



NewsLetter

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2019 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Nearly 200 liturgists, speakers, and guests gathered in Chicago from October 9-11, 2019 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC). Meeting under the theme “The Federation at Fifty: Prayer without Ceasing,” the three-day event focused on the FDLC’s past, present, and future. Adding to the spirit of joy was a written greeting and blessing sent to the delegates on behalf of Pope Francis.

50TH
FDLC
ANNIVERSARY

On the first day, attendees recalled the history of the liturgical movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, revisited the impact of the Second Vatican Council, and reviewed the history of the FDLC itself – a collaboration of diocesan commissions which was formed by the United States bishops in 1969 in order to provide formation on all the revised liturgical texts promulgated after the Council. Presenters included Rev. Edward Foley, OFM Cap. and Lansing Bishop Emeritus Carl F. Mengeling, who was present as a page at the Council.

Delegates studied trends of growth, challenges, opportunities, and pastoral practice among American Catholics on the second day of the meeting, based on research presented by Rev. Thomas Gaunt, SJ of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Six panelists with broad liturgical experience offered their own insights into specific multicultural, pastoral, and academic realities, including clergy and lay formation. On the third day, delegates heard from liturgist and sociologist Rev. Ricky Manalo, CSP and pondered how the next generation of Catholics might perceive the liturgy and how cultural demographics will impact the ways in which it will be celebrated. Recent graduates in liturgical studies offered their own perceptions of the future of pastoral praxis and liturgical formation.

Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso represented the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, and updates on liturgical projects were given by staff of the Secretariat of Divine Worship. Two Committee consultants were honored during the meeting: Benedictine Abbot Primate Gregory J. Polan, OSB was presented with the 2019 Frederick R. McManus Award for his contributions to the liturgical renewal, and Sr. Janet Baxendale, SC was given the Alleluia Award for her wisdom, skill, and the many years of distinguished service to the Archdiocese of New York.

Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, was the principal celebrant for the closing Mass at Holy Name Cathedral. More highlights and photos from the meeting may be found at FDLC.org/50.

The Committee on Divine Worship congratulates the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions on fifty years of dedicated service to the liturgical life of the Church in the United States. With the unique networking opportunity it creates, the FDLC has the ability to share news, experience, and ideas among its members throughout the United States. The great work of liturgical formation and renewal continues, and since the bishops rely on the collaboration of clergy, religious, and faithful who have expertise in this field, the Committee looks forward to continued collaboration with the FDLC.

Abbot Primate Polan Accepts 2019 FDLC McManus Award

The Right Rev. Gregory J. Polan, OSB, Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation and a consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship, was presented with the annual Frederick R. McManus Award during the 2019 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. Excerpts from his acceptance speech are reprinted here for the benefit of our readers:

My life has been involved with the liturgy since grade school, and I am a son of the Archdiocese of Chicago. I began playing the organ for the children's Mass at St. Mary's grade school in Riverside in the early 1960s, graduated to being assistant organist at Holy Name Cathedral in the late 1960s, and then entered the monastery at Conception Abbey in the summer of 1970. In all those years, whether playing the organ, leading song chanting the Responsorial Psalm, directing a choir, or composing music, liturgy has been at the center of my life. As Benedictines, our life is the liturgy; it is the heartbeat of the Benedictine's life in which the whole day – from early morning to late evening – is consecrated to God in liturgical worship, not only for ourselves, but for the whole world.

In 1998, Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb and Cardinal Francis George asked if I would undertake the work of revising the *1963 Grail Psalms*. From my own study of Scripture, I knew that the text had many examples of paraphrase; and yet, this translation was a tremendous gift to the Church by the Ladies of the Grail in England. At that point in 1998, I was a newly-minted abbot (1996), but from the time I was a novice in 1970, I had taken on a project of memorizing the whole Psalter so that it would become something that was a living part of me. That was an audacious challenge; for a young monk, it was a constructive and creative endeavor to do. And now, looking back, I can say with conviction, it was one of the most formative experiences of my life; the Psalter became a "book of life through prayer" that forever would be my daily companion, a most intimate friend. Archbishop Lipscomb and Cardinal George told me that my work on the revision of the Book of Isaiah of the *New American Bible*, my background as a trained musician, and my life as a Benedictine monk made me the right person at the right time to tackle this major undertaking. When I explained that I would have to do this part-time because my main responsibility was to be a spiritual father to a wonderful community of Benedictines at Conception Abbey, they said, "no deadlines; just do good and accurate work." And that is how the project began.

The revision of the *Grail Psalms* went through a series of redactions, and sometimes I had to swallow hard when those who were examining my work did not accept my changes, interventions, and new ways of expression which I felt were good for right translation and for the praying Church. But it taught me that this endeavor was really not "for" me or "about" me, but for the Church, and its redactors had to be the last judge of my offering. It was also an occasion to see the great work of Church publishers. And it was there that I began to hear God's words, which I had the distinct privilege to translate, and then musicians had the gifts and talents to set to beautiful melodies, lush harmonies, and creative rhythms.

There are probably many for whom the name of an early monastic author is not that well known: John Cassian. For Benedictines, Cistercians, and Trappists, he is a spiritual father and formative teacher. I would like to share with you what he has to say about those people who come to love the Psalms, pray them day after day like you, and hear them as they gather for prayer. I can say from experience that his words of 1,600 years ago are a

haunting message of truth, an inspiring expression of reality, and a genuine hope for those who come to pray, love, and reflect on the Psalms. In his Tenth Conference, he writes:

The zeal of the human soul makes us like a spiritual deer who feeds on the high mountains of the Psalms. Nourished by this food, which we continually eat, we penetrate so deeply into the thinking of the Psalms that we sing them not as though composed by the Psalmist, but as if we had written them, as if these were our own private prayer uttered amid the deepest compunction of the heart. We come to think of them as having been specifically composed for us and we recognize that what they express was made real not simply once upon a time in the person of the Psalmist, but that now, every day they are being fulfilled in each of us. Thus do the Scriptures lie ever opened to us. They are revealed heart and sinew. The sacred words stir memories in us. Instructed by our own experiences, we are not really learning through hearsay, but have a feeling for these sentiments as things that we have already seen and experienced. We bring them to birth in the depths of our hearts as if they were feelings naturally there and part of our very being. We enter into their meaning not because of what we read, but because of what we have experienced earlier. And so our soul will arrive at that purity of heart in our search for the living God.

May these words of John Cassian live in us, and may we continue to find in God's Word the inspiration to set to music the beauty of these texts, so that they may continue to serve us and the People of God. Again, I thank you for your liturgical ministry which continues to evangelize the Church in the love, mercy and compassion of God. I thank you for enlivening in all God's people a living trust in the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which shows us the way to eternal life, God's great dream for our world.

Address of Dr. Timothy O'Malley on University-Level Liturgical Formation

Dr. Timothy O'Malley, Director of Education at the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life, addressed delegates at the 2019 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions during a panel discussion on the subject of liturgical formation. Excerpts from his speech, "The Future of Liturgical Formation in the Academy: A Knotty Problem," are reprinted here for the benefit of our readers:

At this 50th anniversary gathering of FDLC, I've been asked to address the future of liturgical formation in the academy. This kind of address risks falling into an apocalyptic discourse more befitting the end of days than a golden anniversary. When I arrived at the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy in 2010, I undertook conversations with twenty institutions of Catholic higher learning in the United States who employed a faculty member in liturgy and/or sacraments. Some were R1, top tier research Universities. Others were small liberal arts colleges. Among the twenty institutions contacted, fifteen said that they would not be replacing the liturgical scholar. There were hires to be made in comparative theology, in social ethics, and constructive theology. Liturgy was not recognized as a vital area of undergraduate education in the discipline of theology. Many of the graduate programs in liturgy had significantly shrunk or closed as well.

The decision to move away from liturgy proper as a field of study is not the result of a nefarious project of systematic theologians. The reality is that we have seen a significant change in the type of student who applies for a master's degree. Beginning in the 1950s, Catholic colleges and universities began programs of continuing education and theological formation around the *ressourcement* unfolding in Europe. At Notre Dame, Josef Jungmann, Louis Bouyer, and Johannes Hofinger spent time on campus teaching religious and clergy (and a few undergraduates clothed in Hawaiian shirts). The recipients of these master's degrees possessed a higher degree in theology.

For the most part, those students no longer exist. The average person pursuing a master's degree in theology, the one who applies to Notre Dame or Boston College or Catholic University, is not a clergy or religious. He or she (and more often she) is 22 or 23 years old (this summer I taught 23 students; 3 were men). He or she does not possess a master's degree, nor, to be honest, anything approaching competency in theology. He or she is likely

interested in teaching at a Catholic high school or in pastoral counseling, where there is perceived job security. If he or she has an academic interest, it's likely not related to liturgical studies. Even those interested in liturgical studies proper find themselves more at the intersection of ethics and systematic theology by the end of their degree.

So, things have changed. Yet institutions like our own (and my own) tend to be conservative relative to adjusting to such change. Sears didn't perceive the advent of Walmart and online shopping. Toys R Us didn't imagine that moms and dads would get their Tickle Me Elmo via Amazon Prime.

So what to do? Let me suggest a common line of inquiry, of research and formation, that those engaged in the study and practice of the sacred liturgy might consider moving forward.

In the early days of the liturgical movement, there was an assumption that liturgy could serve as the medicine against the ails of encroaching modernity. Secularization, individualism, industrialization, and racism – all could be healed through the liturgy. The Second Vatican Council took this assumption as its own, seeing in the sacred liturgy the key to a *ressourcement*, an *aggiornamento*, a “new” evangelization. Hopes were high.

I suspect that though very well-intentioned, members of the early liturgical movement and those affiliated with the reforms were sometimes a tad naïve. They didn't fully understand what happened in modernity. We celebrated the canonization of St. John Henry Newman in October. In his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Newman diagnoses the effects of modernity. On the one hand, there is a reticence to see religion as anything more than a peripheral dimension of one's life. Too much kneeling, too much superstition, too much sanctity is excessive for our age. The gentleman should not give in to such excesses but understand religion as offering the rudiments of a domesticized morality. Religion is a private affair, primarily reserved to the woman. On the other hand, there is a religiosity that becomes almost entirely inward. It is the religiosity of the evangelical, constantly checking whether his or her experience has facilitated a “genuine” encounter with Christ. The ordinances and practices of the Church are peripheral to this individualized encounter, accessible only through self-contemplation. Sincerity trumps ritual activity.

These two dimensions of modernity have led to a specific kind of secularization. It's not the disappearance of religion from the public sphere or the loss of the human capacity for transcendence. Rather, it is a forgetfulness, what Danielle Hervieu-Leger calls a “break in the chain of memory.” Since religion is privatized, domesticized, an interior reality, then particularities don't matter. We don't pass them on. We don't have a social structure to sustain religious practice, because religion is not really a social phenomenon at all.

In this sense, liturgical formation in the University can't just be about figuring out what was done in the early Church (or whatever is your golden age) and then implementing it today. Nor is it simply repeating phrases from the various documents of the Second Vatican Council. My students are underwhelmed by this, seeing these texts as antique remnants of a past time that has no meaning to them. We must deal more soberly with this today where disaffiliation is on the rise, where sacramental practice is down, where referring to liturgy as the “source and summit” makes no sense to the emerging adult.

A note about why this is important. In his brilliant speech at Kenyon College, the late David Foster Wallace noted that everyone worships something. Whether it's power, money, sex, or drugs, secularization has not eliminated our capacity to worship. We're made for it. But we can and do worship the wrong things. And worshipping the wrong things can be deadly. It leads to anxiety among young adults, the kind of anxiety that has led to a suicide epidemic, an opioid epidemic, an epidemic of hate against the migrant because of our desire to worship some version of “nationhood” of “America” that doesn't exist. It worships consumption, money, power, prestige. It worships an idol of the impossible perfect family. Augustine is right – we are made to worship God and our hearts will be restless until they rest in God, but they'll also try to find rest elsewhere.

Here, I see the work then as retrieving, remembering, reconstructing a space where liturgical prayer again makes sense. This is our task, and it will require us to think anew about liturgical education and formation in the academy and beyond.