



NewsLetter

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Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy

December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016

O God, almighty and merciful Father,
you grant your Church a time of grace, penance,
and forgiveness,
that she might have the joy to internally renew herself
by the work of the Holy Spirit,
and to journey ever more faithfully in your ways
in announcing to the world the Gospel of salvation.
Open once more the door of your mercy
and welcome us one day into your heavenly home,
where Jesus, your Son, has gone before us
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

*- Pope Francis,
Prayer at the Opening of the Holy Door
at the Lateran Archbasilica,
December 13, 2015*

USCCB Approves Book of the Chair during November 2015 Meeting

The Latin Church bishops of the USCCB approved a new liturgical text, *Excerpts from the Roman Missal: Book for Use at the Chair*, by a vote of 187-27 with 3 abstentions during the November 2015 plenary meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The book will be forwarded to the Holy See for the requisite confirmation.

Since the *Roman Missal* is a rather large volume that can be difficult for younger altar servers to carry and hold, the Book of the Chair will provide a lighter option, since it will contain only the materials commonly used at the presidential chair. The resulting text is less than half the length of the full *Missal*. Those parts of the Order of Mass that are done at the chair will be included, and a typical Mass formulary will include the Entrance Antiphon, Collect, and Prayer after Communion. Appropriate musical chants will also be included, along with material for processions and ceremonies that take place at the door of the church.

While the use of this book at the chair instead of the full *Missal* will be optional, many priests have expressed a desire for it. Once confirmed by the Holy See, the Secretariat will make the text available to publishers wishing to prepare editions for purchase.

Archbishop Wilton Gregory Elected Next Committee Chairman

During the November 2015 USCCB plenary meeting, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta was elected as the 21st Chairman of the Committee on Divine Worship, for a term beginning on November 17, 2016 through November 14, 2019. He was elected on a vote of 124–114 over the other candidate, Bishop John O. Barres of Allentown.

Within the USCCB, Archbishop Gregory was President from 2001-2004, Vice President from 1998-2001, and has served on a number of Committees. He has also had a distinguished history with the Committee on Divine Worship: he was its 12th Chairman from 1990-1993, chaired the Subcommittee on Black Liturgy from 1984-1990, and served as a member from 1984-1993 and from 2007-2010. Archbishop Gregory now joins the Committee on Divine Worship as Chairman–Elect.

November 2015 Meeting of the Committee on Divine Worship

The Committee on Divine Worship met in Baltimore, Maryland on November 15, 2015. After hearing reports from the Committee and Subcommittee Chairmen, Secretariat staff, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, and the *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*, members and consultants discussed several items.

Revised Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities

Since June 1995, when the body of Bishops approved the *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, significant developments in medicine and research have suggested new pastoral approaches to the faithful living with various disabilities, including celiac disease, autism, and age-related dementias including Alzheimer's disease, to name just a few. Additionally, new technologies allow for more effective outreach and support for persons with autism and other disorders that may inhibit verbal communication. The goal of the proposed revision is the assurance that those with special needs will have access to the sacraments with appropriate accommodations.

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) first approached the USCCB in 2014 to recommend a revision of the *Guidelines*. Since that time, additional revisions and refinement have been proposed by the Committee on Divine Worship, the Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, and the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis. Earlier in 2015, the body of Bishops was invited to make recommendations. The draft reviewed by the Committee on Divine Worship was a first collation of these many proposals. While approving the general direction of the proposed modifications, the Committee called for further refinement and revision to the document. The Committee looks forward to further consultation with USCCB committees and other partner organizations as this draft matures into a document to be presented to the Bishops for an eventual vote.

Other Matters

In addition to reviewing the revised *Guidelines*, the Committee approved an expanded eucharistical formulary for the Memorial of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. This formulary will add Entrance and Communion Antiphons and a newly-composed Prayer over the Offerings and Prayer after Communion. It is hoped that the text in English and Spanish would be voted on by the body of Bishops in November 2016, after which it will be submitted to the Holy See for approval.

Members also examined two National Shrine petitions and reviewed the timetable for upcoming Green Book draft translations from the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. The next two fascicles of the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition* are expected before the end of 2015, and first drafts for the rites of Christian Initiation of Adults and Baptism for Children are anticipated in early 2016. In light of the forthcoming RCIA draft translation, the Committee made a preliminary review of the state of the current U.S. adaptations and arrangement of the text. The Committee will next meet on June 11-12, 2016 in Huntington Beach, California.

Corrections to the 2017 Liturgical Calendar

Two errors in the 2017 edition of the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* have been recently brought to the attention of the Secretariat of Divine Worship:

- 1) In the entry for Tuesday, January 10, 2017, the option of combining the readings of Monday and Tuesday of the First Week in Ordinary Time (which is possible in 2017 because the Baptism of the Lord occurs on a Monday) was excluded. The corrected entry therefore reads:

10 Tue Weekday (First Week in Ordinary Time) green
Heb 2:5-12/Mk 1:21-28 (306) or Heb 1:1-6 (305) and 2:5-12 (306)/
Mk 1:14-20 (305) and 1:21-28 (306) Pss I

- 2) The proper Gospel reading was not cited in the entry for the Memorial of St. Martha on Saturday, July 29, 2017. The corrected entry therefore reads:

29 Sat Saint Martha white
Memorial
Ex 24:3-8 (400)/Jn 11:19-27 or Lk 10:38-42 (607)

Free PDF Download of 1991 African American Catholic Worship Resource

Plenty Good Room: The Spirit and Truth of African American Catholic Worship was published in 1991 by the NCCB as a joint project of the Secretariats for the Liturgy and for Black Catholics. The short book was intended to provide basic information about the history and culture of the African American community, and, in particular, about the community's experience in the Catholic Church in this country. The book then drew from that background to offer suggestions for liturgical practices in the African American Catholic community.

As the book has gone out of print, the USCCB Cultural Diversity in the Church Subcommittee on African American Affairs has recently made the text available as a free PDF download: www.USCCB.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/upload/plenty-good-room.pdf. Their hope is that it will assist liturgists, pastoral leaders, parishes, and dioceses to plan African American and multicultural liturgy that is spiritually uplifting and appropriate for Catholic worship.

Certain liturgical details mentioned in this text are outdated, however, in light of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, as well as the Bishops' more recent statements on architecture and music, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* (2001) and *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007). Those using *Plenty Good Room* will need to do so, therefore, in light of these more recent developments.

Subscription Renewals for 2016 Newsletter

Renewal forms for the 2016 *Newsletter* are being mailed to current subscribers in January. Subscribers are asked to return the completed renewal form with their payment by February 12, 2016 to ensure continuing service. Please note that the six-digit account number assigned to each subscription should be used for any inquiries regarding the subscription. Anyone who has not received a renewal notice by January 19 should contact David Ringwald at (202) 541-3060.

Anyone wishing to subscribe to the *Newsletter* (available in hard-copy or e-mailed in Word or PDF formats) may contact the Secretariat of Divine Worship at 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017, ATTN: Newsletter Subscriptions. The cost of an individual subscription is \$15 per year. Back issues of the *Newsletter* from 2011 to 2015 are available at \$1 per issue. Special bulk order prices are available for orders of 20 copies or more.

Baptism: A Gift Freely Given by God

In his booklet *Baptism*, Jorge Cardinal Medina Estévez recalls an account of someone once asking Saint John Paul II what he considered to be the most important day of his life, to which the Pope famously responded, “The day of my Baptism!” Rich in symbolism and powerful in its effects, Baptism is no less than the doorway to the other sacraments as well as the sacramental entry into the life of the Church. Nevertheless, the importance of this crucial sacramental moment is all too easily overlooked or taken for granted. In a simple and straightforward manner, Cardinal Medina seeks to clarify the critical importance of the sacrament through brief scriptural and historical surveys, an examination of the ritual symbols employed in the rite, a review of Baptism’s effects on the recipient, as well as emphasis on the importance of the ministerial roles of those assisting in baptisms.

Whether received by an infant soon after birth, or by an adult who has been formed in the faith during the period of the catechumenate, the ritual elements of the sacrament – anointing the catechumens with oil, making a profession of faith, anointing with holy Chrism, clothing in a white garment, presenting a burning candle, not to mention the all-important baptismal water itself – are all vivid invitations to the faithful “to understand more deeply what this sacrament symbolizes and achieves” (pg. 12). The author particularly underscores the role of the exorcisms performed either as part of the *Rite of Baptism for Children* or during the scrutinies in the course of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. These are prayers in which the Church asks the Father in heaven to shield those about to be baptized from the Devil’s temptations. As all the baptized are called to reflect the Gospel and the teaching of the Church in their words and actions, so “the disciple of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with the works of Satan, cannot bargain with him or with his deceit, and must be careful and vigilant so as not to succumb to temptation” (pg. 14).

In answering the query of whether it might be better to delay Baptism until the recipient is an adult, so that he or she can make their own decision, Cardinal Medina captures the overarching theme of the importance of the day of Baptism and why it should be recalled and celebrated:

Baptism is not an option but a gift freely given by God, who mercifully grants the child the precious fruits of the sacrament. It would be very sad to deprive a child of the grace of God and postpone his or her Baptism with the risk that the child may never be able to receive it. (pg. 21)

Baptism is a concise and easily digested review of its symbols, its purposes, and its effects. As has been noted previously during the course of this year, the seven booklets of the Sacrament Series by Cardinal Medina are intended less as exhaustive scholarly treatises on the sacraments, but rather as valuable and practical insights from the heart of a pastor. Such insights can be understood and applied by presiding priests, recipients of sacraments, catechists, or indeed anyone seeking a reminder of the crucial role the seven sacraments play in the life of the faithful.



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The Sacrament Series, written from a pastoral perspective by Jorge Cardinal Medina Estévez, provides the reader with a jumping-off point for reflection and prayerful study, and is aimed toward families and those interested in increasing their knowledge of the faith. The entire seven-booklet series – or each individual booklet – is available from USCCB Communications at store.USCCB.org/product-p/7-505.htm.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016
from the Committee on Divine Worship
and the staff of the Secretariat of Divine Worship!