1—Decisions of the Canadian Episcopate.

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MAY 1967

CANADIAN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CONFÉRENCE CATHOLIQUE CANADIENNE

Administration
Liturgy Publication Service
86 Yargent Avenue, Ottawa 2, Ont.
1. DECISIONS OF THE CANADIAN EPISCOPATE

On the recommendation of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy, English and French sections;

The General Assembly of the Episcopate, meeting April 7, 1967 made the following decisions:

1 — INTERIM USE OF AMERICAN ALTAR MISSAL

Until a new supply of Canadian altar missals is available, priests are permitted to use the Altar Missal approved for the United States.

2 — NEW FORMULA FOR SACRAMENT OF PENCE

The new formula for the sacrament of Penance as contained in the new Canadian Catechism is approved for use according to the discretion of each local Ordinary. It is in no way obligatory and if used, it should be used only for children at this present moment.

The essential form of the sacrament of Penance has not been changed. It remains the same as the form contained in the ritual and reads as follows:

"And now, (*) I forgive you all your sins in the name of the
Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The insertion of "I remove any excommunication (suspension, interdict) and ..." is to be made only in the confession of adults and only in cases where it actually applies.

2. DECISIONS OF EPISCOPAL COMMISSION ON LITURGY

The following decisions of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy were made after consultation with, and approval of, the Bishops of the English Sector at their meeting on April 6, 1967.

1 — VERNACULAR ORDO

The adoption in principle of the project to publish an Ordo in the vernacular (English and French Editions), for use in all Dioceses of Canada.

II — SONGS TO REPLACE PROPER CHANTS

The principle of substituting other chants for the official chants of the Introit, Offertory and Communion, is admitted in the recent Instruction on Music in the Liturgy (n. 32), issued on March 5, 1967.
Since according to this Instruction the songs which replace proper chants in the Mass, require the approval of the territorial authority, the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy will select and approve such songs in the name of the Canadian Conference. The songs so approved will be listed in the National Bulletin on Liturgy.

III — WOMEN IN THE LITURGY

The Episcopal Commission on Liturgy has made the following determination with respect to the role of women in the Liturgy:

When Mass is celebrated for a congregation made up mainly of women (convents, girls' schools, etc.), women are permitted to perform the liturgical roles of lay reader and commentator, and the non-liturgical role of "leader of song" for the congregation.

IV — CONTROLLED EXPERIMENTATION IN LITURGY

The Episcopal Commission on Liturgy has agreed:

— that "research teams" be set up for both sections of the National Council on Liturgy (French and English).
— that these research teams be made up of experts in liturgy, pastoral, and catechetics.
— that the work of these teams will be:
  1. to draw up guidelines for experimentation in clearly defined areas of liturgy to avoid duplication and frustration. These areas will be stipulated by the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy and will pertain mainly to pastoral adaptation.
  2. to receive suggestions from priests and laity, assess these, and incorporate them, if possible.
  3. to direct experimentation in terms of No. 1. above.
  4. to report on experimentation to the bishops.
— that the research teams be under the immediate supervision of the secretariate of the National Councils on Liturgy, and that they work in close cooperation with the NCL.
— that the results of the work of the research teams be submitted to the bishops through the NCL.

V — EXPERIMENTAL FUNERAL RITE

The decision has been made by the Episcopal Commission to publish in the National Liturgical Bulletin, the full text of the experimental Funeral Rite for Adults, as drawn up by the "Consilium" in Rome, and recently in use in some few dioceses in Canada, engaged in the experiment.
Even though this rite can be used only where authorized by a local Ordinary who is participating in the experiment, it is deemed important that all priests be informed as to the nature of the experiment.

VI — ORDIINATION RITE IN THE VERNACULAR

The complete text in English of the Ordination rite (Tonsure, Minor Orders, Subdiaconate, Diaconate, Priesthood), will be published in a forthcoming issue of the National Bulletin on Liturgy.

VII — PASTORAL DIRECTORY

The Commission on Liturgy will publish a directory, dealing with practical and pastoral aspects of the Liturgy.

VIII — BLESSING OF CANADIAN FLAG

A new formula of blessing for Canadian Flag is approved for use in Canada.

3. FORMULA FOR BLESSING OF THE CANADIAN FLAG


\[\begin{align*}
\text{V.} & \quad \text{Blessed be the name of the Lord.} \\
\text{R.} & \quad \text{Now and forevermore.} \\
\text{V.} & \quad \text{The Lord be with you.} \\
\text{R.} & \quad \text{And with your spirit.}
\end{align*}\]

Let us pray. O God, Ruler of all nations, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in the presence of this flag which is the symbol of our Canadian nation, we offer You ourselves and our country.

May those who govern under this symbol always exercise their authority with justice and wisdom. May we, united in true brotherhood, continue to prosper, and ever live in that freedom and peace which only You can give.

God of the nations, bless our nation as we ask You to bless this flag, which is its symbol, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

\[\text{R.} \quad \text{Amen.}\]

(The flag may then be sprinkled with holy water.)
4. RITUAL FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

(for both children and adults)

Introduction

Penitent: Father, forgive me for I have sinned

Priest: Remember, Jesus Christ is risen, and He is our Saviour, trust in Him and confess your sins.

Accusation of Sins

Penitent: It is . . . since my last confession.

These are my sins: ............
May God, our Father, forgive me
And make me true to His Spirit

Admonition and Penance .............

Absolution

Priest: And now, (*) I forgive you all your sins
In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit

Penitent: Amen.

Priest: May the Spirit of the Lord Jesus
Keep you one with the Father and one with His Family, now and forever.

Penitent: Amen.

Dismissal

Priest: Go in the peace of Christ

Penitent: Thank you, Father.

* Where it is necessary the Priest inserts: “I remove any excommunication (suspension, interdict) and . . .”

5. COMMENTARY AND EXPLANATION

1. The new formula for the sacrament of Penance in English as contained in the new Canadian Catechism is approved for both children and adults.
One and the same formula for children and adults is to be preferred for the following reasons:

a) A form which is child-like in its simplicity, but not childish in its content, is equally good for adults as for children. The new formula for Penance answers these requirements; its wording is simple; its content rich. Persons using it can grow in their understanding of it. It is true that certain expressions may prove difficult for children, but with catechesis, they can come to understand these well enough to use them intelligently.

b) From a pastoral point of view, it would be extremely difficult to teach children one form, and then teach them another when they become adults. Also, to ask a priest to switch from one formula to another and to know when precisely to do so, is quite unreasonable.

One of the reasons for the use of formulae in the liturgy is to form habits which will help persons to frequent the sacraments, with as little difficulty and tension as possible.

c) Liturgically, it is not a sound principle to adapt formulae to various groups within the larger community. Formulae should be aimed at the adult level of the community as a whole (especially as regards the content of the formulae), though the wording should be as simple as possible. This allows for initiation into the mysteries of the liturgy, a gradual initiation as a child grows into adulthood.

2. Explanation of new formula for Penance

A. INTRODUCTION

"Father, forgive me for I have sinned"

The traditional wording, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," could be subject to misinterpretation. God blesses the sinner, not because he has sinned but because he has repented.

The new wording, "Father, forgive me for I have sinned" removes this ambiguity. The wording here is simple and rhythmic. It recalls the words of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15, 21. As used here, the word "Father" refers to the priest. The fact that the penitent at the very outset addresses himself to the priest helps to set up a personal relationship between priest and penitent. This is especially necessary in children's confessions. The additional fact that forgiveness is asked of the priest brings out the ministerial role exercised by the priest in the sacrament of Penance.

The possible allusion however, to the Father in Heaven is not undesirable.

"Remember, Jesus Christ is risen"

This text is taken from St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy. (2 Tim. 2, 8). The text fits in well here. It invites the penitent to put his faith in our one and only Saviour. It mentions the resurrection, the pledge of our rising. It also expresses the action of Christ in the Sacrament.
It is important here that the idea of the Cross of Jesus also be kept in mind as in Romans, 4: 25 — “Who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” (see also I Cor. 15, 3).

“And He is our Saviour”

Here, in the catechesis on “Saviour” the above-mentioned notion of the Cross and death of Jesus should be brought out.

“Trust in Him and confess your sins”

Because it was considered to be more natural, the term “confess” was chosen in preference to other words such as, “tell”, “admit”, “tell me” etc.

By the recitation of this part of the formula, the priest clearly and in a dignified manner, indicates that the moment has arrived for the penitent to confess his sins.

B. ACCUSATION OF SINS

“It is . . . since my last confession”

The declaration of the length of time since one’s last confession, though less important perhaps in children’s confessions, is however almost essential for adult confession. At the very least, it is normally useful for the confessor of adults. Consequently it is included in the formula for both children and adults.

“These are my sins . . .”

Considered to be very helpful in getting children started.

“May God, our Father, forgive me”

The wording “forgive me” is used in preference to other expressions such as “forgive all my sins”, because it conveys a more personal note. It should however be explained in the catechesis that by asking God to “forgive me”, the person is asking God to forgive all his sins.

“And make me true to His Spirit”

This expression will perhaps sound strange at first, but there is a rich theology behind it, a theology sadly neglected today.

It is to be noted that, in the traditional formula, the penitent was often accustomed to end the accusation of his sins with some such words as: “For these and all the other sins which I cannot now remember, as well as for the sins of my past life, I beg pardon of God, and of you, Father, penance and absolution.”

The new formula, by means of “May God, our Father, forgive me and make me true to His Spirit”, maintains this custom. By these words the penitent equivalently makes as it were a general accusation of all his sins in summation, and at the same time indicates to the confessor that his accusation of sins is finished.
These words also express the desire of the penitent to make an integral confession. Sorrow too and a firm purpose of amendment are expressed as well as the desire to lead a better life.

The role of the Father and that of the Holy Spirit is here stressed. The role of the Son was already stressed by the priest in the Introduction.

C. ADMONITION AND PENCE

The priest gives any admonition or advice as he sees fit and imparts the Penance in his own words.

D. ABSOLUTION

The essential form of the sacrament of Penance has not been changed. It remains the same as the form contained in the ritual.

After imparting the Penance, the priest begins the words of absolution — “And now, etc.” — making a sign of the cross over the penitent.

The insertion of “I remove any excommunication (suspension, interdict) and . . .” is made in the confession of adults, but only where it actually applies.

Prior to the use of the vernacular in the administration of the sacraments, it was customary for the penitent to recite the Act of Contrition while the priest pronounced the words of absolution. The use now of the vernacular has forced us to abandon this practice. The penitent must listen to the absolution pronounced by the priest and answer, “Amen”. Sorrow for sin and purpose of amendment are adequately expressed in preceding parts of this new formula.

“May the Spirit of the Lord Jesus etc.”

The very beautiful text of the ritual: “Passio Domini . . .” has not been retained because of its length and complexity. Even the rubrics provide for its omission, when a just cause is present. The present formula is much simpler. Moreover it expresses the communal and ecclesial dimensions of the sacrament, the importance of charity and the action of the Holy Spirit. The words “now and forever” introduce the notion of a gradual progression leading to eternal life.

E. DISMISSAL

“Go in the peace of Christ”

The formula of dismissal is quite simple and indicates very appropriately the fruit of the sacrament, viz., peace. Moreover, since it is the dismissal formula now used at Mass, it is familiar to all. The penitent answers, “Thank you, Father”, an expression already employed by many, at the end of their confession.