



NewsLetter

COMMITTEE ON DIVINE WORSHIP

Members

Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli, *Chair*
Bishop of Paterson
Justin F. Cardinal Rigali
Archbishop Emer. of Philadelphia
Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans
Most Rev. Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford
Most Rev. Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville
Most Rev. Mark J. Seitz
Bishop of El Paso
Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
Most Rev. Octavio Cisneros
Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn
Most Rev. Paul R. Sanchez
Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn

Consultants

Francis E. Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop Emeritus of Chicago
Right Rev. Gregory J. Polan, OSB
Abbot of Conception Abbey
Rev. Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin
Rev. Jan Michael Joncas
Rev. Thomas C. Ranzino
Rev. Juan J. Sosa
Sr. Janet Baxendale, SC
Mrs. Rita A. Thiron

Secretariat

Rev. Michael J. Flynn
Executive Director
Ms. Sylvia L. Sánchez
Multicultural Specialist
Mr. Matthew M. Godbey
Administrative Assistant
Ms. Hannah R. Dell
Staff Assistant

**USCCB Secretariat of
Divine Worship**
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: (202) 541-3060
Fax: (202) 541-3088
www.USCCB.org

© 2015 USCCB

Volume LI

February 2015

CDWDS Issues *Homiletic Directory* to Assist Priests in Preaching

Responding to concerns first expressed at the 2008 Synod of Bishops on the Word of God, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has published a guide, entitled the *Homiletic Directory*, to assist homilists in the careful, effective, and prayerful preparation of homilies. The directory was issued by the Congregation on June 29, 2014, and publicly released on February 10, 2015.

A directory on homiletics was requested by the Synod Fathers and agreed to by Pope Benedict XVI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (no. 60). For his part, Pope Francis, in his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, underscored the importance of preaching as one of the priorities in the life of the Church.

The directory reemphasizes the centrality of the word of God in preaching, especially at the Sunday liturgy. As the document's introduction states, "The *Homiletic Directory* seeks to assimilate the insights of the past fifty years, review them critically, help preachers appreciate the purpose of the homily, and offer them assistance in fulfilling a mission which is vital to the life of the Church" (no. 3). The directory consists of two main parts and two appendices.

Part One: The Homily and Its Liturgical Setting

The directory emphasizes that the homily is first and foremost a liturgical act, not merely an academic lecture or an instruction unrelated to the liturgy. "Because the homily is an integral part of the liturgy, it is not only an instruction, it is also an act of worship... Given its liturgical nature, the homily also possesses a sacramental significance: Christ is present in the assembly gathered to listen to his word and in the preaching of the minister, through whom the same Lord who spoke long ago in the synagogue at Nazareth now instructs his people" (no. 4).

One of the principal themes reiterated throughout the directory is that the homilist should not have to choose between preaching the *Lectionary* or preaching the doctrine and teachings of the Church in a clear and systematic way, as if the two starting points were incompatible. "It is very appropriate for a preacher to relate the texts of a particular celebration to the events and questions of the day, to share the fruits of scholarship in understanding a passage of Scripture and to demonstrate the connection between the word of God and the doctrine of the Church" (no. 7). Another function of the homily is to call the faithful to repentance and conversion, a role intensified and facilitated by the homily's presence within the liturgy: "The Paschal Mystery, efficaciously encountered in the sacramental celebration, sheds light not only on the

Scriptures that are proclaimed, but it also transforms the lives of those who hear them. So a further purpose of the homily is to help God’s people see how the Paschal Mystery shapes not only what we believe but it also enables us to act in the light of the realities we believe” (no. 22). An important aspect of the homily, then, is to suggest to the assembled faithful how the members of the community who are about to be transformed by the Eucharist can in turn apply the Good News to their own daily lives. “Naturally, the scriptural readings will provide the content and direction for such applications, but the homilist also need to highlight the effect of the Eucharist itself, soon to be celebrated, and its consequences for daily living in the blessed hope of inseparable communion with God” (no. 14).

The *Homiletic Directory* also stresses the importance of preparation. Most importantly, inasmuch as the homily is an act of worship in itself, the homily should be prepared in a context of prayer. “The sacred action of preaching is intimately joined in the sacred nature of the Word of God. The homily in some sense parallels the distribution of the Lord’s Body and Blood to the faithful in the communion rite. In the homily God’s holy Word is ‘distributed’ for the nourishment of his people” (no. 26). Drawing from *Evangelii Gaudium* (no. 152), the directory repeats the advice of Pope Francis, that in seeking profound dialogue with the word of God, the preacher should have “recourse to *lectio divina*, which consists of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation” (no. 27).

Part Two: *Ars Prædicandi*

The purpose of this second section of the directory is as follows: “to provide concrete examples and suggestions to help the homilist put into practice the principles presented in this document by considering the biblical readings provided in the liturgy through the lens of the Paschal Mystery of the crucified and risen Christ” (no. 37). This practical section is not intended to supply sample homilies, but instead makes a detailed survey of many of the doctrinal themes and moral teachings of the Church, and suggests how they might be applied in the context of Lectionary-based preaching throughout the year. As an example, the directory’s comments on the Sunday Mass readings of Easter Time make the following important observations about the Acts of the Apostles, from which the First Readings at Mass throughout the Easter season are drawn: “From these passages, the homilist has in hand some of the strongest and most basic tools. He sees how the apostles used the Scriptures to announce the death and resurrection of Jesus, and he does the same, not only in the passage at hand but in this same style throughout the whole of the liturgical year” (no. 53).

The notes on the Gospel readings (Years A, B, and C) for the Easter Vigil paint a vivid picture of how the homily, in its liturgical context and preceded by the extended series of readings just proclaimed, can provide seed for a homily which all at once can bring to life the passages just read, provide doctrinal formation, and at the same time give theological support for the Sacraments of Initiation being celebrated:

In the context of the liturgy for this night, the Church progresses by way of these lessons to the climax of them all, the Gospel account of the Lord’s Resurrection. We are plunged into the stream of salvation history by means of the Sacraments of Initiation, celebrated on this evening, as Paul’s beautiful passage on Baptism reminds us. The links that are so clear in this night between creation and the new life in Christ, between the historical Exodus and the definitive Exodus of Jesus’ Paschal Mystery in which all the faithful share through Baptism, between the prophets’ promises and their realization in the very liturgies being celebrated—all these are links that can be made again and again throughout the liturgical year. (no. 49)

Appendix I: The Homily and the Catechism of the Catholic Church

In recent years, concerns have been voiced that there is a need for more careful articulation of the Church’s doctrine in preaching. In an effort to underscore the doctrinal elements which are present in—or applicable to—the *Lectionary* selections throughout the year, this first Appendix provides a comprehensive index of relevant teachings summarized in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) for the readings in all three *Lectionary* cycles. A careful study of this appendix could provide a homilist with the framework for a systematic presentation of doctrine throughout the liturgical year, while at the same time remaining grounded in the word of God proclaimed in the liturgy.

To cite one example from this comprehensive list, for the Second Sunday of Lent in Year B, the Appendix refers the homilist to the following areas of church doctrine applicable to the readings, and their corresponding entries in the *Catechism*: the Transfiguration (nos. 554-556; 568); the obedience of Abraham (nos. 59, 145-146, 2570-2572); the characteristics of faith (nos. 153-159); God manifests his glory to make known his will (no. 2059); and Christ is for us (no. 603, 1373, 2634, 2852). Although it would be unlikely that a homilist would speak in detail on each of these issues in a single homily, this list serves as an example of how the preacher can keep the homily rooted in the liturgy and the word of God, and at the same time accentuate points of doctrine and belief.

Appendix II: Post-Conciliar Ecclesial Resources Relevant to Preaching

This final section concludes the directory with a bibliography of magisterial documents relevant to preaching, including references to documents of the Second Vatican Council, papal documents, the instructions in official liturgical books, the Code of Canon Law, and documents of the Roman Curia.

The Congregation has issued the *Homiletic Directory* under the auspices of the Libreria Editrice Vaticana. While the text is not available for download, it is currently being prepared for publication by USCCB Communications (store.USCCB.org).

January 2015 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish met on January 27-28, 2015, in San Antonio, Texas. The major points of work and discussion were as follows:

Misal Romano, Tercera Edición

Subcommittee members discussed the longer-than-expected wait time for the confirmation of the U.S. edition of the *Misal Romano*. They received an update on progress in the advance preparation of the manuscript, as the base text is drawn from the confirmed Mexican edition of the *Misal Romano*. It is the USCCB's goal to have a final manuscript ready to turn over to publishers as quickly as possible following confirmation of the text, thus facilitating a speedy implementation. In addition, Rev. Juan Sosa, President of the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*, presented some catechetical proposals to the Subcommittee, since that organization has been asked by the Subcommittee to assist in the catechesis for the new *Misal Romano*.

Other Liturgical Books and Catechetical Efforts

The state of the *Leccionario* was also discussed, and the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América* was once again discussed as a possible source for the *Leccionario*. However, since there is no date for the completion of the latter project, several alternatives were explored for resuming the *Leccionario* project and preparing it for publication.

Discussion on the *Bendicional* (Book of Blessings) was continued from the last meeting, this time to address the U.S. proper blessings. Sylvia Sánchez, Multicultural Specialist, noted that the Spanish translations of the proper texts required additional improvements.

In light of the recent USCCB approval of *Exorcisms and Related Supplications* in English, a possible Spanish text of the exorcism rite was discussed. To date, only one or two Spanish-speaking Conferences of Bishops have published that ritual book. The document "Frequently Asked Questions about Exorcism," published in the *Newsletter* in November and December 2014 and subsequently posted on the USCCB website, was also discussed.

Workshops for the *Ritual del Matrimonio, Segunda Edición* were considered, and two national Catholic organizations will be contacted in order to offer such workshops at their national conferences. *Don y Promesa/ Gift and Promise*, a pastoral companion that explains the Hispanic elements in the *Rite of Marriage*, is being considered for publication in a new, revised edition.

In addition, the recent report on the RCIA, prepared by the Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate, was presented and discussed. Subcommittee members also considered future publications, among those *El Misterio de Fe* (The Mystery of Faith), published by the FDLC. A Spanish translation of the present publication will have to be reviewed prior to publication.

The Subcommittee's next scheduled meeting is September 1-2, 2015, in Seattle, Washington.

Rev. Juan J. Sosa Appointed as Committee Consultant

Rev. Juan J. Sosa, President of the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*, and Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Miami Beach, Florida, has been appointed as a consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship by Bishop Arthur Serratelli, Committee Chairman. Fr. Sosa's most recent term as a consultant to the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish began in November 2014, but he has served at various times with the Subcommittee since the 1990s. As a consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship, Fr. Sosa will bring his vast experience as a gifted liturgist and composer to the Committee's discussions, especially in the increasingly important area of Hispanic liturgy and ministry.

Rev. Andrew Menke Appointed as Secretariat Associate Director

Rev. Andrew Menke, a priest of the Diocese of Lincoln, has been appointed as Associate Director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship. Following his ordination in 1999, he served in a number of pastoral ministries, including as parochial vicar in several parishes, a religion teacher in area Catholic schools, and as diocesan Master of Ceremonies from 2004 to 2010. Fr. Menke earned a master's degree in education administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2007, a licentiate in sacred liturgy from the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy (Sant'Anselmo) in 2013, and is presently working toward a doctorate from that institute.

Since 2010, Fr. Menke has served as an official in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, specializing in English-language liturgical texts. He will conclude those duties in the coming months before joining the Secretariat on May 1, 2015.

51st International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu, Philippines



The 51st International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) will occur on January 24-31, 2016 in Cebu, Philippines, taking as its theme "Christ in You, Our Hope of Glory" (Col 1:27). Cebu was announced as the 2016 IEC host city by then-Pope Benedict XVI at the conclusion of the 2012 IEC in Dublin, Ireland.

Pope Francis addressed the plenary meeting of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses on September 27, 2014, in which he remarked, "The 51st International Eucharistic Congress offers the opportunity to experience and comprehend the Eucharist as a transformative encounter with the Lord in his word and in his sacrifice of love, so that all may have life, and live in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10). It is a propitious occasion to rediscover the faith as a source of Grace that brings joy and hope in personal, familial and social life." The Holy Father expressed his hope that ongoing worship of the Eucharist will serve as an impulse for the New Evangelization and help the faithful to serve the poor.

Given the distances involved for participants from the United States, all interested persons, groups, and organizations are encouraged to begin making financial and travel arrangements as soon as possible. To register for the IEC, or for more information, please visit www.IEC2016.ph.