



NewsLetter

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September 2023 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish met at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, DC on September 13-14, 2023. Members and consultants devoted much of the meeting to the development of the future U.S. *Leccionario*. After making initial decisions concerning the base texts of the elements of the *Leccionario* at their April 2023 meeting, the Subcommittee revised and approved the Introduction and Lenten Gospel Acclamations, both of which are derived from the original text approved for Mexico. Additional elements drawn from the Mexican *Leccionario* will be reviewed at the next meeting.

The core of the U.S. *Leccionario* – the readings and psalms – will use the translation of the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América* (BIA), which is being finalized in the coming months by the Committee on Doctrine's Subcommittee on the Translation of Scripture Text. To that end, members and consultants began an initial review of the refrains to the Responsorial Psalms using a draft text. All present provided valuable feedback on the text's strengths and weaknesses. Only when the BIA is completed and approved can work begin in earnest to produce the complete U.S. *Leccionario*.

Finally, the Subcommittee approved an operational plan intended to guide its work and that of the Secretariat for the next five years. Three focus areas are included: 1) approval of inculturated liturgical texts for the Spanish-speaking Church in the United States; 2) development of liturgical guidelines and suggestions for bishops and their liturgical personnel; and 3) production of formation materials centered on the liturgical texts themselves, intended primarily for pastoral ministers and diocesan worship staff, with a secondary audience being the lay faithful. Regarding liturgical texts, the largest work will be on the *Leccionario*, but other elements from the *Liturgia de las Horas* will be developed, along with proper texts from the more recently inscribed saints on the General Roman Calendar. There was a renewed commitment to ensure that liturgical texts and guidelines produced in English will also be translated into Spanish. The Secretariat will enhance the Subcommittee's Spanish-language website, USCCB.org/cultodivino, into a more dynamic hub for liturgical resources, news, and catechesis.

The Subcommittee's next meeting will be March 5, 2024 in San Antonio, Texas.

Administrative Committee Approves Designation of National Shrine-Cathedral of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Dallas

On September 12, 2023, the USCCB Administrative Committee approved designating the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Dallas, Texas as the country's latest National Shrine. The Committee on Divine Worship recommended the approval at its June 2023 meeting after receiving the shrine's application and conducting a site visit. The church was first established in 1869 as Dallas' first Catholic parish, called Sacred Heart Church. In 1890 it was named the cathedral of the new Diocese of Dallas and the current building was dedicated in 1902. Reflecting the growing Hispanic population in the area, permission was received in 1977 to formally change the title to the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Prayers for the Opening of the First Session of the 2023-2024 Synod of Bishops

The first session of the Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will meet at the Vatican on October 4-29, 2023 to discuss the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission." Echoing the Holy Father's prayer intention for that month, namely, for the Synod, Mario Cardinal Grech, Secretary General of the Synod, sent a letter to the world's bishops on September 12, 2023.



Cardinal Grech invited all the members of the Church to pray for the Pope and the members of the Synodal Assembly, and thus to participate in the Holy Spirit's action as the Synod undertakes its deliberations. In particular, the General Secretariat of the Synod released the Latin text of a Solemn Blessing for the end of Mass on the Sunday before the start of the Synod, October 1, 2023, the Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Sample petitions for the Universal Prayer and suggested intercessions for weekdays, particularly for the Liturgy of the Hours, were also released.

More information is available at [Synod.va/en/news/without-prayer-there-will-be-no-synod.html](https://www.usccb.org/synod/2023/without-prayer-there-will-be-no-synod). An English translation of the Solemn Blessing for use on October 1, prepared by the USCCB, was sent to the body of bishops and is reprinted for the benefit of our readers:

May our God and Father,
who in many and various ways
spoke to our fathers through the prophets,
direct you and the whole Church
in fidelity to his word and in discernment
of his will.

R. Amen.

May the Only Begotten Son,
sent in the fullness of time
to manifest to all the riches of the Father's mercy,
keep you in communion with himself
and your brothers and sisters.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit lead you all,
and especially the Synodal Assembly,
to perceive the signs of the times,
so that, adhering to the will of God in all things,
you may bear the abundant fruit of unity
by promoting the life of the Church
and witnessing to the Gospel.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

Administration of Viaticum to the Sick by Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers: Part 2

The July-August 2023 *Newsletter* presented the first part of this article, “Administration of Viaticum to the Sick by Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers,” part of an ongoing series on the rites found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*. That article examined the theology of Viaticum, the minister and recipient of the sacrament, as well as certain aspects of the rite, especially as it differs for ordinary and extraordinary ministers. This article will examine in greater depth the rite for administering Viaticum outside Mass for extraordinary ministers.

The rite consists of six parts: the Introductory Rites, the Reading of the Word of God, the Profession of Baptismal Faith, Prayer for the Sick Person, Viaticum, and the Concluding Rites. The Introductory Rites begin with a greeting and introduction, which describes Christ’s gift of the Eucharist the night before he passed over from this world to the Father in order to strengthen the dying and fortify them with the pledge of resurrection. The introduction concludes with an invitation to pray for the dying person, and a period of silent prayer is observed by all. The Penitential Act follows.

Next, the Reading of the Word of God takes place. While this reading could be omitted in certain circumstances, the rite notes that it is “very appropriate,” especially since the Profession of Baptismal Faith immediately follows: “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). Nine options are given in the rite itself. Seven are the words of Christ from the Gospel of St. John: two from chapter 6, the Bread of Life Discourse, and five from chapters 14 and 15, the Last Supper Discourse. These readings echo the themes of the rite’s introduction, helping the dying person to see his death as a participation in Christ’s by partaking of the Eucharist. In light of this use of the Gospel of St. John, it may be fitting to accompany those who are dying through a meditation on chapters 6, 14, and 15 in their last days. The final two passages are from St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians and the First Letter of St. John. A concluding rubric notes that other readings may be chosen from those given in *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*.

The third part of the rite is the Profession of Baptismal Faith. It is “desirable” that this take place, and the introductory rubric connects this element to the reception of Viaticum. This profession flows from the Word of God and leads toward Viaticum. Those questions which were answered by or on behalf of the dying person at baptism, those questions which express the faith that was renewed every Sunday in the midst of the Church – before going to the Father, the dying person responds to those questions one final time: “I do.”

Prayer for the Sick Person in the form of a litany then occurs. These petitions, directed to the Person of Christ, carry forward those themes expressed by the introduction and the readings: Christ’s Passover, the reception of eternal life through partaking of the Eucharist, and the eternal banquet which the Eucharist foreshadows.

The fifth part is the reception of Viaticum which begins with the common recitation of the Lord’s Prayer. Ever since baptism, this prayer has been prayed either by or on behalf of the dying person. The *traditiones* of Christian Initiation – the Handing On of the Creed and the Handing On of the Our Father – are each present in this rite, which the dying person hands back to God in faith; Viaticum is a recapitulation of Christian Initiation. Additionally, the Our Father is one of the preparatory rites for the reception of Communion, in which petition is made for daily bread and purification from sin (GIRM, no. 81). The minister then shows the Eucharist to the dying person, using the same formula as at Mass, “Behold the Lamb of God,” and the dying person responds for what may be the last time, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” In this context, the phrase, “my soul shall be healed,” takes on a particularly eschatological meaning. The minister then gives Communion in the usual way to which the dying person responds, “Amen.” The minister adds, “May he protect you and lead you to eternal life,” and the dying person responds, “Amen.”

The ritual ends with the Concluding Rites in which the minister offers a prayer and says, “May the Lord be with you always, may he strengthen you by his power and keep you in his peace.” Then those present may offer the sick person a Sign of Peace.

The Transforming Power of the Liturgy: Eucharist and Our Common Home

Just before the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest solemnly places bread and wine upon the altar while he prays: “Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread [the wine] we offer you: fruit of the earth [of the vine] and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life [our spiritual drink].” This ritual element manifests “the eucharist form of life” and brings about “a real change in the way we approach history and the world” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 92). In this series on the Transforming Power of the Liturgy, we reflect upon the liturgy’s power to transform us into people who care for our common home.

Theology

The refrain of the first creation account in the Book of Genesis is: “it was good.” God, who is good, creates, and creation participates in and manifests his goodness. On the sixth day, God creates man and woman, and looking at all that he has made, God finds it “very good.” This “very good” comes about because the human person is created in God’s image and, as God’s representative, exercises a godlike care or “dominion” on behalf of creation. This dominion is exercised in two ways. First, man and woman mediate God’s creativity by tilling and keeping creation for the wellbeing of all. Through the collaborative efforts of humanity, wilderness becomes a garden, grain becomes bread, and grapes become wine. These gifts are destined to be enjoyed and celebrated by all, and this is the second way that humanity exercises dominion – by together mediating creation’s thanksgiving, its *eucharistia* – to God. Creation praises God by its existence, but it does so mutely; humanity gives creation a voice. In the fullness of time, the Word becomes flesh, taking all creation to himself and transforming it. Creation serves the Paschal Mystery of Christ – the wood of the cross and the rock of the tomb – and in establishing the sacraments which communicate his divine life to human beings, Christ makes use of created things.

Liturgy

In addition to creation’s service in the liturgy and sacraments, a proper engagement with created things prepares the way for authentic liturgical participation. In *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis describes the movement from a superficial understanding of creation to an integral one, which perceives the way creatures manifest God’s goodness (cf. nos. 233-234). The Holy Father describes something similar in the liturgy, which requires Christians to read symbols, passing from the exterior sign to the interior reality (cf. *Desiderio desideravi*, nos. 44-46). Reading creation makes it easier for us to read the liturgy, and this authentic liturgical participation prepares us to be people who care for our common home.

In 2015, Pope Francis established for the Catholic Church the annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1, a celebration observed on this day since 1989 by the Orthodox Churches. In 2007, the World Council of Churches established the time from September 1 to the feast of St. Francis on October 4 as the ecumenical “Season of Creation.” Communities may celebrate this day or season liturgically in a variety of ways, especially in the Homily, Universal Prayer, and musical selections.

The *Roman Missal* also contains Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions that are connected to theme of creation: “For the Sanctification of Human Labor,” “At Seedtime,” “After the Harvest,” “In Time of Famine or for Those Suffering Hunger,” “For Rain,” or “For Fine Weather.” The orations of these Mass formularies express: the divine origin of creation for the sustenance of all people; the origin, direction, and completion of human work by divine grace; thanksgiving and praise as the ends of human work; and earthly fruitfulness as a call to spiritual fruitfulness.

Action

One way to take action is to study the Holy Father’s encyclical on Care for Our Common Home, *Laudato si’*; a helpful discussion guide may be found at USCCB.org/environment. “Simple daily gestures” done in common may also have a huge impact (cf. *Laudato si’*, no. 230): reducing the use of utilities and trash or recycling and composting. Additionally, in light of the Church’s teaching about the universal destination of goods (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2402-2406), it is important to ask who does not have access to the goods of creation which they require for their wellbeing. It is often vulnerable populations who suffer most from the unequal distribution of resources (cf. *Laudato si’*, no. 230).