



NewsLetter

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Archbishop Blair Addresses the 2020 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

The 2020 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions took place on October 1 with the theme "Raised Up to a New Hope." Due to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the meeting was moved from an in-person gathering in San Diego, California to a virtual meeting platform. The plenary address was given by Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin of The Catholic University of America, a former consultant to the Committee on Divine Worship.

During the course of the meeting, Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, Committee Chairman, addressed the participants; major excerpts from his speech are reprinted here for the benefit of our readers:

I began my three-year term as Chairman last November after one year as Chairman-Elect during Archbishop Gregory's final year heading the Committee. I've also served on this Committee in the past, so I have some familiarity with its work, and I've also assisted ICEL for a number of years as a member of its Editorial Committee. For many years I've also been involved in USCCB committee work on evangelization and catechesis, and also served as chairman of that committee. I am very grateful for the opportunities I've had to share in all this work with so many fine people, dedicated to the glory of God, the good of the Church and the salvation of souls.

Obviously, everyone's plans this year have been upended. Given the circumstances, the current Divine Worship Committee has yet to meet in person. Last June we held a Committee meeting virtually, and I've also consulted with the members about several items via e-mail. Like all of you, we hope to resume in-person meetings as soon as possible next year.

With the pandemic two liturgical issues in particular arose. The first had to do with the celebration of Holy Week and the second with the administration of sacraments under the circumstances imposed by the pandemic.

As to the first, you will recall that the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome issued some modified instructions for the celebration of Holy Week liturgies, and our Committee shared this information with all the bishops. In light of the challenges imposed by the pandemic, the direction provided by the Congregation was very helpful in ensuring that any pandemic modifications to the liturgy would be consistent from place to place and liturgically sound. These special instructions were only valid for this year, and hopefully we won't need anything like this again anytime soon.

We who are clergy have experienced deeply the frustration of not being able to fulfill our liturgical office in a way that brings us close to the people entrusted to our pastoral care and that unites the whole People of God in the celebration of the sacraments. There is the saying that “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” and we can only hope that this will prove true with regard to people’s Mass attendance and parochial involvement once the pandemic subsides, and a renewed commitment on the part of the clergy to celebrate worthily and well the Church’s liturgy.

It’s encouraging to know that the creativity of parishes in livestreaming or otherwise broadcasting the liturgy has succeeded in reaching many people as a source of grace and consolation in trying times, even though it’s no substitute for in-person participation. As the Second Vatican Council insisted in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private” (no. 27). This is very clear, and I think it’s well-understood today. But the same Council Fathers also reminded priests of their liturgical office and of the need to glorify God and call down his blessing upon the world. In the words of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*: “even if there cannot be present a number of the faithful, it is still an act of Christ and of the Church” (no. 13). This truth of our faith is perhaps not fully appreciated today, and deserves deeper reflection.

Another issue posed by the pandemic has been the manner of celebrating the liturgy with the requisite dignity and in conformity with the Church’s norms while at the same time taking the precautions necessary to protect the health and safety of everyone present. In most places, including my own archdiocese, many of us clergy are of an age that places us in a category of heightened risk for the coronavirus, and the same is true of many of our faithful church-going parishioners.

As I wrote to all the bishops at the end of April on behalf of the Committee on Divine Worship, no single document can provide answers to every question in every situation as things were unfolding. What we chose to publish were links to several reputable resources that could help in making local determinations: one was prepared by the Dominicans’ Thomistic Institute with the participation of medical professionals; another from medical professionals was commissioned by the Knights of Columbus; and another resource was compiled by the members of the FDLC. I think the bishops were grateful for the guidance provided by these resources.

Determining local procedures requires prudential judgment, as well as respect for sound liturgical practice and above all respect for the matter and form of the sacraments. We anticipated that people will disagree on some points. Even under normal circumstances, we encounter a diversity of opinions on liturgical matters; how much more might we anticipate this to be the case under present circumstances.

For example, some bishops have temporarily forbidden the distribution of Communion on the tongue, and bishops have taken different positions on the celebration of the sacraments outdoors. I would urge all of you, in whatever capacity you’re able, to be models of serenity and patience, and to work for unity and dare I say it nowadays, obedience, to the liturgical directives that are meant to protect the health of all. The devil thrives on division and contention, and we need to resist this with God’s help.

Hopefully we’ll return to normal celebrations of the liturgy sooner rather than later, and then we can return to arguing about music, architecture and texts, and all the other things liturgists like to do in ordinary circumstances!

In light of all that has happened, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the assistance you are providing to your bishops as they’ve struggled to address the many questions that have arisen. When our Committee met by Zoom last June, several of the members commented on how much they’ve relied on the expertise of their diocesan liturgy directors, in general and in particular this year.

A good liturgy director is a great resource for a diocese and its bishop. He or she is knowledgeable about liturgical practice and knows where to go to find sound answers when questions arise. A good liturgy director also knows the diocese: its culture, challenges, resources, and its opportunities. He or she is able to communicate

effectively with clergy, other ministers, and with musicians, reminding them of diocesan policies and new developments, and so forth. This kind of expertise is invaluable. So I want to thank you for all that you do out of love for God and a desire to promote the sanctification of the People of God.

Finally, I want to mention one item of business that has been “percolating” in the Committee for some time now. In the discussions of the previous Committee on Divine Worship, it was noted that a lot of time has of necessity been devoted to the review of liturgical translations and the preparation of new books. But what about those things that promote a better and more fruitful celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, the *ars celebrandi*, the art of celebrating the liturgy?

It goes without saying that the *ars celebrandi* involves much more than respect for the matter and form of each sacrament, but matter and form remain the indispensable starting point. Lately we’ve seen the sad consequences of a failure to adhere to matter and form, with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s declaration, approved by Pope Francis, on the invalidity of Baptism conferred with an incorrect form of words. I encourage you to read the Congregation’s explanation of why this is so. As a bishop I have sometimes found it necessary to remind the clergy that the Second Vatican Council called for liturgical reform and renewal, but it also said that apart from legitimate authority, “no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 22).

With regard to the *ars celebrandi*, unlike many of our Protestant brothers and sisters who may have one principal Sunday service, many of our parishes are challenged to repeat a high level of liturgical celebration over several Masses, including the multiplication of Masses by the reduced number of priests ministering in many of our dioceses. The multiplication of “Masses of convenience” in churches that are half or more empty is something that has to be taken into account in the pastoral planning in which many dioceses are engaged today. To the extent that the Divine Worship Committee can provide some reflection and leadership on these challenges, we will be happy to do so.

In conclusion, I’m grateful to have had this opportunity to share some thoughts with you, and I hope this National Meeting of the FDLC will be a source of encouragement and inspiration. Thank you again for all that you do in service to the Church, and may God bless you!

Pope Francis Adds Three Invocations in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary



On June 20, 2020, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a circular letter to the Presidents of the world’s Conferences of Bishops (Prot. n. 296/20), communicating the decision of Pope Francis to insert three new invocations into the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the Litany of Loreto. The invocations “Mother of mercy,” “Mother of hope,” and “Solace of migrants” (or “Comfort of migrants”) are inserted after “Mother of the Church,” “Mother of divine grace,” and “Refuge of sinners,” respectively.

Different translations of the Litany of Loreto are available and may be used by the faithful. For the benefit of our readers, one English translation has been reprinted below. It is originally drawn from the current edition of the *Manual of Indulgences* (USCCB Communications, 2006) and further adapted, and the translation of the concluding prayer is taken from the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto)

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	God, the Father of heaven,	have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.	God the Son, Redeemer of	
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	the world,	have mercy on us.
		God the Holy Spirit,	have mercy on us.
		Holy Trinity, one God,	have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,	pray for us.	Glory of Israel,	pray for us.
Holy Mother of God,	pray for us.	Vessel of selfless devotion,	pray for us.
Most honored of virgins,	pray for us.	Mystical Rose,	pray for us.
Mother of Christ,	pray for us.	Tower of David,	pray for us.
Mother of the Church,	pray for us.	Tower of ivory,	pray for us.
Mother of mercy,	pray for us.	House of gold,	pray for us.
Mother of divine grace,	pray for us.	Ark of the covenant,	pray for us.
Mother of hope,	pray for us.	Gate of heaven,	pray for us.
Mother most pure,	pray for us.	Morning Star,	pray for us.
Mother of chaste love,	pray for us.	Health of the sick,	pray for us.
Mother and virgin,	pray for us.	Refuge of sinners,	pray for us.
Sinless Mother,	pray for us.	Solace of migrants,	pray for us.
Dearest of mothers,	pray for us.	Comfort of the troubled,	pray for us.
Model of motherhood,	pray for us.	Help of Christians,	pray for us.
Mother of good counsel,	pray for us.	Queen of angels,	pray for us.
Mother of our Creator,	pray for us.	Queen of patriarchs,	pray for us.
Mother of our Savior,	pray for us.	Queen of prophets,	pray for us.
Virgin most wise,	pray for us.	Queen of apostles,	pray for us.
Virgin rightly praised,	pray for us.	Queen of martyrs,	pray for us.
Virgin rightly renowned,	pray for us.	Queen of confessors,	pray for us.
Virgin most powerful,	pray for us.	Queen of virgins,	pray for us.
Virgin gentle in mercy,	pray for us.	Queen of all saints,	pray for us.
Faithful Virgin,	pray for us.	Queen conceived without sin,	pray for us.
Mirror of justice,	pray for us.	Queen assumed into heaven,	pray for us.
Throne of wisdom,	pray for us.	Queen of the Rosary,	pray for us.
Cause of our joy,	pray for us.	Queen of families,	pray for us.
Shrine of the Spirit,	pray for us.	Queen of peace,	pray for us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.	<i>Let us pray.</i>	
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.	Grant, Lord God, that we, your servants,	
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.	may rejoice in unfailing health of mind and body,	
		and, through the glorious intercession	
		of Blessed Mary ever-Virgin,	
		may we be set free from present sorrow	
		and come to enjoy eternal happiness.	
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,		Through Christ our Lord.	Amen.
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.			