



# NewsLetter

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### September 2019 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish

The Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish met at the USCCB headquarters in Washington, DC on September 18-19, 2019, resuming its meeting schedule after having to cancel its anticipated meetings in fall 2018 and spring 2019 due to various conflicts.

Members and consultants discussed possible ways to address the need for better liturgical formation and catechesis that emerged from the recommendations of the Fifth National *Encuentro* of Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The Subcommittee also voted to recommend the preparation of a new Spanish edition of the *Ritual de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos* to complement the forthcoming English version of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The Committee on Divine Worship will vote on the recommendation at their November 2019 meeting.

### Clarification on the Designation of Cathedrals as Minor Basilicas

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is authorized, on behalf of the Holy Father, to grant the title of Minor Basilica to churches that have a special importance – architecturally, historically, liturgically, and pastorally. When a bishop wishes to request this honor for a church in his diocese, the Conference of Bishops has the duty to verify that the application is complete and to grant the *nihil obstat* to the request; the application is then forwarded to the Holy See. In the United States, the Secretariat of Divine Worship assists the USCCB President and his staff in this process.

Occasionally the Holy See has granted Minor Basilica status to cathedral churches, and has done so to more than fifteen cathedrals in the United States. The Congregation has recently showed a reluctance to grant this honor to cathedrals, however, because cathedrals already have an inherent dignity and play a prominent role as the “mother church” of the diocese. Due to the Conference’s role in granting its *nihil obstat*, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, USCCB President, wrote to the Holy See asking for a clarification.

The Congregation’s current norms for this process are found in its 1989 Decree *Domus ecclesiae*, the introductory section of which includes the following paragraphs:

Among the churches of any diocese the cathedral church holds the first place and the greatest dignity. In it is placed the *cathedra*, the sign of the Bishop's teaching authority and power, as pastor of the same diocese and the sign of communion with the Roman *cathedra* of Peter. Next there are the parish churches, which are the homes of the various communities of the diocese. In addition, there are shrines to which the Christian faithful of the diocese or of other local Churches go on pilgrimage.

Among these churches and others of different categories are found some that have particular importance for liturgical and pastoral life. These may be honored by the Supreme Pontiff with the title of minor basilica, thereby signifying their particular link with the Roman Church and the Supreme Pontiff.

On June 27, 2019, the Congregation responded to Cardinal DiNardo's letter and offered an important clarification regarding *Domus ecclesiae*, namely, that the phrase "among these churches" (*has inter ecclesias*) at the beginning of the second paragraph quoted above does not refer to cathedrals, but rather only to parish churches and shrines. While a cathedral can still be named a Minor Basilica, this is to be seen as an exception to the norm. The Holy See's response further stated that it "will study any request [for Minor Basilica designation] that is forwarded" from a Conference of Bishops, but observed that a cathedral would only be so designated when there are "very particular and compelling reasons."

Since it remains possible for a cathedral to receive this honor, the USCCB will continue to grant the *nihil obstat* if a bishop submits a duly completed application for Minor Basilica status in these cases. However, in light of the Congregation's recent clarification, a bishop will need to weigh carefully whether it would be prudent to undertake the lengthy application process to have a cathedral designated as a Minor Basilica.

The full text of *Domus ecclesiae*, as well as information about obtaining the application materials for a petition of Minor Basilica designation, is available on the USCCB website: [www.USCCB.org/about/divine-worship/policies/minor-basilica.cfm](http://www.USCCB.org/about/divine-worship/policies/minor-basilica.cfm).

## **From Liturgical Apostolate to Divine Worship: The Liturgical Renewal Thus Far**

The liturgical committee of the bishops of the United States – Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Committee on Divine Worship – has, for over sixty years, sought to help clergy and faithful alike to appreciate the richness of the Sacred Liturgy and implement the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Recently, the *Newsletter* has explored a number of themes that occupied the time and attention of the Committee from its beginnings, through the Council and afterward, and into the present: the history of its establishment and its renewed mission as a result of the Council (August 2018); the choice of vernacular languages introduced into the liturgy of the United States (October 2018); the growth of Hispanic/Latino liturgical efforts and Spanish ritual books (November-December 2018); and the development of the *Lectionary for Mass* (March-April 2019). Timelines of the accomplishments of the Committee and the Church as a whole have accompanied these broader reflections. In the final reflection of this series, the *Newsletter* considers the way that the promulgation of the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* would profoundly affect the work of the Committee on Divine Worship from the turn of the third millennium to the present day.

The preparation of the "first wave" of vernacular translations of the reformed rites in the decade or so following the close of the Council was a monumental project. Those who labored over those rituals ensured that the clergy and faithful would have access to the new liturgical books in a very timely manner. They capitalized on the enthusiasm for the revised rites and are to be commended for this great service to the Church. Before long, however, the experience gained from the use of these texts led the Magisterium to reconsider some of this work with a critical eye. Already in 1988, Saint John Paul II remarked in *Vicesimus quintus annus*, his Apostolic Letter on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

The Bishops' Conferences have had the weighty responsibility of preparing the translations of the liturgical books... But now the time has come to reflect upon certain difficulties that have subsequently emerged, to remedy certain defects or inaccuracies, to complete partial translations, to compose or approve chants to be used in the Liturgy, to ensure respect for the texts approved and lastly to publish liturgical books in a form that both testifies to the stability achieved and is worthy of the mysteries being celebrated. (no. 20)

As a concrete step to address some of these concerns, the same Holy Father would approve *Liturgiam authenticam* on March 28, 2001. Issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Instruction addressed principles of vernacular translation of the liturgy. Praising “[t]he liturgical renewal thus far” (no. 3), *Liturgiam authenticam* put forth a lofty goal in seeking to continue the good work begun after the Second Vatican Council: “This Instruction therefore envisions and seeks to prepare for a new era of liturgical renewal, which is consonant with the qualities and the traditions of the particular Churches, but which safeguards also the faith and the unity of the whole Church of God” (no. 7).

In collaboration with other English-speaking Conferences of Bishops and working through the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), the bishops of the USCCB then began to undertake the “second wave” of translations of the post-Conciliar liturgical books. Some of this work considered new material from revised Latin typical editions or from as-yet-untranslated texts, but the larger part of the work consisted simply of new translations of material that already existed in English translation. The Committee on Divine Worship took this work very seriously. Working from base translations prepared by ICEL, the members dedicated substantial portions of their meetings during these years to reviewing ICEL’s work and to the evaluation of proposals for modification that had been submitted by the bishops of the Conference.

The project of providing new English translations of the liturgical books has not been without controversy – both on the floor of USCCB plenary meetings and in the court of popular opinion – but has nonetheless brought forth new editions of the ritual texts that aim to reflect the theological content of the Latin originals with accuracy and in a manner that is understandable and worthy of the liturgy. To date, this effort has led to the implementation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, and ritual books for Confirmation, Matrimony, Exorcism, the dedication of a church and an altar, the blessing of the holy oils at the Chrism Mass, and the Baptism of children. New translations of several other books, perhaps most notably the *Liturgy of the Hours*, are currently underway.

Neither the promulgation of new ritual books in the 1970s nor the revision of their English translations, however, will suffice in attaining the kind of conscious and actual participation in the Sacred Liturgy envisioned by the Council Fathers in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. They are important components in this renewal, but certainly do not solve the challenges faced by the Church. For younger generations of Catholics, the reformed liturgy is not something “new” or “exciting” as it was for those who saw its introduction, but is rather something taken for granted. This demands vigilant attention to the need for ongoing liturgical formation and for finding new ways to awaken people to the beauty of the liturgy.

Pope Francis has made several contributions to this need for a deepening of the liturgical reform. In September 2017, he issued the *motu proprio Magnum principium*, strengthening the role of Conferences of Bishops in the translation of liturgical texts. Moreover, he has spoken repeatedly on the connection between the liturgy and life: “We know that it is not enough to change the liturgical books to improve the quality of the liturgy. To do this alone would be a deception. For life to be truly a praise pleasing to God, it is indeed necessary to change the heart. Christian conversion is oriented to this conversion, which is an encounter of life with the ‘God of the living’ (Mt 22:32)” (Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, February 14, 2019).

This is truly the next great priority for the Committee on Divine Worship in the years to come: not just to translate and implement the texts of the liturgy, but to inculcate its spirit and transformative power in the daily lives of Catholic men, women, and children in the United States.

## Timeline of the Committee on Divine Worship, 2000-2020

*In this fifth and final part of the sixtieth anniversary timeline, highlights of the Committee on Divine Worship from 2000 to the present day are presented here. The first decade of the twenty-first century was chiefly devoted by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) to the preparation of the Roman Missal, Third Edition, with the second decade to new translations of several liturgical books.*

March 28, 2001	Holy See issues <i>Liturgiam authenticam</i> , the fifth Instruction on implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, focusing on vernacular translations
March 19, 2003	Promulgation of the third edition of the <i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
April 2005	Death of Pope St. John Paul II and Election of Pope Benedict XVI
October 2005	BCL Secretariat provides worldwide English translation of the <i>Manual of Indulgences</i>
June 15, 2006	USCCB approves first segment of the <i>Roman Missal, Third Edition</i> , the Order of Mass
July 7, 2007	Publication of the <i>motu proprio Summorum Pontificum</i> , widening use of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite
November 15, 2007	BCL renamed Committee on Divine Worship, following 2006 approval of USCCB reorganization plans
November 17, 2009	USCCB completes approval process of the <i>Roman Missal, Third Edition</i>
March 19, 2010	Holy See confirms <i>Revised Grail Psalms</i> for liturgical use
November 27, 2011	Implementation of the <i>Roman Missal, Third Edition</i> in the United States and most English-speaking countries
June 14, 2012	USCCB announces start of “Liturgical Bible” project (see <i>Liturgiam authenticam</i> , no. 36)
February 28, 2013	Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI; Election of Pope Francis occurs on March 13
September 2013	Committee statement “Stewards of the Tradition” commemorates 50th anniversary of <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
November 12, 2013	USCCB approves Spanish-language <i>Misal Romano, Tercera Edición</i>
June 8, 2015	Committee on Divine Worship approves optional <i>Lectionary for Mass Supplement</i>
May 15, 2016	Implementation of the <i>Order of Confirmation</i> , the first “post-Missal” English translation
December 30, 2016	Implementation of the <i>Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Second Edition</i>
June 29, 2017	Implementation of <i>Exorcisms and Related Supplications</i> ; related prayers for public use published in September
November 9, 2018	Implementation of the <i>Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar</i>
December 2, 2018	Implementation of the <i>Misal Romano, Tercera Edición</i>
April 12, 2020	Expected implementation of the <i>Order of Baptism of Children</i>