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Catholic Church - Liturgy and ritual.

THIRD INSTRUCTION
ON THE
CORRECT IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE
CONSTITUTION
ON THE
SACRED LITURGY

Congregation For Divine
Worship

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LITURGICAE INSTAURATIONES

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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Congregation For Divine Worship

THIRD INSTRUCTION ON THE CORRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

The reforms which have so far been put into effect in application of the Liturgical Constitution of the Second Vatican Council have been concerned above all with the celebration of the Eucharistic Mystery. "For the most blessed Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ Himself, our Passover and living Bread. Through His very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, He offers life to men. They are thereby invited and led to offer themselves, their work, and all created things together with Him."¹ In the same way, when the Church assembles to offer the sacrifice of the Mass according to the renewed form of celebration, it is made manifest that the Mass is the center of the Church's life to which all other activity is directed. Thus the purpose of the reform of the rites is to promote a pastoral action which has its summit and source in the sacred Liturgy and to bring to life the paschal mystery of Christ.²

This work of renewal has been carried out, step by step, during the past six years; it has prepared the way for the passage from the former Mass Liturgy to the renewed Liturgy outlined in detail in the Roman Missal with the *Ordo Missae* and the General Instruction which it includes. Now it can be said that a new and promising future lies ahead for pastoral-liturgical action; the way is open to make full use

of all the possibilities contained in the new Lectionary for Mass and in the abundant variety of forms contained in the Roman Missal.

The wide choice of texts and the flexibility of the rubrics make it possible to adapt the celebration to the circumstances, the mentality and the preparation of the assembly. Thus there is no need to resort to arbitrary adaptations, which would only weaken the impact of the Liturgy. The possibilities offered by the Church's reforms can make the celebration vital, moving and spiritually effective.

The step by step introduction of the new liturgical forms has taken into consideration both the overall renewal program and the great variety of local conditions throughout the world. Thus these new forms have been well received by the majority of clergy and laity,³ although here and there they have met with resistance and impatience.

There were those who, for the sake of conserving ancient tradition, were unwilling to accept these reforms. There were others who, concerned with urgent pastoral needs, felt they could not wait for the definitive renewal to be promulgated. As a result, some individuals, acting on private initiative, arrived at hasty and sometimes unwise solutions, and made changes, additions or simplifications in the rites which at times went against the basic principles of the Liturgy. This only troubled the conscience of the faithful and impeded or made more difficult the progress of genuine renewal.

For these reasons, many bishops, priests and laymen have asked the Apostolic See to intervene; they desired that the Church use her authority to keep and increase that fruitful union of minds and hearts which is the characteristic of the Christian people in its encounter with God.

However, this was not possible as long as the "Consilium" was engaged in its task of liturgical renewal, but now it can be done on the basis of the final results of this work.

But first of all, the bishops are called upon to exercise their responsibility. It is they whom the Holy Spirit has made leaders in the Church of God;⁴ they are "the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, just as they are governors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church committed to them."⁵ It is their duty to guide, direct, stimulate and sometimes correct, but always to be shining examples in carrying out the genuine renewal of the Liturgy. It must also be their concern that the whole body of the Church can move ahead with one mind, in the unity of charity, on the diocesan, national and international level. This work of the bishops is

necessary and especially urgent in this case, because of the close relation between Liturgy and Faith, so that what benefits the one, benefits the other.

With the help of their liturgical commissions, the bishops should be accurately informed about the religious and social condition of the faithful which they serve; in order to meet their spiritual needs in the best way possible, they should learn to make full use of the means offered by the rites. By thus evaluating the situation in their diocese, they will be able to note what helps and what hinders true renewal and engage in a wise and prudent work of persuasion and guidance, a work which both recognizes the real needs of the faithful and follows the guidelines laid down in the new liturgical laws.

A well-informed bishop will be a great help to the priests who must exercise their ministry in hierarchical fellowship with him;⁶ his knowledge will make it easier for them to work together with him in obedience for the more perfect expression of divine worship and for the sanctification of souls.

Thus it is the scope of this document to aid and encourage the bishops in putting fully into effect the liturgical norms, especially those contained in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. In order to restore the orderly and serene celebration of the Eucharist, the center of the Church's life as "a sign of unity, a bond of charity,"⁷ the following guidelines should be followed:

1. The recent reforms have simplified liturgical formulas, gestures and actions, according to the principle laid down in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension and normally should not require much explanation."⁸ Yet this simplification must not go beyond certain limits, for otherwise the Liturgy would be deprived of its sacred signs and of its appeal to the senses. These are necessary to make the mystery of salvation really effective in the Christian community and, by means of catechetical instruction, to make it rightly understood under the visible symbols.

Liturgical reform is not at all synonymous with so-called desacralization and is not intended as an occasion for what is called secularization. Thus the Liturgy must keep a dignified and sacred character.

The effectiveness of liturgical actions does not consist in the continual search for newer rites or simpler forms, but in an ever deeper insight into the Word of God and the mystery which is celebrated.

The priest will assure the presence of God and His mystery in the celebration by following the rites of the Church rather than his own preferences.

The priest should keep in mind that, by imposing his own personal restoration of sacred rites, he is offending the rights of the faithful and is introducing individualism and idiosyncrasy into celebrations which belong to the whole Church.

The ministry of the priest is the ministry of the Church, and it can be exercised only in obedience, in hierarchical fellowship, and in devotion to the service of God and of his brothers. The hierarchical structure of the Liturgy, its sacramental value, and the respect due to the community of God's people require that the priest exercise his liturgical service as a "faithful minister and steward of the mysteries of God."⁹ He should not add any rite which is not continued in the liturgical books.

2. The Holy Scriptures, of all the texts proclaimed in the liturgical assembly, are of the greatest value: in the readings, God speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His word, announces the good news of the Gospel.¹⁰ Therefore:

(a) Full importance must be given to the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. Other readings, whether from sacred or profane authors of past or present, may never be substituted for the Word of God, nor may only a single Scripture lesson be read. The purpose of the homily is to explain the readings and make them relevant for the present day. This is the task of the priest, and the faithful should not add comments or engage in dialogue during the homily.

(b) The Liturgy of the Word prepares the assembly and leads them to the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus the two parts of the Mass form one act of worship¹¹ and may not be celebrated separately, at different times or in different places.

Another liturgical action or part of the divine office may be integrated into the Liturgy of the Word; special rules for this will be indicated in the relative liturgical books.

3. The liturgical texts composed by the Church also deserve great respect. No one may make changes, substitutions, additions or deletions in them.¹²

(a) This rule applies especially to the *Ordo Missae*. The formulas which it contains, in the official translations, may never be altered, not even when Mass is sung. However, some parts of the rite such as the

penitential rite, the eucharistic prayer, the acclamations of the people, the final blessing, can be chosen from various alternative formulas, as indicated for each rite.

(b) The entrance and communion songs can be selected from the collections approved by the Bishops' Conferences. In choosing the songs for Mass, the Conferences should consider not only their suitability to the time and circumstances of the celebration, but also the needs of the faithful who will sing them.

(c) All means must be used to promote singing by the people. New forms should be used, which are adapted to the different mentalities and to modern tastes. The Bishops' Conferences should indicate selections of songs to be used in Masses for special groups, e.g., young people or children; the words, melody and rhythm of these songs, and the instruments used for accompaniment, should correspond to the sacred character of the celebration and the place of worship.

The Church does not exclude any kind of sacred music from the liturgy.¹³ However, not every type of music, song or instrument is equally capable of stimulating prayer or expressing the mystery of Christ. Music in the celebration must serve the worship of God, and thus must have qualities of holiness and good form,¹⁴ be suited to the liturgical action and the nature of each of its parts, not impede the active participation of the whole assembly,¹⁵ but must direct the attention of mind and heart to the mystery which is celebrated.

It is the duty of the Bishops' Conferences to lay down guidelines for liturgical music, or, in the absence of general norms, the local Bishops may make these for their dioceses.¹⁶ Attention should be given to the choice of musical instruments: these should be few in number, suited to the place and the community, should favor prayer and not be too loud.

(d) Great freedom of choice is given for selecting the orations; especially on weekdays *per annum* these may be taken from any one of the 34 Mass formularies, from the Masses for special intentions,¹⁷ or from the votive Masses.

Furthermore, in translating these texts the Bishops' Conferences can make use of the special norms given by the "Consilium"; these are contained in the Instruction of January 25, 1969, on *Translation of Liturgical Texts* (no. 34).¹⁸

(e) With regard to the readings, besides those indicated for each Sunday, feast and ferial day, a wide choice of readings is given for

the celebration of the Sacraments and for special circumstances. When Mass is celebrated with special groups, texts which are more suited to the group may be chosen, provided they are taken from some approved lectionary.¹⁹

(f) During the celebration of the Mass, the priest may say a few words to the people: at the beginning, before the readings, the preface, the prayer after communion, and before the dismissal.²⁰ But he should abstain from adding comments during the eucharistic prayer. These words should be brief and to the point, and should be prepared beforehand. If other comments or announcements need to be made, these should be made by the lay leader of the assembly, but he should avoid all exaggeration and limit himself to what is necessary.

(g) In the general intercessions (prayer of the faithful), besides the prayers for the Church, the world and the needy, it is good to add some special intentions for the local community. Other intentions should not be inserted in the Roman canon at the remembrances of the living and the dead. These intentions for the general intercessions should be written down beforehand, in the style of the prayer of the faithful,²¹ and can be read by different members of the assembly.

If the priest knows how to make intelligent use of these possibilities, they give him such a wide range of choice that he will have no need to resort to private adaptations. Priests should be taught to prepare their celebration, taking note of the circumstances and needs of the faithful and acting with confidence along the lines laid down by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

4. The eucharistic prayer is the prayer of the priest; of all the parts of the Mass, it is that which belongs especially to him alone, because of his office.²² Thus it is not permitted to have some part of it read by a minister of lower rank, by the assembly or by a lay person. This would be against the hierarchical structure of the Liturgy in which everyone must take part by doing solely and totally what is required of him.²³ Thus the priest alone must say the whole eucharistic prayer.

5. The bread used for the celebration of the Eucharist is wheat bread, and, according to the ancient custom of the Latin Church, is unleavened.²⁴

The truth of the sign demands that this bread look like real food which is broken and shared among brothers. However, it must *always* be made in the traditional form, according to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal;²⁵ this applies both to the individual hosts for the

communion of the faithful and to larger altar breads which are broken up into smaller parts for distribution.

The need for greater truth in the eucharistic sign is met more by the color, taste and texture of the bread than by its shape.

Out of reverence for the Sacrament, great care and attention should be used in preparing the altar bread; it should be easy to break and should not be unpleasant for the faithful to eat. Bread which tastes uncooked, or which becomes dry and inedible too quickly, must never be used.

Great reverence must also be used in breaking the consecrated bread and in receiving the bread and wine, both at communion and in consuming what remains after communion.²⁶

6. Communion under both kinds is the more perfect sacramental expression of the people's participation in the Eucharist.²⁷ The cases in which this may be done are enumerated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no. 242) and in the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship on extending the possibilities of communion under both kinds, *Sacramentali Communione*, of June 29, 1970. Therefore:

(a) Ordinaries, within the limits established by the Bishops' Conference, should not give general permission but should clearly state the cases and celebrations in which it is given. They should avoid occasions when there are large numbers of communicants. The groups should be limited in number, well ordered and homogeneous.

(b) The faithful should be given special instruction, so that when they receive communion under both kinds, they can fully understand its meaning.

(c) A priest, deacon or ordained acolyte should be present to offer the chalice to the communicants. In the absence of another minister, the priest should follow the rite given in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no. 245).

It is best to avoid the practice of passing the chalice from one communicant to another or of having the communicant take the chalice directly from the altar. In these cases communion should be administered by intinction.

(d) The office of administering communion belongs first to priests, then to deacons and, in some cases, to acolytes. The Holy See can permit the designation of some other worthy person to whom this

office may be entrusted. Those who have not been appointed must not distribute communion or carry the Blessed Sacrament.

The manner of distributing communion should follow the prescriptions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (nos. 244-252) and the above mentioned instruction of June 29, 1970. If permission is given for administering communion in a different way, the conditions laid down by the Holy See should be observed.

(e) Where there is a lack of priests, the bishop may, with permission of the Apostolic See, designate other persons (such as catechists, especially in the missions) to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word and to distribute holy communion. They may never say the eucharistic prayer, but if they find it useful to read the narrative of the Last Supper, they should use it as a reading in the Liturgy of the Word. Thus such liturgical assemblies consist of the celebration of the Word, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the distribution of holy communion according to the prescribed rite.

(f) In whatever way communion is administered, it must be done in a dignified, reverent and orderly manner, with the respect due to the Sacrament. Attention must be paid to the nature of each liturgical assembly and to the age, condition and preparation of the communicants.²⁸

7. The traditional liturgical norms of the Church prohibit women (young girls, married women, religious) from serving the priests at the altar, even in chapels of women's homes, convents, schools and institutes.

However, norms have been published according to which women may:

(a) proclaim the Scripture readings, except the Gospel. Use should be made of modern technical means, so that they can easily be heard by all. The Bishops' Conferences can determine the place in the assembly from which women may read the Word of God;

(b) say the petitions of the General Intercessions (prayers of the faithful);

(c) play the organ and other instruments which may be used in church; lead the singing of the assembly;

(d) make announcements and give explanatory comments to aid the people's understanding of the rite;

(e) fulfill certain offices of service to the faithful which in some places are usually entrusted to women, such as receiving the faithful at the doors of the church and directing them to their places, guiding them in processions, and collecting their offerings in church.²⁹

8. Special care and attention is due to the sacred vessels, vestments and church furnishings. Greater freedom is given with regard to their material and design, so that the various peoples and artists may have the widest possible scope for applying their talents to divine worship. However, the following should be kept in mind:

(a) Things which are used for worship must always be “of high quality, durable, and suited to liturgical use.”³⁰ Thus common or household articles may not be used in the Liturgy.

(b) Chalices and patens should be consecrated by the bishop before they are used; he will judge whether or not they are suitable for the Liturgy.

(c) “The vestment common to all ministers of whatever rank is the alb.”³¹ The practice of wearing only a stole over the monastic cowl or ordinary clerical garb for concelebration is reprobated as an abuse. It is never permitted to celebrate Mass or perform other sacred actions, such as the laying on of hands at ordinations or the administering of other sacraments or blessings, while wearing only the stole over non-clerical clothes.

(d) The Bishops’ Conferences may decide whether or not materials other than those traditionally used may be employed for church furnishings and vestments. They should inform the Apostolic See about their decision.³²

Bishops’ Conferences may also propose to the Holy See adaptations in the design of sacred vestments in conformity with the needs and customs of their regions.³³

9. The Eucharist is normally celebrated in church.³⁴ The Ordinary, within his own jurisdiction, will decide when there is a real necessity which permits celebrating outside the church. In such a case, careful attention should be given to the choice of a place and a table which are fitting for the eucharistic sacrifice. As far as possible, dining halls and tables on which meals are eaten should not be used for the celebration.

10. Bishops should give special attention to a definitive arrangement of the church and especially the altar and sanctuary which is suitable for the celebration of the renewed liturgy. In doing this they

should follow the norms of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal³⁵ and the document *Eucharisticum Mysterium*.³⁶

Temporary arrangements made in recent years should be given a final form. Some of these provisory solutions still in use are liturgically and artistically unsatisfactory and render difficult the worthy celebration of the Mass; the "Consilium" has ordered that they be corrected.³⁷

With the help of diocesan committees on liturgy and sacred art and after consultation, if necessary, with other experts and the civil authorities, a detailed study should be made of new building projects, and a review of temporary arrangements in existing churches; all the churches should be given a definitive arrangement which respects any artistic monuments, adapting them as far as possible to present day needs.

11. To make the renewed liturgy understood, a great deal of work still remains to be done in translating accurately and in publishing the new liturgical books. They must be translated completely and must replace all other liturgical books previously in use.

If the Bishops' Conferences find it necessary and useful to add other formulas or make certain changes, these should first be presented for approval to the Holy See; in printing these additions or changes, they should be distinguished from the official Latin text by some typographical sign.

This work of translation will produce better results if it is done slowly, with the help of many experts, not only theologians and liturgists, but also writers and poets. Thus the vernacular liturgical texts will be works of real literary merit and of enduring quality, whose harmony of style and richness of expression will reflect the profound significance of their content.³⁸

In publishing the vernacular liturgical books, the tradition should be kept of not indicating the names of the authors and translators. These books are destined for the use of the Christian community, and it is the hierarchy which orders their preparation and publication, and does not depend on the consent of private individuals, which would be an offense against the Church's freedom and the dignity of her liturgy.

12. When liturgical experimentation is seen to be necessary or useful, permission is granted in writing by this Sacred Congregation alone; the experiments will be made according to clearly defined norms, under the responsibility of the competent local authority.

With regard to the Mass, those faculties which were granted in view of the reform of the rite are no longer in force. With the publication of the new Roman Missal, the norms and the form of the eucharistic celebration are those given in the General Instruction and the *Ordo Missae*.

The Bishops' Conferences should decide first on the adaptations already foreseen by the liturgical books and submit their decision for confirmation to the Holy See.

If wider adaptations are necessary, in accordance with number 40 of the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the bishops should make a detailed study of the culture, traditions and special pastoral needs of their people. If they find there is need for some practical experimentation, this should be done within clearly defined limits. Experiments should be carried out by well prepared groups, under the direction of capable ministers, especially appointed for the task. Experiments should not be made in large assemblies, nor should they be given publicity. They should be few in number and carried out for periods no longer than a year, after which a report should be made to the Apostolic See. The liturgical changes requested may not be put into effect while awaiting the reply of the Holy See. If changes are to be made in the structure of the rites or in the order of parts as given in the liturgical books, or if completely new actions or texts are to be introduced, a complete outline and program of the modifications should be proposed to the Apostolic See before any experiments are begun.

Such a procedure is required both by the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and by the importance of the matter.³⁹

13. Finally, it must be remembered that the liturgical renewal is a concern of the whole Church. At pastoral meetings, this renewal should be studied in both its theoretical and its practical aspects as an instrument for the Christian formation of the people, so that the liturgy may become for them a living and meaningful experience.

The present reform, drawing upon an ancient yet living spiritual tradition, has sought to create a liturgical prayer which is visibly the work of the whole People of God, structured in its variety of orders and ministries.⁴⁰ This unity of the whole body of the Church is the guarantee of the efficacy and authenticity of the Liturgy.

The Pastors of the Church should above all consider themselves ministers of the community's liturgy; in their generous fidelity to the norms and directives of the Church, and in their spirit of faith, they

should be examples for the people. Thus by constantly deepening their own understanding of the liturgical mysteries and by communicating this understanding to the faithful, they will contribute to that growth and progress of the Church which is the fruit of the renewed liturgy, a liturgy which is open to the needs of our times and yet far from every kind of secularism and individualism.

By mandate of Pope Paul VI, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship prepared this instruction; the Supreme Pontiff approved and confirmed it by his authority on September 3 of this year, and ordered that it be published and observed by all.

From the office of the Congregation for Divine Worship, September 5, 1970.

Benno Card. Gut
Prefect

A. Bugnini
Secretary

NOTES

- ¹ II Vatican Council, Decree on Life and Ministry of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, No. 5: A.A.S. 58 (1966) 997.
- ² Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites (SCR), Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, Nos. 5, 6: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 878.
- ³ Cf. Paul VI, Address to General Audience, August 20, 1969, *L'Osservatore Romano*, August 21, 1969.
- ⁴ Acts 20:28.
- ⁵ Vat. II, Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, No. 15: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 106.
- ⁶ Vat. II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, No. 15: A.A.S. 58 (1966) 1014-1015.
- ⁷ Vat. II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 47: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 113.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 34: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 109.
- ⁹ 1 Cor. 4:1.
- ¹⁰ Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Nos. 7, 33: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 100-101, 108.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, No. 56: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 115.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, No. 22, 3: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 106.
- ¹³ Cf. SCR, Instruction on Sacred Music, *Musicam Sacram*, March 5, 1967, No. 9: A.A.S. 59 (1967) 303; Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 116: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 131.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 4: A.A.S. 59 (1967) 301.
- ¹⁵ Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Nos. 119-120: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 130.
- ¹⁶ Cf. SCR *Musicam Sacram*, No. 9: A.A.S. 59 (1967) 303.
- ¹⁷ Cf. General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 323.
- ¹⁸ Cf. *Notitiae* 5 (1969) 9-10 (also nos. 21-24, pp. 7-8).
- ¹⁹ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship (CDW), Instruction on Masses in Small Groups, *Actio Pastoralis*, May 15, 1969, No. 6, e: A.A.S. 61 (1969) 809.
- ²⁰ Cf. General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 11.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, Nos. 45-46.
- ²² *Ibid.*, No. 10.
- ²³ Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 28: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 107.
- ²⁴ General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 282.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 283.
- ²⁶ SCR, Instruction on Eucharistic Worship, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, May 25, 1967, No. 48: A.A.S. 59 (1967) 566.
- ²⁷ General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 240.
- ²⁸ CDW, Instruction on the Extension of the Faculty to Distribute Holy Communion Under Both Kinds, *Sacramentali Communionem*, June 29, 1970, No. 6: *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 3, 1970.
- ²⁹ General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 68.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 288.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, No. 298.
- ³² Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 128: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 132-133.
- ³³ General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 304.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 260.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, Nos. 153-280.
- ³⁶ Cf. Nos. 52-57: A.A.S. 59 (1967) 567-569.
- ³⁷ Cf. Letter of Cardinal Lercaro, Chairman of "Consilium," to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences, June 30, 1965: *Notitiae* 1 (1965) 261-262.
- ³⁸ Paul VI, Discourse to Italian Liturgical Commissions, February 7, 1969: *L'Osservatore Romano*, February 8, 1969.
- ³⁹ Vat. II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 40: A.A.S. 56 (1964) 111.
- ⁴⁰ General Instruction of Roman Missal, No. 58.

