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1. FIFTH DECREE OF THE CANADIAN EPISCOPATE

Concerning the use of the Vernacular in the Liturgy

By virtue of the provisions of the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Art. 22, par. 2; Art. 36, par. 3 and 4; Art. 40 and 54), and of the Motu Proprio, “Sacram Liturgiam” (Art. 9 and 10);

On the recommendation of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy;

The Canadian Episcopate made the following decision by an affirmative vote exceeding a two-thirds majority registered on June 23rd, 1966, and confirmed by the Holy See on July 20th, 1966:

ITE MISSA EST

1. The vernacular translation of the dismissal “Ite Missa Est” will henceforth be —

GO IN THE PEACE OF CHRIST

— supplanting the previously approved formula, “Go, the Mass is ended.”

2. This decree goes into effect October 14th, 1966.

Canadian Catholic Conference

+ LOUIS LEVESQUE

Coadjutor Archbishop of Rimouski
Chairman

By Order of His Grace the Chairman
Gordon George, s.j.
General Secretary of the Episcopate
Ottawa, October 26, 1966.
2. A STATEMENT OF THE CANADIAN EPISCOPATE

on the Liturgy of Penance

* October 14, 1966 *

God does not will the death of sinners, but that they be converted and live. Moreover He calls everyone to a life of union with Him through faith in His Son Jesus and through Baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit.

Stamped with the sign of Christ, we nevertheless, remain sinners because of the weakness of our human condition. God however, in His mercy, never ceases to call us to repentance, and when necessary He offers us, in the sacrament of Penance, a sign and a means of reconciliation.

The ministry of reconciliation has been given to the Church. As a result of investigation brought about by the liturgical renewal, this ministry of reconciliation, tends to take on a new form called the community celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. This form of celebration seeks to show forth more clearly the ecclesial dimension of Penance and to emphasize the fact that conversion has its source in the word of God. Consequently it brings together two fundamental ideas set forth in the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy, which recommends that communal forms of celebration are the more perfect, and which strongly urges that greater prominence be given to the word of God in the liturgy.

Investigations and experiments in various places have given rise to certain ambiguities or have been the occasion of wonderment or "admiration". In order therefore that they may be pursued without confusion and may be truly fruitful, we call to mind the following points:

1. Individual or private celebration of the Sacrament of Penance still retains all of its value; through personal contact and through the attitude of the priest, the penitent can truly experience the mercy of God;

2. Sacramental absolution must not be given in a communal way: during community celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance, the private and individual confession of sins by each penitent, as well as individual absolution must be assured.

3. A pastoral approach that takes advantage of these various forms of penance (celebration of the Word on a penitential theme, penitential formulas in the eucharistic liturgy, etc.) will help the faithful to have a greater appreciation of the sacrament itself.

October 14, 1966.
COMMENTARY

In calling attention to these three points concerning the liturgy of the Sacrament of Penance, the Canadian Bishops wish to provide an answer to certain questions which have actually been the subject of public discussion in reference to private and communal celebration of this sacrament. At the same time they desire to furnish sound guidelines for pastoral practice.

1. Individual or private celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.

The recent introduction of communal celebrations has caused some to question the private and individual celebration of this Sacrament: Will not private Penance be entirely replaced by communal celebration of Penance? This question is frequently discussed now since the newspapers, radio and television have brought it to the attention of the people.

To this the Bishops reply that the private celebration of the Sacrament of Penance still retains all of its value. Even though private Penance expresses less clearly the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament, nevertheless the sacramental rite itself truly signifies the reconciliation of the sinner with God through the Church.

To a great extent, it depends on the Celebrant, his bearing, words and attitude, whether or not the rite is truly an expressive sign.

2. Communal Celebration of Penance.

Varied and diverse have been the research and experiments employed to introduce a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. In all cases however, a constant aim and purpose has been clearly evident, namely, to show forth the ecclesial dimension of Penance and to proclaim the Word of God.

This twofold concern, legitimate in itself, is likewise clearly in accord with fundamental norms laid down in the Conclilar Constitution on the sacred Liturgy:

a) Ecclesial dimension of Sacraments:

"Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the ‘sacrament of unity’, namely, the holy people united and ordered under their Bishops.

"Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office and actual participation.” n. 26.

"It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private."
“This applies with especial force to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and social nature.” n. 27.

“As regards instruction, it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful, not only the social consequences of sin but also that essence of the virtue of penance which leads to the detestation of sin as an offense against God; the role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be passed over, and the people must be exhorted to pray for sinners.” n. 109 b.

b) Proclaiming Word of God:

“He (Christ), is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church”. n. 7.

“Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy ... it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the restoration, progress and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony.” n. 24.

“That the intimate connection between words and rites may be apparent in the liturgy:

In sacred celebrations there is to be more reading from holy Scripture, and it is to be more varied and suitable.” n. 35, 1.

It is from this positive viewpoint that the statement of the Bishops considers the practice of communal celebration. However, in order to remove any uncertainty, it asks that private confession of sins and individual absolution be maintained.

No priest-celebrant accordingly is authorized to give absolution to all collectively during the course of a common celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.

The celebration of Penance ought therefore to be so arranged as to avoid all confusion on this point.

3. Other forms of Penance:

There are however other forms of penance, which, though not possessing the efficacy of a sacrament, should nevertheless not be neglected. Such for example are: the use of holy water, general confession of sin made in the “Confiteor”, the Lord’s prayer, the penitential psalms, etc. The meaningful use of these cannot but serve to deepen the faithful’s appreciation of the sacrament itself.

In particular, celebrations of the Word centred on a penitential theme, even though not accompanied by the sacrament of penance itself, can be of great value in introducing the faithful to various aspects of the sacrament, e.g., the mercy of God, Redemption in Christ, the mystery of death and life, reconciliation with the Church, etc., thus increasing their spirit of Penance.
and true conversion of heart. Such a celebration of the Word may include a petition for pardon either expressed by the entire congregation or by the celebrant who presides. In this latter case it must be quite clear that there is no question of a sacramental absolution being imparted.

3. PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE IN CANADA

* Decision taken by the Canadian Episcopate

Friday, October 14, 1966 *

"The General Assembly decides:

1. To give new emphasis, by an intensive and well-coordinated catechesis, to the evangelical law of penance and to recall its obligatory character.

2. To maintain the penitential character of Lent and of all Fridays of the year, with particular insistence on Fridays of Lent and especially Good Friday. On these days, penance should be considered as an important requirement of the Christian life, but the manner of fulfilling this duty is left to the discretion of the faithful.

3. To remind parents and educators, on the occasion of this legislation which is directed especially to adults, of their duty to introduce children gradually to the practice of penance.

4. To recommend to the faithful "privileged forms" of penance, either by reason of their evangelical value, v.g. fasting, almsgiving, prayer, works of mercy, or by reason of their traditional value, v.g. abstinence."

(This decision was taken in the General Assembly, Friday, October 14, 1966, and was effective the same day at 5:00 p.m.)

CHANGES: PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE

"Repent and believe in the gospel"

The major changes that have just been effected in penitential discipline in the Church in Canada will, no doubt, be welcomed by the majority. However, accompanied by so many other changes, these will perhaps evoke astonishment, if not scandal, among some. Still others will rejoice in this evolution without understanding what is involved. These people will consider nothing more than the fact that they are freed of a weight that had become heavy to bear.
What then is the real intention of this evolution, and what meaning should be given the new penitential discipline?

A tradition in constant evolution

In the Church, penance has always been recognized as a fundamental requirement of the Gospel. To welcome the good news of salvation, proclaimed and realized in Jesus, is to be won over to Him, to be converted to Him, to believe His word, and to undertake to amend one's life. "Repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1. 15)

Since the very beginning, Christian tradition has known many different ways of giving concrete assistance to the penitential dimension of a life to be lived in conformity with the gospel. A concerted look at the practice of fast and abstinence reveals both a permanent fundamental concern for penance and a constant mobility, not only from one century to another, but from one region to another.

Fast and abstinence were recommended for Wednesdays and Fridays in the very early days. Towards the 11th century, the practice fell into disuse on Wednesdays. Certain churches, notably that of Rome, practised the same custom on Saturdays, but their example was never followed by the majority, even in the western world.

Penitential discipline in the Church developed along parallel lines with the formation of the liturgical year. The main times for penance were thus gradually determined: Good Friday and Holy Saturday in the first centuries; Holy Week in the 11th century; the three-week Lenten period (in Rome before 384); and the six-week Lenten period (end of the 4th century). In the 5th century, Ember Days and the Vigils of major feasts were added.

The method of practical observance of fast and abstinence also evolved; it became less severe. The first fast was more rigorous, consisting of a single meal towards evening; the use of meat, fish, dairy products, eggs and wine was excluded. At the beginning of the 7th century, it was gradually permitted to take wine, fish, dairy products and eggs, chiefly if required by working conditions. In the Middle Ages, in addition to one full mid-day meal, the taking of a light breakfast and a light supper in the evening was introduced.

It is interesting to note the practices of fast and abstinence in the early days of the Church in Canada, according to the Ritual of Bishop de Saint-Vallier (1703). There was complete fast during all of Lent, on Ember Days and on certain Vigils; there was abstinence every Friday and Saturday, on Sundays in Lent and on Rogation Days. In 1884, this discipline was somewhat modified: fast during all of Lent, Ember Days, Wednesdays and Fridays of Advent, and on certain Vigils; abstinence every Friday, Ember Days, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays of the first five weeks of Lent, Palm Sunday and Sunday of Holy Week, Wednesdays and Fridays of Advent.

The Code of Canon Law in 1917 marked a new stage in the evolution of penitential discipline in the Western Church. From this time forward,
fast and abstinence were more clearly defined. Abstinence remained the
rule for every Friday of the year, Ash Wednesday, Ember Days, all Saturdays
of Lent, Ember Saturdays, and for certain Vigils, but fast was required only
during Lent, on Ember Days and certain Vigils. On days of fast without
abstinence, one meal with meat was authorized.

By the very recent apostolic Constitution “Paenitemini” (February 17,
1966), this discipline was simplified still further: abstinence on all Fridays
of the year, fast and abstinence on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In
addition, the Episcopal Assembly of each country was given power to adapt
these new norms to the particular conditions of their own country. Thus,
this ultimate stage of evolution allows pastoral adaptation to the customs
of the people.

**Rediscovering the spirit of penance**

The penitential discipline, just determined by the General Assembly
of Canadian Bishops, appeals to the conscience of every individual. Those
who take seriously the Gospel and the invitation of Our Lord to change our
ways will do penance. This new discipline, with emphasis on the responsi-
bility of the individual (with little stress on the legal obligation) will require
constant effort on the part of pastors to educate. This situation should be
a much healthier one in many respects.

As indicated in the apostolic constitution on fast and abstinence issued
on February 17 by Pope Paul VI, “Penance therefore — already in the Old
Testament — is a religious, personal act which has as its aim love and sur-
render to God: fasting for the sake of God, not for one's own self.” (23)
“All this, however, was but a foreshadowing of things to come.” (32) “Pen-
ance — required by the inner life, confirmed by the religious experience of
mankind, and the object of a particular precept of divine revelation —
assumes ‘in Christ and the Church’ new dimensions infinitely broader and
more profound.”

Perhaps by recovering a good part of our liberty and freedom we can
be led to rediscover the role of certain corporal asceticism (bodily self-denial).
Perhaps we will acquire self-dominance and struggle against the old man,
the man of sin, whose persistence in us we must all one day recognize. Would
it not be disregarding the body itself to deprive oneself in principle of all
corporal penance?

The Christian who wishes to add certain penitential practices to prayer
and almsgiving can henceforth follow fast or abstinence when and where he
wishes, at his discretion, without anyone being aware of it. This is an extrem-
ely fortunate perspective in our increasingly pluralistic society. It will allow
us to respond to Our Lord's invitation: “But thou, when thou dost fast,
anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen fasting
by men, but by thy Father, who is in secret.” (Matt. 6. 17-18)

**Liturgy, Penance, Feast Days**

Undoubtedly, the new penitential discipline in usage in the Church in
Canada, will lead us to find by ourselves and for ourselves, the profound
bond which has always united penance and liturgy. Authentic penance practically assumes liturgical character. At the time of preparation of the liturgical year, penance and liturgy are integrated, thus allowing us to receive the full benefits of the feasts. As for penance, it contributes towards the creation of these rhythms of progress and rest, humiliation and exaltation, upon which the liturgical year is built.

From this fact, penance allows us to reach a still more profound dimension in the liturgical celebration. In our approach to the feast, it helps us to be united with Christ's passing from death to life, which the liturgy presents to us. Through penance we share the sufferings of Our Lord. Should we thus not become more worthy to share in His glory? Is this not what was meant by the early Christian tradition in the institution of the fast on Good Friday and Holy Saturday? When the day arrives that we will voluntarily prepare for the celebration of Easter by doing penance on all Fridays of the year, but especially on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we will know that the new penitential discipline of the Church has borne fruit.

**REDISCOVERY OF THE MEANING OF PENANCE AND CHRISTIAN LIFE**

**I — Penance**

In this post-conciliar era, the People of God are, by degrees, entering upon a "renewal" which is translated to the level of life.

Each change strives to express in an adapted form a more authentic Christian life. It is also, for the People of God, the occasion of finding again the permanent values of Christianity which have found various forms of expression according to the different epochs and regions.

The attachment to the old forms of fast and abstinence risked, perhaps too much, the exclusion of penance from the lives of Christians. That is why the Most Reverend Bishops have proposed a new way of living this life of penance.

**II — The Permanent Value of Penance**

To do penance is to die with Christ in order to be brought to life with Him.

The People of God today, as of old, have a keen consciousness of their place in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. It is through death that Christ entered life. In order to lead us with Him to the Father, Jesus Christ became our brother, even to sharing our human, sinful, suffering and mortal nature. Such was the path chosen by Christ, in freedom and love, to say the salvific "yes" that snatches us away from the power of sin. Christ, who came to open the gates of the Kingdom for us, submitted to the most tragic reality of our human nature: suffering and death. And through these He found for Himself and for us, the path of life.
To do penance is to live the Sacraments

Christ passed from death to life, and each Christian is called upon to do the same.

By Baptism, he is placed in this course which passes through death in order to achieve resurrection. "Do you not know that all we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." (1) This dual work of Baptism, this pulling away from sin and communion with God, is continued in all the actions of a Christian throughout his lifetime. Throughout his life in the Risen Christ he says "no" to sin and "yes" to God.

This activity of conversion, initiated in Baptism, is roused each time the Christian meets Our Lord in the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus Christ pulls man away from sin to make him pass into life.

The zenith of this conversion is the Sunday Eucharist. On the Cross, Christ said "yes" to the Father for us; at Mass, we say "yes" to the Father with the Risen Christ.

For a Christian, to do penance is to take seriously his sacramental life.

To do penance is to proclaim the dignity of man

In effect, through penance, as through any corporal act, man recalls to himself and to others, that everything in his person has value in the sight of God. His body, food, work are sacred because he was born of God and called to the Resurrection. (2)

III — The Christian Today Lives This Mystery of Penance

Penance thus appears as an entrée into this spirit of Christ, Who did not hesitate to pass through death in order to enter life. How true will this be for a 20th-century Christian? That is the object of this new legislation. 

Penance and Personal Generosity

Within a very flexible framework, the church solicits the personal freedom and generosity of the Christian. She wishes to stress that this communion in penance with Christ is a free response to Our Lord's appeal. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (3)

Personally and freely, each Christian undertakes with Christ this struggle against the power of sin, against egoism, against resistance to God. (4)

(1) Romans 6. 3-4
(2) See I Corinthians 3. 16-18
(3) Matthew 16. 24
(4) See Gospel for 1st Sunday of Lent
Personally and freely, the Christian, little by little, trains himself to realize death in his own life in order to better live and radiate Christ.

Personally and freely, the Christian, living and working in a scientific and technical world, a world of comfort and money, is called upon by penance to witness to the Christian life.

Penance and Deprivation of Food

The new legislation suggests, among other things, the deprivation of food as one form of Christian penance. For man to live, food is necessary. In voluntarily denying himself this source of life, the Christian admits to God: “For with you is the fountain of life, and in your light we see light.” (5)

Still more, through voluntary self-denial, the Christian personally communes with his less fortunate brethren who, each day, die from hunger and suffering in a thousand ways throughout the world. As through the Eucharistic Bread we commune in the Passion of Christ, thus by penance, we commune with Christ's sufferings for our fellow-man. This interior communion, to be fully authentic, will be realized by positive acts to alleviate the sufferings of our brethren: almsgiving, mutual aid, service for others, engagements involving sacrifices to help build a better world. (6)

Understood in this way, penance is not a commandment added on from the outside. It is a normal part of every Christian life.

Following Christ, it is a death in order to have life. Hence, it is lived in a climate of joy in accordance with Christ's exhortation: “And when you fast do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen fasting by men, but by thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee.” (7)

(5) Psalm 36. 10
(6) See Isaia 58. 6 & fol.; Matt. 25. 34-40
(7) Matthew 6. 16-18
4. DECREE CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION IN HOSPITALS

Today the practice of frequent and even daily Communion is quite common, even among those who are confined to hospital. However, modern hospital complexes as well as internal rigid schedules allow this practice to be carried out only with considerable inconvenience. In order therefore, that Holy Communion may be distributed more easily and more expeditiously to many sick people, the Sacred Congregation of Rites, has deemed it opportune to modify the prescriptions of Title V, chapter IV, n. 28 of the Roman Ritual in the following regard:

1. In hospitals comprising one single building, in which an oratory is located, the priest administering the Sacrament shall recite in this oratory all the prayers before and after Communion to the sick, prescribed by the Roman Ritual. He distributes Communion to each of the sick persons in the various rooms, using the formula for Communion.

2. In those hospitals made up of several distinct buildings, the Blessed Sacrament is to be carried reverently from the Oratory and placed on a table, prepared in each of the buildings, in a convenient and becoming place. Here the priest, after reciting the prayers to be said before and after Communion to the sick, distributes Communion in the manner mentioned above.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect has referred the above-mentioned matters to our most holy Father, Pope Paul VI. His holiness has ratified and confirmed the above modifications and granted permission for their use whenever convenient.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

February 14th, 1966.

Arcadius M. Card. LARRAONA, Prefect.

Ferdinand ANTONELLI, O.F.M., Secretary.

AAS, 58 (1966) 525-526.
1. The Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued on January 9th, 1929, at that time shortened and simplified the rite of administering holy Communion to several sick persons residing in the same house, but in different rooms. Prior to this the entire rite was required to be performed in each room.

   It was this Instruction which determined that in such cases, the prayers preceding Communion were to be said in the first room only, and the prayers following Communion to be said in the last room. In the other rooms however, there was to be recited the “Misereatur”, “Indulgentiam”, “Ecce Agnus Dei”, and “Domine non Sum dignus” once.

2. This Instruction was subsequently incorporated into the Roman Ritual, under title V, chapter IV, n. 28.

3. Now, over thirty years later, a still more simplified form of administering Communion to the sick is demanded by reason of new circumstances, namely: the ever-increasing practice of frequent and daily Communion; the fact that people today, when sick, prefer hospital to home care and treatment, especially since this is easily provided for by many forms of health insurance; it is also to be noted that in convalescent homes, hospitals and the like, provision is made for private and semi-private rooms etc.

4. It was these circumstances that the Sacred Congregation had in mind when issuing this new decree.

5. It is quite evident that this permission is extended to whatever may be considered a hospital, even in the widest sense of the term. As long as due reverence is assured, then the prayers before and after Communion are recited only once in each building. In no way however, is it permitted that these prayers be said in the Church, and then Communion be brought to the sick in their homes, reciting only the formula of Communion.

6. If in hospitals having several buildings, one or more buildings has an oratory, the priest follows the prescriptions as outlined for cases where there is an oratory.

7. Where however, there is no oratory, there is nothing to prevent the setting-up of a table in the first room at which the priest recites the prayers before and after Communion.

8. This simplification of rubrics does not extend to the manner of carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. The rubrics still require that the Blessed Sacrament be carried by a priest or deacon, vested in surplice and stole, accompanied by at least two persons carrying candles and a bell. Where possible the ombrellino is also carried. The use of the humeral veil is not required except in cases where the Blessed Sacrament is brought from an oratory to the table prepared in each of several buildings. Even in this instance, for a just and reasonable cause the Blessed Sacrament may be carried privately, in which case the humeral veil is not required. The simplification of the rubrics makes no change concerning those things which, according to the rubrics, are to be present on the table where the Blessed Sacrament is placed.
5. DATE OF THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH IN 1967

Next year, 1967, the Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confessor, and Patron of the Universal Church, coincides with the Second Sunday of the Passion, "Palm Sunday". According to the rubrics, it would be transferred from the 19th of March to the 4th of April; however certain local Ordinaries have asked the Sacred Congregation of Rites to permit its celebration on the 18th of March.

Our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, in an audience granted the 9th of May of this year to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, has acceded to the requests and decided that next year, 1967, the Office and Mass of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confessor, and Patron of the Universal Church, would be celebrated on the 18th of March, and all the other rubrics observed.

From the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, 13 May, 1966.

+ ARCADIO M. Cardinal LARRAONA
   Prefect

+ F. ANTONELLI
   Secretary

(L'Osservatore Romano, 27 May, 1966)
6. REPLIES OF THE "CONSILIUM" TO QUESTIONS ON THE LITURGY

These replies do not possess any official character. They have only a normative value; official replies having the force of law will be given, when required, by the competent authority in the "Acta Apostolicae Sedis".

The Liturgy of the Word


Ans.: It is fitting that churches gradually be provided with a presidential chair so that the priest "may truly be seen as presiding over the assembly" (Instruction, n. 92), and that there be in the various churches a place where the word of God may be fittingly proclaimed — so that "the intrinsic nature and purpose of the parts of the Mass, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested". (Constitution, art. 50). These are the requirements for present and future reform, and sacred buildings must therefore be adapted to them.

However, where there is a special, provisional reason for the priest to remain at the altar, he is to follow the prescription set forth in nn. 25 and 34 of the Ritus Servandus. The rubrics do not now permit the whole first part of the Mass to take place at the middle of the altar. But if the readings are proclaimed from the altar (n. 47), they may all be proclaimed from the same side of the altar, facing the people. In this way at least, some distinction is maintained between the two parts of the Mass.

92. IS A SINGLE LECTOR PERMITTED TO READ ALL THE PROPER PARTS?

Ans.: The intention of the ritual of the Liturgy of the Word in the Ritus Servandus and the Ordo Missae is that "in liturgical celebrations each of the ministers and of the faithful, in the performance of their various functions, should do all and only what belongs to them by the nature of the function and according to the liturgical rules (Constitution, art. 28). Therefore the lector must avoid doing nearly everything that the celebrant did before, and directing all attention to the lector himself — often he reads the texts of
the Proper, the readings, the chants between the readings — occasionally even taking the part of commentator and cantor. Gradually, these celebrations should be carried out more and more in the spirit of the Constitution, so that each part is looked after by an appropriate minister: reader, psalmist or cantor, commentator. The texts of the Proper are processional chants accompanying actions of the assembly and, of themselves, they belong to the people or to the choir. It is preferable, therefore, to have at least one section of the assembly as a choir, consisting of several persons, to sing or read them. Where this cannot yet be done, at least an effort should be made to have the reader of the Proper texts someone other than the reader, or the server who reads, and from the commentator.

93. MAY THE DEACON, OR ANOTHE PRIEST WHO READS THE GOSPEL, SIMPLY WEAR A SURPLICE AND STOLE, OR IN THE CASE OF A RELIGIOUS, CHOIR DRESS?

Ans.: What is prescribed in n. 44, of the Ritus Servandus does not envisage a haphazard use of another priest or deacon, who is present only for the reading or singing of the Gospel and then immediately leaves. Rather the intention of the above mentioned document is that the deacon, or failing this, another priest, acts as an assistant to the celebrant all during the Mass and therefore, should wear the liturgical vestments proper to his order; namely, the alb and stole.

94. WHEN MASS FOR A DECEASED PERSON IS CELEBRATED, MAY A SERMON BE GIVEN AFTER THE GOSPEL?

Ans.: Yes, provided all semblance of a funeral eulogy is avoided and that the homily, based “on the sacred text” (Constitution, a 52), shows forth “the paschal nature of christian death” (Constitution, a 81), stimulating the faith and hope of those present in the paschal mystery of Christ.

Liturgical Celebrations for the Deaf

95. MAY SIGN LANGUAGE BE USED IN CELEBRATING THE LITURGY FOR THE DEAF?

Ans.: Yes. This is the only way the Deaf have of really taking part actively in the Liturgy. At the request of some Bishops’ Conferences, the Holy Father has recently (14 Dec., 1965) permitted Sign Language to be used in celebrating the Liturgy for the Deaf whenever the vernacular is used, if there is a pastoral reason for it.

The following procedure may be followed:

1. The readings are signed to the congregation.

2. With regard to participating in the other people’s parts:

a) the celebrant signs his own part, and says it at the same time; the people sign the responses;
b) in the parts which are recited together by the celebrant and the people, e.g. the *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus-Benedictus*, *Agnus Dei*, etc., the faithful sign with the celebrant. (1)

99. Is it permissible to arbitrarily make changes in liturgical texts published in the vernacular and approved by the competent authority?

Ans.: 1. According to the Constitution on the sacred Liturgy, the regulation of the liturgy belongs solely to the Holy See and, as laws may determine, to the Bishop and territorial bodies of Bishops. "No other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority." (Constitution, a. 22, 1-3).

2. It is for the competent territorial authority to decide whether and to what extent the vernacular language is to be used and at the same time to approve the vernacular texts. (Constitution, a. 36, 3-4; Instruction, 26 Sept. 1964, nn. 23-31).

3. Moreover, the words of the Holy Father Pope Paul VI should be recalled, which he addressed to participants of a Convention held November 10, 1965, dealing with popular translations of liturgical texts: "Finally it must be noted that liturgical texts, approved by the competent authority and confirmed by the Holy See, must be preserved intact. No one, on his own authority is permitted to change, shorten, augment, omit... These legitimately established norms now have the force of ecclesiastical law and are to be dutifully observed in conscience by all. In fact these laws demand even a stricter compliance, since they regulate the most sacred actions of all. (AAS. 57 [1965] 969-970).

101. Is a cross necessary on an altar where Mass is said facing the people?

Ans.: This question arises because of the fact that in Notitiae (2 [1966] 176), there appeared pictures of Churches, recently renovated according to the new liturgical norms, in which no cross appeared on the altar. Moreover in an explanatory note (p. 162), it was stated that: “A single large cross in the centre of the apse is clearly visible to the entire assembly.”

The prescription of the Code of Rubrics, n. 527, is still in force which requires that: “In the centre of the altar there is to be placed a suitably large crucifix.” This crucifix, according to the Caeremoniale Episcoporum (lib. 1, c. 12, n. 11), is to be turned toward the inner side of the altar.”

However, the Ritus Servandus of 1965 no longer requires the priest to raise his eyes to the cross during the celebration of Mass. Moreover, the Instruction for the proper Implementation of the Liturgy (n. 94), directs that: “the cross and candlesticks which are required on the altar for the individual liturgical services, may also, in accordance with the judgment of the local Ordinary, be placed apart from the altar.”

(1) The necessary changes in the rubrics have been made jointly by the Liturgical Commission of the United States and the International Catholic Deaf Association (Notitiae 6, [1966] 245-246).
At altars then, where Mass is said facing the people, it would seem best to follow this concession. Otherwise, the mere compliance with the letter of the law would result either in the use of a cross so small that it could not be seen, or so large that it would be an obstacle to the view of the faithful, particularly at the elevations and at the "per ipsum."

There are three possible locations for the Crucifix outside of the altar: (1) the processional cross may be placed in front of the altar, with corpus facing the celebrant. This may not however, fit in well with the arrangement of some sanctuaries. (2) a large cross may be suspended above the altar. (3) a large cross may be stationed in the centre of the apse. In cases 2 & 3, this one large cross suffices so that, it is not necessary to place another cross on the altar. Where the celebrant faces the people, this large cross is not incensed first, but only when the priest in circling the altar directly faces it at the centre.

102. SHOULD HOLY COMMUNION BE HABITUALLY RECEIVED FROM HOSTS CONSECRATED AT THE SAME SACRIFICE?

Ans.: Even the Encyclical letter "Mediator Dei" spoke in praise of this custom.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy once again highly recommended the practice: "that more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's Communion, receive the Lord's body from the same sacrifice, is strongly recommended." n. 55.

This exhortation has been incorporated into the Ritus Servandus, n. 7: "It is strongly recommended that hosts for the Communion of the faithful should be consecrated in the Mass itself."

The mind of the Church then is quite clear. Nor can there be any doubt that the place most suitable for the Communion of the faithful is after the Communion of the priest. When Communion however, is received from hosts consecrated in the Mass itself, it becomes a sign of a closer and more intimate participation in the sacrifice being celebrated.

Sometimes however, certain objections are raised to this practice in reference to purification of ciboria, the number of communicants, the renewal of sacred hosts already in the Tabernacle etc. In reply to these objections, let it be said:

a) In religious communities, and in places where the number of communicants remains fairly constant, there is no great difficulty involved.

b) If the particles which remain are few, the celebrant himself may consume them (cf. Ritus Servandus, n. 82). If a considerable number of particles are left over, then, according to the prudent judgment of the celebrant they may be used in a subsequent Mass.

In fine, the proposed difficulties are not of such magnitude as to prevent, especially in many places, the implementation of a practice so highly recommended by the Church.
108. **May the celebrant at Mass recite in a subdued voice (vox submissa), the prayers prescribed to be said in a secret voice?**

Ans.: Yes, it is permissible, at least in large churches, especially when a microphone is used to enable those of the faithful to hear and participate better, who because of distance or other reasons cannot see the altar.

This has been the practice ever since 1958 in Masses broadcast by radio, in which prayers to be said in the Secret voice are said in “a slightly elevated voice” (cf. Instruction on Sacred Music and the Sacred Liturgy, Sept. 3, 1958, n. 78). What was provided then by commentators, applies also in above case (A. Bugnini, Liturgia viva, Milano, 1962, p. 301).
7. ADDRESS BY POPE PAUL VI TO THE CONSILIUM

Following is a translation of an address given in Latin by Pope Paul VI (Oct. 31) to members and consultors of the commission for implementing the ecumenical council’s Constitution on the Liturgy.

Lord cardinals, revered brothers and beloved sons, we see here the commission for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and we owe to it our affectionate and reverent greeting because of its present plenary meeting.

Here indeed is a very qualified body composed of reliable and skilled men, coming together from various parts of the world and bearing the fruits of their studies and piety in order to perform together a work of the utmost importance.

This work comprises the revision of the liturgical texts of the Latin Church and the rearrangement of the standard and form by which this same Church celebrates the holy mysteries of true divine worship and educates the Christian people to take part in them, that is, in the official and communal prayer and in a more profound spiritual life, one more greatly nourished by sanctifying virtues.

We welcome you with great reverence and pleasure and we thank you for your visit, which joins our person and our thoughts to your most worthy activity.

We thank you very much for this activity of yours. What could be more useful to the Church in this post-council period? What could be more precious for enlivening the religious flame within her, for meriting for her the aid of the Holy Spirit and for conferring upon her the power to attract, to form and to sanctify souls?

We often think of your arduous and learned toil as revisers of the sacred liturgy in accordance with the thought of the ecumenical council, and we seem to perceive the three periods of its complex and delicate development.

Your first task is to examine the sacred ceremonies already in use in the Church. You labor for the revision and reform of these. This examination, which in itself does not present particular difficulties, because such ceremonies are known to everyone, nevertheless requires spiritual qualities: a sense of what is sacred, of what commands reverence for the ceremonies that the Church has designed for divine worship; of respect for tradition,
which gives us a precious and venerated inheritance; of historical intelligence in reference to the rites to be reviewed at present and their true significance, whether symbolic (or otherwise), and so forth.

Thus, such an examination should neither be guided by a preconceived inclination toward unjustified changes, nor by an iconoclastic haste that wants to reform and change everything.

It should instead be guided by religious prudence and intelligent respect.

We must seek what is best rather than what is new. In what is new we should prefer what brings back to us the treasures of the more inspired moments of Christian piety, rather than our modern inventions. This does not mean sealing the lips of the Church of today from singing her "new canticle," if indeed the breath of the Holy Spirit enables her to do so (cfr. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 23).

Your second most delicate task is the study of liturgical expressions, not only in words, but also in music and chant, and in the gestures and action of rites. Great attention to the biblical source of every liturgical action is necessary. Diligent study is required to make concordant the "lex orandi" (law of prayer) with the "lex credendi" (law of belief), to preserve, in other words, the liturgical prayer and its rich doctrinal significance and to fit the language of worship to its dogmatic content, as well as to the hierarchy of the values celebrated. These things enlist not only your learning as scholars, your talent as literary men and artists, but also your soul, inflamed with God, with Christ and His kingdom; your soul, as we believe, experienced in the mystical effusions of the spiritual dialogue.

Your study, which draws its intimate genius from personal and lived prayer, and which calls to its aid the secrets of art, is what puts your skill to the greatest test and is what will give to the reform you are working out — in addition to the mysterious seal of beauty — that charism of universality which is not unusual in the temple of God, to which there must be added the charism of duration, the charism we might say, of perennial youth. The liturgy deserves very precious gifts.

Nor could your spiritual striving for deservedly sublime stylistic forms of the liturgy make you forget another very human task which, today, we might call the prevailing task in the aims of liturgical reform; in other words, the task of making the liturgical ceremony accessible — in understanding, in expression and in execution — to the majority of the faithful (cfr. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 11, 14, etc.).

Again, this effort at adapting the forms and language of the holy rite to pastoral requirements, to the catechetical aims of worship, to the spiritual and moral formation of the faithful, to the need for unity with God, to the ability of the sacred sign to be understood and experienced in its specific religious virtue, demands of you great wisdom, experience and charity. It demands this of you who are the artisans of the new liturgy and the discoverers of its buried treasures; of the new liturgy, where we wished to see beauty and simplicity, loftiness of thought and clarity, contents and brevity, the echo of ancient centuries and the voice of the new times joined together in a new harmony! The Church of God entrusts to you this sublime task!
This we say, revered brothers and beloved sons, to show you the esteem we feel for the work which you are assiduously accomplishing. However, we become aware that this work extends to other tasks and renders other services, in other words, those of moderators of the vast and many-phased movement toward renovation which has its origin in the conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

It is the task of our venerable and meritorious Sacred Congregation of Rites to establish the new ritual forms with stable and binding norms and to safeguard those which are already in force.

However it is the function of your commission to exercise vigilance over the experimental phase of the innovations which are being attempted and introduced in various ecclesiastical regions. It is its function to correct deviations which might occur here and there and to put a stop to unauthorized and arbitrary initiatives which might cause disorder in the proper discipline of public prayer and perhaps even give rise to doctrinal errors.

Thus, it is up to you to prevent abuses, to stimulate those who are lagging behind or who are reluctant to change, to rekindle energies, to encourage good initiatives, and to give praise where it is due.

Also this moderating function assumes at this time great importance and we recommend it to you in special manner. Knowing the vigilance and prudence with which you exercise it, we are grateful to you for it.

The variety of languages and the novelty of rites which the renewal movement introduces into the liturgy must not admit of anything which is not duly recognized by the responsible authority of the bishops and of this Apostolic See. Nor must this variety and novelty allow anything unworthy of divine worship, anything manifestly profane or unsuitable for expressing the interior and sacred nature of prayer, nor indeed anything so singular and unusual that, instead of fostering the devotion of the praying community, it astounds and disturbs that community and prevents it from developing its own innate religious spirit and tradition in a reasonable and legitimate way. With regard to this last point, a certain pedagogic gradualness would seem advisable.

We are happy to note that your small, though valuable bulletin Notitiae, fulfills this task. It acquires at the same time another merit which we happily acknowledge in your commission, the merit of spreading to the entire Church the information that relates to liturgical renewal. It thus aims at arousing the emulation of good example and at favouring both a just variety of liturgical expressions and, at the same time, the basic harmony which we must always appreciate in the liturgical life of the entire Church.

We are happy, furthermore, because of the orderly and intense activity to which the commission devotes itself with exemplary dedication and because of the results that already are, and are presaged to be, happy and abundant.

The Church, which after the council looks to the activity which is to fulfill her work and put into effect the decrees, can be happy with your pious and noble toil, not only because of the spirit of faithfulness toward the coun-
cil’s directives which inform and impel your entire work, but also for the
great amount of work being carried out. It can be happy because of the
rapidity with which the work is accomplished, insofar as this is allowed by
its delicate and complex nature and by the requirement of perfection with
which it must be conducted to a good end.

There are certain questions of great importance, which the cardinal
president mentioned, that will also require particular consideration on our
part.

One of these concerns sacred music, which is the object of great interest
not only to liturgists but also to musicologists.

It is a question deserving great study, which will surely be prolonged
by degrees while pastoral experience, on the one hand, and musical genius,
on the other, continue their dialogue, which we wish may be friendly and
fruitful.

The instruction, — prepared by the commission on music in the litur-
gy, — which must regulate the agreement between the liturgy and music,
will facilitate a good understanding and, we hope, will re-establish a new
collaboration between those two sublime voices of the human spirit — prayer
and art.

The Congress on Sacred Music, recently held in Chicago, confirms
such hope.

We wish here to recall what the council’s Constitution on the Sacred
Liturgy has established in this respect in reference to the liturgy and music
(Ibid, no’s. 39, 44, 112, 114, 115, 116, 120, 121). We only point out that
the pastoral and communitarian character of the liturgical renewal, willed
by the council, demands that music and sacred chant be reviewed and per-
fected in their relationship with the development of the sacred rite, as it is
to be today, and offer both the occasion and the invitation to attain in the
field new merit and new glory in the field of art and religion. “Musica sacra
tanto sanctior erit quanto arctius cum actione liturgica connectetur" —
[Sacred music increases in holiness to the degree that it is intimately linked
with liturgical action] — (ibid, No. 112).

There is furthermore another question, which among all others, is
worthy of the utmost interest and which concerns the Mass ordo.

We have already taken note of the work accomplished and we know
what profound and reverent discussions have gone into it, not only in ref-
erence to the said Mass ordo, but also in reference to the compiling of the
new missal and of the calendar of the sacred ceremonies. But the matter
is of such gravity and of such universal importance that we believe we cannot
forego consulting with the episcopacy before ratifying by our approval the
proposals considered by this commission.

Proceed meanwhile, revered brothers and eminent scholars of liturgical
science, in your studies and work. May you always be aided by an awareness
of the great service which your work renders to the cause of the faith, which
finds its public and solemn profession as well as its personal and social com-
fort in divine worship.
And may you be aided by an awareness of the service which your work provides for the epiphany of Christ which the liturgy — in the word, in the sacrament and in the priesthood — makes sensible and alive to the souls of believers; and also by an awareness of the service which the Church draws from the purification and sublimation of her language of worship, showing herself in such service to be what the Church is, a mystical body joined to Christ as her Head, a redeemed humanity and, like an enamored Spouse, giving all to Christ, and receiving all from Him.

And again, may you be aided by an awareness of the service, we will likewise say, done for the people of God, who find their wisdom, joyfulness, peace, unity and sanctification in the liturgy, when it is limpid, temperate and inspired. And, lastly, may you be aided by an awareness of the service which you offer to the contemporary world, calling it, through the stimulus of the humble and enchanting beauty of the liturgy expressed in its genuine forms, to the re-discovery of a lost kingdom, that of the spirit, that of the ineffable and incomparable presence of the divine mystery.

Continue on actively and trustingly, we say. May you be aided in knowing that you are assured of our trust and benevolence.

And lastly may you be aided by the loving light of the Christ for whom you strive, and in whose name we, who are unworthily invested with His representation, bless all of you from our heart.
CONSECUTIVE READINGS FOR WEEKDAYS

Consecutive Readings From Sacred Scripture

As announced by the Canadian Catholic Conference, March 3rd, 1966, the Consilium on the Liturgy has granted to all diocesan Ordinaries of Canada, the privilege of “consecutive readings from Sacred Scripture on weekdays in all Masses of the third and fourth class, which do not have proper readings”.

Now however, we are pleased to announce that a Lectionary for Weekdays, containing the complete texts permitted, is in the process of printing and will be ready for distribution shortly.

In this new Lectionary, the texts from Old and New Testaments, are arranged according to the days of the week, providing a two year cycle of readings.


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