

notitiae

CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO
ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM



453-454

MAI.-IUN. 2004 - 05-06

CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

Commentarii ad nuntia et studia de re liturgica

Edita cura Congregationis de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum

Mensile- sped. Abb. Postale – 50% Roma

Directio: Commentarii sedem habent apud Congregationem de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, ad quam transmittenda sunt epistolae, chartulae, manuscripta, his verbis inscripta Notitiae, *Città del Vaticano*

Administratio autem residet apud *Libreria Editrice Vaticana – Città del Vaticano – c.c.p. N. 00774000.*

Pro Commentariis sunt in annum solvendae: in Italia lit. 50.000 / € 25,83 – extra Italiam lit. 70.000 / € 36,16 (\$ 54).

Typis Vaticanis

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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Allocutiones

SALMO 142, 1-11:
PREGHIERA NELLA TRIBOLAZIONE*

È stato or ora proclamato il Salmo 142, l'ultimo dei cosiddetti «Salmi penitenziali» nel settenario di suppliche distribuite nel Salterio (cf. *Sal* 6; 31; 37; 50; 101; 129; 142). La tradizione cristiana li ha utilizzati tutti per invocare dal Signore il perdono dei peccati. Il testo che oggi vogliamo approfondire era particolarmente caro a san Paolo, che ne aveva dedotto una radicale peccaminosità in ogni creatura umana: «Nessun vivente davanti a te, (o Signore), è giusto» (v. 2). Questa frase viene assunta dall'Apostolo a base del suo insegnamento sul peccato e sulla grazia (cf. *Gal* 2, 16; *Rm* 3, 20).

La *Liturgia delle Lodi* ci propone questa supplica come proposito di fedeltà e implorazione di aiuto divino agli inizi della giornata. Il Salmo infatti ci fa dire a Dio: «Al mattino fammi sentire la tua grazia, poiché in te confido» (*Sal* 142, 8).

Il Salmo inizia con un'intensa e insistente invocazione rivolta a Dio, fedele alle promesse di salvezza offerta al popolo (cf. v. 1). L'orante riconosce di non avere meriti da far valere e quindi chiede umilmente a Dio di non atteggiarsi a giudice (cf. v. 2).

Poi egli tratteggia la situazione drammatica, simile ad un incubo mortale, in cui si sta dibattendo: il nemico, che è la rappresentazione del male della storia e del mondo, lo ha condotto fino alle soglie della morte. Eccolo, infatti, caduto nella polvere della terra, che è già un'immagine del sepolcro; ecco le tenebre, che sono la negazione del-

* Ex allocutione die 9 iulii 2003 habita, durante audientia generali in area quae respicit basilicam Sancti Petri in Vaticano christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 10 luglio 2003).

la luce, segno divino di vita; ecco, infine, «i morti da gran tempo», cioè i trapassati (cf. v. 3), tra i quali gli sembra di essere già relegato.

L'esistenza stessa del Salmista è devastata: manca ormai il respiro e il cuore sembra un pezzo di ghiaccio, incapace di continuare a battere (cf. v. 4). Al fedele, atterrato e calpestato, restano libere solo le mani, che si levano verso il cielo in un gesto che è, al tempo stesso, di implorazione di aiuto e di ricerca di sostegno (cf. v. 6). Il pensiero infatti gli corre al passato in cui Dio ha operato prodigi (cf. v. 5).

Questa scintilla di speranza riscalda il gelo della sofferenza e della prova in cui l'orante si sente immerso e in procinto di essere travolto (cf. v. 7). La tensione, rimane, comunque, sempre forte; ma un raggio di luce sembra profilarsi all'orizzonte. Passiamo, così, all'altra parte del Salmo (cf. vv. 7-11).

Essa si apre con una nuova, pressante invocazione. Il fedele sentendo quasi sfuggirgli la vita, lancia a Dio il suo grido: «Rispondimi presto, Signore, viene meno il mio spirito» (v. 7). Anzi, egli teme che Dio abbia nascosto il suo volto e si sia allontanato, abbandonando e lasciando sola la sua creatura.

La scomparsa del volto divino fa piombare l'uomo nella desolazione, anzi, nella morte stessa, perché il Signore è la sorgente della vita. Proprio in questa sorta di frontiera estrema fiorisce la fiducia nel Dio che non abbandona. L'orante moltiplica le sue invocazioni e le appoggia con dichiarazioni di fiducia nel Signore: «Poiché in te confido... perché a te si innalza l'anima mia... a te mi affido... sei tu il mio Dio...». Egli chiede di essere salvato dai suoi nemici (cf. vv. 8-12) e liberato dall'angoscia (cf. v. 11), ma fa anche ripetutamente un'altra domanda, che manifesta una profonda aspirazione spirituale: «Insegnami a compiere il tuo volere, perché sei tu il mio Dio» (v. 10a; cf. vv. 8b.10b.). Questa ammirevole domanda la dobbiamo fare nostra. Dobbiamo capire che il nostro bene più grande è l'unione della nostra volontà con la volontà del nostro Padre celeste, perché soltanto così possiamo ricevere in noi tutto il suo amore, che ci porta la salvezza e la pienezza della vita. Se non è accompagnata da un forte desiderio di docilità a Dio, la fiducia in Lui non è autentica.

L'orante ne è consapevole ed esprime quindi questo desiderio. La sua è allora una vera e propria professione di fiducia in Dio salvatore, che strappa dall'angoscia e ridona il gusto della vita, in nome della sua «giustizia», ossia della sua fedeltà amorosa e salvifica (cf. v. 11). Partita da una situazione quanto mai angosciata, la preghiera è approdata alla speranza, alla gioia e alla luce, grazie ad una sincera adesione a Dio e alla sua volontà, che è una volontà di amore. È questa la potenza della preghiera, generatrice di vita e di salvezza.

Fissando lo sguardo verso la luce del mattino della grazia (cf. v. 8) san Gregorio Magno, nel suo commento ai sette Salmi penitenziali, così descrive quell'alba di speranza e di gioia: «È il giorno illuminato da quel sole vero che non conosce tramonto, che le nubi non rendono tenebroso e la nebbia non oscura... Quando apparirà Cristo, nostra vita, e cominceremo a vedere Dio a viso aperto, allora fuggirà ogni caligine delle tenebre, svanirà ogni fumo dell'ignoranza, sarà dissipata ogni nebbia della tentazione... Quello sarà il giorno luminoso e splendido, preparato per tutti gli eletti da Colui che ci ha strappato dal potere delle tenebre e ci ha trasferiti nel regno del suo Figlio diletto.

La mattina di quel giorno è la risurrezione futura... In quel mattino brillerà la felicità dei giusti, apparirà la gloria, si vedrà l'esultanza, quando Dio astergerà ogni lacrima dagli occhi dei santi, quando ultima sarà distrutta la morte, quando i giusti rifulgeranno come il sole nel regno del Padre.

In quel mattino il Signore farà sperimentare la sua misericordia... dicendo: "Venite, benedetti dal Padre mio" (*Mt* 25, 34). Allora sarà manifesta la misericordia di Dio, che nella vita presente la mente umana non può concepire. Il Signore ha infatti preparato, per quelli che lo amano, ciò che occhio non vide né orecchio udì né entrò nel cuore dell'uomo» (*PL* 79, coll. 649-650).

CANTICO: *Is* 66,10-14a :
NELLA CITTÀ DI DIO CONSOLAZIONE E GIOIA*

Dall'ultima pagina del *Libro di Isaia* è tratto l'inno che abbiamo appena ascoltato, un canto di gioia dominato dalla figura materna di Gerusalemme (cf. 66, 11) e poi dalla sollecitudine amorevole di Dio stesso (cf. v. 13). Gli studiosi della Bibbia ritengono che questa sezione finale, aperta a un futuro splendido e festoso, sia la testimonianza di una voce posteriore, quella di un profeta che celebra la rinascita di Israele dopo la parentesi oscura dell'esilio babilonese. Siamo, dunque, nel sesto secolo a.C., due secoli dopo la missione di Isaia, il grande profeta sotto il cui nome è posta l'intera opera ispirata.

Noi ora seguiremo il fluire gioioso di questo breve cantico, aperto da tre imperativi che sono appunto un invito alla felicità: « rallegratevi », « esultate », « sfavillate di gioia » (cf. v. 10). È questo un filo luminoso che percorre spesso le ultime pagine del *Libro di Isaia*: gli afflitti di Sion sono allietati, incoronati, coperti di « olio di letizia » (61, 3); il profeta stesso « gioisce pienamente nel Signore, la sua anima esulta in Dio » (v. 10); « come gioisce lo sposo per la sposa, così Dio gioirà » per il suo popolo (62, 5). Nella pagina precedente a quella che ora è oggetto del nostro canto e della nostra preghiera è il Signore stesso a partecipare alla felicità di Israele che sta per rinascere come nazione: « Si godrà e si gioirà sempre di quello che sto per creare, e farò di Gerusalemme una gioia, del suo popolo un gaudio. Io esulterò di Gerusalemme, godrò del mio popolo » (65, 18-19).

La sorgente e la ragione di questa esultanza interiore è nella ritrovata vitalità di Gerusalemme, risorta dalle ceneri della rovina, che era piombata su di essa allorché le armate babilonesi la demolirono. Si parla, infatti, del suo « lutto » (66, 10) ormai lasciato alle spalle.

Come accade spesso in varie culture, la città è rappresentata con

* Ex allocutione die 16 iulii 2003 habita, durante audientia generali in Castelgandolfo christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 luglio 2003).

immagini femminili, anzi materne. Quando una città è in pace, è simile a un grembo protetto e sicuro; anzi, è come una madre che allatta i suoi figli con abbondanza e tenerezza (cf. v. 11). In questa luce, la realtà che la Bibbia chiama, con un'espressione femminile, «la figlia di Sion», cioè Gerusalemme, ritorna ad essere una città-madre che accoglie, nutre e delizia i suoi figli, cioè i suoi abitanti. Su questa scena di vita e di tenerezza scende poi la parola del Signore che ha il tono di una benedizione (cf. vv. 12-14).

Dio ricorre ad altre immagini legate alla fecondità: parla, infatti, di fiumi e torrenti, cioè di acque che simboleggiano la vita, il rigoglio della vegetazione, la prosperità della terra e dei suoi abitanti (cf. v. 12). La prosperità di Gerusalemme, la sua «pace» (*shalom*), dono generoso di Dio, assicurerà ai suoi bimbi una esistenza circondata di tenerezza materna: «saranno portati in braccio, sulle ginocchia saranno accarezzati» (*ibid.*) e questa tenerezza materna sarà tenerezza di Dio stesso: «Come una madre consola un figlio, così io vi consolerò» (v. 13). Così il Signore adopera la metafora materna per descrivere il suo amore per le sue creature.

Anche prima nel *Libro di Isaia* si legge un passo che attribuisce a Dio un profilo materno: «Si dimentica forse una donna del suo bambino, così da non commuoversi per il figlio del suo seno? Anche se ci fosse una donna che si dimenticasse, io invece non ti dimenticherò mai» (49, 15). Nel nostro Cantico le parole del Signore rivolte a Gerusalemme finiscono riprendendo il tema della vitalità interiore, espresso con un'altra immagine di fertilità e di energia: quella dell'erba fresca, immagine applicata alle ossa, per indicare il vigore del corpo e dell'esistenza (cf. 66, 14).

È facile a questo punto, di fronte alla città-madre, allargare il nostro sguardo fino a raggiungere il profilo della Chiesa, vergine e madre feconda. Concludiamo la nostra meditazione sulla Gerusalemme rinata con una riflessione di sant'Ambrogio, desunta dalla sua opera *Le vergini*: «La santa Chiesa è immacolata nella sua unione maritale: feconda per i suoi parti, è vergine per la sua castità, benché madre per i figli che genera. Noi siamo dunque partoriti da una ver-

gine, che ha concepito non per opera di uomo ma per opera dello Spirito. Siamo dunque partoriti da una vergine non tra dolori fisici, ma tra il giubilo degli angeli. Ci nutre una vergine non con il latte del corpo, ma con quello di cui parla l'Apostolo, quando dice di aver allattato la debole età dell'adolescente popolo di Dio.

Quale donna sposata ha più figli della santa Chiesa? È vergine per la santità che riceve nei sacramenti ed è madre di popoli. La sua fecondità è attestata anche dalla Scrittura che dice: "Sono più numerosi i figli dell'abbandonata di colei che ha marito" (*Is* 54, 1; *Gal* 4, 27), la nostra madre non ha marito, ma ha uno sposo, perché tanto la Chiesa nei popoli quanto l'anima nei singoli — immuni da qualsiasi infedeltà, feconde nella vita dello spirito — senza che venga meno il pudore, si sposano con il Verbo di Dio come con uno sposo eterno» (I, 31: Saemo 14/1, pp. 132-133).

SALMO 146:
POTENZA E BONTÀ DEL SIGNORE*

Il Salmo ora cantato è la prima parte di una composizione che comprende anche il successivo Salmo 147 e che l'originale ebraico ha conservato nella sua unità. Sono state l'antica versione greca e quella latina a dividere il canto in due Salmi distinti.

Il Salmo incomincia con un invito a lodare Dio e poi elenca una lunga serie di motivi di lode, tutti espressi al presente. Si tratta di attività di Dio considerate come caratteristiche e sempre attuali; sono però di generi molto diversi: alcune riguardano gli interventi di Dio nell'esistenza umana (cf. *Sal* 146, 3.6.11) e in particolare a favore di Gerusalemme e di Israele (cf. v. 2); altre riguardano l'universo creato (cf. v. 4) e più specialmente la terra con la sua vegetazione e gli animali (cf. vv. 8-9).

Dicendo, alla fine, di chi il Signore si compiace, il Salmo ci invita a un duplice atteggiamento: di timore religioso e di fiducia (cf. v. 11). Noi non siamo abbandonati a noi stessi o alle energie cosmiche, ma siamo sempre nelle mani del Signore per il suo progetto di salvezza.

Dopo l'invito festoso alla lode (cf. v. 1), il Salmo si dispiega in due movimenti poetici e spirituali. Nel primo (cf. vv. 2-6) si introduce innanzitutto l'azione storica di Dio, sotto l'immagine di un costruttore che sta riedificando Gerusalemme tornata alla vita dopo l'esilio babilonese (cf. v. 2). Ma questo grande artefice, che è il Signore, si rivela anche come un padre che si china sulle ferite interiori e fisiche, presenti nel suo popolo umiliato e oppresso (cf. v. 3).

Lasciamo spazio a sant'Agostino che, nell'Esposizione del Salmo 146 tenuta a Cartagine nel 412, così commentava la frase: « Il Signore risana chi ha il cuore spezzato »: « Chi non spezza il cuore non viene risanato... Chi sono coloro che spezzano il cuore? Gli umili. E coloro

* Ex allocutione die 23 iulii 2003 habita, durante audientia generali in Castelgandolfo christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 luglio 2003).

che non lo spezzano? I superbi. Comunque, il cuore spezzato, viene guarito, il cuore gonfio d'orgoglio viene abbattuto. Anzi, con probabilità, se viene abbattuto è proprio affinché, una volta spezzato, possa essere raddrizzato, possa essere guarito... "Egli risana quelli che hanno il cuore spezzato, e fascia le loro fratture"... In altre parole risana gli umili di cuore, coloro che confessano, che si puniscono, che si giudicano con severità per poter sperimentare la sua misericordia. Ecco chi risana. La perfetta salute sarà però raggiunta al termine del presente stato mortale, quando il nostro essere corruttibile si sarà rivestito d'incorruttilità e il nostro essere mortale si sarà rivestito d'immortalità» (5-8: Esposizioni sui Salmi, IV, Roma 1977, pp. 772-779).

Ma l'opera di Dio non si manifesta soltanto curando il suo popolo dalle sofferenze. Egli, che circonda di tenerezza e premura i poveri, si erge come giudice severo nei confronti degli empi (cf. v. 6). Il Signore della storia non è indifferente davanti all'imperversare dei prepotenti che credono di essere gli unici arbitri delle vicende umane: Dio abbassa nella polvere della terra coloro che sfidano il cielo con la loro superbia (cf. *1 Sam* 2, 7-8; *Lc* 1, 51-53).

L'azione di Dio, però, non si esaurisce nella sua signoria sulla storia; egli è anche il re del creato, l'universo intero risponde al suo appello di Creatore. Egli può non solo numerare tutta la sterminata serie delle stelle, ma è in grado di attribuire a ciascuna di esse il nome, definendone quindi la natura e le caratteristiche (cf. *Sal* 146, 4).

Cantava già il profeta Isaia: «Levate in alto i vostri occhi e guardate: chi ha creato quegli astri? Egli fa uscire in numero preciso il loro esercito e li chiama tutti per nome» (40, 26). Gli «eserciti» del Signore sono, dunque, le stelle. Il profeta Baruc continuava così: «Le stelle brillano dalle loro vedette e gioiscono; egli le chiama e rispondono: "Ecco-ci!" e brillano di gioia per colui che le ha create» (3, 34-35).

Dopo un nuovo invito gioioso alla lode (cf. *Sal* 146, 7), ecco aprirsi il secondo movimento del Salmo 146 (cf. vv. 7-11). Di scena è ancora l'azione creatrice di Dio nel cosmo. In un paesaggio spesso arido com'è quello orientale, il primo segno dell'amore divino è la pioggia che feconda la terra (cf. v. 8). Per questa via il Creatore im-

bandisce una mensa per gli animali. Anzi, egli si preoccupa di dare cibo anche ai più piccoli viventi, come i nati del corvo che gridano per la fame (cf. v. 9). Gesù ci inviterà a guardare «gli uccelli del cielo: non seminano, né mietono, né ammassano nei granai; eppure il Padre celeste li nutre» (*Mt* 6, 26; cf. anche *Lc* 12, 24 con l'esplicito riferimento ai «corvi»).

Ma ancora una volta l'attenzione si sposta dalla creazione all'esistenza umana. E così il Salmo si conclude mostrando il Signore che si china su chi è giusto e umile (cf. *Sal* 146, 10-11), come già si era dichiarato nella prima parte dell'inno (cf. v. 6). Attraverso due simboli di potenza, il cavallo e la gamba dell'uomo in corsa, si delinea l'atteggiamento divino che non si lascia conquistare o intimorire dalla forza. Ancora una volta, la logica del Signore ignora l'orgoglio e l'arroganza del potere, ma si schiera dalla parte di chi è fedele e «spera nella sua grazia» (v. 11), cioè si abbandona alla guida di Dio nel suo agire e nel suo pensare, nel suo progettare e nel suo stesso vivere quotidiano.

Tra costoro anche l'orante deve collocarsi, fondando la sua speranza nella grazia del Signore, certo di essere avvolto dal manto dell'amore divino: «L'occhio del Signore veglia su chi lo teme, su chi spera nella sua grazia, per liberarlo dalla morte e nutrirlo in tempo di fame... In lui gioisce il nostro cuore e confidiamo nel suo santo nome» (*Sal* 32, 18-19.21).

SALMO 50:
PIETÀ DI ME, O SIGNORE*

È la quarta volta che ascoltiamo, durante queste nostre riflessioni sulla *Liturgia delle Lodi*, la proclamazione del Salmo 50, il celebre *Miserere*. Esso, infatti, è riproposto nel venerdì di ogni settimana, perché divenga un'oasi di meditazione, dove scoprire il male che si annida nella coscienza ed invocare dal Signore purificazione e perdono. Come confessa, infatti, il Salmista in un'altra supplica, «nessun vivente davanti a te è giusto», o Signore (*Sal* 142, 2). Nel *Libro di Giobbe* si legge: «Come può giustificarsi un uomo davanti a Dio e apparire puro un nato di donna? Ecco, la luna stessa manca di chiarezza e le stelle non sono pure ai suoi occhi: quanto meno l'uomo, questo verme, l'essere umano, questo bruco!» (25, 4-6).

Fraresi forti e drammatiche, che vogliono mostrare in tutta serietà e gravità il limite e la fragilità della creatura umana, la sua capacità perversa di seminare male e violenza, impurità e menzogna. Tuttavia, il messaggio di speranza del *Miserere*, che il Salterio pone sulle labbra di Davide, peccatore convertito, è questo: Dio può «cancellare, lavare, mondare» la colpa confessata con cuore contrito (cf. *Sal* 50, 2-3). Dice il Signore attraverso la voce di Isaia: «Anche se i vostri peccati fossero come scarlatto, diventeranno bianchi come neve. Se fossero rossi come porpora, diventeranno come lana» (1, 18).

Ci fermeremo questa volta brevemente sulla finale del Salmo 50, una finale piena di speranza perché l'orante è consapevole di essere stato perdonato da Dio (cf. vv. 17-21). Ormai la sua bocca sta per proclamare al mondo la lode del Signore, attestando in tal modo la gioia che sperimenta l'anima purificata dal male e perciò liberata dal rimorso (cf. v. 17).

L'orante testimonia in modo netto un'altra convinzione, connet-

* Ex allocutione die 30 iulii 2003 habita, durante audientia generali in Castelgandolfo christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 31 luglio 2003).

tendosi all'insegnamento reiterato dei profeti (cf. *Is* 1, 10-17; *Am* 5, 21-25; *Os* 6, 6): il sacrificio più gradito che sale al Signore come profumo e fragranza soave (cf. *Gn* 8, 21) non è l'olocausto di tori e di agnelli ma piuttosto il « cuore affranto e umiliato » (*Sal* 50, 19).

L'*Imitazione di Cristo*, testo tanto caro alla tradizione spirituale cristiana, ripete lo stesso ammonimento del Salmista: « L'umile contrizione dei peccati è per te il sacrificio gradito, un profumo molto più soave del fumo dell'incenso... Là si purifica e si lava ogni iniquità » (III, 52, 4).

Il Salmo si conclude in modo inaspettato con una prospettiva completamente diversa, che sembra persino contraddittoria (cf. vv. 20-21). Dall'ultima supplica di un singolo peccatore si passa a una preghiera per la ricostruzione di tutta la città di Gerusalemme, il che ci trasporta dall'epoca di Davide a quella della distruzione della città, secoli dopo. D'altra parte, dopo aver espresso nel v. 18 il rifiuto divino delle immolazioni di animali, il Salmo annuncia nel v. 21 che Dio gradirà queste stesse immolazioni.

È chiaro che questo passo finale è un'aggiunta posteriore, fatta nel tempo dell'esilio, che vuole, in un certo senso, correggere o almeno completare la prospettiva del Salmo davidico. E questo su due punti: da una parte, non si è voluto che tutto il Salmo si restringesse a una preghiera individuale; bisognava pensare anche alla situazione pietosa di tutta la città. Dall'altra parte, si è voluto ridimensionare il rifiuto divino dei sacrifici rituali; questo rifiuto non poteva essere né completo né definitivo, perché si trattava di un culto prescritto da Dio stesso nella *Torah*. Chi ha completato il Salmo ha avuto una intuizione valida: ha capito la necessità in cui si trovano i peccatori, la necessità di una mediazione sacrificale. I peccatori non sono in grado di purificarsi da soli; non bastano buoni sentimenti. Ci vuole una mediazione esterna efficace. Il *Nuovo Testamento* rivelerà il senso pieno di questa intuizione, mostrando che con l'offerta della sua vita, Cristo ha effettuato una mediazione sacrificale perfetta.

Nelle sue *Omellerie su Ezechiele* san Gregorio Magno ha colto bene la differenza di prospettiva che esiste tra i vv. 19 e 21 del *Miserere*.

Egli ne propone una interpretazione, che possiamo anche accogliere, concludendo così la nostra riflessione. San Gregorio applica il v. 19, che parla di spirito contrito, all'esistenza terrena della Chiesa e il v. 21, che parla di olocausto, alla Chiesa nel cielo.

Ecco le parole di quel grande Pontefice: «La santa Chiesa ha due vite: una che conduce nel tempo, l'altra che riceve in eterno; una con cui fatica in terra, l'altra che viene ricompensata in cielo; una con cui raccoglie i meriti, l'altra che ormai gode dei meriti raccolti. E nell'una e nell'altra vita offre il sacrificio: qui il sacrificio della compunzione e lassù il sacrificio di lode. Del primo sacrificio è detto: "Uno spirito contrito è sacrificio a Dio" (*Sal* 50, 19); del secondo sta scritto: "Allora gradirai i sacrifici prescritti, l'olocausto e l'intera oblazione" (*Sal* 50, 21)... In entrambi si offrono le carni, perché qui l'oblazione della carne è la mortificazione del corpo, lassù l'oblazione della carne è la gloria della risurrezione nella lode a Dio. Lassù si offrirà la carne come in olocausto, allorché trasformata nella incorruttibilità eterna, non ci sarà più nessun conflitto e niente di mortale, perché perdurerà tutta intera accesa di amore per lui, nella lode senza fine» (*Omellie su Ezechiele*/2, Roma 1993, p. 271).

CANTICO: *Tb* 13,10-13,15,16C-17A:
RINGRAZIAMENTO PER LA LIBERAZIONE DEL POPOLO*

La Liturgia delle Lodi ha accolto tra i suoi Cantici un frammento di un inno, posto a suggello della storia narrata dal Libro biblico di *Tobia*: l'abbiamo ascoltato poc'anzi. L'inno, piuttosto ampio e solenne, è una tipica espressione della preghiera e della spiritualità giudaica che attinge ad altri testi già presenti nella Bibbia.

Il Canto si sviluppa attraverso una duplice invocazione. Emerge innanzitutto un ripetuto invito a lodare Dio (cf. vv. 3.4.7) per la purificazione ch'egli sta operando per mezzo dell'esilio. I «figli d'Israele» vengono esortati ad accogliere questa purificazione con una sincera conversione (cf. vv. 6.8). Se fiorirà nei cuori la conversione, il Signore farà sorgere all'orizzonte l'alba della liberazione. È proprio in questo clima spirituale che si colloca l'avvio del Canto che la *Liturgia* ha ritagliato all'interno dell'inno più ampio del capitolo 13 di *Tobia*.

La seconda parte del testo, intonata dal vecchio Tobì, protagonista col figlio Tobia dell'intero Libro, è una vera e propria celebrazione di Sion. Essa riflette l'appassionata nostalgia e l'ardente amore che l'ebreo della Diaspora prova nei confronti della città santa (cf. vv. 9-18). Anche questo aspetto brilla all'interno del brano che è stato scelto come preghiera mattutina della *Liturgia delle Lodi*. Fermiamoci su questi due temi, cioè la purificazione del peccato attraverso la prova e l'attesa dell'incontro col Signore nella luce di Sion e del suo tempio santo.

Tobì rivolge un appello caloroso ai peccatori perché si convertano e operino la giustizia: è questa la via da imboccare per ritrovare l'amore divino che dà serenità e speranza (cf. v. 8).

La stessa storia di Gerusalemme è una parabola che insegna a tutti la scelta da compiere. Dio ha castigato la città perché non poteva rimanere indifferente di fronte al male perpetrato dai suoi figli. Ma

* Ex allocutione die 13 augusti 2003 habita, durante audientia generali in Castigandolfo christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 agosto 2003).

ora, vedendo che molti si sono convertiti e trasformati in figli giusti e fedeli, egli manifesterà ancora il suo amore misericordioso (cf. v. 10).

Lungo tutto il Canto del capitolo 13 di *Tobia* si ripete spesso questa convinzione: il Signore « castiga e usa misericordia... castiga per le vostre ingiustizie ma usa misericordia a tutti... ti ha castigata per le opere dei tuoi figli, e avrà ancora pietà per i figli dei giusti » (vv. 2.5.10). Dio ricorre al castigo come mezzo per richiamare sulla retta via i peccatori sordi ad altri richiami. L'ultima parola del Dio giusto resta tuttavia quella dell'amore e del perdono; il suo desiderio profondo è quello di poter riabbracciare i figli ribelli che tornano a lui con cuore pentito.

Nei confronti del popolo eletto la misericordia divina si manifesterà con la ricostruzione del Tempio di Gerusalemme, operata da Dio stesso: « Egli ricostruirà in te il suo tempio con gioia » (v. 11). Appare, così, il secondo tema, quello di Sion, come luogo spirituale verso cui deve convergere non solo il ritorno degli ebrei ma anche il pellegrinaggio dei popoli che cercano Dio. Si schiude, così, un orizzonte universalistico: ricostruito, il tempio di Gerusalemme, segno della parola e della presenza divina, risplenderà di una luce planetaria che squarcerà le tenebre, così che possano mettersi in marcia « nazioni numerose, gli abitanti di tutti i confini della terra » (cf. v. 13), recando i loro doni e cantando la loro gioia di partecipare alla salvezza che il Signore effonde in Israele.

Gli Israeliti, dunque, e tutti i popoli sono in cammino insieme verso un'unica meta di fede e di verità. Su di loro il cantore di questo inno fa scendere una beatitudine ripetuta dicendo a Gerusalemme: « Beati coloro che ti amano, beati coloro che gioiscono per la tua pace! » (v. 15). La felicità è autentica quando si è ritrovata la luce che sfolgora nel cielo di tutti coloro che cercano il Signore con il cuore purificato e con l'ansia della verità.

Verso questa Gerusalemme, libera e gloriosa, segno della Chiesa nella meta ultima della sua speranza, prefigurata dalla Pasqua di Cristo, sant'Agostino si rivolge con ardore nel libro delle *Confessioni*.

Riferendosi alla preghiera che egli intende compiere nella sua

« stanza segreta », ci descrive quelle « canzoni d'amore fra i gemiti, gli inenarrabili gemiti che durante il mio pellegrinaggio suscita il ricordo di Gerusalemme nel cuore proteso in alto verso di lei, Gerusalemme, la mia patria, Gerusalemme la mia madre, e verso di Te, il suo sovrano, il suo illuminatore, il suo padre e tutore e sposo, le sue caste e intense delizie, la sua solida gioia e tutti i suoi beni ineffabili ». E conclude con una promessa: « Non me ne distoglierò, fino a che nella pace di quella madre carissima, dove stanno le primizie del mio spirito, donde traggio queste certezze, tu non abbia adunato tutto ciò che io sono da questa deforme dispersione, per uniformarlo definitivamente in eterno, o Dio mio, misericordia mia » (*Le Confessioni*, 12, 16, 23, Roma 1965, pp. 424-425).

MEDITAZIONE SUL MISTERO DELLA DIVINA MATERNITÀ DI MARIA*

«*Alma Redemptoris Mater... Alma Madre del Redentore...*». Così invochiamo Maria nel tempo natalizio, con un'antica e suggestiva antifona mariana, che prosegue tra l'altro con queste parole: «*Tu quae genuisti natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem* – Tu, nello stupore di tutto il creato, hai generato il tuo Creatore».

Maria, Madre di Dio! Questa verità di fede, profondamente legata alle festività natalizie, è particolarmente evidenziata nella liturgia del primo giorno dell'anno, solennità di Maria Santissima Madre di Dio. Maria è la Madre del Redentore; è la donna eletta da Dio per realizzare il progetto salvifico incentrato sul mistero dell'incarnazione del Verbo divino.

Un'umile creatura ha generato il Creatore del mondo! Il tempo di Natale ci rinnova la consapevolezza di questo mistero, presentandoci la Madre del Figlio di Dio quale compartecipe agli eventi culminanti della storia della salvezza. La secolare tradizione della Chiesa ha sempre considerato la nascita di Gesù e la divina maternità di Maria come due aspetti dell'incarnazione del Verbo. «Infatti – ribadisce il *Catechismo della Chiesa Cattolica* citando il Concilio di Efeso – colui che Maria ha concepito come uomo per opera dello Spirito Santo e che è diventato veramente suo Figlio secondo la carne, è il Figlio eterno del Padre, la seconda Persona della Santissima Trinità. La Chiesa confessa che Maria è veramente *Madre di Dio*, 'Theotokos'» (n. 495).

Dal fatto che la Madonna è «Madre di Dio» *derivano tutti gli altri aspetti* della sua missione; aspetti ben evidenziati dai titoli con i quali la comunità dei discepoli di Cristo in ogni parte del mondo La onora. Innanzitutto quelli di «Immacolata» e di «Assunta», perché

* Ex allocutione die 7 ianuarii 2004 habita, durante audientia generali in aula Pauli VI in Vaticano christifidelibus concessa (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 gennaio 2004).

non poteva certo essere soggetta alla corruzione derivante dal peccato originale Colei che doveva generare il Salvatore.

La Vergine è inoltre invocata come la Madre del Corpo mistico, cioè della Chiesa. Il *Catechismo della Chiesa Cattolica*, rifacendosi alla tradizione patristica espressa da sant'Agostino, afferma che Lei «è veramente Madre delle membra di Cristo... perché ha cooperato con la sua carità alla nascita dei fedeli della Chiesa, i quali di quel Capo sono le membra» (n. 963).

L'intera esistenza di Maria è *legata in modo quanto mai stretto a quella di Gesù*. A Natale è Lei ad offrire Gesù all'umanità. Sulla croce, al momento supremo del compimento della missione redentrice, sarà Gesù a far dono ad ogni essere umano della sua stessa Madre, quale eredità preziosa della redenzione.

Le parole del Signore crocifisso al fedele discepolo Giovanni costituiscono il suo testamento. Egli affida a Giovanni sua Madre e, allo stesso tempo, consegna l'Apostolo e ogni credente all'amore di Maria.

In questi ultimi giorni del tempo di Natale soffermiamoci a contemplare nel presepe *la silenziosa presenza della Vergine accanto al Bambino Gesù*. Lo stesso amore, la stessa premura che ha avuto per il suo divin Figlio, la riserva a noi.

ÉGLISE ET PAROISSE*

C'est avec joie que je vous accueille, Evêques des provinces ecclésiastiques de Lyon et de Clermont, au terme de votre Visite *ad limina*. Il s'agit toujours d'un moment fort de ressourcement spirituel, grâce à la prière célébrée en commun sur les tombes des Apôtres Pierre et Paul, prière qui ravive en nous la conscience de la valeur irremplaçable du témoignage chrétien, parfois jusqu'au martyre, et de l'enracinement apostolique de notre foi.

C'est aussi un temps de partage fraternel et de travail, permettant de fortifier notre sens de l'Eglise, grâce aux rencontres avec le Successeur de Pierre, garant de la communion ecclésiale, et avec les différents Dicastères. Je souhaite particulièrement la bienvenue aux nouveaux évêques, nombreux dans votre groupe, et je remercie chaleureusement Monsieur le Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, Archevêque de Lyon et Primat des Gaules, qui vient, en votre nom, de me présenter vos deux régions et quelques-unes de vos préoccupations pastorales. Vous évoquez une situation souvent difficile, due au manque de pasteurs et à la sécularisation des mentalités, alors que vos diocèses s'efforcent avec courage de préparer l'avenir.

Je souhaite aujourd'hui m'arrêter avec vous sur *la vie de l'Eglise diocésaine*. Depuis la dernière Visite *ad limina* des Evêques de France en 1997, beaucoup de diocèses ont entrepris une réflexion importante sur la vie et le rôle des paroisses, rendue nécessaire à cause de l'évolution démographique et de l'urbanisation grandissante, mais aussi en raison de la diminution du nombre des prêtres, qui se fera encore plus sentir dans les années à venir.

Dans bien des diocèses, ce travail s'est réalisé dans le cadre d'un synode diocésain, dans d'autres, on a entrepris ce qu'on a appelé une

* Ex allocutione diei 7 februarii 2004 habita ad Coetum Episcoporum Galliae, qui visitationis causa «ad limina apostolorum» Romam venerant (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 febbraio 2004).

«démarche synodale», essayant dans tous les cas d'impliquer largement les pasteurs et les fidèles, pour évaluer ensemble ce que représente la paroisse dans la vie de l'Eglise et quel doit être son avenir. Le plus souvent, l'Evêque a décidé ensuite de mettre en oeuvre une réorganisation pastorale de tout le diocèse, soit en créant de nouvelles paroisses, moins nombreuses et mieux adaptées, soit en regroupant les paroisses existantes dans des ensembles plus cohérents, afin de mieux servir les besoins de l'évangélisation.

Loin de se limiter à une simple réforme administrative et à un nouveau découpage des limites paroissiales, cette réflexion pastorale a permis de faire un véritable travail *de formation permanente et de catéchèse* avec les fidèles, leur permettant de s'approprier de manière plus consciente les richesses de ce qui constitue la vie d'une paroisse, à savoir les trois grandes missions de l'Eglise: la mission prophétique, caractérisée par la charge d'annoncer à tous les hommes la Bonne Nouvelle du salut, mission confiée à l'Eglise par le Seigneur lui-même; la mission sacerdotale, qui consiste à participer à l'unique Sacerdoce du Christ en célébrant les mystères divins; la mission royale enfin, qui s'exprime dans le service envers tous, à la manière du Seigneur Jésus.

Ainsi les fidèles ont pu évaluer ensemble la manière dont la paroisse s'acquittait concrètement de ses tâches, tout en apprenant à les relier entre elles et en comprenant mieux ce qui en fait l'unité. Il est en effet essentiel pour les fidèles de bien saisir que la catéchèse des enfants, la vie de prière, le service des malades, ne sont pas des activités les unes à côté des autres, confiées à des «spécialistes» ou à des bénévoles, mais qu'elles correspondent à des missions fondamentales de la vie chrétienne et qu'elles sont par conséquent le bien de tous, comme l'a si justement exprimé saint Paul en appliquant à l'Eglise la comparaison du corps (cf. *1 Co* 12, 12-28). Toute communauté ecclésiale, et particulièrement la paroisse, qui est la cellule de base de la vie de l'Eglise diocésaine, doit annoncer l'Evangile, célébrer le culte qui revient à Dieu et servir à la manière du Christ.

Il importe également de veiller à ce que la communauté paroissia-

le exprime la diversité des membres qui la composent et la variété de leurs charismes, et qu'elle s'ouvre à la vie des associations ou des mouvements. Elle sera alors une expression vivante de la communion ecclésiale, qui met les biens de chacun au service de tous (cf. *Ac* 4, 32) et qui ne se ferme jamais sur elle-même. Ainsi les fidèles auront le souci de la communion dans la paroisse et se sentiront membres tant du diocèse que de l'Eglise tout entière (cf. *Code de Droit canonique*, can. 529 2).

Cette prise de conscience de *l'identité véritable de la paroisse*, qui n'est pas seulement un territoire géographique ou une subdivision administrative, mais bien la communauté ecclésiale fondamentale, s'est accompagnée également pour les fidèles d'une redécouverte de l'identité propre du diocèse. Lui non plus n'est pas seulement une circonscription administrative, il est d'abord la manifestation d'une réalité ecclésiale: l'Eglise diocésaine, « portion du Peuple de Dieu, confiée à un évêque pour qu'avec l'aide de son presbyterium, il en soit le pasteur » (cf. *Christus Dominus*, n. 11). Le diocèse est donc une entité vivante, une réalité humaine et spirituelle, famille de communautés que sont les paroisses et les autres réalités ecclésiales présentes sur le territoire.

Il me plaît de souligner l'importance de cette redécouverte de l'Eglise dans sa véritable nature: elle n'est ni une administration ni une entreprise, elle est d'abord une réalité spirituelle, faite d'hommes et de femmes appelés par la grâce de Dieu à devenir fils et filles de Dieu, et entrés dans une fraternité nouvelle par le Baptême qui les a incorporés au Christ.

La redécouverte de la nature sacramentelle de l'Eglise, qui est aussi « communion missionnaire » (*Christifideles laici*, n. 32), doit donc s'exprimer dans une nouvelle dynamique toute orientée vers l'évangélisation. Vos diocèses l'ont bien compris, en choisissant pour objet de leur réflexion synodale une perspective à visée missionnaire, comme la réorganisation pastorale du diocèse, l'évangélisation des jeunes ou la pastorale des sacrements. La mobilisation des énergies de tous sur un tel objectif permet de dégager des priorités pastorales concrètes,

qui sont ensuite mises en oeuvre plus facilement sur le terrain par tous les acteurs pastoraux. De même, le fait de travailler longuement ensemble, prêtres et laïcs, sur une question aussi décisive que l'avenir de la communauté chrétienne permet de se découvrir en profondeur, d'apprécier les implications et les rôles spécifiques des uns et des autres dans la vie de l'Eglise, et de mieux percevoir la communion ecclésiale qui met en valeur l'estime et la complémentarité des différences ainsi que le service commun du Christ et de nos frères dans une même foi.

Avec vous, je me réjouis des rassemblements diocésains que vous avez pu réaliser, notamment les rassemblements de jeunes auxquels vous portez, avec toute l'Eglise diocésaine, une attention particulière. Ils permettent de mieux percevoir le sens de l'Eglise-communion, puisque ce sont des personnes venues de différents groupes, de différents lieux, de différentes sensibilités, qui sont appelées à se rencontrer pour faire route ensemble, comme le dit précisément l'étymologie du mot synode. J'appelle de mes vœux une unité et une cohérence toujours plus intenses autour des Pasteurs chargés de conduire le troupeau. A ce propos, je sais que vous veillez à accueillir les groupes et les prêtres de sensibilités plus traditionnelles, et il est sans doute possible d'aller encore plus loin en ce sens. Il revient aussi aux membres de ces communautés plus traditionnelles de s'ouvrir aux autres réalités et sensibilités des Eglises locales, pour prendre une part toujours plus active à la vie diocésaine, selon l'enseignement du Concile Vatican II. Comme tous leurs frères prêtres, les prêtres de ces communautés ont un rôle pastoral spécifique à jouer auprès des fidèles, en manifestant concrètement leur communion filiale avec l'Evêque, et ainsi avec l'Eglise universelle, et en se rendant disponibles aux appels pour la mission.

Pour être fidèle au sens de la mission, qui est une nécessité vitale pour l'Eglise et l'expression de « son identité la plus profonde » (cf. Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 14), on ne peut bien sûr se contenter de remodeler les outils de nos Eglises par une simple adaptation de la dimension territoriale des paroisses. Il convient également de s'ouvrir à d'autres dimensions, en prêtant la plus grande attention aux phé-

nomènes sociaux nouveaux et à tous les « aréopages modernes » (*Redemptoris missio*, n. 37). Pour mieux y parvenir, certains diocèses ont décidé d'associer leurs forces apostoliques, en mettant au service des diocèses les plus démunis des prêtres disponibles pour la mission. Je salue cette initiative et je souhaite qu'elle puisse être reprise ailleurs, éventuellement sous d'autres formes, et peut-être dans le cadre des nouvelles provinces, là où les disparités de moyens sont importantes et risquent de pénaliser certains diocèses. Puissent tous les prêtres auxquels des demandes semblables sont faites se rendre disponibles!

Dans vos rapports, vous manifestez l'importance que vous donnez au fait que *la liturgie* soit célébrée solennellement dans l'Eglise cathédrale, autour de l'Evêque et de ses prêtres, et avec un grand concours de fidèles, à plusieurs occasions au cours de l'année, comme lors de la Messe chrismale ou au moment des Ordinations. La liturgie devient ainsi cette « principale manifestation de l'Eglise » (cf. *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, n. 41), où tout le peuple de Dieu se rassemble dans le lieu qui représente la communion visible de l'Eglise diocésaine et où il prend conscience de manière plus profonde de son identité, en retrouvant sa source sacramentelle qui est le Christ Seigneur, Verbe fait chair, dont l'Esprit agit par le ministère des pasteurs, en premier lieu de l'Evêque. Le corps ecclésial manifeste ainsi la diversité de ses membres, en même temps que les liens qu'ils ont entre eux, et chacun avec l'Evêque, serviteur de la communion entre tous.

L'assurance que la vie chrétienne s'enracine dans le mystère eucharistique, « source et sommet de la vie de l'Eglise », selon la belle expression des Pères conciliaires (cf. *ibid*, n. 10), amène de plus en plus de fidèles à s'engager activement auprès des ministres ordonnés dans la préparation et la célébration de l'action liturgique, pour mettre en valeur la beauté du culte chrétien, qui est ordonné « à la gloire de Dieu et au salut du monde », comme l'exprime la liturgie de la Messe.

Servir à la manière du Christ est la mission royale de tout baptisé et de toute communauté ecclésiale, que le diocèse se doit donc de manifester concrètement. D'une certaine manière, *le ministère des diacres permanents* honore cet engagement. En effet, beaucoup d'entre

eux reçoivent une mission en relation avec l'exercice de la charité, dans la prise en charge des aumôneries du monde de la santé ou du monde carcéral, ou au service d'institutions caritatives. Ce sont cependant *les fidèles laïcs* qui sont les premiers acteurs de cette mission ecclésiale de service, dans le témoignage qu'ils rendent quotidiennement à l'Évangile, par leur vie de travail et dans leurs engagements divers au cœur du monde. A travers les réalités de la vie politique et sociale, dans les multiples domaines de l'activité économique et dans l'action culturelle, ils oeuvrent dans la société afin de promouvoir des relations entre les hommes qui respectent et honorent la dignité de chaque personne dans toutes ses dimensions. Ils manifestent également leur sens de la justice et de la solidarité vis-à-vis des moins favorisés, à la fois sur les plans local, national et international, notamment par le soutien des oeuvres missionnaires. Les catholiques de France ont aussi *une longue tradition missionnaire*.

Malgré les pauvretés actuelles, qu'ils n'oublient pas les contrées dans lesquelles leurs devanciers ont porté l'Évangile! S'engager pour la mission à l'extérieur, loin d'appauvrir la paroisse ou le diocèse, leur donnera en retour une nouvelle force, liée au partage des dons.

8. Au terme de notre rencontre où j'ai évoqué devant vous des réalités qui constituent votre labeur quotidien et qui nourrissent votre prière de pasteurs, je ne puis oublier l'ensemble de vos collaborateurs. Je pense d'abord aux vicaires généraux, plus directement liés à l'exercice de votre ministère, qui sillonnent chaque jour les routes des diocèses pour aller à la rencontre des paroisses, de leurs pasteurs et de leurs fidèles, ainsi qu'aux vicaires épiscopaux qui travaillent également à rendre l'action pastorale de l'Évêque plus proche de tous. Je pense aussi aux personnes qui travaillent à la Curie diocésaine, au service de la communauté du diocèse, pour aider à la gestion de son patrimoine, pour améliorer l'exercice de la solidarité par un partage plus juste et plus efficace des ressources, ou encore pour instruire les affaires de justice. Bien des diocèses ont ouvert récemment une « Maison diocésaine », où sont regroupés mouvements et services, pour une

meilleure collaboration entre eux, mais aussi pour permettre la simple rencontre des personnes, comme le font aussi les moyens de communication sociale que sont les radios et la presse diocésaines. A travers vous, chers Frères Evêques, je veux encourager toutes les personnes qui travaillent dans ces institutions diocésaines et qui accomplissent ainsi un service d'Eglise dont la dimension missionnaire n'échappe à personne. Qu'elles en soient vivement remerciées!

En rentrant dans vos diocèses pour reprendre avec courage et force spirituelle le service de la mission que le Seigneur vous a confiée, ayez à coeur de témoigner à tous les baptisés le soutien et les encouragements du Pape! Puissent tous les fidèles avoir le souci de participer pleinement à la vie du diocèse et de fortifier ainsi les liens de la communion entre eux, sans oublier de s'ouvrir aux autres Eglises et de nourrir toujours leur attachement à l'Eglise universelle, en priant aussi pour le Pape et pour l'accomplissement de son ministère!

Successeur de Pierre, j'ai reçu la mission particulière d'affermir mes frères dans la foi (cf. *Lc* 22, 32) et de servir la communion entre tous les Evêques et entre tous les fidèles. Heureux d'exercer une fois de plus pour vous ce ministère qui est le mien, en vous confiant à l'intercession maternelle de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie, je vous accorde de grand coeur, ainsi qu'à tous vos fidèles, une affectueuse Bénédiction apostolique.

CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

anglice

INSTRUCTION

Redemptionis Sacramentum

On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided
regarding the Most Holy Eucharist

PREAMBLE

1. In the Most Holy Eucharist, Mother Church with steadfast faith acknowledges the SACRAMENT OF REDEMPTION,¹ joyfully takes it to herself, celebrates it and reveres it in adoration, proclaiming the death of Christ Jesus and confessing his Resurrection until he comes in glory² to hand over, as unconquered Lord and Ruler, eternal Priest and King of the Universe, a kingdom of truth and life to the immense majesty of the Almighty Father.³

2. The Church's doctrine regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, in which the whole spiritual wealth of the Church is contained –

¹ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum, editio typica tertia, diei 20 aprilis 2000, Typis Vaticanis, 2002, Missa votiva de Dei misericordia, oratio super oblata, p. 1159.

² Cf. *1 Cor* 11, 26; MISSALE ROMANUM, Prex Eucharistica, acclamatio post consecrationem, p. 576; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17 April 2003, nn. 5, 11, 14, 18: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 436, 440-441, 442, 445.

³ Cf. *Is* 10: 33; 51, 22; MISSALE ROMANUM, In sollemnitate Domini nostri Iesu Christi, universorum Regis, Praefatio, p. 499.

namely Christ, our Paschal Lamb⁴ – the Eucharist which is the source and summit of the whole of Christian life,⁵ and which lies as a causative force behind the very origins of the Church,⁶ has been expounded with thoughtful care and with great authority over the course of the centuries in the writings of the Councils and the Supreme Pontiffs. Most recently, in fact, the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, in the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, set forth afresh certain elements of great importance on this subject in view of the ecclesial circumstances of our times.⁷

In order that especially in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy the Church might duly safeguard so great a mystery in our own time as well, the Supreme Pontiff has mandated that this Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments,⁸ in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, should prepare this Instruction treating of certain matters pertaining to the discipline of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Those things found in this Instruction are therefore to be read in the continuity with the above-mentioned Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.

It is not at all the intention here to prepare a compendium of the norms regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, but rather, to take up within this Instruction some elements of liturgical norms that have been previously expounded or laid down and even today remain in force in order to assure a deeper appreciation of the liturgical norms;⁹ to establish certain norms by which those earlier ones are explained and complemented; and also to set forth for Bishops, as well as for

⁴ Cf. *1 Cor* 5: 7; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 7 December 1965, n. 5; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n. 75: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 649-719, here p. 693.

⁵ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, 21 November 1964, n. 11.

⁶ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17 April 2003, n. 21: AAS 95 (2003) p. 447.

⁷ *Ibidem*: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 433-475.

⁸ *Ibidem*, n. 52: AAS 95 (2003) p. 468.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

Priests, Deacons and all the lay Christian faithful, how each should carry them out in accordance with his own responsibilities and the means at his disposal.

3. The norms contained in the present Instruction are to be understood as pertaining to liturgical matters in the Roman Rite, and, *mutatis mutandis*, in the other Rites of the Latin Church that are duly acknowledged by law.

4. “Certainly the liturgical reform inaugurated by the Council has greatly contributed to a more conscious, active and fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar on the part of the faithful.”¹⁰ Even so, “shadows are not lacking”.¹¹ In this regard it is not possible to be silent about the abuses, even quite grave ones, against the nature of the Liturgy and the Sacraments as well as the tradition and the authority of the Church, which in our day not infrequently plague liturgical celebrations in one ecclesial environment or another. In some places the perpetration of liturgical abuses has become almost habitual, a fact which obviously cannot be allowed and must cease.

5. The observance of the norms published by the authority of the Church requires conformity of thought and of word, of external action and of the application of the heart. A merely external observation of norms would obviously be contrary to the nature of the Sacred Liturgy, in which Christ himself wishes to gather his Church, so that together with himself she will be “one body and one spirit”.¹² For this reason, external action must be illuminated by faith and

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003) p. 439.

¹¹ *Ibidem*; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, nn. 12-13: AAS 81 (1989) pp. 909-910; cf. also SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 4 December 1963 n. 48.

¹² MISSALE ROMANUM, *Prex Eucharistica* III, p. 588; cf. *1 Cor* 12: 12-13; *Eph* 4: 4.

charity, which unite us with Christ and with one another and engender love for the poor and the abandoned. The liturgical words and rites, moreover, are a faithful expression, matured over the centuries, of the understanding of Christ, and they teach us to think as he himself does;¹³ by conforming our minds to these words, we raise our hearts to the Lord. All that is said in this Instruction is directed toward such a conformity of our own understanding with that of Christ, as expressed in the words and the rites of the Liturgy.

6. For abuses “contribute to the obscuring of the Catholic faith and doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament”.¹⁴ Thus, they also hinder the faithful from “re-living in a certain way the experience of the two disciples of Emmaus: ‘and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him’”.¹⁵ For in the presence of God’s power and divinity¹⁶ and the splendour of his goodness, made manifest especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it is fitting that all the faithful should have and put into practice that power of acknowledging God’s majesty that they have received through the saving Passion of the Only-Begotten Son.¹⁷

7. Not infrequently, abuses are rooted in a false understanding of liberty. Yet God has not granted us in Christ an illusory liberty by which we may do what we wish, but a liberty by which we may do that which is fitting and right.¹⁸ This is true not only of precepts coming directly from God, but also of laws promulgated by the Church, with appropriate regard for the nature of each norm. For

¹³ Cf. *Phil* 2,5.

¹⁴ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003), p. 439.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, n. 6: AAS 95 (2003) p. 437; cf. *Lk* 24: 31.

¹⁶ Cf. *Rom* 1: 20.

¹⁷ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Praefatio I de Passione Domini, p. 528.

¹⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor*, 6 August 1993, n. 35: AAS 85 (1993) pp. 1161-1162; Homily given at Camden Yards, 9 October 1995, n. 7: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, XVII, 2* (1995), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998, p. 788.

this reason, all should conform to the ordinances set forth by legitimate ecclesiastical authority.

8. It is therefore to be noted with great sadness that “ecumenical initiatives which are well-intentioned, nevertheless indulge at times in Eucharistic practices contrary to the discipline by which the Church expresses her faith”. Yet the Eucharist “is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity or depreciation”. It is therefore necessary that some things be corrected or more clearly delineated so that in this respect as well “the Eucharist will continue to shine forth in all its radiant mystery”.¹⁹

9. Finally, abuses are often based on ignorance, in that they involve a rejection of those elements whose deeper meaning is not understood and whose antiquity is not recognized. For “the liturgical prayers, orations and songs are pervaded by the inspiration and impulse” of the Sacred Scriptures themselves, “and it is from these that the actions and signs receive their meaning”.²⁰ As for the visible signs “which the Sacred Liturgy uses in order to signify the invisible divine realities, they have been chosen by Christ or by the Church”.²¹ Finally, the structures and forms of the sacred celebrations according to each of the Rites of both East and West are in harmony with the practice of the universal Church also as regards practices received universally from apostolic and unbroken tradition,²² which it is the

¹⁹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003) p. 439.

²⁰ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 24; cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, nn. 19 and 23: AAS 87 (1995) pp. 295-296, 297.

²¹ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 33.

²² Cf. ST IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 2: SCh., 211, 24-31; ST AUGUSTINE, *Epistula ad Ianuarium*: 54,1: PL 33,200: «Illa autem quae non scripta, sed tradita custodimus, quae quidem toto terrarum orbe servantur, datur intellegi vel ab ipsis Apostolis, vel plenariis conciliis, quorum est Ecclesia saluberrima auctoritas, commendata atque

Church's task to transmit faithfully and carefully to future generations. All these things are wisely safeguarded and protected by the liturgical norms.

10. The Church herself has no power over those things which were established by Christ himself and which constitute an unchangeable part of the Liturgy.²³ Indeed, if the bond were to be broken which the Sacraments have with Christ himself who instituted them, and with the events of the Church's founding,²⁴ it would not be beneficial to the faithful but rather would do them grave harm. For the Sacred Liturgy is quite intimately connected with principles of doctrine,²⁵ so that the use of unapproved texts and rites necessarily leads either to the attenuation or to the disappearance of that necessary link between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*.²⁶

11. The Mystery of the Eucharist "is too great for anyone to permit himself to treat it according to his own whim, so that its sacredness and its universal ordering would be obscured".²⁷ On the contrary, anyone

statuta retineri»; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, nn. 53-54: AAS 83 (1991) pp. 300-302; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Aspects of the Church as Communion, *Communio notio*, 28 May 1992, nn. 7-10: AAS 85 (1993) pp. 842-844; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Varietates legitimae*, n. 26: AAS 87 (1995) pp. 298-299.

²³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 21.

²⁴ Cf. POPE PIUS XII, Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis*, 30 November 1947: AAS 40 (1948) p. 5; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Declaration *Inter insigniores*, 15 October 1976, part IV: AAS 69 (1977) pp. 107-108; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Varietates legitimae*, n. 25: AAS 87 (1995) p. 298.

²⁵ Cf. POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*, 20 November 1947: AAS 39 (1947) p. 540.

²⁶ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction *Inaestimabile donum*, 3 April 1980: AAS 72 (1980) p. 333.

²⁷ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 52: AAS 95 (2003), p. 468.

who acts thus by giving free reign to his own inclinations, even if he is a Priest, injures the substantial unity of the Roman Rite, which ought to be vigorously preserved,²⁸ and becomes responsible for actions that are in no way consistent with the hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people today. Nor do such actions serve authentic pastoral care or proper liturgical renewal; instead, they deprive Christ's faithful of their patrimony and their heritage. For arbitrary actions are not conducive to true renewal,²⁹ but are detrimental to the right of Christ's faithful to a liturgical celebration that is an expression of the Church's life in accordance with her tradition and discipline. In the end, they introduce elements of distortion and disharmony into the very celebration of the Eucharist, which is oriented in its own lofty way and by its very nature to signifying and wondrously bringing about the communion of divine life and the unity of the People of God.³⁰ The result is uncertainty in matters of doctrine, perplexity and scandal on the part of the People of God, and, almost as a necessary consequence, vigorous opposition, all of which greatly confuse and sadden many of Christ's faithful in this age of ours when Christian life is often particularly difficult on account of the inroads of "secularization" as well.³¹

12. On the contrary, it is the right of all of Christ's faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly

²⁸ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 4, 38; Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 21 November 1964, nn. 1, 2, 6; POPE PAUL VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*: AAS 61 (1969) pp. 217-222; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 399; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, 28 March 2001, n. 4: AAS 93 (2001) pp. 685-726, here p. 686.

²⁹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, n. 72: AAS 95 (2003) p. 000.

³⁰ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 23: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 448-449; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, n. 6: AAS 59 (1967) p. 545.

³¹ S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction *Inaestimabile donum*: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 332-333.

be as the Church wishes, according to her stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms. Likewise, the Catholic people have the right that the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass should be celebrated for them in an integral manner, according to the entire doctrine of the Church's Magisterium. Finally, it is the Catholic community's right that the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist should be carried out for it in such a manner that it truly stands out as a sacrament of unity, to the exclusion of all blemishes and actions that might engender divisions and factions in the Church.³²

13. All of the norms and exhortations set forth in this Instruction are connected, albeit in various ways, with the mission of the Church, whose task it is to be vigilant concerning the correct and worthy celebration of so great a mystery. The last chapter of the present Instruction will treat of the varying degrees to which the individual norms are bound up with the supreme norm of all ecclesiastical law, namely concern for the salvation of souls.³³

Chapter I

THE REGULATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

14. "The regulation of the Sacred Liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, which rests specifically with the Apostolic See and, according to the norms of law, with the Bishop."³⁴

³² Cf. *1 Cor* 11,17-34; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 52; AAS 95 (2003) pp. 467-468.

³³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 25 January 1983, can. 1752.

³⁴ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22 § 1; cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 § 1.

15. The Roman Pontiff, “the Vicar of Christ and the Pastor of the universal Church on earth, by virtue of his supreme office enjoys full, immediate and universal ordinary power, which he may always freely exercise”,³⁵ also by means of communication with the pastors and with the members of the flock.

16. “It pertains to the Apostolic See to regulate the Sacred Liturgy of the universal Church, to publish the liturgical books and to grant the *recognitio* for their translation into vernacular languages, as well as to ensure that the liturgical regulations, especially those governing the celebration of the most exalted celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass, are everywhere faithfully observed”.³⁶

17. “The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments attends to those matters that pertain to the Apostolic See as regards the regulation and promotion of the Sacred Liturgy, and especially the Sacraments, with due regard for the competence of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It fosters and enforces sacramental discipline, especially as regards their validity and their licit celebration”. Finally, it “carefully seeks to ensure that the liturgical regulations are observed with precision, and that abuses are prevented or eliminated whenever they are detected”.³⁷ In this regard, according to the tradition of the universal Church, pre-eminent solicitude is accorded the celebration of Holy Mass, and also to the worship that is given to the Holy Eucharist even outside Mass.

18. Christ’s faithful have the right that ecclesiastical authority should fully and efficaciously regulate the Sacred Liturgy lest it should ever

³⁵ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 331; cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 22.

³⁶ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 § 2.

³⁷ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor bonus*, 28 June 1988: AAS 80 (1988) pp. 841-924, here artt. 62, 63, and 66, pp. 876-877.

seem to be “anyone’s private property, whether of the celebrant or of the community in which the mysteries are celebrated”³⁸.

1. THE DIOCESAN BISHOP, HIGH PRIEST OF HIS FLOCK

19. The diocesan Bishop, the first steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to him, is the moderator, promoter and guardian of her whole liturgical life.³⁹ For “the Bishop, endowed with the fullness of the Sacrament of Order, is ‘the steward of the grace of the high Priesthood’,⁴⁰ especially in the Eucharist which he either himself offers or causes to be offered,⁴¹ by which the Church continually lives and grows”.⁴²

20. Indeed, the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church is found whenever the rites of Mass are celebrated, especially in the Cathedral Church, “with the full and active participation of the entire holy People of God, joined in one act of prayer, at one altar at which the Bishop presides”, surrounded by his presbyterate with the Deacons and ministers.⁴³ Furthermore, “every lawful celebration of the Eucharist is directed by

³⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 52: AAS 95 (2003) p. 468.

³⁹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, 28 October 1965, n. 15; cf. also the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 41; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 387.

⁴⁰ Prayer for the Consecration of a Bishop in the Byzantine Rite: *Euchologion to mega*, Rome, 1873, p. 139.

⁴¹ Cf. ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Ad Smyrn.* 8,1: ed. F.X. FUNK, I, p. 282.

⁴² SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 26; cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 7: AAS 59 (1967) p. 545; cf. also POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores gregis*, 16 October 2003, nn. 32-41: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 October 2003, pp. 6-8.

⁴³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 41; cf. ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Ad Magn.* 7, *Ad Philad.* 4, *Ad Smyrn.* 8: ed. F.X. FUNK, I, pp. 236, 266, 281; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 22; cf. also *Code of Canon Law*, can. 389.

the Bishop, to whom is entrusted the office of presenting the worship of the Christian religion to the Divine Majesty and ordering it according to the precepts of the Lord and the laws of the Church, further specified by his own particular judgement for the Diocese”.⁴⁴

21. It pertains to the diocesan Bishop, then, “within the limits of his competence, to set forth liturgical norms in his Diocese, by which all are bound”.⁴⁵ Still, the Bishop must take care not to allow the removal of that liberty foreseen by the norms of the liturgical books so that the celebration may be adapted in an intelligent manner to the Church building, or to the group of the faithful who are present, or to particular pastoral circumstances in such a way that the universal sacred rite is truly accommodated to human understanding.⁴⁶

22. The Bishop governs the particular Church entrusted to him,⁴⁷ and it is his task to regulate, to direct, to encourage, and sometimes also to reprove;⁴⁸ this is a sacred task that he has received through episcopal Ordination,⁴⁹ which he fulfills in order to build up his flock in truth and holiness.⁵⁰ He should elucidate the inherent meaning of

⁴⁴ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Lumen gentium*, n. 26.

⁴⁵ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 § 4.

⁴⁶ Cf. Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Liturgy, *Dubium: Notitiae* 1 (1965) p. 254.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Acts* 20,28; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, nn. 21 and 27; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, n. 3.

⁴⁸ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, 5 September 1970: AAS 62 (1970) p. 694.

⁴⁹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 21; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, n. 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. CAEREMONIALE EPISCOPORUM ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatum, editio typica, 14 September 1984, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1985, n. 10

the rites and the liturgical texts, and nourish the spirit of the Liturgy in the Priests, Deacons and lay faithful⁵¹ so that they are all led to the active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist,⁵² and in like manner he should take care to ensure that the whole body of the Church is able to grow in the same understanding, in the unity of charity, in the diocese, in the nation and in the world.⁵³

23. The faithful “should cling to the Bishop as the Church does to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ does to the Father, so that all may be in harmonious unity, and that they may abound to the glory of God”.⁵⁴ All, including members of Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life as well as those of all ecclesial associations and movements of any kind, are subject to the authority of the diocesan Bishop in all liturgical matters,⁵⁵ apart from rights that have been legitimately conceded. To the diocesan Bishop therefore falls the right and duty of overseeing and attending to Churches and oratories in his territory in regard to liturgical matters, and this is true also of those which are founded by members of the above-mentioned institutes or under their direction, provided that the faithful are accustomed to frequent them.⁵⁶

24. It is the right of the Christian people themselves that their diocesan Bishop should take care to prevent the occurrence of abuses in ecclesiastical discipline, especially as regards the ministry of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, the worship of God and devotion to the Saints.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, Institutio Generalis, n. 387.

⁵² Cf. *ibidem*, n. 22.

⁵³ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*: AAS 62 (1970) p. 694.

⁵⁴ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 27; cf. 2 Cor 4,15.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons 397 § 1; 678 § 1.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, can. 683 § 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, can. 392.

25. Commissions as well as councils or committees established by the Bishop to handle “the promotion of the Liturgy, sacred music and art in his diocese” should act in accordance with the intentions and the norms of the Bishop; they must rely on his authority and his approval so that they may carry out their office in a suitable manner⁵⁸ and so that the effective governance of the Bishop in his diocese will be preserved. As regards all these sorts of bodies and other entities and all undertakings in liturgical matters, there has long been the need for the Bishops to consider whether their working has been fruitful thus far,⁵⁹ and to consider carefully which changes or improvements should be made in their composition and activity⁶⁰ so that they might find new vigour. It should be borne in mind that the experts are to be chosen from among those whose soundness in the Catholic faith and knowledge of theological and cultural matters are evident.

2. THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

26. The same holds for those commissions of this kind which have been established by the Conference of Bishops in accordance with the will of the Council,⁶¹ commissions whose members consist of Bishops who are clearly distinguished from their expert helpers. Where the number of members of a Conference of Bishops is not

⁵⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 21: AAS 81 (1989) p. 917; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 45-46; POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 562.

⁵⁹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 20: AAS 81 (1989) p. 916.

⁶⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁶¹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 44; CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, Letter sent to the Presidents of the Conferences of Bishops together with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 21 June 1999, n. 9: AAS 91 (1999) p. 999.

sufficient for the effective establishment of a liturgical commission from among their own number, then a council or group of experts should be named, always under the presidency of a Bishop, which is to fulfill the same role insofar as possible, albeit without the name of “liturgical commission”.

27. As early as the year 1970, the Apostolic See announced the cessation of all experimentation as regards the celebration of Holy Mass⁶² and reiterated the same in 1988.⁶³ Accordingly, individual Bishops and their Conferences do not have the faculty to permit experimentation with liturgical texts or the other matters that are prescribed in the liturgical books. In order to carry out experimentation of this kind in the future, the permission of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is required. It must be in writing, and it is to be requested by the Conference of Bishops. In fact, it will not be granted without serious reason. As regards projects of inculturation in liturgical matters, the particular norms that have been established are strictly and comprehensively to be observed.⁶⁴

28. All liturgical norms that a Conference of Bishops will have established for its territory in accordance with the law are to be submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the *recognitio*, without which they lack any binding force.⁶⁵

⁶² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction *Liturgicae instaurationis*, n. 12: AAS 62 (1970) pp. 692-704; cf., here p. 703.

⁶³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Declaration on Eucharistic Prayers and liturgical experimentation*, 21 March 1988: *Notitiae* 24 (1988) p. 234-236.

⁶⁴ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Varietates legitimae*: AAS 87 (1995) pp. 288-314.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 838 § 3; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, n. 31: AAS 56 (1964) p. 883; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, nn. 79-80: AAS 93 (2001) pp. 711-713.

3. PRIESTS

29. Priests, as capable, prudent and indispensable co-workers of the order of Bishops,⁶⁶ called to the service of the People of God, constitute one presbyterate with their Bishop,⁶⁷ though charged with differing offices. “In each local congregation of the faithful, in a certain way, they make present the Bishop with whom they are associated in trust and in generosity of heart; according to their rank, they take upon themselves his duties and his solicitude, and they carry these out in their daily work”. And “because of this participation in the Priesthood and mission, Priests should recognize the Bishop as truly their father and obey him reverently”⁶⁸. Furthermore, “ever intent upon the good of God’s children, they should seek to contribute to the pastoral mission of the whole diocese, and indeed of the whole Church”.⁶⁹

30. The office “that belongs to Priests in particular in the celebration of the Eucharist” is a great one, “for it is their responsibility to preside at the Eucharist *in persona Christi* and to provide a witness to and a service of communion not only for the community directly taking part in the celebration, but also for the universal Church, which is always brought into play within the context of the Eucharist. It must be lamented that, especially in the years following

⁶⁶ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 7 December 1965, n. 7; PONTIFICALE ROMANUM, ed. 1962: Ordo consecrationis sacerdotalis, in Praefatione; PONTIFICALE ROMANUM *ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II renovatum, auctoritate Pauli PP. VI editum, Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum*: De Ordinatione Episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum, editio typica altera, 29 June 1989, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1990, cap. II: De Ordin. presbyterorum, Praenotanda, n. 101.

⁶⁷ ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Ad Philad.*, 4: ed. F.X. FUNK, I, p. 266; POPE ST CORNELIUS I, cited by ST CYPRIAN, Letter 48,2: ed. G. HARTEL, III, 2, p. 610.

⁶⁸ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 28.

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibidem*.

the post-Conciliar liturgical reform, as a result of a misguided sense of creativity and adaptation, there have been a number of abuses which have been a source of suffering for many”.⁷⁰

31. In keeping with the solemn promises that they have made in the rite of Sacred Ordination and renewed each year in the Mass of the Chrism, let Priests celebrate “devoutly and faithfully the mysteries of Christ for the praise of God and the sanctification of the Christian people, according to the tradition of the Church, especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation”.⁷¹ They ought not to detract from the profound meaning of their own ministry by corrupting the liturgical celebration either through alteration or omission, or through arbitrary additions.⁷² For as St. Ambrose said, “It is not in herself ... but in us that the Church is injured. Let us take care so that our own failure may not cause injury to the Church”.⁷³ Let the Church of God not be injured, then, by Priests who have so solemnly dedicated themselves to the ministry. Indeed, under the Bishop’s authority let them faithfully seek to prevent others as well from committing this type of distortion.

32. “Let the Parish Priest strive so that the Most Holy Eucharist will be the center of the parish congregation of the faithful; let him work to ensure that Christ’s faithful are nourished through the

⁷⁰ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 52; cf. n. 29: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 467-468; 452-435.

⁷¹ PONTIFICALE ROMANUM, De Ordinatione Episcoporum, presbyterorum et diaconorum, editio typica altera: *De Ordinatione Presbyterorum*, n. 124; cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Feria V in Hebdomada Sancta: Ad Missam chrismatis, Renovatio promissionum sacerdotalium, p. 292.

⁷² Cf. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session VII, 3 March 1547, Decree on the Sacraments, canon 13, DS 1613; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 22; POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) pp. 544, 546-547, 562; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can 846, § 1; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 24.

⁷³ ST AMBROSE, *De Virginitate*, n. 48: PL 16, 278.

devout celebration of the Sacraments, and in particular, that they frequently approach the Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance; let him strive, furthermore, to ensure that the faithful are encouraged to offer prayers in their families as well, and to participate consciously and actively in the Sacred Liturgy, which the Parish Priest, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is bound to regulate and supervise in his parish lest abuses occur”.⁷⁴ Although it is appropriate that he should be assisted in the effective preparation of the liturgical celebrations by various members of Christ’s faithful, he nevertheless must not cede to them in any way those things that are proper to his own office.

33. Finally, all “Priests should go to the trouble of properly cultivating their liturgical knowledge and ability, so that through their liturgical ministry, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be praised in an ever more excellent manner by the Christian communities entrusted to them”.⁷⁵ Above all, let them be filled with that wonder and amazement that the Paschal Mystery, in being celebrated, instills in the hearts of the faithful.⁷⁶

4. DEACONS

34. Deacons “upon whom hands are imposed not for the Priesthood but for the ministry”,⁷⁷ as men of good repute,⁷⁸ must act in such a way that with the help of God they may be recognized as the true

⁷⁴ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 528 § 2.

⁷⁵ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 5.

⁷⁶ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 5: AAS 95 (2003) p. 436.

⁷⁷ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 29; cf. *Constitutiones Ecclesiae Aegypticae*, III, 2: ed. F.X. FUNK, *Didascalia*, II, p. 103; *Statuta Ecclesiae Ant.*, 37-41: ed. D. MANSI 3, 954.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Acts* 6,3.

disciples⁷⁹ of him “who came not to be served but to serve”,⁸⁰ and who was among his disciples “as one who serves”.⁸¹ Strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, they are in service to the People of God, in communion with the Bishop and his presbyterate.⁸² They should therefore consider the Bishop as a father, and give assistance to him and to the Priests “in the ministry of the word, of the altar, and of charity”.⁸³

35. Let them never fail, “as the Apostle says, to hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience,⁸⁴ and to proclaim this faith by word and deed according to the Gospel and the tradition of the Church”,⁸⁵ in wholehearted, faithful and humble service to the Sacred Liturgy as the source and summit of ecclesial life, “so that all, made children of God through faith and Baptism, may come together as one, praising God in the midst of the Church, to participate in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord’s Supper”.⁸⁶ Let all Deacons, then, do their part so that the Sacred Liturgy will be celebrated according to the norms of the duly approved liturgical books.

⁷⁹ *Jn* 13, 35.

⁸⁰ *Matt* 20, 28.

⁸¹ Cf. *Luke* 22, 27.

⁸² Cf. CAEREMONIALE EPISCOPORUM, nn. 9, 23. Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 29.

⁸³ Cf. PONTIFICALE ROMANUM, De Ordinatione Episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum, editio typica altera, cap. III, *De Ordin. diaconorum*, n. 199.

⁸⁴ Cf. *1 Tim* 3, 9.

⁸⁵ Cf. PONTIFICALE ROMANUM, De Ordinatione Episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum, editio typica altera, cap. III, *De Ordin. diaconorum*, n. 200.

⁸⁶ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 10.

Chapter II

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL
IN THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

1. ACTIVE AND CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION

36. The celebration of the Mass, as the action of Christ and of the Church, is the center of the whole Christian life for the universal as well as the particular Church, and also for the individual faithful,⁸⁷ who are involved “in differing ways according to the diversity of orders, ministries, and active participation.⁸⁸ In this way the Christian people, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people, a people God has made his own”,⁸⁹ manifests its coherent and hierarchical ordering”.⁹⁰ “For the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical Priesthood, though they differ in essence and not only in degree, are ordered to one another, for both partake, each in its own way, of the one Priesthood of Christ”.⁹¹

37. All of Christ’s faithful, freed from their sins and incorporated into the Church through Baptism, are deputed by means of a

⁸⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 41; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 11; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 2, 5, 6; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, n. 30, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, 21 November 1964, n. 15; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, nn. 3e, 6: AAS 59 (1967) pp. 542, 544-545; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 16.

⁸⁸ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 26; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 91.

⁸⁹ *1 Pet* 2,9; cf. 2,4-5.

⁹⁰ MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 91; cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 41.

⁹¹ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 10.

sacramental character for the worship of the Christian religion,⁹² so that by virtue of their royal priesthood,⁹³ persevering in prayer and praising God,⁹⁴ they may offer themselves as a living and holy sacrifice pleasing to God and attested to others by their works,⁹⁵ giving witness to Christ throughout the earth and providing an answer to those who ask concerning their hope of eternal life that is in them.⁹⁶ Thus the participation of the lay faithful too in the Eucharist and in the other celebrations of the Church's rites cannot be equated with mere presence, and still less with a passive one, but is rather to be regarded as a true exercise of faith and of the baptismal dignity.

38. The constant teaching of the Church on the nature of the Eucharist not only as a meal, but also and pre-eminently as a Sacrifice, is therefore rightly understood to be one of the principal keys to the full participation of all the faithful in so great a Sacrament.⁹⁷ For when "stripped of its sacrificial meaning, the mystery is understood as if its meaning and importance were simply that of a fraternal banquet".⁹⁸

39. For promoting and elucidating active participation, the recent renewal of the liturgical books according to the mind of the Council fostered acclamations of the people, responses, psalmody, antiphons,

⁹² Cf. ST THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 63, a. 2.

⁹³ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 10; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 28: AAS 95 (2003) p. 452.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Acts* 2,42-47.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Rom* 12,1.

⁹⁶ Cf. *1 Pet* 3,15; 2,4-10.

⁹⁷ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, nn. 12-18: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 441-445; Letter *Dominicae Cenae*, 24 February 1980, n. 9: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 129-133.

⁹⁸ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003) p. 439.

and canticles, as well as actions or movements and gestures, and called for sacred silence to be maintained at the proper times, while providing rubrics for the parts of the faithful as well.⁹⁹ In addition, ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity aimed at allowing each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to the established liturgical norms. In the songs, the melodies, the choice of prayers and readings, the giving of the homily, the preparation of the prayer of the faithful, the occasional explanatory remarks, and the decoration of the Church building according to the various seasons, there is ample possibility for introducing into each celebration a certain variety by which the riches of the liturgical tradition will also be more clearly evident, and so, in keeping with pastoral requirements, the celebration will be carefully imbued with those particular features that will foster the recollection of the participants. Still, it should be remembered that the power of the liturgical celebrations does not consist in frequently altering the rites, but in probing more deeply the word of God and the mystery being celebrated.¹⁰⁰

40. Nevertheless, from the fact that the liturgical celebration obviously entails activity, it does not follow that everyone must necessarily have something concrete to do beyond the actions and gestures, as if a certain specific liturgical ministry must necessarily be given to the individuals to be carried out by them. Instead, catechetical instruction should strive diligently to correct those widespread superficial notions and practices often seen in recent years in this regard, and ever to instill anew in all of Christ's faithful that sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the mystery of faith that is the Eucharist, in whose celebration the Church is forever passing from what is obso-

⁹⁹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 1: AAS 62 (1970) p. 695.

lete into newness of life: “*in novitatem a vetustate*”.¹⁰¹ For in the celebration of the Eucharist, as in the whole Christian life which draws its power from it and leads toward it, the Church, after the manner of Saint Thomas the Apostle, prostrates herself in adoration before the Lord who was crucified, suffered and died, was buried and arose, and perpetually exclaims to him who is clothed in the fullness of his divine splendour: “My Lord and my God!”¹⁰²

41. For encouraging, promoting and nourishing this interior understanding of liturgical participation, the continuous and widespread celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the use of the sacramentals and exercises of Christian popular piety are extremely helpful. These latter exercises – which “while not belonging to the Liturgy in the strict sense, possess nonetheless a particular importance and dignity” – are to be regarded as having a certain connection with the liturgical context, especially when they have been lauded and attested by the Magisterium itself,¹⁰³ as is the case especially of the Marian Rosary.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, since these practices of piety lead the Christian people both to the reception of the sacraments – especially the Eucharist – and “to meditation on the mysteries of our Redemption and the imitation of the excellent heavenly examples of the Saints, they are therefore not without salutary effects for our participation in liturgical worship”.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Feria secunda post Dominica V in Quadragesima, Collecta, p. 258.

¹⁰² Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*, 6 January 2001, n. 21: AAS 93 (2001) p. 280; cf. *Jn* 20,28.

¹⁰³ Cf. POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 586; cf. also SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 67; POPE PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, 11 February 1974, n. 24: AAS 66 (1974) pp. 113-168, here p. 134; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *Direttorio su pietà popolare e Liturgia*, 17 December 2001.

¹⁰⁴ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 16 October 2002: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 5-36.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 586-587.

42. It must be acknowledged that the Church has not come together by human volition; rather, she has been called together by God in the Holy Spirit, and she responds through faith to his free calling (thus the word *ekklesia* is related to *klesis*, or “calling”).¹⁰⁶ Nor is the Eucharistic Sacrifice to be considered a “concelebration”, in the univocal sense, of the Priest along with the people who are present.¹⁰⁷ On the contrary, the Eucharist celebrated by the Priests “is a gift which radically transcends the power of the community. ... The community that gathers for the celebration of the Eucharist absolutely requires an ordained Priest, who presides over it so that it may truly be a eucharistic convocation. On the other hand, the community is by itself incapable of providing an ordained minister”.¹⁰⁸ There is pressing need of a concerted will to avoid all ambiguity in this matter and to remedy the difficulties of recent years. Accordingly, terms such as “celebrating community” or “celebrating assembly” (in other languages “asamblea celebrante”, “assemblée célébrante”, “assemblea celebrante”) and similar terms should not be used injudiciously.

2. THE MINISTRIES OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL IN THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

43. For the good of the community and of the whole Church of God, some of the lay faithful according to tradition have rightly and laudably exercised ministries in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.¹⁰⁹ It is

¹⁰⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Varietates legitimae*, n. 22: AAS 87 (1995) p. 297.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 553.

¹⁰⁸ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 29: AAS 95 (2003) p. 453; cf. FOURTH LATERAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, 11-30 November 1215, Chapter I: DS 802; ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XXIII, 15 July 1563, Doctrine and Canons on Sacred Order, Chapter 4: DS 1767-1770; POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 553.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 § 2; cf. also the MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 97.

appropriate that a number of persons distribute among themselves and exercise various ministries or different parts of the same ministry.¹¹⁰

44. Apart from the duly instituted ministries of acolyte and lector,¹¹¹ the most important of these ministries are those of acolyte¹¹² and lector¹¹³ by temporary deputation. In addition to these are the other functions that are described in the Roman Missal,¹¹⁴ as well as the functions of preparing the hosts, washing the liturgical linens, and the like. All, “whether ordained ministers or lay faithful, in exercising their own office or ministry should do exclusively and fully that which pertains to them”.¹¹⁵ In the liturgical celebration itself as well as in its preparation, they should do what is necessary so that the Church’s Liturgy will be carried out worthily and appropriately.

45. To be avoided is the danger of obscuring the complementary relationship between the action of clerics and that of laypersons, in such a way that the ministry of laypersons undergoes what might be called a certain “clericalization”, while the sacred ministers inappro-

¹¹⁰ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, General Instruction, n. 109.

¹¹¹ Cf. POPE PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio) *Ministeria quaedam*, 15 August 1972, nn. VI-XII; PONTIFICALE ROMANUM *ex decreto sacrosancti oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum*, De institutione lectorum et acolythorum, de admissione inter candidatos ad diaconatum et presbyteratum, de sacro caelibatu amplectendo, editio typica, 3 December 1972, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1973, p. 10: AAS 64 (1972) pp. 529-534, here pp. 532-533; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 § 1; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 98-99, 187-193.

¹¹² Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 187-190, 193; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 § 2-3.

¹¹³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 24; S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, nn. 2 and 18: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 334, 338; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 101, 194-198; *Code of Canon Law*, can 230 § 2-3.

¹¹⁴ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 100-107.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, n. 91; cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 28.

priately assume those things that are proper to the life and activity of the lay faithful.¹¹⁶

46. The lay Christian faithful called to give assistance at liturgical celebrations should be well instructed and must be those whose Christian life, morals and fidelity to the Church's Magisterium recommend them. It is fitting that such a one should have received a liturgical formation in accordance with his or her age, condition, state of life, and religious culture.¹¹⁷ No one should be selected whose designation could cause consternation for the faithful.¹¹⁸

47. It is altogether laudable to maintain the noble custom by which boys or youths, customarily termed servers, provide service of the altar after the manner of acolytes, and receive catechesis regarding their function in accordance with their power of comprehension.¹¹⁹ Nor should it be forgotten that a great number of sacred ministers over the course of the centuries have come from among boys such as these.¹²⁰ Associations for them, including also the participation and assistance of their parents, should be established or promoted, and in

¹¹⁶ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Allocation to the Conference of Bishops of the Antilles, 7 May 2002, n. 2: AAS 94 (2002) pp. 575-577; Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, 30 December 1988, n. 23: AAS 81 (1989) pp. 393-521, here pp. 429-431; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, 15 August 1997, Theological Principles, n. 4: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 860-861.

¹¹⁷ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 19.

¹¹⁸ S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Immensae caritatis*, 29 January 1973: AAS 65 (1973) p. 266.

¹¹⁹ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *De Musica sacra*, 3 September 1958, n. 93c: AAS 50 (1958) p. 656.

¹²⁰ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Response to dubium, 11 July 1992: AAS 86 (1994) pp. 541-542; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Letter to the Presidents of Conferences of Bishops on the liturgical service of laypersons, 15 March 1994: *Notitiae* 30 (1994) pp. 333-335, 347-348.

such a way greater pastoral care will be provided for the ministers. Whenever such associations are international in nature, it pertains to the competence of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to establish them or to approve and revise their statutes.¹²¹ Girls or women may also be admitted to this service of the altar, at the discretion of the diocesan Bishop and in observance of the established norms.¹²²

Chapter III

THE PROPER CELEBRATION OF MASS

1. THE MATTER OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

48. The bread used in the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice must be unleavened, purely of wheat, and recently made so that there is no danger of decomposition.¹²³ It follows therefore that bread made from another substance, even if it is grain, or if it is mixed with another substance different from wheat to such an extent that it would not commonly be considered wheat bread, does not constitute valid matter for confecting the Sacrifice and the Eucharistic Sacrament.¹²⁴ It is a grave abuse to introduce other substances,

¹²¹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus*, art. 65: AAS 80 (1988) p. 877.

¹²² Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Response to dubium, 11 July 1992: AAS 86 (1994) pp. 541-542; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Letter to the Presidents of the Conferences of Bishops concerning the liturgical service of laypersons, 15 March 1994: *Notitiae* 30 (1994) pp. 333-335, 347-348; Letter to a Bishop, 27 July 2001: *Notitiae* 38 (2002) 46-54.

¹²³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 924 § 2; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 320.

¹²⁴ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Dominus Salvator noster*, 26 March 1929, n. 1: AAS 21 (1929) pp. 631-642, here p. 632.

such as fruit or sugar or honey, into the bread for confecting the Eucharist. Hosts should obviously be made by those who are not only distinguished by their integrity, but also skilled in making them and furnished with suitable tools.¹²⁵

49. By reason of the sign, it is appropriate that at least some parts of the Eucharistic Bread coming from the fraction should be distributed to at least some of the faithful in Communion. "Small hosts are, however, in no way ruled out when the number of those receiving Holy Communion or other pastoral needs require it",¹²⁶ and indeed small hosts requiring no further fraction ought customarily to be used for the most part.

50. The wine that is used in the most sacred celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice must be natural, from the fruit of the grape, pure and incorrupt, not mixed with other substances.¹²⁷ During the celebration itself, a small quantity of water is to be mixed with it. Great care should be taken so that the wine intended for the celebration of the Eucharist is well conserved and has not soured.¹²⁸ It is altogether forbidden to use wine of doubtful authenticity or provenance, for the Church requires certainty regarding the conditions necessary for the validity of the sacraments. Nor are other drinks of any kind to be admitted for any reason, as they do not constitute valid matter.

2. THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

51. Only those Eucharistic Prayers are to be used which are found in the Roman Missal or are legitimately approved by the Apostolic See,

¹²⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, n. II: AAS 21 (1929) p. 635.

¹²⁶ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 321.

¹²⁷ Cf. Lk 22,18; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 924 §§ 1, 3; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 322.

¹²⁸ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 323.

and according to the manner and the terms set forth by it. “It is not to be tolerated that some Priests take upon themselves the right to compose their own Eucharistic Prayers”¹²⁹ or to change the same texts approved by the Church, or to introduce others composed by private individuals.¹³⁰

52. The proclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer, which by its very nature is the climax of the whole celebration, is proper to the Priest by virtue of his Ordination. It is therefore an abuse to proffer it in such a way that some parts of the Eucharistic Prayer are recited by a Deacon, a lay minister, or by an individual member of the faithful, or by all members of the faithful together. The Eucharistic Prayer, then, is to be recited by the Priest alone in full.¹³¹

53. While the Priest proclaims the Eucharistic Prayer “there should be no other prayers or singing, and the organ or other musical instruments should be silent”,¹³² except for the people’s acclamations that have been duly approved, as described below.

54. The people, however, are always involved actively and never merely passively: for they “silently join themselves with the Priest in faith, as well as in their interventions during the course of the Eucharistic Prayer as prescribed, namely in the responses in the Preface dialogue, the *Sanctus*, the acclamation after the consecration and the “*Amen*” after the final doxology, and in other acclamations

¹²⁹ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 13, AAS 81 (1989).

¹³⁰ S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 5: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 335.

¹³¹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 28: AAS 95 (2003) p. 452; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 147; S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 4: AAS 62 (1970) p. 698; S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 4: AAS 72 (1980) p. 334.

¹³² MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 32.

approved by the Conference of Bishops with the *recognitio* of the Holy See".¹³³

55. In some places there has existed an abuse by which the Priest breaks the host at the time of the consecration in the Holy Mass. This abuse is contrary to the tradition of the Church. It is reprobated and is to be corrected with haste.

56. The mention of the name of the Supreme Pontiff and the diocesan Bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer is not to be omitted, since this is a most ancient tradition to be maintained, and a manifestation of ecclesial communion. For "the coming together of the eucharistic community is at the same time a joining in union with its own Bishop and with the Roman Pontiff".¹³⁴

3. THE OTHER PARTS OF THE MASS

57. It is the right of the community of Christ's faithful that especially in the Sunday celebration there should customarily be true and suitable sacred music, and that there should always be an altar, vestments and sacred linens that are dignified, proper, and clean, in accordance with the norms.

58. All of Christ's faithful likewise have the right to a celebration of the Eucharist that has been so carefully prepared in all its parts that the word of God is properly and efficaciously proclaimed and explained in it; that the faculty for selecting the liturgical texts and rites is carried out with care according to the norms; and that their faith is duly safeguarded and nourished by the words that are sung in the celebration of the Liturgy.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, n. 147; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 28: AAS 95 (2003) p. 452; cf. also CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 4: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 334-335.

¹³⁴ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 39: AAS 95 (2003) p. 459.

59. The reprobated practice by which Priests, Deacons or the faithful here and there alter or vary at will the texts of the Sacred Liturgy that they are charged to pronounce, must cease. For in doing thus, they render the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy unstable, and not infrequently distort the authentic meaning of the Liturgy.

60. In the celebration of Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are intimately connected to one another, and form one single act of worship. For this reason it is not licit to separate one of these parts from the other and celebrate them at different times or places.¹³⁵ Nor is it licit to carry out the individual parts of Holy Mass at different times of the same day.

61. In selecting the biblical readings for proclamation in the celebration of Mass, the norms found in the liturgical books are to be followed,¹³⁶ so that indeed “a richer table of the word of God will be prepared for the faithful, and the biblical treasures opened up for them”.¹³⁷

62. It is also illicit to omit or to substitute the prescribed biblical readings on one’s own initiative, and especially “to substitute other, non-biblical texts for the readings and responsorial Psalm, which contain the word of God”.¹³⁸

63. “Within the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, the reading of the Gospel, which is “the high point of the Liturgy of the Word”,¹³⁹ is

¹³⁵ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 2b: AAS 62 (1970) p. 696.

¹³⁶ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 356-362.

¹³⁷ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 51.

¹³⁸ MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 57; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 13: AAS 81 (1989) p. 910; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Declaration, *Dominus Iesus*, on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, 6 August 2000: AAS 92 (2000) pp. 742-765.

¹³⁹ MISSALE ROMANUM, General Instruction, n. 60.

reserved by the Church's tradition to an ordained minister.¹⁴⁰ Thus it is not permitted for a layperson, even a religious, to proclaim the Gospel reading in the celebration of Holy Mass, nor in other cases in which the norms do not explicitly permit it.¹⁴¹

64. The homily, which is given in the course of the celebration of Holy Mass and is a part of the Liturgy itself,¹⁴² "should ordinarily be given by the Priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating Priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to a Deacon, but never to a layperson."¹⁴³ In particular cases and for a just cause, the homily may even be given by a Bishop or a Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate".¹⁴⁴

65. It should be borne in mind that any previous norm that may have admitted non-ordained faithful to give the homily during the eucharistic celebration is to be considered abrogated by the norm of canon 767 § 1.¹⁴⁵ This practice is reprobated, so that it cannot be permitted to attain the force of custom.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 59-60.

¹⁴¹ Cf., e.g., RITUALE ROMANUM, ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II renovatum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI editum Ioannis Pauli Pp. II cura recognitum: Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera, 19 March 1990, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1991, n. 125; ROMAN RITUAL, renewed by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI: Order for Anointing of the Sick and for their Pastoral Care, editio typica, 7 December 1972, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1972, n. 72.

¹⁴² Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can 767 § 1.

¹⁴³ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6, § 1, 2; also can. 767 § 1, regarding which other noteworthy prescriptions may be found in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

¹⁴⁴ MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can 767 § 1.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6 § 1, 2; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, Response to dubium, 20 June 1987: AAS 79 (1987) p. 1249.

66. The prohibition of the admission of laypersons to preach within the Mass applies also to seminarians, students of theological disciplines, and those who have assumed the function of those known as “pastoral assistants”; nor is there to be any exception for any other kind of layperson, or group, or community, or association.¹⁴⁶

67. Particular care is to be taken so that the homily is firmly based upon the mysteries of salvation, expounding the mysteries of the Faith and the norms of Christian life from the biblical readings and liturgical texts throughout the course of the liturgical year and providing commentary on the texts of the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass, or of some other rite of the Church.¹⁴⁷ It is clear that all interpretations of Sacred Scripture are to be referred back to Christ himself as the one upon whom the entire economy of salvation hinges, though this should be done in light of the specific context of the liturgical celebration. In the homily to be given, care is to be taken so that the light of Christ may shine upon life's events. Even so, this is to be done so as not to obscure the true and unadulterated word of God: for instance, treating only of politics or profane subjects, or drawing upon notions derived from contemporary pseudo-religious currents as a source.¹⁴⁸

68. The diocesan Bishop must diligently oversee the preaching of the homily,¹⁴⁹ also publishing norms and distributing guidelines and auxiliary tools to the sacred ministers, and promoting meetings and other projects for this purpose so that they may have the opportunity to consider the nature of the homily more precisely and find help in its preparation.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 864-865.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XXII, 17 September 1562, on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapter 8: DS 1749; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 65.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Allocution to a number of Bishops from the United States of America who had come to Rome for a visit «ad Limina Apostolorum», 28 May 1993, n. 2: AAS 86 (1994) p. 330.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 386 § 1.

69. In Holy Mass as well as in other celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy, no Creed or Profession of Faith is to be introduced which is not found in the duly approved liturgical books.

70. The offerings that Christ's faithful are accustomed to present for the Liturgy of the Eucharist in Holy Mass are not necessarily limited to bread and wine for the eucharistic celebration, but may also include gifts given by the faithful in the form of money or other things for the sake of charity toward the poor. Moreover, external gifts must always be a visible expression of that true gift that God expects from us: a contrite heart, the love of God and neighbour by which we are conformed to the sacrifice of Christ, who offered himself for us. For in the Eucharist, there shines forth most brilliantly that mystery of charity that Jesus brought forth at the Last Supper by washing the feet of the disciples. In order to preserve the dignity of the Sacred Liturgy, in any event, the external offerings should be brought forward in an appropriate manner. Money, therefore, just as other contributions for the poor, should be placed in an appropriate place which should be away from the eucharistic table.¹⁵⁰ Except for money and occasionally a minimal symbolic portion of other gifts, it is preferable that such offerings be made outside the celebration of Mass.

71. The practice of the Roman Rite is to be maintained according to which the peace is extended shortly before Holy Communion. For according to the tradition of the Roman Rite, this practice does not have the connotation either of reconciliation or of a remission of sins, but instead signifies peace, communion and charity before the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist.¹⁵¹ It is rather the Penitential Act to be carried out at the beginning of Mass (especially in its first form) which has the character of reconciliation among brothers and sisters.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, Institutio Generalis, n. 73.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 154.

72. It is appropriate “that each one give the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner”. “The Priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. He does likewise if for a just reason he wishes to extend the sign of peace to some few of the faithful”. “As regards the sign to be exchanged, the manner is to be established by the Conference of Bishops in accordance with the dispositions and customs of the people”, and their acts are subject to the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See.¹⁵²

73. In the celebration of Holy Mass the breaking of the Eucharistic Bread – done only by the Priest celebrant, if necessary with the help of a Deacon or of a concelebrant – begins after the exchange of peace, while the *Agnus Dei* is being recited. For the gesture of breaking bread “carried out by Christ at the Last Supper, which in apostolic times gave the whole eucharistic action its name, signifies that the faithful, though they are many, are made one Body in the communion of the one Bread of Life who is Christ, who died and rose for the world’s salvation” (cf. *1 Cor* 10, 17).¹⁵³ For this reason the rite must be carried out with great reverence.¹⁵⁴ Even so, it should be brief. The abuse that has prevailed in some places, by which this rite is unnecessarily prolonged and given undue emphasis, with laypersons also helping in contradiction to the norms, should be corrected with all haste.¹⁵⁵

74. If the need arises for the gathered faithful to be given instruction or testimony by a layperson in a Church concerning the Christian life, it is altogether preferable that this be done outside Mass. Nevertheless, for serious reasons it is permissible that this type of instruction or testimony be given after the Priest has proclaimed the Prayer

¹⁵² Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 82, 154.

¹⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 83.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 5: AAS 62 (1970) p. 699.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 83, 240, 321.

after Communion. This should not become a regular practice, however. Furthermore, these instructions and testimony should not be of such a nature that they could be confused with the homily,¹⁵⁶ nor is it permissible to dispense with the homily on their account.

4. ON THE JOINING OF VARIOUS RITES WITH THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

75. On account of the theological significance inherent in a particular rite and the Eucharistic Celebration, the liturgical books sometimes prescribe or permit the celebration of Holy Mass to be joined with another rite, especially one of those pertaining to the Sacraments.¹⁵⁷ The Church does not permit such a conjoining in other cases, however, especially when it is a question of trivial matters.

76. Furthermore, according to a most ancient tradition of the Roman Church, it is not permissible to unite the Sacrament of Penance to the Mass in such a way that they become a single liturgical celebration. This does not exclude, however, that Priests other than those celebrating or concelebrating the Mass might hear the confessions of the faithful who so desire, even in the same place where Mass is being celebrated, in order to meet the needs of those faithful.¹⁵⁸ This should nevertheless be done in an appropriate manner.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 2: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. especially the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, nn. 93-98; ROMAN RITUAL, revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope John Paul II: Book of Blessings, editio typica, 31 May 1984, General Introduction, n. 28; Order of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, editio typica, 25 March 1981, nn. 10 and 14; S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, on Masses with Particular Groups, *Actio pastoralis*, 15 May 1969: AAS 61 (1969) pp. 806-811; Directory for Masses with Children, *Pueros baptizatos*, 1 November 1973: AAS 66 (1974) pp. 30-46; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 21.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio), *Misericordia Dei*, 7 April 2002, n. 2: AAS 94 (2002) p. 455; Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Response to Dubium: *Notitiae* 37 (2001) pp. 259-260.

77. The celebration of Holy Mass is not to be inserted in any way into the setting of a common meal, nor joined with this kind of banquet. Mass is not to be celebrated without grave necessity on a dinner table¹⁵⁹ nor in a dining room or banquet hall, nor in a room where food is present, nor in a place where the participants during the celebration itself are seated at tables. If out of grave necessity Mass must be celebrated in the same place where eating will later take place, there is to be a clear interval of time between the conclusion of Mass and the beginning of the meal, and ordinary food is not to be set before the faithful during the celebration of Mass.

78. It is not permissible to link the celebration of Mass to political or secular events, nor to situations that are not fully consistent with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, it is altogether to be avoided that the celebration of Mass should be carried out merely out of a desire for show, or in the manner of other ceremonies including profane ones, lest the Eucharist should be emptied of its authentic meaning.

79. Finally, it is strictly to be considered an abuse to introduce into the celebration of Holy Mass elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books and taken from the rites of other religions.

Chapter IV

HOLY COMMUNION

1. DISPOSITIONS FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

80. The Eucharist is to be offered to the faithful, among other reasons, “as an antidote, by which we are freed from daily faults and

¹⁵⁹ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 9: AAS 62 (1970) p. 702.

preserved from mortal sins”,¹⁶⁰ as is brought to light in various parts of the Mass. As for the Penitential Act placed at the beginning of Mass, it has the purpose of preparing all to be ready to celebrate the sacred mysteries;¹⁶¹ even so, “it lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance”,¹⁶² and cannot be regarded as a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance in remission of graver sins. Pastors of souls should take care to ensure diligent catechetical instruction, so that Christian doctrine is handed on to Christ’s faithful in this matter.

81. The Church’s custom shows that it is necessary for each person to examine himself at depth,¹⁶³ and that anyone who is conscious of grave sin should not celebrate or receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession, except for grave reason when the possibility of confession is lacking; in this case he will remember that he is bound by the obligation of making an act of perfect contrition, which includes the intention to confess as soon as possible”.¹⁶⁴

82. Moreover, “the Church has drawn up norms aimed at fostering the frequent and fruitful access of the faithful to the Eucharistic table and at determining the objective conditions under which Communion may not be given”.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XIII, 11 October 1551, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Chapter 2: DS 1638; cf. Session XXII, 17 September 1562, On the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapters 1-2: DS 1740, 1743; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 35: AAS 59 (1967) p. 560.

¹⁶¹ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Ordo Missae, n. 4, p. 505.

¹⁶² MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 51.

¹⁶³ Cf. *1 Cor* 11: 28.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 916; cf. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XIII, 11 October 1551, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Chapter 7: DS 1646-1647; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 36: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 457-458; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 35: AAS 59 (1967) p. 561.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 42: AAS 95 (2003) p. 461.

83. It is certainly best that all who are participating in the celebration of Holy Mass with the necessary dispositions should receive Communion. Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that Christ's faithful approach the altar as a group indiscriminately. It pertains to the Pastors prudently and firmly to correct such an abuse.

84. Furthermore when Holy Mass is celebrated for a large crowd – for example, in large cities – care should be taken lest out of ignorance non-Catholics or even non-Christians come forward for Holy Communion, without taking into account the Church's Magisterium in matters pertaining to doctrine and discipline. It is the duty of Pastors at an opportune moment to inform those present of the authenticity and the discipline that are strictly to be observed.

85. Catholic ministers licitly administer the Sacraments only to the Catholic faithful, who likewise receive them licitly only from Catholic ministers, except for those situations for which provision is made in can. 844 §§ 2,3, and 4, and can. 861 § 2.¹⁶⁶ In addition, the conditions comprising can. 844 § 4, from which no dispensation can be given,¹⁶⁷ cannot be separated; thus, it is necessary that all of these conditions be present together.

86. The faithful should be led insistently to the practice whereby they approach the Sacrament of Penance outside the celebration of Mass, especially at the scheduled times, so that the Sacrament may be administered in a manner that is tranquil and truly beneficial to them, so as not to be prevented from active participation at Mass.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, n. 844 § 1; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, nn. 45-46: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 463-464; cf. also PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, Directory for the application of the principles and norms on ecumenism, *La recherche de l'unité*, nn. 130-131: AAS 85 (1993) 1039-1119, here p. 1089.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 46: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 463-464.

Those who are accustomed to receiving Communion often or daily should be instructed that they should approach the Sacrament of Penance at appropriate intervals, in accordance with the condition of each.¹⁶⁸

87. The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution.¹⁶⁹ Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a Priest and never outside the celebration of Mass. Apart from exceptional cases, it is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered on Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist.¹⁷⁰ "Children who have not attained the age of reason, or those whom" the Parish Priest "has determined to be insufficiently prepared" should not come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist.¹⁷¹ Where it happens, however, that a child who is exceptionally mature for his age is judged to be ready for receiving the Sacrament, the child must not be denied First Communion provided he has received sufficient instruction.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 35: AAS 59 (1967) p. 561.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 914; S. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, Declaration, *Sanctus Pontifex*, diei 24 maii 1973: AAS 65 (1973) p. 410; S. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship and S. Congregation for the Clergy, Letter to the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences. Episcoporum, *In quibusdam*, 31 March 1977: *Enchiridion Documentorum Instaurationis Liturgicae*, II, pp. 142-144; S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP and S. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, Response to dubium, 20 May 1977: AAS 69 (1977) p. 427.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, 31 May 1998, nn. 31-34: AAS 90 (1998) pp. 713-766, here pp. 731-734.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 914.

2. THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

88. The faithful should normally receive sacramental Communion of the Eucharist during Mass itself, at the moment laid down by the rite of celebration, that is to say, just after the Priest celebrant's Communion.¹⁷² It is the Priest celebrant's responsibility to minister Communion, perhaps assisted by other Priests or Deacons; and he should not resume the Mass until after the Communion of the faithful is concluded. Only when there is a necessity may extraordinary ministers assist the Priest celebrant in accordance with the norm of law.¹⁷³

89. "So that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the Sacrifice being celebrated",¹⁷⁴ it is preferable that the faithful be able to receive hosts consecrated in the same Mass.¹⁷⁵

90. "The faithful should receive Communion kneeling or standing, as the Conference of Bishops will have determined", with its acts having received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See. "However, if they receive Communion standing, it is recommended that they give due reverence before the reception of the Sacrament, as set forth in the same norms".¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55.

¹⁷³ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 31: AAS 59 (1967) p. 558; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, Response to dubium, 1 June 1988: AAS 80 (1988) p. 1373.

¹⁷⁴ MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 85.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 31: AAS 59 (1967) p. 558; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 85, 157, 243.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 160.

91. In distributing Holy Communion it is to be remembered that “sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who seek them in a reasonable manner, are rightly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them”.¹⁷⁷ Hence any baptized Catholic who is not prevented by law must be admitted to Holy Communion. Therefore, it is not licit to deny Holy Communion to any of Christ’s faithful solely on the grounds, for example, that the person wishes to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing.

92. Although each of the faithful always has the right to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, at his choice,¹⁷⁸ if any communicant should wish to receive the Sacrament in the hand, in areas where the Bishops’ Conference with the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See has given permission, the sacred host is to be administered to him or her. However, special care should be taken to ensure that the host is consumed by the communicant in the presence of the minister, so that no one goes away carrying the Eucharistic species in his hand. If there is a risk of profanation, then Holy Communion should not be given in the hand to the faithful.¹⁷⁹

93. The Communion-plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling.¹⁸⁰

94. It is not licit for the faithful “to take ... by themselves ... and, still less, to hand ... from one to another” the sacred host or the sacred chalice.¹⁸¹ Moreover, in this regard, the abuse is to be set aside whereby spouses administer Holy Communion to each other at a Nuptial Mass.

¹⁷⁷ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 843 § 1; cf. can. 915.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, *Institutio Generalis*, n. 161.

¹⁷⁹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Dubium: Notitiae* 35 (1999) pp. 160-161.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, *Institutio Generalis*, n. 118.

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, n. 160.

95. A lay member of Christ's faithful "who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist may receive it again on the same day only within a Eucharistic Celebration in which he or she is participating, with due regard for the prescriptions of can. 921 § 2."¹⁸²

[96.] The practice is reprobated whereby either unconsecrated hosts or other edible or inedible things are distributed during the celebration of Holy Mass or beforehand after the manner of Communion, contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books. For such a practice in no way accords with the tradition of the Roman Rite, and carries with it the danger of causing confusion among Christ's faithful concerning the Eucharistic doctrine of the Church. Where there exists in certain places by concession a particular custom of blessing bread after Mass for distribution, proper catechesis should very carefully be given concerning this action. In fact, no other similar practices should be introduced, nor should unconsecrated hosts ever be used for this purpose.

3. THE COMMUNION OF PRIESTS

97. A Priest must communicate at the altar at the moment laid down by the Missal each time he celebrates Holy Mass, and the concelebrants must communicate before they proceed with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Priest celebrant or a concelebrant is never to wait until the people's Communion is concluded before receiving Communion himself.¹⁸³

98. The Communion of Priest concelebrants should proceed according to the norms prescribed in the liturgical books, always using hosts

¹⁸² Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 917; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, Response to Dubium, 11 July 1984: AAS 76 (1984) p. 746.

¹⁸³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55; MISSALE ROMANUM, General Instruction, nn. 158-160, 243-244, 246.

consecrated at the same Mass¹⁸⁴ and always with Communion under both kinds being received by all of the concelebrants. It is to be noted that if the Priest or Deacon hands the sacred host or chalice to the concelebrants, he says nothing; that is to say, he does not pronounce the words “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ”.

99. Communion under both kinds is always permitted “to Priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate Mass”.¹⁸⁵

4. COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

100. So that the fullness of the sign may be made more clearly evident to the faithful in the course of the Eucharistic banquet, lay members of Christ’s faithful, too, are admitted to Communion under both kinds, in the cases set forth in the liturgical books, preceded and continually accompanied by proper catechesis regarding the dogmatic principles on this matter laid down by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.¹⁸⁶

101. In order for Holy Communion under both kinds to be administered to the lay members of Christ’s faithful, due consideration should be given to the circumstances, as judged first of all by the diocesan Bishop. It is to be completely excluded where even a small danger exists of the sacred species being profaned.¹⁸⁷ With a view to wider co-ordination, the Bishops’ Conferences should issue norms, once their decisions have received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, especially

¹⁸⁴ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 237-249; cf. also nn. 85, 157.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 283a.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XXI, 16 July 1562, Decree on Eucharistic Communion, Chapters 1-3: DS 1725-1729; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 282-283.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 283.

as regards “the manner of distributing Holy Communion to the faithful under both kinds, and the faculty for its extension”.¹⁸⁸

102. The chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ’s faithful where there is such a large number of communicants¹⁸⁹ that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist and there is a danger that “more than a reasonable quantity of the Blood of Christ remain to be consumed at the end of the celebration”.¹⁹⁰ The same is true wherever access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange, or where such a large amount of wine would be required that its certain provenance and quality could only be known with difficulty, or wherever there is not an adequate number of sacred ministers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion with proper formation, or where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.

103. The norms of the Roman Missal admit the principle that in cases where Communion is administered under both kinds, “the Blood of the Lord may be received either by drinking from the chalice directly, or by intinction, or by means of a tube or a spoon”.¹⁹¹ As regards the administering of Communion to lay members of Christ’s faithful, the Bishops may exclude Communion with the tube or the spoon where this is not the local custom, though the option of administering Communion by intinction always remains. If this modality is employed, however, hosts should be used which are neither too thin nor too small, and the communicant should receive the Sacrament from the Priest only on the tongue.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *ibidem*.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Sacramentali Communionem*, 29 June 1970: AAS 62 (1970) p. 665; Instruction, *Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 6a: AAS 62 (1970) p. 699.

¹⁹⁰ MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 285a.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, n. 245.

¹⁹² Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 285b and 287.

104. The communicant must not be permitted to intinct the host himself in the chalice, nor to receive the intincted host in the hand. As for the host to be used for the intinction, it should be made of valid matter, also consecrated; it is altogether forbidden to use non-consecrated bread or other matter.

105. If one chalice is not sufficient for Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, there is no reason why the Priest celebrant should not use several chalices.¹⁹³ For it is to be remembered that all Priests in celebrating Holy Mass are bound to receive Communion under both kinds. It is praiseworthy, by reason of the sign value, to use a main chalice of larger dimensions, together with smaller chalices.

106. However, the pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms.

107. In accordance with what is laid down by the canons, "one who throws away the consecrated species or takes them away or keeps them for a sacrilegious purpose, incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished by another penalty, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state".¹⁹⁴ To be regarded as pertaining to this case is any action that is voluntarily and gravely disrespectful of the sacred species. Anyone, therefore, who acts contrary to these norms, for example casting the sacred species into the sacrarium or in an unworthy place or on the ground, incurs the penalties laid down.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore all will remember that once the

¹⁹³ Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 207 and 285a.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1367.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Response to dubium, 3 July 1999: AAS 91 (1999) p. 918.

distribution of Holy Communion during the celebration of Mass has been completed, the prescriptions of the Roman Missal are to be observed, and in particular, whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ must be entirely and immediately consumed by the Priest or by another minister, according to the norms, while the consecrated hosts that are left are to be consumed by the Priest at the altar or carried to the place for the reservation of the Eucharist.¹⁹⁶

Chapter V

CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING THE EUCHARIST

1. THE PLACE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

108. “The celebration of the Eucharist is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise. In this case the celebration must be in a decent place”.¹⁹⁷ The diocesan Bishop shall be the judge for his diocese concerning this necessity, on a case-by-case basis.

109. It is never lawful for a Priest to celebrate in a temple or sacred place of any non-Christian religion.

2. VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE MASS

110. “Remembering always that in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice the work of redemption is constantly being carried out,

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, *Institutio Generalis*, nn. 163, 284.

¹⁹⁷ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 932 § 1; S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Instruction, Liturgicae instaurationes*, n. 9: AAS 62 (1970) p. 701.

Priests should celebrate frequently. Indeed, daily celebration is earnestly recommended, because, even if it should not be possible to have the faithful present, the celebration is an act of Christ and of the Church, and in carrying it out, Priests fulfill their principal role”.¹⁹⁸

111. A Priest is to be permitted to celebrate or concelebrate the Eucharist “even if he is not known to the rector of the church, provided he presents commendatory letters” (i.e., a *celebret*) not more than a year old from the Holy See or his Ordinary or Superior “or unless it can be prudently judged that he is not impeded from celebrating”.¹⁹⁹ Let the Bishops take measures to put a stop to any contrary practice.

112. Mass is celebrated either in Latin or in another language, provided that liturgical texts are used which have been approved according to the norm of law. Except in the case of celebrations of the Mass that are scheduled by the ecclesiastical authorities to take place in the language of the people, Priests are always and everywhere permitted to celebrate Mass in Latin.²⁰⁰

113. When Mass is concelebrated by several Priests, a language known both to all the concelebrating Priests and to the gathered people should be used in the recitation of the Eucharist Prayer. Where it happens that some of the Priests who are present do not know the language of the celebration and therefore are not capable of pro-

¹⁹⁸ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 904; cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 3; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 13; cf. also ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Session XXII, 17 September 1562, On the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapter 6: DS 1747; POPE PAUL PP. VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium fidei*, 3 September 1965: AAS 57 (1965) pp. 753-774, here pp. 761-762; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 11: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 440-441; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 44: AAS 59 (1967) p. 564; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 19.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 903; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 200.

²⁰⁰ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 36 § 1; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 928.

nouncing the parts of the Eucharistic Prayer proper to them, they should not concelebrate, but instead should attend the celebration in choral dress in accordance with the norms.²⁰¹

114. “At Sunday Masses in parishes, insofar as parishes are ‘Eucharistic communities’, it is customary to find different groups, movements, associations, and even the smaller religious communities present in the parish.”²⁰² While it is permissible that Mass should be celebrated for particular groups according to the norm of law,²⁰³ these groups are nevertheless not exempt from the faithful observance of the liturgical norms.

115. The abuse is reprobated by which the celebration of Holy Mass for the people is suspended in an arbitrary manner contrary to the norms of the Roman Missal and the healthy tradition of the Roman Rite, on the pretext of promoting a “fast from the Eucharist”.

116. Masses are not to be multiplied contrary to the norm of law, and as regards Mass stipends, all those things are to be observed which are otherwise laid down by law.²⁰⁴

3. SACRED VESSELS

117. Sacred vessels for containing the Body and Blood of the Lord must be made in strict conformity with the norms of tradition and of the

²⁰¹ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 114.

²⁰² POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, n. 36: AAS 90 (1998) p. 735; cf. also S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 27: AAS 59 (1967) p. 556.

²⁰³ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, esp. n. 36: AAS 90 (1998) pp. 713-766, here pp. 735-736; S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction *Actio pastoralis*: AAS 61 (1969) pp. 806-811.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cann. 905, 945-958; cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, Decree, *Mos iugiter*, 22 February 1991: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 443-446.

liturgical books.²⁰⁵ The Bishops' Conferences have the faculty to decide whether it is appropriate, once their decisions have been given the *recognitio* by the Apostolic See, for sacred vessels to be made of other solid materials as well. It is strictly required, however, that such materials be truly noble in the common estimation within a given region,²⁰⁶ so that honour will be given to the Lord by their use, and all risk of diminishing the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species in the eyes of the faithful will be avoided. Reprobated, therefore, is any practice of using for the celebration of Mass common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers, as also other vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that break easily. This norm is to be applied even as regards metals and other materials that easily rust or deteriorate.²⁰⁷

118. Before they are used, sacred vessels are to be blessed by a Priest according to the rites laid down in the liturgical books.²⁰⁸ It is praiseworthy for the blessing to be given by the diocesan Bishop, who will judge whether the vessels are worthy of the use to which they are destined.

119. The Priest, once he has returned to the altar after the distribution of Communion, standing at the altar or at the credence table, purifies the paten or ciborium over the chalice, then purifies the chalice in accordance with the prescriptions of the Missal and wipes the chalice with the purificator. Where a Deacon is present, he returns with the Priest to the altar and purifies the vessels. It is permissible, however, especially if there are several vessels to be purified, to leave

²⁰⁵ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 327-333.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 332.

²⁰⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 332; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 16: AAS 72 (1980) p. 338.

²⁰⁸ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 333; Appendix IV. *Ordo benedictionis calicis et patenae intra Missam adhibendus*, pp. 1255-1257; PONTIFICALE ROMANUM ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, Ordo Dedicationis ecclesiae et altaris, editio typica, diei 29 maii 1977, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977, cap. VII, pp. 125-132.

them, covered as may be appropriate, on a corporal on the altar or on the credence table, and for them to be purified by the Priest or Deacon immediately after Mass once the people have been dismissed. Moreover a duly instituted acolyte assists the Priest or Deacon in purifying and arranging the sacred vessels either at the altar or the credence table. In the absence of a Deacon, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes and arranges them in the usual way.²⁰⁹

120. Let Pastors take care that the linens for the sacred table, especially those which will receive the sacred species, are always kept clean and that they are washed in the traditional way. It is praiseworthy for this to be done by pouring the water from the first washing, done by hand, into the church's sacrarium or into the ground in a suitable place. After this a second washing can be done in the usual way.

4. LITURGICAL VESTURE

121. "The purpose of a variety of colour of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year".²¹⁰ On the other hand, the variety "of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments. In fact, these "sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself".²¹¹

122. "The alb" is "to be tied at the waist with a cincture unless it is made so as to fit even without a cincture. Before the alb is put on, if it does not completely cover the ordinary clothing at the neck, an amice should be put on".²¹²

²⁰⁹ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 163, 183, 192.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, n. 345.

²¹¹ *Ibidem*, n. 335.

²¹² Cf. *ibidem*, n. 336.

123. “The vestment proper to the Priest celebrant at Mass, and in other sacred actions directly connected with Mass unless otherwise indicated, is the chasuble, worn over the alb and stole”.²¹³ Likewise the Priest, in putting on the chasuble according to the rubrics, is not to omit the stole. All Ordinaries should be vigilant in order that all usage to the contrary be eradicated.

124. A faculty is given in the Roman Missal for the Priest concelebrants at Mass other than the principal concelebrant (who should always put on a chasuble of the prescribed colour), for a just reason such as a large number of concelebrants or a lack of vestments, to omit “the chasuble, using the stole over the alb”.²¹⁴ Where a need of this kind can be foreseen, however, provision should be made for it insofar as possible. Out of necessity the concelebrants other than the principal celebrant may even put on white chasubles. For the rest, the norms of the liturgical books are to be observed.

125. The proper vestment of the Deacon is the dalmatic, to be worn over an alb and stole. In order that the beautiful tradition of the Church may be preserved, it is praiseworthy to refrain from exercising the option of omitting the dalmatic.²¹⁵

126. The abuse is reprobated whereby the sacred ministers celebrate Holy Mass or other rites without sacred vestments or with only a stole over the monastic cowl or the common habit of religious or ordinary clothes, contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books, even when there is only one minister participating.²¹⁶ In order that such abuses be corrected as quickly as possible, Ordinaries should take care that in all churches and oratories subject to their jurisdic-

²¹³ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 337.

²¹⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 209.

²¹⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 338.

²¹⁶ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, n. 8c: AAS 62 (1970) p. 701.

tion there is present an adequate supply of liturgical vestments made in accordance with the norms.

127. A special faculty is given in the liturgical books for using sacred vestments that are festive or more noble on more solemn occasions, even if they are not of the colour of the day.²¹⁷ However, this faculty, which is specifically intended in reference to vestments made many years ago, with a view to preserving the Church's patrimony, is improperly extended to innovations by which forms and colours are adopted according to the inclination of private individuals, with disregard for traditional practice, while the real sense of this norm is lost to the detriment of the tradition. On the occasion of a feastday, sacred vestments of a gold or silver colour can be substituted as appropriate for others of various colours, but not for purple or black.

128. Holy Mass and other liturgical celebrations, which are acts of Christ and of the people of God hierarchically constituted, are ordered in such a way that the sacred ministers and the lay faithful manifestly take part in them each according to his own condition. It is preferable therefore that "Priests who are present at a Eucharistic Celebration, unless excused for a good reason, should as a rule exercise the office proper to their Order and thus take part as concelebrants, wearing the sacred vestments. Otherwise, they wear their proper choir dress or a surplice over a cassock".²¹⁸ It is not fitting, except in rare and exceptional cases and with reasonable cause, for them to participate at Mass, as regards to externals, in the manner of the lay faithful.

²¹⁷ Cf. *MISSALE ROMANUM*, *Institutio Generalis*, n. 346g.

²¹⁸ *Ibidem*, n. 114 cf. nn. 16-17.

Chapter VI

THE RESERVATION OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST
AND EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP OUTSIDE MASS

1. THE RESERVATION OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

129. “The celebration of the Eucharist in the Sacrifice of the Mass is truly the origin and end of the worship given to the Eucharist outside the Mass. Furthermore the sacred species are reserved after Mass principally so that the faithful who cannot be present at Mass, above all the sick and those advanced in age, may be united by sacramental Communion to Christ and his Sacrifice which is offered in the Mass”.²¹⁹ In addition, this reservation also permits the practice of adoring this great Sacrament and offering it the worship due to God. Accordingly, forms of adoration that are not only private but also public and communitarian in nature, as established or approved by the Church herself, must be greatly promoted.²²⁰

130. “According to the structure of each church building and in accordance with legitimate local customs, the Most Holy Sacrament is to be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is noble, prominent, readily visible, and adorned in a dignified manner” and furthermore “suitable for prayer” by reason of the quietness of the location, the space available in front of the tabernacle, and also the supply of benches or seats and kneelers.²²¹ In addition, diligent attention should be paid to all

²¹⁹ S. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Decree, *Eucharistiae sacramentum*, 21 June 1973: AAS 65 (1973) 610.

²²⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

²²¹ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 54: AAS 59 (1967) p. 568; Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, n. 95: AAS 56 (1964) pp. 877-900, here p. 898; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 314.

the prescriptions of the liturgical books and to the norm of law,²²² especially as regards the avoidance of the danger of profanation.²²³

131. Apart from the prescriptions of canon 934 § 1, it is forbidden to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a place that is not subject in a secure way to the authority of the diocesan Bishop, or where there is a danger of profanation. Where such is the case, the diocesan Bishop should immediately revoke any permission for reservation of the Eucharist that may already have been granted.²²⁴

132. No one may carry the Most Holy Eucharist to his or her home, or to any other place contrary to the norm of law. It should also be borne in mind that removing or retaining the consecrated species for a sacrilegious purpose or casting them away are *graviora delicta*, the absolution of which is reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.²²⁵

133. A Priest or Deacon, or an extraordinary minister who takes the Most Holy Eucharist when an ordained minister is absent or impeded in order to administer it as Communion for a sick person, should go insofar as possible directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person's home, leaving aside any profane business so that any danger of profanation may be avoided and the

²²² Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Letter, *Dominicae Cenaе*, n. 3: AAS 72 (1980) pp. 117-119; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 53: AAS 59 (1967) p. 568; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 938 § 2; ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, *Introduction*, n. 9; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, nn. 314-317.

²²³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 938 §§ 3-5.

²²⁴ S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Nullo unquam*, diei 26 maii 1938, n. 10d: AAS 30 (1938), pp. 198-207, here p. 206.

²²⁵ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio), *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, 30 April 2001: AAS 93 (2001) pp. 737-739; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

greatest reverence for the Body of Christ may be ensured. Furthermore the Rite for the administration of Communion to the sick, as prescribed in the Roman Ritual, is always to be used.²²⁶

2. CERTAIN FORMS OF WORSHIP OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST OUTSIDE MASS

134. “The worship of the Eucharist outside the Sacrifice of the Mass is a tribute of inestimable value in the life of the Church. Such worship is closely linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.”²²⁷ Therefore both public and private devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist even outside Mass should be vigorously promoted, for by means of it the faithful give adoration to Christ, truly and really present,²²⁸ the “High Priest of the good things to come”²²⁹ and Redeemer of the whole world. “It is the responsibility of sacred Pastors, even by the witness of their life, to support the practice of Eucharistic worship and especially exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the eucharistic species”.²³⁰

²²⁶ Cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, nn. 26-78.

²²⁷ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 25: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 449-450.

²²⁸ Cf. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Sessio XIII, 11 October 1551, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Chapter 5: DS 1643; POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 569; POPE PAUL PP. VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*, 3 September 1965: AAS 57 (1965) pp. 751-774, here 769-770; S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 3f: AAS 59 (1967) p. 543; S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 20: AAS 72 (1980) p. 339; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 25: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 449-450.

²²⁹ Cf. *Heb* 9:11; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 3: AAS 95 (2003) p. 435.

²³⁰ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 25: AAS 95 (2003) p. 450.

135. The faithful “should not omit making visits during the day to the Most Holy Sacrament, as a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, and a debt of the adoration due to Christ the Lord who is present in it”.²³¹ For the contemplation of Jesus present in the Most Holy Sacrament, as a communion of desire, powerfully joins the faithful to Christ, as is splendidly evident in the example of so many Saints.²³² ‘Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, a church in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved should be open to the faithful for at least some hours each day, so that they can spend time in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament’.²³³

136. The Ordinary should diligently foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or prolonged or almost continuous, with the participation of the people. For in recent years in so many places “adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness”, although there are also places “where there is evident almost a total lack of regard for worship in the form of eucharistic adoration”.²³⁴

137. Exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist must always be carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books.²³⁵ Before the Most Holy Sacrament either reserved or exposed, the praying of the Rosary, which is admirable “in its simplicity and even its profundity”, is not to be excluded either.²³⁶ Even so, especially if

²³¹ Pope PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium fidei*: AAS 57 (1965) p. 771.

²³² Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 25: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 449-450.

²³³ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 937.

²³⁴ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003) p. 439.

²³⁵ Cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, nn. 82-100; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 317; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 941 § 2.

²³⁶ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, diei 16 octobris 2002: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 5-36; here n. 2, p. 6.

there is Exposition, the character of this kind of prayer as a contemplation of the mystery of the life of Christ the Redeemer and the Almighty Father's design of salvation should be emphasized, especially by making use of readings taken from Sacred Scripture.²³⁷

138. Still, the Most Holy Sacrament, when exposed, must never be left unattended even for the briefest space of time. It should therefore be arranged that at least some of the faithful always be present at fixed times, even if they take alternating turns.

139. Where the diocesan Bishop has sacred ministers or others whom he can assign to this purpose, the faithful have a right to visit the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist frequently for adoration, and to take part in adoration before the Most Holy Eucharist exposed at least at some time in the course of any given year.

140. It is highly recommended that at least in the cities and the larger towns the diocesan Bishop should designate a church building for perpetual adoration; in it, however, Holy Mass should be celebrated frequently, even daily if possible, while the Exposition should rigorously be interrupted while Mass is being celebrated.²³⁸ It is fitting that the host to be exposed for adoration should be consecrated in the Mass immediately preceding the time of adoration, and that it should be placed in the monstrance upon the altar after Communion.²³⁹

²³⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Letter of the Congregation, 15 January 1997: *Notitiae* 34 (1998) pp. 506-510; APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, Letter to a Priest, 8 March 1996: *Notitiae* 34 (1998) p. 511.

²³⁸ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 61: AAS 59 (1967) p. 571; ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, n. 83; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 317; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 941 § 2.

²³⁹ Cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, n. 94.

141. The diocesan Bishop should acknowledge and foster insofar as possible the right of the various groups of Christ's faithful to form guilds or associations for the carrying out of adoration, even almost continuous adoration. Whenever such associations assume an international character, it pertains to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to erect them and to approve their statutes.²⁴⁰

3. EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES AND EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

142. "It is for the diocesan Bishop to establish regulations about processions in order to provide for participation in them and for their being carried out in a dignified way"²⁴¹ and to promote adoration by the faithful.

143. "Wherever it is possible in the judgement of the diocesan Bishop, a procession through the public streets should be held, especially on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ as a public witness of reverence for the Most Holy Sacrament",²⁴² for the "devout participation of the faithful in the eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is a grace from the Lord which yearly fills with joy those who take part in it".²⁴³

144. Although this cannot be done in some places, the tradition of holding eucharistic processions should not be allowed to be lost. Instead,

²⁴⁰ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor bonus*, art. 65: AAS 80 (1988) p. 877.

²⁴¹ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 944 § 2; cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Introduction, n. 102; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 317.

²⁴² *Code of Canon Law*, can. 944 § 1; cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Introduction, nn. 101-102; MISSALE ROMANUM, Institutio Generalis, n. 317.

²⁴³ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003) p. 439

new ways should be sought of holding them in today's conditions: for example, at shrines, or in public gardens if the civil authority agrees.

145. The pastoral value of Eucharistic Congresses should be highly esteemed, and they "should be a genuine sign of faith and charity".²⁴⁴ Let them be diligently prepared and carried out in accordance with what has been laid down,²⁴⁵ so that Christ's faithful may have the occasion to worship the sacred mysteries of the Body and Blood of the Son of God in a worthy manner, and that they may continually experience within themselves the fruits of the Redemption.²⁴⁶

Chapter VII

EXTRAORDINARY FUNCTIONS OF LAY FAITHFUL

146. There can be no substitute whatsoever for the ministerial Priesthood. For if a Priest is lacking in the community, then the community lacks the exercise and sacramental function of Christ the Head and Shepherd, which belongs to the essence of its very life.²⁴⁷ For "the only minister who can confect the sacrament of the Eucharist *in persona Christi* is a validly ordained Priest".²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Cf. ROMAN RITUAL, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Introduction, n. 109.

²⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 109-112.

²⁴⁶ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, In sollemnitate sanctissimi Corporis et Sanguinis Christi, Collecta, p. 489.

²⁴⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, and others, Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Theological Principles, n. 3: AAS 89 (1997) p. 859.

²⁴⁸ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 900 § 1; cf. FOURTH LATERAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, 11-30 November 1215, Chapter 1: DS 802; POPE CLEMENT VI, Letter to Mekhitar, Catholicos of the Armenians, *Super quibusdam*, 29 September 1351: DS 1084; ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF TRENT, Sessio XXIII, 15 July 1563, Doctrine and Canons on Sacred Orders, Chapter 4: DS 1767-1770; POPE PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) p. 553.

147. When the Church's needs require it, however, if sacred ministers are lacking, lay members of Christ's faithful may supply for certain liturgical offices according to the norm of law.²⁴⁹ Such faithful are called and appointed to carry out certain functions, whether of greater or lesser weight, sustained by the Lord's grace. Many of the lay Christian faithful have already contributed eagerly to this service and still do so, especially in missionary areas where the Church is still of small dimensions or is experiencing conditions of persecution,²⁵⁰ but also in areas affected by a shortage of Priests and Deacons.

148. Particular importance is to be attached to the training of catechists, who by means of great labours have given and still give outstanding and altogether necessary help in the spreading of the faith and of the Church.²⁵¹

149. More recently, in some dioceses long since evangelized, members of Christ's lay faithful have been appointed as "pastoral assistants", and among them many have undoubtedly served the good of the Church by providing assistance to the Bishop, Priests and Deacons in the carrying out of their pastoral activity. Let care be taken, however, lest the delineation of this function be assimilated too closely to the form of pastoral ministry that belongs to clerics. That is to say, attention should be paid to ensuring that "pastoral assistants" do not take upon themselves what is proper to the ministry of the sacred ministers.

²⁴⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 § 3; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Allocution during a Symposium concerning the collaboration of laypersons in the pastoral ministry of Priests, 22 April 1994, n. 2: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 April 1994; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Prooemium: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 852-856.

²⁵⁰ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris missio*, nn. 53-54: AAS 83 (1991) pp. 300-302; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Prooemium: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 852-856.

²⁵¹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad gentes*, 7 December 1965, n. 17; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, n. 73: AAS 83 (1991) p. 321.

150. The activity of a pastoral assistant should be directed to facilitating the ministry of Priests and Deacons, to ensuring that vocations to the Priesthood and Diaconate are awakened and that lay members of Christ's faithful in each community are carefully trained for the various liturgical functions, in keeping with the variety of charisms and in accordance with the norm of law.

151. Only out of true necessity is there to be recourse to the assistance of extraordinary ministers in the celebration of the Liturgy. Such recourse is not intended for the sake of a fuller participation of the laity but rather, by its very nature, is supplementary and provisional.²⁵² Furthermore, when recourse is had out of necessity to the functions of extraordinary ministers, special urgent prayers of intercession should be multiplied that the Lord may soon send a Priest for the service of the community and raise up an abundance of vocations to sacred Orders.²⁵³

152. These purely supplementary functions must not be an occasion for disfiguring the very ministry of Priests, in such a way that the latter neglect the celebration of Holy Mass for the people for whom they are responsible, or their personal care of the sick, or the baptism of children, or assistance at weddings or the celebration of Christian funerals, matters which pertain in the first place to Priests assisted by Deacons. It must therefore never be the case that in parishes Priests alternate indiscriminately in shifts of pastoral service with Deacons or laypersons, thus confusing what is specific to each.

153. Furthermore, it is never licit for laypersons to assume the role or the vesture of a Priest or a Deacon or other clothing similar to such vesture.

²⁵² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 8 § 2: AAS 89 (1997) p. 872.

²⁵³ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 32: AAS 95 (2003) p. 455.

1. THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

154. As has already been recalled, “the only minister who can confer the Sacrament of the Eucharist *in persona Christi* is a validly ordained Priest”.²⁵⁴ Hence the name “minister of the Eucharist” belongs properly to the Priest alone. Moreover, also by reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon,²⁵⁵ to whom it belongs therefore to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ’s faithful during the celebration of Mass. In this way their ministerial office in the Church is fully and accurately brought to light, and the sign value of the Sacrament is made complete.

155. In addition to the ordinary ministers there is the formally instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass. If, moreover, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay member of Christ’s faithful may also be delegated by the diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the norm of law,²⁵⁶ for one occasion or for a specified time, and an appropriate formula of blessing may be used for the occasion. This act of appointment, however, does not necessarily take a liturgical form, nor, if it does take a liturgical form, should it resemble sacred Ordination in any way. Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 900 § 1.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, can. 910 § 1; cf. also POPE JOHN PAUL II, Letter, *Dominicae Cenaе*, n. 11: AAS 72 (1980) p. 142; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 8 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 870-871.

²⁵⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 230 § 3.

²⁵⁷ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Immense caritatis*, prooemium: AAS 65 (1973) p. 264; POPE PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio), *Ministeria quaedam*, 15 August 1972: AAS 64 (1972) p. 532; MISSALE ROMANUM, Appendix III: Ritus ad deputandum ministrum sacrae Communionis ad actum distribuendae, p. 1253; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 8 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 871.

156. This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist”, by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.

157. If there is usually present a sufficient number of sacred ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be appointed. Indeed, in such circumstances, those who may have already been appointed to this ministry should not exercise it. The practice of those Priests is reprobated who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons.²⁵⁸

158. Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged.²⁵⁹ This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation, considering the circumstances and culture of the place, is not at all a sufficient reason.

²⁵⁸ S. CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND DIVINE WORSHIP, Instruction, *Inaestimabile donum*, n. 10: AAS 72 (1980) p. 336; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, Response to dubium, 11 July 1984: AAS 76 (1984) p. 746.

²⁵⁹ Cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction, *Immensae caritatis*, n. 1: AAS 65 (1973) pp. 264-271, here pp. 265-266; Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, Responsio ad propositum dubium, 1 June 1988: AAS 80 (1988) p. 1373; CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 8 § 2: AAS 89 (1997) p. 871.

159. It is never allowed for the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to delegate anyone else to administer the Eucharist, as for example a parent or spouse or child of the sick person who is the communicant.

160. Let the diocesan Bishop give renewed consideration to the practice in recent years regarding this matter, and if circumstances call for it, let him correct it or define it more precisely. Where such extraordinary ministers are appointed in a widespread manner out of true necessity, the diocesan Bishop should issue special norms by which he determines the manner in which this function is to be carried out in accordance with the law, bearing in mind the tradition of the Church.

2. PREACHING

161. As was already noted above, the homily on account of its importance and its nature is reserved to the Priest or Deacon during Mass.²⁶⁰ As regards other forms of preaching, if necessity demands it in particular circumstances, or if usefulness suggests it in special cases, lay members of Christ's faithful may be allowed to preach in a church or in an oratory outside Mass in accordance with the norm of law.²⁶¹ This may be done only on account of a scarcity of sacred ministers in certain places, in order to meet the need, and it may not be transformed from an exceptional measure into an ordinary practice, nor may it be understood as an authentic form of the advancement of the laity.²⁶² All must remember besides that the faculty for giving such permission belongs to the local Ordinary, and this as regards individual instances; this permission is not the competence of anyone else, even if they are Priests or Deacons.

²⁶⁰ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 § 1.

²⁶¹ Cf. *ibidem*, can. 766.

²⁶² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 2 §§ 3-4: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

3. PARTICULAR CELEBRATIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST

162. On the day known as the Lord's Day, the Church faithful gathers together to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection and the whole Paschal Mystery, especially by the celebration of Mass.²⁶³ For "no Christian community is built up unless it is rooted in and hinges upon the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist".²⁶⁴ Hence it is the Christian people's right to have the Eucharist celebrated for them on Sunday, and whenever holydays of obligation or other major feasts occur, and even daily insofar as this is possible. Therefore when it is difficult to have the celebration of Mass on a Sunday in a parish church or in another community of Christ's faithful, the diocesan Bishop together with his Priests should consider appropriate remedies.²⁶⁵ Among such solutions will be that other Priests be called upon for this purpose, or that the faithful transfer to a church in a nearby place so as to participate in the Eucharistic mystery there.²⁶⁶

163. All Priests, to whom the Priesthood and the Eucharist are entrusted *for the sake of others*,²⁶⁷ should remember that they are enjoined to provide the faithful with the opportunity to satisfy the

²⁶³ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, esp. nn. 31-51: AAS 90 (1998) pp. 713-766, here pp. 731-746; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio ineunte*, diei 6 ianuarii 2001, nn. 35-36: AAS 93 (2001) pp. 290-292; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 41: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 460-461.

²⁶⁴ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 6; cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, nn. 22, 33: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 448, 455-456.

²⁶⁵ Cf. S. CONGREGATION OF RITES, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 26: AAS 59 (1967) pp. 555-556; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, *Christi Ecclesia*, 2 June 1988, nn. 5 and 25: *Notitiae* 24 (1988) pp. 366-378, here pp. 367, 372.

²⁶⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, *Christi Ecclesia*, n. 18: *Notitiae* 24 (1988) p. 370.

²⁶⁷ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Letter, *Dominicae Cenae*, n. 2: AAS 72 (1980) p. 116.

obligation of participating at Mass on Sundays.²⁶⁸ For their part, the lay faithful have the right, barring a case of real impossibility, that no Priest should ever refuse either to celebrate Mass for the people or to have it celebrated by another Priest if the people otherwise would not be able to satisfy the obligation of participating at Mass on Sunday or the other days of precept.

164. “If participation at the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible on account of the absence of a sacred minister or for some other grave cause,”²⁶⁹ then it is the Christian people’s right that the diocesan Bishop should provide as far as he is able for some celebration to be held on Sundays for that community under his authority and according to the Church’s norms. Sunday celebrations of this specific kind, however, are to be considered altogether extraordinary. All Deacons or lay members of Christ’s faithful who are assigned a part in such celebrations by the diocesan Bishop should strive “to keep alive in the community a genuine ‘hunger’ for the Eucharist, so that no opportunity for the celebration of Mass will ever be missed, also taking advantage of the occasional presence of a Priest who is not impeded by Church law from celebrating Mass”.²⁷⁰

165. It is necessary to avoid any sort of confusion between this type of gathering and the celebration of the Eucharist.²⁷¹ The diocesan Bishops, therefore, should prudently discern whether Holy Communion ought to be distributed in these gatherings. The matter would appropriately

²⁶⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, n. 49: AAS 90 (1998) p. 744; Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 41: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 460-461; *Code of Canon Law*, cann. 1246-1247.

²⁶⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1248 § 2; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, *Christi Ecclesia*, nn. 1-2: *Notitiae* 24 (1988) p. 366.

²⁷⁰ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 33: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 455-456.

²⁷¹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, *Christi Ecclesia*, n. 22: *Notitiae* 24 (1988) p. 371.

be determined in view of a more ample co-ordination in the Bishops' Conference, to be put into effect after the *recognitio* of the acts by the Apostolic See through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. It will be preferable, moreover, when both a Priest and a Deacon are absent, that the various parts be distributed among several faithful rather than having a single lay member of the faithful direct the whole celebration alone. Nor is it ever appropriate to refer to any member of the lay faithful as "presiding" over the celebration.

166. Likewise, especially if Holy Communion is distributed during such celebrations, the diocesan Bishop, to whose exclusive competence this matter pertains, must not easily grant permission for such celebrations to be held on weekdays, especially in places where it was possible or would be possible to have the celebration of Mass on the preceding or the following Sunday. Priests are therefore earnestly requested to celebrate Mass daily for the people in one of the churches entrusted to their care.

167. "Similarly, it is unthinkable on the Lord's Day to substitute for Holy Mass either ecumenical celebrations of the word or services of common prayer with Christians from the ... Ecclesial Communities, or even participation in these Communities' liturgical services".²⁷² Should the diocesan Bishop out of necessity authorize the participation of Catholics for a single occasion, let pastors take care lest confusion arise among the Catholic faithful concerning the necessity of taking part at Mass at another hour of the day even in such circumstances, on account of the obligation.²⁷³

²⁷² POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 30: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 453-454; cf. also PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, *La recherche de l'unité*, 25 March 1993, n. 115: AAS 85 (1993) pp. 1039-1119, here p. 1085.

²⁷³ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, *La recherche de l'unité*, n. 115: AAS 85 (1993) p. 1085.

4. THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE CLERICAL STATE

168. “A cleric who loses the clerical state in accordance with the law ... is prohibited from exercising the power of order”.²⁷⁴ It is therefore not licit for him to celebrate the sacraments under any pretext whatsoever save in the exceptional case set forth by law,²⁷⁵ nor is it licit for Christ’s faithful to have recourse to him for the celebration, since there is no reason which would permit this according to canon 1335.²⁷⁶ Moreover, these men should neither give the homily²⁷⁷ nor ever undertake any office or duty in the celebration of the sacred Liturgy, lest confusion arise among Christ’s faithful and the truth be obscured.

Chapter VIII

REMEDIES

169. Whenever an abuse is committed in the celebration of the sacred Liturgy, it is to be seen as a real falsification of Catholic Liturgy. St Thomas wrote, “the vice of falsehood is perpetrated by anyone who offers worship to God on behalf of the Church in a manner contrary to that which is established by the Church with divine authority, and to which the Church is accustomed”.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 292; PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Declaration de recta interpretatione can. 1335, secundae partis, C.I.C., 15 May 1997, n. 3: AAS 90 (1998) p. 64.

²⁷⁵ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cann. 976; 986 § 2.

²⁷⁶ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Declaration de recta interpretatione can. 1335, secundae partis, C.I.C., 15 May 1997, nn. 1-2: AAS 90 (1998) pp. 63-64.

²⁷⁷ As regards Priests who have obtained the dispensation from celibacy, cf. S. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Normae de dispensatione a sacerdotali caelibatu ad instantiam partis, Normae substantiales*, 14 October 1980, art. 5; cf. also CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction, *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 5: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

²⁷⁸ ST THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theol.*, II, 2, q. 93, a. 1.

170. In order that a remedy may be applied to such abuses, “there is a pressing need for the biblical and liturgical formation of the people of God, both pastors and faithful”,²⁷⁹ so that the Church’s faith and discipline concerning the sacred Liturgy may be accurately presented and understood. Where abuses persist, however, proceedings should be undertaken for safeguarding the spiritual patrimony and rights of the Church in accordance with the law, employing all legitimate means.

171. Among the various abuses there are some which are objectively *graviora delicta* or otherwise constitute grave matters, as well as others which are nonetheless to be carefully avoided and corrected. Bearing in mind everything that is treated especially in Chapter I of this Instruction, attention should be paid to what follows.

1. *GRAVIORA DELICTA*

172. *Graviora delicta* against the sanctity of the Most August Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Eucharist are to be handled in accordance with the ‘Norms concerning *graviora delicta* reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’,²⁸⁰ namely:

a) taking away or retaining the consecrated species for sacrilegious ends, or the throwing them away;²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 15: AAS 81 (1989) p. 911; cf. also SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 15-19.

²⁸⁰ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio), *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*: AAS 93 (2001) pp. 737-739; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

²⁸¹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1367; PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATIVE TEXTS, Responsio ad propositum dubium, 3 July 1999: AAS 91 (1999) p. 918; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

b) the attempted celebration of the liturgical action of the Eucharistic Sacrifice or the simulation of the same;²⁸²

c) the forbidden concelebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice with ministers of Ecclesial Communities that do not have the apostolic succession nor acknowledge the sacramental dignity of priestly Ordination;²⁸³

d) the consecration for sacrilegious ends of one matter without the other in the celebration of the Eucharist or even of both outside the celebration of the Eucharist.²⁸⁴

2. GRAVE MATTERS

173. Although the gravity of a matter is to be judged in accordance with the common teaching of the Church and the norms established by her, objectively to be considered among grave matters is anything that puts at risk the validity and dignity of the Most Holy Eucharist: namely, anything that contravenes what is set out above in nn. 48-52, 56, 76-77, 79, 91-92, 94, 96, 101-102, 104, 106, 109, 111, 115, 117, 126, 131-133, 138, 153 and 168. Moreover, attention should be given to the other prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law, and especially what is laid down by canons 1364, 1369, 1373, 1376, 1380, 1384, 1385, 1386, and 1398.

²⁸² Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1378 § 2 n. 1 et 1379; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis*: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

²⁸³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 908 et 1365; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis*: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

²⁸⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 927; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Epistula ad totius Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopos aliosque Ordinarios et Hierarchas quorum interest: de delictis gravioribus eidem Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis*: AAS 93 (2001) p. 786.

3. OTHER ABUSES

174. Furthermore, those actions that are brought about which are contrary to the other matters treated elsewhere in this Instruction or in the norms established by law are not to be considered of little account, but are to be numbered among the other abuses to be carefully avoided and corrected.

175. The things set forth in this Instruction obviously do not encompass all the violations against the Church and its discipline that are defined in the canons, in the liturgical laws and in other norms of the Church for the sake of the teaching of the Magisterium or sound tradition. Where something wrong has been committed, it is to be corrected according to the norm of law.

4. THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

176. The diocesan Bishop, “since he is the principal dispenser of the mysteries of God, is to strive constantly so that Christ’s faithful entrusted to his care may grow in grace through the celebration of the sacraments, and that they may know and live the Paschal Mystery”.²⁸⁵ It is his responsibility, “within the limits of his competence, to issue norms on liturgical matters by which all are bound”.²⁸⁶

177. “Since he must safeguard the unity of the universal Church, the Bishop is bound to promote the discipline common to the entire Church and therefore to insist upon the observance of all ecclesiastical laws. He is to be watchful lest abuses encroach upon ecclesiastical discipline, especially as regards the ministry of the Word, the celebra-

²⁸⁵ *Code of Canon Law*, can. 387.

²⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, can. 838 § 4.

tion of the Sacraments and sacramentals, the worship of God and the veneration of the Saints”.²⁸⁷

178. Hence whenever a local Ordinary or the Ordinary of a religious Institute or of a Society of apostolic life receives at least a plausible notice of a delict or abuse concerning the Most Holy Eucharist, let him carefully investigate, either personally or by means of another worthy cleric, concerning the facts and the circumstances as well as the imputability.

179. Delicts against the faith as well as *graviora delicta* committed in the celebration of the Eucharist and the other Sacraments are to be referred without delay to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which “examines [them] and, if necessary, proceeds to the declaration or imposition of canonical sanctions according to the norm of common or proper law”.²⁸⁸

180. Otherwise the Ordinary should proceed according the norms of the sacred canons, imposing canonical penalties if necessary, and bearing in mind in particular that which is laid down by canon 1326. If the matter is serious, let him inform the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

5. THE APOSTOLIC SEE

181. Whenever the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments receives at least a plausible notice of a delict or an abuse concerning the Most Holy Eucharist, it informs the Ordinary so that he may investigate the matter. When the matter

²⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, can. 392.

²⁸⁸ Cf. POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor bonus*, art. 52: AAS 80 (1988) p. 874.

turns out to be serious, the Ordinary should send to the same Dicastery as quickly as possible a copy of the acts of the inquiry that has been undertaken, and where necessary, the penalty imposed.

182. In more difficult cases the Ordinary, for the sake of the good of the universal Church in the care for which he too has a part by virtue of his sacred Ordination, should not fail to handle the matter, having previously taken advice from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. For its part, this Congregation, on the strength of the faculties given to it by the Roman Pontiff, according to the nature of the case, will assist the Ordinary, granting him the necessary dispensations²⁸⁹ or giving him instructions or precriptions, which he is to follow diligently.

6. COMPLAINTS REGARDING ABUSES IN LITURGICAL MATTERS

183. In an altogether particular manner, let everyone do all that is in their power to ensure that the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist will be protected from any and every irreverence or distortion and that all abuses be thoroughly corrected. This is a most serious duty incumbent upon each and every one, and all are bound to carry it out without any favouritism.

184. Any Catholic, whether Priest or Deacon or lay member of Christ's faithful, has the right to lodge a complaint regarding a liturgical abuse to the diocesan Bishop or the competent Ordinary equivalent to him in law, or to the Apostolic See on account of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.²⁹⁰ It is fitting, however, insofar as possible, that the report or complaint be submitted first to the diocesan Bishop. This is naturally to be done in truth and charity.

²⁸⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, n. 63: AAS 80 (1988) p. 876.

²⁹⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, can. 1417 § 1.

CONCLUSION

185. “Against the seeds of discord which daily experience shows to be so deeply ingrained in human nature as a result of sin, there stands the creative power of the unity of Christ’s body. For it is precisely by building up the Church that the Eucharist establishes fellowship among men.”²⁹¹ It is therefore the hope of this Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments that also, by the diligent application of those things that are recalled in this Instruction, human weakness may come to pose less of an obstacle to the action of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and that with all distortion set aside and every reprobated practice removed,²⁹² through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, “Woman of the Eucharist”, the saving presence of Christ in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood may shine brightly upon all people.

186. Let all Christ’s faithful participate in the Most Holy Eucharist as fully, consciously and actively as they can,²⁹³ honouring it lovingly by their devotion and the manner of their life. Let Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the exercise of the sacred ministry, examine their consciences as regards the authenticity and fidelity of the actions they have performed in the name of Christ and the Church in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. Let each one of the sacred ministers ask himself, even with severity, whether he has respected the rights of the lay members of Christ’s faithful, who confidently entrust themselves and their children to him, relying on him to fulfill for the faithful those sacred functions that the Church intends to carry out in cele-

²⁹¹ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 24: AAS 95 (2003) p. 449.

²⁹² Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 53-58: AAS 95 (2003) pp. 469-472.

²⁹³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 14; cf. also nn. 11, 41, et 48.

brating the sacred Liturgy at Christ's command.²⁹⁴ For each one should always remember that he is a servant of the Sacred Liturgy.²⁹⁵

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

This Instruction, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was approved by the same Pontiff on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, 19 March 2004, and he ordered it to be published and to be observed immediately by all concerned.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, 25 March 2004.

FRANCIS Card. ARINZE
Prefect

✠ DOMENICO SORRENTINO
Archbishop Secretary

²⁹⁴ Cf. ST THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 9 ad 1.

²⁹⁵ Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM, *Institutio Generalis*, n. 24.

THE ORIGINS OF THE COLLECT
FOR THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY «PER ANNUM»

Dominica XI «per annum »

Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
invocationibus nostris adesto propitius,
et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
gratiae tuae praesta semper auxilium,
ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
Per Dominum.

1970MR,¹ p. 350; 1975MR, p. 350; 2002MR, p. 461; Bruy 230;
Copp 1245.

Cf. Sup 1129: XVIII. Dominica I post Pentecosten:
Cf. Pad 505: CXIII. Ebdomada II post Pentecosten:

*Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
adesto propitius invocationibus nostris,
et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
gratiae tuae praesta semper auxilium,
ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
Per Dominum.*

¹ For a list of abbreviations, and an explanation of conventions, see *Notitiae* 36 (2000) 351-362.

Cf. 1962MR 1422: Dominica I post Pentecosten:
 Cf. 1570MR 1870: Dominica I post Pentecosten:
 Cf. 1474MR 1316: Dominica I post Pentecosten:
 Cf. TreSup 1085: XII. Dominica I post Octabas Pentecosten:
 Cf. SGall 858: 147. Ebdomada II post Pentecosten:
 Cf. GeV 566: I, LXII. Sexta dominica post clausum Paschae:

Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
 adesto propitius invocationibus nostris:
et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
 praesta auxilium gratiae tuae;
ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
Per Dominum.

Cf. Gell 1076: 165. Ebd[omada] II p[ost] Pentecoste[n]:

Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
 adesto propitius invocationibus nostris,
et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
 praesta auxilium gratiae tuae,
ut, [...] exsequendis mandatis tuis,
et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
Per.

Cf. MB² 507: Item Missa dominicalis:

Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
 adesto propitius invocationibus nostris,

² Elias Avery Lowe, André Wilmart & Henry Austin Wilson (edd.), *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book (Ms Paris lat. 13246)*, Text, Henry Bradshaw Society, London, 1920 (= *Henry Bradshaw Society* 58).

*et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
 praesta auxilium gratiae tuae,
 ut, in sequendis mandatis tuis,
 et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
 Per.*

Cf. MF³ 141: 21. Item alia Missa:

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus,
 adesto propitius invocationibus nostris,
*et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
 praesta auxilium gratiae tuae,
 ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
 et voluntate tibi et actione pariter placeamus.
 Per Dominum.*

Cf. 1974MA 177/2: Dominica VII «per annum»:

*Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
 invocationibus nostris adesto propitius,
 et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
 praesta gratiae tuae benignus auxilium,
 ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
 et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
 Per Dominum.*

³ Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer & Petrus Siffrin (edd.), *Missale Francorum* (Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 257), Casa Editrice Herder, Roma, 1957 (= *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series maior, Fontes* 2).

* * *

There are various literary techniques for opening a Roman oration, such as a relative clause or an imperative. In this rich collect, we encounter for the first time in this series a different technique, namely the use of a title (*in te sperantium fortitudo*) by which God is invoked, alongside, or in apposition to, the more standard designation (*Deus*).

The collect is ancient and is found in wide use through the West at least since the seventh century. The form closest to the present Missal is that assigned to the series of ordinary Sunday Mass formularies first by the so-called *Paduense*, a manuscript representing an adaptation made to the special circumstances use of the clergy of St Peter's Basilica around the years 659-683 A.D. of the papal Mass book. A very similar text is found in other manuscripts of the eighth century that represent Roman, Gallican and even Celtic liturgical practice, in particular the largely Roman *Gelasianum Vetus*, where it appears for the Sixth Sunday after Easter.

Out of this great variety of witnesses our oration, in the exact same form as in the *Paduense*, was taken by the compiler of the *Supplementum* compiled around the years 810-815 to complete the papal sacramentary sent by Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne. Although, as can be seen from the sources cited above, the exact Sunday has varied slightly in the course of history, the collect has always been used, as now, shortly after Pentecost. It re-entered the mainstream of the Roman liturgical books and was present when the first Roman Missal was printed in 1474. It was retained by the 1570 reform Missal and remained until the last edition of the latter, issued in 1962. In this period it was assigned to the First Sunday after Pentecost.⁴ It would seem that a check was made by the 1970 revisers and the text adjusted to conform more closely to the *Paduense-Supplementum* text,

⁴ Cf. Louis BROU, *Les oraisons des dimanches après la Pentecôte: Commentaire liturgique*, Apostolat Liturgique, Bruges, 1959 (= *Paroisse et liturgie* 38), pp. 9-10.

though a further variation caused by inversions in line 2 was introduced before the Missal went to press. So it has remained until the present day.

The Ambrosian Missal has followed the modern Roman text, with recent stylistic variants, as so often, but assigns it to the Seventh Sunday.

The text is conceived against the broad canvas of Christian life in the context of the economy of salvation and expressed with a certain grandeur, both literary and of faith.

Anthony WARD, S.M.

COMMENTO BIBLICO ALLA COLLETTA
DELLA DOMENICA XI « PER ANNUM »

Domenica XI « per annum »

Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo,
invocationibus nostris adesto propitius,
et, quia sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas,
gratiae tuae praesta semper auxilium,
ut, in exsequendis mandatis tuis,
et voluntate tibi et actione placeamus.
Per Dominum.

La struttura letteraria della colletta consta di una duplice invocazione, di cui si determina una causa (« quia ») e un effetto (« ut »). La ripetuta richiesta di aiuto rivolta a Dio all'inizio della celebrazione eucaristica (« Deus, [...] invocationibus nostris adesto propitius et [...] gratiae tuae praesta semper auxilium ») si fonda (« quia ») sulla consapevolezza che la debole natura mortale dei fedeli (« mortalis infirmitas ») non è capace di far nulla, se non è sostenuta da Dio (« sine te nihil potest »). È quanto raccomanda Gesù ai suoi discepoli nell'ultima cena: « Qui manet in me, et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum, quia sine me nihil potestis facere » (*Gv* 15, 5, *Volgata*).

Pregando con questa colletta, la Chiesa riconosce non solo che la condizione di possibilità del suo agire sta nella grazia divina, ma anche che il fine (« ut ») della sua stessa esistenza è il compiacimento di Dio (« ut [...] tibi [...] placeamus »). Si tratta di una consapevolezza ben radicata nella sacra Scrittura, come emerge in maniera emblematica dall'invocazione conclusiva dell'*Epistola agli Ebrei*. In 13, 21, l'autore di questo « discorso di esortazione » (*Eb* 13, 22; cf. *At* 13, 15) prega Dio di intervenire prima a favore della comunità ecclesiale a cui sta predicando (ὁμᾶς, « vi ») e, poi, anche a proprio favore (ἐν ἡμῖν, « in noi »). A riguardo dei suoi ascoltatori, il predicatore chiede al

«Dio della pace» di metterli in grado di compiere la sua volontà (v. 21). Poi, venendo a comprendere anche sé nella preghiera, domanda che sia Dio stesso a realizzare ciò che è di suo gradimento (v. 21): «Il Dio della pace [...] vi renda adatti ad ogni bene, per fare la sua volontà, facendo egli in noi ciò che è gradito [= “quod placeat” (Volgata)] ai suoi occhi, per Gesù Cristo [...]» (vv. 20-21). Constatiamo come, secondo l’agiografo, l’iniziativa di Dio si determini nel senso che è proprio Dio (v. 20) ad agire nell’uomo («facendo egli in noi», v. 21), mediante Gesù Cristo (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). D’altro canto, lo scopo di tale intervento di Dio è compiere «ciò che è a lui gradito» (τό εὐάρεστον ἐπιοῦν αὐτοῦ, v. 21). Quindi, Dio non è soltanto colui al quale deve piacere un determinato comportamento dei cristiani (cf. 12, 28: εὐαρέστως, «in maniera gradita»; 13, 16: εὐαρεστεῖται, «si compiace»), ma è soprattutto il vero protagonista della realizzazione in essi di «ciò che è gradito» a lui. L’agiografo lascia così intendere che l’uomo non è in grado con le sole sue forze di compiere azioni apprezzate da Dio. Ma è esclusivamente Dio, che, mediante Cristo (v. 21; cf. v. 15), crea le condizioni perché il credente, realizzando la volontà divina (cf. 13, 21 e 10, 36), possa comportarsi in maniera tale da piacergli.¹ In nuce, viene qui delineato uno dei concetti portanti dell’antropologia cristiana concernente il delicato rapporto tra grazia divina e libertà umana.

A questo riguardo, sono utili due precisazioni di corollario. Anzitutto, è degno di rilievo il dato che, nell’*Epistola agli Ebrei*, la preghiera di 13, 21, che ribadisce — sia pure con un accento diverso — l’esortazione precedente (cf. *Eb* 10, 36) a fare con perseveranza la volontà di Dio, resta saldamente fondata sulla prospettiva cristologica. In effetti, Gesù Cristo è venuto al mondo precisamente per fare la volontà divina (τοῦ ποιῆσαι, ὁ Θεός, τὸ θέλημα σου, 10, 7. 9; cf. anche 10, 10). È soltanto grazie alla sua mediazione sommo sacerdotale (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 13, 21), realizzatasi nella sua passione, morte e glori-

¹ Si tratta di una tematica cara pure a Paolo (cf., ad esempio, *1 Ts* 2, 13; *Fil* 2, 13). Si legga anche *1 Pt* 5, 10.

ficazione (cf. v. 20), che l'umanità può entrare in un effettivo rapporto di alleanza con Dio e può essere resa adatta da lui a compiere il bene. Un'idea analoga è espressa nella colletta, che da un lato, insiste sulla debolezza umana («sine te nihil potest mortalis infirmitas»); e, dall'altro, fa leva sull'aiuto divino («gratiae tuae praesta semper auxilium»), implorato «per Christum, Dominum nostrum».

La seconda puntualizzazione mostra come i partecipanti alla celebrazione eucaristica si rendano conto che, per piacere a Dio, è necessario coinvolgere tutta la loro esistenza («et voluntate [...] et actione»), ossia «tutto il cuore, tutta l'anima e tutte le forze» (*Dt* 6, 5). Coerentemente con questa visione di un impegno cristiano integrale e totalizzante, volto all'amore di Dio attraverso la pratica dei suoi comandamenti («in exsequendis mandatis tuis»), la *lex orandi* della Chiesa non ripropone una concezione anticotestamentaria dell'osservanza legale del decalogo. Al contrario, la coscienza ecclesiale si attiene alla reinterpretazione cristologica di esso, sintetizzabile nei due comandamenti inscindibili (cf. *1 Gv* 4, 20) dell'amore verso Dio e dell'amore nei confronti del prossimo.² Una presa di posizione molto simile emerge dalla già citata riflessione conclusiva dell'*Epistola agli Ebrei* sui comportamenti umani graditi a Dio. Certo, le azioni dell'uomo che Dio apprezza sono connotate in 13, 15-16 in termini culturali. Pur tuttavia, ad essere definito con il sostantivo «sacrificio» (vv. 15-16) non è solo il «frutto di labbra confessanti il suo nome» (v. 15), ma anche la «beneficenza» e la «condivisione» (v. 16). Possiamo, allora, ritrovare anche qui un'istanza analoga a quella individuata nella colletta: ad essere animata da una dimensione sacrificale di fondo, espressa non solo a livello culturale, ma anche a livello esistenziale, è l'intera vita cristiana. In quanto animata dall'amore verso Dio e dalla carità nei confronti dei fratelli, essa risulta gradita a Dio. Del resto, i cristiani imitano la vicenda esistenziale di Gesù Cristo, in cui l'unico sacrificio della vita si concretizza in modalità differenti, as-

² Cf. *Mt* 22, 34-40 (*Mc* 12, 28-31; *Lc* 10, 25-28); *Gv* 13, 34-35; e anche *Gv* 15, 12. 17; *Rm* 13, 8-10; *Gal* 5, 14; 2 *Gv* 1, 5.

sumendo il valore di sacrificio espiatorio dei peccati umani (cf. 9, 28; 10, 12), di sacrificio di alleanza (cf. 9, 15-24; 13, 20), di sacrificio di consacrazione sacerdotale (cf. 5, 8-9; 10, 10-14; 13, 12) e di sacrificio di lode e di ringraziamento (cf. 2, 12).³

Proseguendo la riflessione sulla tensione dei cristiani a deliziare Dio («ut [...] tibi [...] placeamus») mediante l'osservanza integrale («et voluntate [...] et actione») dei comandamenti divini («in exsequendis mandatis tuis») cristologicamente reinterpretati, possiamo sostenere che, in tutte quelle azioni che partecipano della carità di Cristo, Dio si manifesta. In negativo, questo è comprensibile a partire dal fatto che senza Dio l'essere umano non è capace di far del bene («sine te nihil potest mortalīs infirmitas»); anzi, di per sé, l'uomo non sussisterebbe neppure. Ma in positivo, alla luce della rivelazione biblica, possiamo sostenere che in tutti quegli atti umani che, in qualche modo, rendono reale l'amore, si dà una manifestazione di Dio; appare un segno di rivelazione anticipata di ciò che Dio è in definitiva, ossia della sua fedeltà, della sua giustizia, della sua misericordia; in una parola: della sua carità. Più esattamente ancora: il Dio rivelato dalla vita, dalla morte e dalla risurrezione di Cristo «è carità» (*1 Gv* 1, 8. 16). Perciò, nell'atto di chi dà da mangiare a chi ha fame, oppure di chi visita il malato o il carcerato, si sprigiona un segno che rivela che il Dio di Gesù è carità (cf. *Mt* 25, 31-46). E questo segno di rivelazione di Dio, prima ancora che valere come testimonianza per altri, è un indizio che rivela Dio a colui che vive la carità. Per questo, il giudice escatologico, alla domanda dei giusti sul momento della «cristofania» (cf. vv. 37-39), risponde: «Ogni volta che avete fatto queste cose a uno solo di questi miei fratelli più piccoli, le avete fatte a me» (v. 40). In effetti, questa logica di *Mt* 25, fondandosi in ultima istanza sulla creazione dell'uomo in Cristo,⁴ vale per ogni atto autenticamente umano. È valida perfino nel caso in cui l'atto di carità non sia

³ Cf. Albert VANHOYE, «Culto antico e culto nuovo nell'Epistola agli Ebrei», in *Rivista Liturgica* 65 (1978) 595-608, in particolare p. 601.

⁴ Cf., ad esempio, *Gv* 1, 3. 10; *1 Cor* 8, 6; *Col* 1, 16; *Ef* 1, 4. 10; 2, 10; *Eb* 1, 2; *Ap* 3, 14.

compiuto intenzionalmente per Cristo. Tant'è vero che i giusti della parabola evangelica del giudizio finale non si sono neanche accorti del segno di Dio, che si sprigionava dalle loro buone opere. Eppure, «ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est»!⁵

Alla luce di queste rapide suggestioni, si comprende perché i fedeli si appellino a Dio: si rendono conto, infatti, che se la fecondità della loro esistenza dipende unicamente da lui, vale la pena di riporre in lui le proprie speranze («Deus, in te sperantium fortitudo!»).

Franco MANZI

⁵ «Antiphona 1 Joann. 2; 3; 4. Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. [...]» («Feria Quinta in Coena Domini», in: *Missale Romanum ex Decreto SS. Concilii Tridentini restitutum, S. Pii V Pontificis Maximi jussu editum, aliorum Pontificum cura recognitum, a Pio X reformatum et Benedicti XV auctoritate Vulgatum*, Editio XVIII juxta Typicam Vaticanam, Ratisbonae 1935, p. 189).

ACTUOSITAS LITURGICA

Refertur hic, adhibitis notitiis ab ipsis mandatis, de actuositate Commissionum diversarum Conferentiarum Episcoporum de re liturgica aliisque ad eam attinentibus.

POLONIA

La Commissione per il Culto Divino e la Disciplina dei Sacramenti dell'Episcopato Polacco è composta da quattro Membri (vescovi) e nove Consultori (8 preti e un laico). La Commissione svolge due volte l'anno le Sessioni Ordinarie.

I Consultori della Commissione assieme ad altri autori preparano le traduzioni dei testi liturgici presentate per l'approvazione della Conferenza dell'Episcopato Polacco. Il Presidente della Commissione riferisce sulle novità liturgiche durante le Sessioni Plenarie della Conferenza dell'Episcopato Polacco.

Sono state pubblicate le traduzioni dell'Istruzione *Liturgiam authenticam* (nel Bollettino *Anamnesis* n. 29) e del *Direttorio sulla pietà popolare e liturgia* (Poznan 2003).

Attualmente stiamo preparando una emendata edizione del primo volume della *Liturgia Horarum*, la traduzione del *Martyrologium Romanum* e la traduzione del *Missale Romanum* (*editio typica tertia*).

La Commissione redige e pubblica dal 1995, quattro volte l'anno, il Bollettino *Anamnesis* (in Avvento, in Quaresima, a Pentecoste e in ottobre). Sono stati pubblicati 36 numeri.

Nel Bollettino sono stati presentati negli ultimi anni: l'insegnamento del Santo Padre sulla Liturgia, i documenti della Santa Sede sulla Liturgia, l'insegnamento dei Vescovi (Lettere Pastorali, Conferenze sulla Liturgia), articoli sulla formazione liturgica, sulla Liturgia Pastorale, sull'Arte liturgica, sulla predicazione e varie informazioni.

La Commissione ha un sito Internet www.kkbids.episkopat.pl. Dal 1 marzo 2002 questo sito è stato visitato da 24408 utenti.

In questo sito sono stati introdotti i numeri 9-36 del Bollettino *Anamnesis*.

Dall'anno 1997 la Commissione organizza nel mese di ottobre a Jasna Gora i Simposi sulla Liturgia destinati alle persone consacrate. Ai Simposi partecipano 150-200 persone. Durante i giorni 23-24 ottobre 2003 si è svolto il Simposio dal tema: Riflessioni sulla Enciclica *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. Le conferenze sono state pubblicate nel Bollettino *Anamnesis* ed anche in un libro.

Il 17 e 18 marzo 2003 ha avuto luogo un incontro dei Responsabili per i Servizi liturgici delle Diocesi organizzato dalla Sottocommissione per i Servizi liturgici. Ogni anno si svolgerà un tale incontro.

Nel marzo 2003 nella Facoltà di Teologia a Olsztyn e nel novembre 2003 nella Facoltà di Teologia a Opole sono stati organizzati Simposi riguardanti il tema: *Direttorio sulla pietà popolare e liturgia* con gli interventi dei Consultori della Commissione.

Il 10 e 11 settembre 2003 si è svolto un incontro dei professori di Liturgia in Siedlce con l'intervento del Presidente della Commissione. Il Presidente della Commissione ha partecipato al Simposio tenendo una Conferenza dal tema: *Storia della musica liturgica in Polonia tra passato e presente* (Lublin 11-14 settembre 2003).

Il 3 aprile 2004 si è svolto, per la prima volta, un Pellegrinaggio dei Ministri straordinari dell'Eucaristia di tutte le Diocesi al Santuario Mariano di Jasna Gora.

I Rappresentanti della Commissione (il Segretario e il Presidente) hanno partecipato all'incontro dei Segretari delle Commissioni liturgiche Nazionali d'Europa a Dobogoko (Ungheria).

La Commissione collabora con le Commissioni diocesane per la Liturgia. Nel mese di aprile 2003 si è svolto un incontro dei presidenti delle Commissioni Diocesane per la Liturgia a Varsavia, dal tema *Ars celebrandi*, organizzato dalla stessa Commissione Liturgica. Gli interventi sono stati pubblicati nel libro *Ars celebrandi* (Katowice 2003).

✠ Stefan CICHY

Vescovo Ausiliare di Katowice
Presidente della Commissione

VII CONGRESSO INTERNAZIONALE DI LITURGIA

« LA CRESIMA. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION »

Nei giorni 6-8 maggio 2004 presso la Pontificia Università Gregoriana si è tenuto il VII Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia, promosso dal Pontificio Istituto Liturgico Sant'Anselmo.

Nella prima sessione del giorno 6 maggio è intervenuto il Prof. Pius Tragan, osb, con il tema *Nascere da acqua e da Spirito. Il dono dello Spirito Santo nelle comunità apostoliche*. Nella sessione pomeridiana sono intervenuti il Prof. Vittorio Grossi, osa, col il tema *De unctione spiritus-verbi in alcuni testi e contesti patristici* e il Prof. Gabriel Ramis col tema *La Confirmación en la Iglesia hispánica*.

Il giorno venerdì 7 maggio alla sessione del mattino sono intervenuti i Proff. Maciej Zachara col tema *La Confermazione nel primo millennio in Occidente* e Nathan Mitchell col tema *A Sacrament in Search of a Theology: Confirmation in the Latin West during the Second Millennium*.

Nella Sessione pomeridiana sono intervenuti i Proff. Pierpaolo Caspani col tema *La Confermazione nella riflessione teologica del secolo XX* e Paul De Clerck con *La confirmation, finale du baptême, porte de l'eucharistie*.

Il giorno 8 maggio si è svolta una tavola rotonda dal tema *Orientamenti e proposte per il Sacramento della Cresima*. Ha concluso la tre giorni col discorso di sintesi il Prof. Matias Augé, cmf.

Ad alcune sedute del Congresso ha presenziato anche S.E. Mons. Domenico Sorrentino, Arcivescovo Segretario della Congregazione.

CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO
ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

MARTYROLOGIUM ROMANUM

EX DECRETO SACROSANCTI OECUMENICI CONCILII VATICANI II INSTAURATUM
AUCTORITATE IOANNIS PAULI PP. II PROMULGATUM

EDITIO TYPICA

Martyrologium Romanum, ad normam decretorum Constitutionis de Sacra Liturgia recognitum, quo ditius fieret et clarius, iuxta adhortationem Patrum Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II, sanctitatem in mundo per opportuna exempla imitanda eximiorum virorum et mulierum Dei significaret, ad exsequendam instaurationem liturgicam apparatus, hoc anno 2001 publici iuris factum est a Congregatione de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum in prima editione typica post Concilium celebratum, attentis animadversionibus et suggestionibus, quae ad textum illum a Caesare Card. Baronio anno 1584 redactum emendandum e scientia historica et hagiologica receptae sint.

Opus ad normam articulis 23 Constitutionis Apostolicae *Sacrosanctum Concilium* apparatus est, ut accurata investigatio theologica, historica et pastoralis singularum partium Liturgiae semper praecedat atque aperiat viam verae ac legitimae progressionis, quem ad finem Passiones praesertim et Vitae Sanctorum iustae fidei historicae rationi reddendae erant.

Relatione habita cum praecedentibus, editio haec peculiariter praebet elementa, quae sequuntur:

- materia, sicut ceteri libri liturgici instaurati, ditata est opportunis *Praenotandis*, ut aptius doctrina de sanctitate in oeconomia salutis et in vita Ecclesiae, de imitatione Christi in vita Sanctorum, indoles seu natura liturgica Martyrologii, structura generalis et ordo lectionis textus exponantur, necnon brevi tractatu de pronuntiatione lunae, elogiis peculiaribus pro celebrationibus mobilibus, lectionibus brevibus et orationibus ad ritum lectionis Martyrologii pertinentibus;

- clarius Sancti et Beati dispositi sunt in elencho diei iuxta ordinem chronologicum, praemisso numero identificationis, qui per indices inventionem expediat singuli nominis;

- elogia Sanctorum Calendarii generalis Ritus romani ob peculiare momentum eorum semper ut prima commemoratio diei exstant, typis maioribus aliis exarata;

- Beati a media usque ad nostram aetatem et Sancti omnes localis vel particularis momenti asterisco quodam distinguuntur post numerum progredientem identificationis addito;

- ad modum appendicis insertus est *Index nominum Sanctorum et Beatorum*, cum mentione numeri identificationis et anni obitus inter parentheses.

Venditio operis fit cura Librariae Editricis Vaticanae

CONGREGAZIONE PER IL CULTO DIVINO
E LA DISCIPLINA DEI SACRAMENTI

SPIRITUS ET SPONSA

*Atti della Giornata commemorativa
del XL della "Sacrosanctum Concilium"*

Roma, 4 dicembre 2003

La Congregazione per il Culto Divino e la Disciplina dei Sacramenti è lieta di offrire gli Atti della Giornata commemorativa del XL della *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, celebrata in Vaticano, il 4 dicembre 2003. Essa ha ribadito ciò che Giovanni Paolo II ha costantemente sottolineato nei venticinque anni del suo Magistero sulla Cattedra di Pietro: Il Concilio è stato una grande «grazia», che spetta alla Chiesa del nostro tempo recepire in tutta la sua portata.

Per questo il Convegno non si è limitato a rievocare e rileggere la Costituzione conciliare, ma ha inteso portare l'attenzione sulla sua ricezione nell'arco di tempo che coincide con l'attuale Pontificato. Al tempo stesso, si è prestata attenzione alla felice coincidenza del centenario del Motu Proprio «*Tra le sollecitudini*» di San Pio X: ne è scaturita una stimolante riflessione sulla musica liturgica.

Di questa lettura insieme storica e prospettica dell'evento conciliare si è fatto ancora una volta interprete autorevole Giovanni Paolo II, con due documenti apparsi a distanza di pochi giorni: la Lettera Apostolica «*Spiritus et Sponsa*» e il «*Chirografo*» sulla Musica Sacra. Essi vengono riproposti all'inizio di questo volume con traduzioni in diverse lingue.

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Rilegato in brossura, pp. 389

€ 15,00