Missal*.



Selected artwork is from The Church's Year of Grace, by Pius Parsch, (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1957), and Clip Art for Year A, Clip Art for Year B, and Clip Art for Year C, by Steve Erspamer, (Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 1992, 1993, 1994, respectively).

