



NewsLetter

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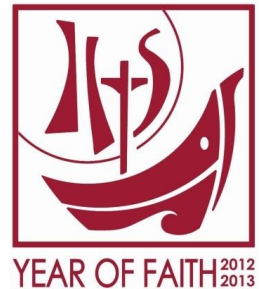
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The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ and the Year of Faith

Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, has announced a special event to mark the centrality of the Eucharist in the observance of the Year of Faith: a worldwide Solemn Eucharistic Adoration on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) will take place on Sunday, June 2.



From the *Annus Fidei* website:

On the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Holy Father will preside over a special Eucharistic adoration that will extend at the same time all over the world involving the cathedrals and parishes in each diocese. For an hour, **at 5 PM (Rome time)**, the whole world will be united in prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Because of normal Sunday Mass schedules, it will be a particular challenge to schedule such a gathering simultaneously in the various time zones of the United States, which would be held at 11:00 AM Eastern, 10:00 AM Central, 9:00 AM Mountain, 8:00 AM Pacific, 7:00 AM in Alaska, and 5:00 AM in Hawaii.

The Committee on Divine Worship recommends keeping the spirit of the gathering by holding such a Holy Hour at a more convenient time on that day, such as on Sunday afternoon following the last Mass of the day. Such a celebration could include a traditional Eucharistic procession. It would also be appropriate to mark the celebration of regularly-scheduled Masses at that particular hour (11:00 AM Eastern) with special solemnity, and to note the unity of prayer with the Holy Father at that time through the homily and Prayer of the Faithful.

The following resources might be useful in planning liturgical celebrations:

- *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (Catholic Book, 1976)
- *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist* (Liturgical Press, 1992)
- *Thirty-One Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: A Resource of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy* (USCCB, 2004)

For more information, visit the announcement on the Year of Faith website at:

www.AnnusFidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/eventi/adorazioneeucaristica.html

50 Years of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Sacraments and Sacramentals

[F]or well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the Sacraments and Sacramentals sanctifies almost every event in their lives; they are given access to the stream of divine grace which flows from the Paschal Mystery of the Passion, Death, the Resurrection of Christ, the font from which all Sacraments and Sacramentals draw their power. **There is hardly any proper use of material things which cannot thus be directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God.**

– *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 61
(emphasis added)

The third chapter of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) begins by defining the “purpose” of the sacraments as the sanctification of mankind, the building up of the Body of Christ, and the offering of worship to God. There is a progression here from the individual faithful, whose holiness in the world also works to sanctify the world (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31); to the Church, who acts to unify and strengthen the faithful; to the Divine, who is the origin and goal of all creation. The symbolic language of the sacraments is necessary to communicate the spiritual realities they signify—which is their supreme purpose. The signs used in the sacraments, however, also serve to instruct the faithful and to dispose them for the reception of the grace they confer. This is why the Council Fathers believed it to be, “of the highest importance that the faithful should easily understand the sacramental signs, and should frequent with great eagerness those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life” (SC, no. 59). In other

words, their ultimate goal was greater interior disposition, achieved in part, through adapting the ritual signs to be more easily grasped by the faithful. The Council Fathers believed that interior preparation would lead to greater external apprehension and participation, which would result in deeper interior conversion and engagement.

Paragraph 60 introduces the sacramentals, which, like the sacraments, draw their power from the Paschal Mystery. They are differentiated from the sacraments in that the grace associated with them is obtained through the intercession of the Church and not through the action itself as instituted by Christ. They are intended to help direct us to the sacred reality of all of God’s creation and especially to lead us more fruitfully to and from the celebration of the sacraments—which, in turn, draw us toward the Kingdom of God itself.

The first reform elaborated for the sacraments and sacramentals calls for the use of the vernacular as well as some local adaptation for the rituals (no. 63). Paragraphs 64-70, then, turn to the Sacrament of Baptism, calling for the restoration of the catechumenate for adults with various stages (no. 64), and expressing openness to local initiation elements, provided they can be conformed to the Christian tradition (no. 65). With regard to Baptism above all, one can see the concern of the Council Fathers to address the needs of the Church in mission countries, where the structures of Church life are still developing and the situation is not uncommon of large numbers, who are prepared by catechists, and baptized together when the priest is able to arrive. In the Extraordinary Form for the Baptism of infants, the infant is addressed as though he or she is an adult and able to respond, though the godparents actually make the responses. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called for the rite to be adapted for infants such that now whenever a response is expected from the one to be baptized, this is addressed instead to the parents and godparents, who speak on behalf of the infant (no. 67). A shorter rite was also envisioned for mission countries (no. 68) when there is danger of death and no priest or deacon is available. In paragraph 69, the Council Fathers wanted it made clear that when one is legitimately baptized, whether in an emergency or in an ecclesial community, then that person should be treated as fully baptized and any subsequent ritual—either of “supplying the rites” or of bringing them into full communion with the Church—must treat them as already baptized (cf. no. 69). For all of the sacraments (with the exception of Penance), provision was made for their being celebrated also within the Eucharist.

Confirmation was to be revised to bring out its intimate connection with the whole of Christian initiation (no. 71). Penance was to be revised to express more clearly “both the nature and effect of the sacrament” (no. 72). This was accomplished in the revision of the formula of absolution, which now includes an anamnesis of Christ’s Paschal Mystery and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Extreme Unction was renamed as Anointing of the Sick. The most fitting time for its conferral was elaborated, and provision was made both for adaptation regarding the number of anointings and for a continuous rite that includes also Penance and Viaticum (nos. 73-75). Paragraph 76 called for the ceremonies and texts of Holy Orders to be revised, and specifically named as one change to be

provided for in episcopal ordination (still called “consecration” in the constitution—something that would be changed with the revisions), namely that the laying on of hands should be done by all the bishops present. Paragraphs 77-78 called for the revision of the Marriage rite, which was to include local adaptations where appropriate. The constitution emphasized the importance of the grace of the sacrament, the spousal duties, and the nuptial blessing. In revising the sacramentals (no. 79), the number of reserved blessings was to be few and provision made for qualified laypersons to administer some of these in special circumstances and at the discretion of the local Ordinary. Paragraph 80 addresses the revision of the rite of consecration of virgins and calls for the renewal of religious profession to be done within the Mass whenever possible. Finally, paragraphs 81 and 82 called for the funeral rites to express more clearly the paschal dimension of human death, leading to greater balance between the reality of human grief and our firm faith in the resurrection.

The Purification of Sacred Vessels by the Deacon at Mass

In the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the role of the deacon has been considerably elaborated. The need for clarifications, however, are still present, and so the Secretariat of Divine Worship would like to offer the following elucidation, admittedly minor, regarding the purification of vessels by deacons.

One of the ways that the Church seeks to avoid confusion between the office of deacon and priest regards the manner of service at or near the altar. Service at the altar has many forms. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) states that the deacon “ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book” (no. 171b). GIRM no. 173 states that he may lay the *Book of the Gospels* on the altar and no. 178 states that he “prepares the altar” for the Liturgy of the Eucharist; he may also remove the corporal and sacred vessels from the altar after Communion. Purification of sacred vessels, however, is not something that the deacon does at the altar, but at the credence table, perhaps to avoid the appearance of the deacon doing a ministry alone at the altar that is other than preparatory or in assistance to the priest.

Paragraph 163 of the GIRM, which describes Mass without a deacon, describes the purification by the priest as being done either at the altar or at the credence table: “Upon returning to the altar, the Priest collects the fragments, should any remain, and he stands at the altar or at the credence table and purifies...” This contrasts, however, with the instruction found in paragraph 183, which describes Mass with a deacon:

When the distribution of Communion is over, the Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, should any remain, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair. Nevertheless, it is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people.

Here, the deacon is at the altar with the priest to collect the fragments, but when the priest returns to the chair, the deacon carries the sacred vessels to the credence table to purify.

Although the 2004 Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* might seem to confuse these straightforward rubrics of the GIRM when it states, “Where a Deacon is present, he returns with the Priest to the altar and purifies the vessels” (no. 119), this actually coincides with GIRM no. 183, which similarly says that the priest and deacon return to the altar, and that the deacon purifies the vessels at the credence table. GIRM no. 183 makes clear what is left unstated by *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, that purification by the deacon takes place not at the altar, but at the credence table.

This clarification of the deacon’s role helps to bring forth a further expression of our theology of liturgy and holy orders, matters which are indeed central to our life in the Church.

The Proper of Saints and Particular Calendars

With the addition of several observances in the Proper of Saints in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* (both in the General Roman Calendar and the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States), the Secretariat of Divine Worship has received a number of inquiries about how particular observances are added to “particular calendars,” *i.e.*, the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States as well as proper diocesan calendars or calendars for religious communities.

The 1970 Instruction of the then–Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Calendaria Particularia*, outlined the principles for the reform of particular or proper calendars (for conferences of bishops, dioceses, and religious institutes). It suggested several criteria for determining what saints or blessed (duly listed in the *Roman Martyrology*) ought to be admitted to particular calendars. For national calendars, in addition to principal and secondary patrons, other saints or blessed who have a special relationship to the region or nation can be included. For a diocesan calendar, in addition to the principal and secondary patron, other saints or blessed can be added who belong to the diocese “in a particular way, for example, because it was their place of origin, longtime residence, or place of death or because of a *cultus* from time immemorial that still continues” (no. 9).

Keeping in mind the importance of maintaining the sense of liturgical times and seasons as well as semi-continuous readings of the weekday Lectionary in Ordinary Time, it is also possible, for the sake of particular devotion, to observe as an optional memorial any saint inscribed in the *Roman Martyrology* (using the appropriate Mass formulary from the Commons) as stated in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 355c:

On weekdays in Ordinary Time, there may be chosen either the Mass of the weekday, or the Mass of an Optional Memorial which happens to occur on that day, or the Mass of any Saint inscribed in the Martyrology for that day, or a Mass for Various Needs, or a Votive Mass.

Since the introduction of the *Missal*, several observances have been either added or proposed to the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States. The Optional Memorial of Blessed John Paul II (October 22) was confirmed in 2012, and the Optional Memorials of Saint Marianne Cope (January 23) and Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos (October 5) are currently awaiting final confirmation (*recognitio*) from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

A number of dioceses have received requests from religious communities to place a saint or blessed of their community on the particular calendar of a diocese. In some cases, these requests originate in response to the policy statement *On the Inclusion of Saints and the Blessed in the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* which was approved by the then-NCCB on November 18, 1992 as an internal policy statement of its standing Committee on the Liturgy (see the December 1992 issue of the *Newsletter*). This statement requires that before a saint or blessed may be considered for inclusion on the national calendar for the United States of America, the following guidelines are to be applied:

1. As a general practice, before being considered for inclusion on the national calendar, saints or the blessed of a religious community must first be included on diocesan calendars for a significant period of time (usually 5 to 10 years) in order to insure that they have a genuine *cultus* in the United States.
2. The *cultus* of the saint or blessed must exist in a significant number of dioceses throughout the country before the saint or blessed may be proposed for inclusion on the national calendar. This *cultus* must be broader than in a particular area or region of the country in order to demonstrate that the saint or blessed is of significance to the entire country.
3. Normally the saint or blessed must have served in the United States of America.
4. Such commemorations of saints or the blessed will ordinarily be given the rank of optional memorial.

Requests to place a saint or blessed on a diocesan calendar are to be submitted to the local ordinary of the diocese, and the inclusion of a saint or blessed requires his approval. If the local ordinary approves this request, it must then be submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for confirmation.