



NewsLetter

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2017 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Nearly one hundred fifty leaders from eighty-five dioceses gathered in Bloomington, Minnesota on October 3-5, 2017 for the forty-eighth National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, co-sponsored annually by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) and the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship. Their focus was “Touching the Hem of His Garment: The Pastoral Care of the Sick.” Specifically, they examined the rites of the *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, their proper celebration, and the pastoral activities which surround them.

The members of the FDLC were greeted by Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis: “The faithful of this diocese are very proud that the State of Minnesota and her liturgists have been on the forefront of liturgical renewal within the Catholic Church for decades. One need only recall the pioneering work of Benedictine Monks like Virgil Michael and Godfrey Diekmann; or the beloved hymnody of Joncas, Haugen, and Haas; or the worldwide impact of the Liturgical Press, to recognize the that Minnesotans have consistently shown a commitment to that full, conscious, and active participation in the sacred liturgy that is the right of the people of God.”

Rita Thiron, FDLC Executive Director, brought the meeting’s theme into focus: “When illness strikes, life as we know it, stops. Doctor appointments become more important than our usual daily schedules. The care of a loved one becomes our only concern. We realize our helplessness in the face of something we cannot control. So we rely on our faith to make sense of suffering. We rely on the power of Christ and his sacramental grace. We rely on the power of our communal prayer. And we become more acutely aware of those who cannot be with us as we gather around our Eucharistic Table.”

Perhaps the most powerful reminder of the helplessness caused by illness came during the opening prayer when Rev. Jan Michael Joncas, Committee consultant and a Minneapolis native, recalled his own near-death experience with Guillain-Barre syndrome, a fast-moving virus which attacks the body’s muscles and neurological systems. Within days, only his eyelids could blink answers, but he still recalled the power of a priest’s anointing and the symbol of the cross on his forehead. His captivating reflections were interspersed with Scripture and song.

An impressive group of presenters aided the discussions in Bloomington. Bishop John M. Quinn of Winona spoke of the power of presence to those who are ailing and how visits to the sick have been part of his priestly and episcopal ministry for decades. “The sick are an integral part of the parish community. They are visible signs of the Paschal Mystery. Let them evangelize the community for they have much to teach us.”

He was followed the next day by two equally-eloquent keynoters – Msgr. John Kasza of the Archdiocese of Detroit who spoke on the richness of the rites found in the liturgical text, and Sr. Esther Mary Nickels, RSM who spoke of her experiences with patients in her work as an emergency-room respiratory therapist. Both related their work to the healing work of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician.

The meeting’s “Study Day” was opened to local participants. Healthcare professionals, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and pastoral care staffs were present to hear the plenary sessions as well as six workshops sessions. Rev. James Bessert of the Diocese of Saginaw spoke on the continuum of care as found in the *Pastoral Care of the Sick* and the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Rev. Andrew Menke, the Secretariat of Divine Worship’s Executive Director, and Mrs. Jan Benton of the National Catholic Partnership for Disabilities reviewed the recently-approved USCCB “Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, Revised Edition.” Rev. Thomas Knoblach, a renowned expert on medical ethics, spoke on end of life issues in light of Catholic teachings. Dr. Johan Van Parys shared his experience with “Healing and the Arts,” a very successful parish program at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis. Sr. Sandy DeMasi, SSJ, of the Archdiocese of Newark, spoke on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, specifically on the rites of initiation for those in exceptional circumstances and for those in danger of death. Finally, Dr. Stephen Kopecky, a world-renowned cardiologist from the Mayo Clinic, shared his own experiences with the rites for the Sick – both as a doctor and as a cancer patient.

On the final day of the meeting, staff of the Secretariat of Divine Worship gave updates to diocesan leaders regarding the progress of the translation of liturgical texts, the status of liturgical books currently under review at the Vatican, and other liturgical initiatives. They were especially interested in next year’s implementation of the third edition of the *Misal Romano* and the FDLC’s plans for liturgical catechesis. The celebrations of daily Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours were integral to the meeting. The attendees also participated in a Eucharistic liturgy at the Basilica of St. Mary where Archbishop Hebda served as principal celebrant. Twenty-eight people received the anointing of sick during the Mass.

The three-day event closed with a banquet at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel. Rev. Leon Strieder of the Diocese of Austin was honored with the fourth annual *Alleluia Award* which recognizes a member for distinguished service to the mission of the Federation. The FDLC’s highest honor, the prestigious Frederick R. McManus Award was presented to the Liturgical Press of Collegeville, Minnesota in recognition of its ninety years of outstanding contributions to liturgical scholarship and ministerial formation. Publisher Peter Dwyer accepted the award on behalf of the staff and monks of the Abbey.

The business sessions also contributed to the mission of the FDLC. Members passed a resolution to produce information on proper practices for rites as found in *Pastoral Care of the Sick*. Various committees met to plan liturgical formation, anticipate the reception of the revised *Misal Romano*, review current projects regarding pastoral liturgy, improve technology related to member services, and plan the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the FDLC.

Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, Committee Member, Appointed Sixth Bishop of Evansville

Pope Francis appointed Auxiliary Bishop Joseph M. Siegel of Joliet in Illinois as the sixth Bishop of Evansville on October 18, 2017. Bishop Siegel has served as a member of the Committee on Divine Worship since November 2016, his first Committee assignment within the USCCB.

Ordained a priest of the Diocese of Joliet in Illinois in 1988, Bishop Siegel served in pastoral assignments in his diocese for over 20 years. He was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of Joliet in Illinois on January 19, 2010 by then-Bishop J. Peter Sartain, and has since participated in various duties both in Joliet and within the Catholic Conference of Illinois. He is a fourth-degree Knight of Columbus and a Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Bishop Siegel will be installed as Bishop of Evansville on December 15, 2017. The members of the Committee on Divine Worship and Secretariat staff congratulate Bishop Siegel and wish him many fruitful years of ministry!

Theology in the *Praenotanda*: Vocation

Building upon the ancient axiom that there is a reciprocal relationship between prayer and belief (lex orandi, lex credendi), “Theology in the Praenotanda” – an ongoing series of the Secretariat of Divine Worship – explores that relationship as it is reflected in the Introductions of the liturgical rites of the Church. Each article of the series highlights some of the theological themes that are integral to the celebrations of the rites and provides examples of the way in which the relationship between belief and worship is seen in the text of the rites.

Considered here are the two praenotanda of the sacraments of vocation, Matrimony and Holy Orders, sacraments that “are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1534).

Order of Celebrating Matrimony (OCM)

The sacrament of Marriage is rooted in creation and elevated to the status of a sacrament through the New Covenant made in Christ Jesus. The “sacred bond [of the Marriage covenant] . . . does not depend on human choice, but rather on the Author of Marriage [God], who ordained it to be endowed with its own goods and ends” (OCM, no. 4). Because Christ’s relationship with the Church is the model for Christian marriage, the goods and ends of the sacrament are found in Christ. “By the Sacrament of Matrimony Christian spouses signify and participate in the mystery of unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church, both embracing conjugal life and in accepting and educating their children, they help one another to become holy and have their own place and particular gift among the People of God” (no. 8). Through these goods and ends of marriage, the spouses help one another to enter more deeply into a relationship with God as they strive to live out their vocation in imitation of Christ. They are fruitful in bearing and bringing up children, just as the Church produces new members for Christ through Baptism.



Living in a covenantal relationship with God and with one another, the spouses continually celebrate their sacramental relationship. Marriage is a continuing process through which “[t]hose who marry in Christ are able, with faith in the Word of God, to celebrate fruitfully the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, to live rightly, and to bear witness to it publicly before all” (no. 11). Because this sacrament concerns a person’s state in life, that is, marriage to another person, the couple’s life together is a continual witness to the community of the self-sacrificing love of Christ and the building up of the faithful. Not only does the couple provide a witness to the community, the pastor and the parish community also provide a witness of faith to the couple by supporting them through prayer and catechesis as they prepare for the sacramental celebration and their life together (see nos. 12-15).

The ongoing witness of the couple and their role in the community is expressed in the celebration of the sacrament. “Since Marriage is ordered toward the increase and sanctification of the People of God, its celebration displays a communitarian character that encourages the participation also of the parish community” (no. 28). This ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of Marriage is rooted in Baptism, through which “a man and a woman are once and for all incorporated into the covenant of Christ with the Church in such a way that their conjugal community is assumed into Christ’s charity and is enriched by the power of his Sacrifice” (no. 7). This relationship is deepened and strengthened as the couple lives out their vocation to God through one another and their family. “Those who marry in Christ are able, with faith in the Word of God, to celebrate fruitfully the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, to live it rightly, and to bear witness to it publicly before all” (no. 11).

Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons (RO)

Like Marriage, the sacrament of Holy Orders publicly brings about a particular relationship between God and humanity. In the case of Holy Orders, “[t]hrough sacred Ordination certain of the Christian faithful are appointed in the name of Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to shepherd the Church with the word and grace of God” (RO, no. 1). From the practice of the Church throughout the centuries, “it is clear that the laying on of hands and the Prayer of Ordination bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit and impress a sacred character in such a way that Bishops, priests, and deacons are, in their respective ways, conformed to Christ” (no. 6). In sacramental word and gesture “the Bishop blesses God and calls upon the gift of the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of ministry” (no. 6).



Although there is one sacrament of Holy Orders, “the divinely established ecclesial ministry is exercised in different Orders by those who even from antiquity have been called Bishops, Priests, and Deacons” (no. 2). Bishops are the successors of the Apostles who were commissioned and eagerly took up Christ’s ministry after his death and resurrection. They are “[s]igned with the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders” (no. 3). Like the Apostles, bishops have “the mission to teach all nations and to preach the Gospel to every creature, so that by faith, baptism, and obedience to the commandments (cf. Matthew 28:18) all people may attain salvation” (no. 12, quoting *Lumen Gentium*, no. 24). They are charged with pastoral leadership of local communities and are united with their brother bishops in the task of spreading the Gospel of Christ to the world (no. 13). The college of Bishops, united under the pope, “successor of Peter, expresses the unity, diversity, and universality of the flock of Christ” (no. 12).

Through Ordination priests are anointed by the Holy Spirit, “signed with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they have the power to act in the person of Christ the Head.” They do so, however, only by taking “part in the Bishop’s Priesthood and mission” (no. 101). Configured to Christ and united with their bishop, “they announce the divine word to all,” “exercise their sacred office above all in the Eucharistic *synaxis*,” care for “the repentant and the sick” through “the ministry of reconciliation and comfort,” and “gather together God’s family... and lead them through Christ, in the Spirit, to God the Father.” “Finally they labor in preaching and teaching, believing what they have read..., teaching what they have believed, and putting into practice what they have taught” (no. 102).

Deacons are strengthened by the grace of the sacrament so that they may “serve the People of God in the *diakonia* of liturgy, word, and charity, in communion with the Bishop and his presbyterate” (no. 5, quoting *Lumen Gentium*, no. 29). They administer Baptism, assist at and bless marriages, “protect and distribute the Eucharist... bring Viaticum to the dying,” exercise the ministry of the Word, “preside over the prayer and worship of the faithful, administer sacramentals, and officiate at funeral and burial rites” (no. 174). Therefore, the *praenotanda* exhorts them to “be mindful of the admonition of Saint Polycarp: ‘Be merciful and zealous, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who made himself the minister of all’” (no. 174, quoting *Lumen Gentium*, no. 29). The deacon models his ministry on Christ’s, “who did not come to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45).

The sacrament of Holy Orders is foundational for the identity, ministry and mission of the Church. This ecclesiastical ministry is divinely inspired: through his Apostles Christ made bishops “sharers in his consecration and mission. They in turn have lawfully handed on the office of their ministry in several grades to different individuals in the Church” (no. 2). Thus, from the earliest days of the Church the ecclesiastical ministry has been exercised in different Orders – also known as degrees (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], no. 1554) and grades (RO, no 2) – “by those who even from antiquity have been called Bishops, Priests, and Deacons” (no. 2). The Sacrament of Holy Orders is always celebrated within the rites of Mass. In this way “the preeminent manifestation of the Church” – the bishop with his priests and deacons – “and the conferral of Holy Orders are joined with the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the fount and apex of the whole Christian life” (no. 9). The Church continues to make her own the exhortation of St. Ignatius of Antioch: “Let everyone revere the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as the image of the Father, and the presbyters [priests] as the senate of God and the assembly of the apostles. For without them one cannot speak of the Church” (CCC, no. 1554).