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FROM: The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
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NATIONAL MEETING OF LITURGISTS FOCUSES ON SACRED TIME

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

147 delegates from 91 dioceses gathered in Buffalo, New York, October 11-15, 2005, for the annual National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

The meeting, jointly sponsored by the Federation of Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) and the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL), focused its theme on *All Time and Seasons Belong to Christ*.

The major speakers, Gail Ramshaw, Gary Eberle, David Philippart, and John Eudes Bamberger offered insights into different aspects of sacred time and its relationship to liturgy. The first address by liturgical language expert, Gail Ramshaw, explored how the Sunday gathering is transformed through Christ's presence in scripture and the language of liturgy. Gary Eberle's presentation took an anthropological look at sacred time through the structure of the Roman Catholic celebration of Eucharist. The seasons of the liturgical calendar were examined by David Philippart in light of appropriate environment and art. The final presentation by Dom John Eudes Bamberger looked at the work of Liturgy as it entails a discovery of the transcendent realities conveyed in words and images. Excerpts of the addresses will be posted on the FDLC web site (www.fdlc.org).

In the course of the meeting the Federation presented its annual Frederick R. McManus Award for pastoral liturgy to liturgical designer and consultant, Robert Rambusch. Mr. Rambusch's work in the liturgical renewal spans over sixty years. In accepting the award, Mr. Rambusch paid tribute to the numerous persons and organizations involved in the reform of the liturgy in the United States. The complete text of Mr. Rambusch's remarks will appear on the FDLC web site (www.fdlc.org).

During the meeting the diocesan delegates adopted the following position statements that had been formulated during FDLC regional meetings earlier this year. The delegates also passed a resolution formed during the meeting and presented to the floor by the FDLC Executive Committee.

Position Statement 2005/1

Topic: Resources to assist in the clustering or closing of parishes

Vote: 117 ballots cast (2/3 required to pass); 114 yes; 2 no, 1 abstention; motion passed by 97.44%

PREAMBLE:

Whereas, the Eucharist is central to who we are as Church;

Whereas, the celebration of the Eucharist requires an ordained presbyter;

Whereas, there is a growing shortage of priest pastors;

Whereas, recent studies confirm that this trend will continue;

Whereas, many dioceses are addressing this shortage by closing or clustering parishes;

Whereas, both rural and urban communities have been impacted by this practice;

Whereas, current crises have dictated immediate responses and inconsistent methods;

Whereas, pastoral care for those affected by the closure of a parish may include the need to give liturgical expression to grief, reconciliation, transition, and welcome;

Whereas, merging cultural traditions sometimes impacts liturgical praxis;

Whereas, the closure or merging of parishes may result in the use of a single or multiple worship space(s);

Whereas, one presbyter may be asked to serve several communities in distinct locations;

Whereas, the music ministry may often be called upon to serve several communities;

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Whereas all liturgical ministers in each parish community must be well-formed according to diocesan guidelines;

BODY OF STATEMENT:

It is the position of the delegates of the 2005 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, that pastoral tools, strategies, and resources be identified and developed to assist bishops, diocesan offices of worship, priests, parish staffs, and parish worship commissions in dealing with ministerial and liturgical issues that result from clusterings, mergings, and closures of parishes or even loss through natural disasters in order to provide a pastoral response to the needs of our assemblies and an authentic respect for the Church's liturgical traditions. We request that these be prepared jointly by the BCL Secretariat and the Eucharist and Liturgical Year Committee of the Board of Directors of the FDLC in the most timely way possible.

POSITION STATEMENT 2005/2

Topic: To encourage the distribution and reception of Holy Communion under both kinds

Vote: 103 ballots cast (2/3 required to pass); 100 yes; 3 no; 0 abstentions; motion passed by 97.09%.

PREAMBLE:

Whereas, the command at the Last Supper was given to "take and eat, take and drink";

Whereas, from the first days of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion consisted of the reception of both species in fulfillment of the Lord's command to "take and eat ... take and drink."

Whereas, Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:54-55);

Whereas, Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds;

Whereas, in keeping with the Lord's command, his Body and Blood should be received by the faithful who are properly disposed as spiritual food;

Whereas, in a preeminent way the Eucharistic Liturgy uses the signs of bread and wine in obedience to the Lord's command and, after their transformation, gives them to us as the Body and Blood of Christ in the act of Communion;

Whereas, the consummation of the Mass is found in Holy Communion, whereby the people purchased for the Father by his beloved Son eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ;

Whereas, sharing in both eucharistic species reflects more fully the sacred realities that the Liturgy signifies, the Church in her wisdom has made provisions in recent years so that more frequent eucharistic participation from both the sacred host and the chalice of salvation might be made possible for the laity in the Latin Church;

Whereas, in recent decades the custom of the distribution under both kinds to the faithful has been restored and repeatedly encouraged in the liturgical books;

Whereas, permission for this practice was extended in GIRM 2002;

Whereas, the faithful have embraced and received great spiritual solace from receiving this full expression of the Eucharist, and

Whereas the directives of some current and future documents/statements could discourage and, indeed, render obsolete the offering of the Precious Blood to the lay faithful;

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BODY OF STATEMENT:

It is the position of the delegates to the 2005 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions that we fully support the Distribution of Holy Communion under kinds and recommend that the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy invite and actively promote the full implementation of the lay faithful sharing in the fullness of Communion through the reception of the Precious Blood.

POSITION STATEMENT 2005/3

Topic: Question and answer tool through the BCL to encourage Holy Communion under both kinds

Vote: 106 ballots cast (2/3 required to pass); 98 yes; 8 no; 0 abstentions; motion passed by 92.45 %

PREAMBLE:

- Whereas Sacred Scripture quotes Jesus as saying: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life within you" (Jn 6:53); and "Take, eat ... Then he took a cup and ... gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you" (Mt 26:26, 27); and "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." (Jn 6:54-55); and St. Paul states: "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor 11:26);
- Whereas the 2002 *General Instruction for the Roman Missal* states: [281] "Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident and clear expression is given to the divine will by which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the relationship between the Eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Father's Kingdom.";
- Whereas *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (4-23-04) states: [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.";
- Whereas the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion* (USCCB – 6/14/01) state: [16] "At the same time an appreciation for reception of 'the whole Christ' through one species should not diminish in any way the fuller sign value of reception of Holy Communion under both kinds. For just as Christ offered his whole self, body and blood, as a sacrifice for our sins, so too is our reception of his Body and Blood under both kinds an especially fitting participation in his memorial of eternal life. And further: [14] ...the Council thus gave permission for the reception of Communion under both kinds on some occasions, because this clearer form of the sacramental sign offers a particular opportunity of deepening the understanding of the mystery in which the faithful take part; and again: [17] From the first days of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion consisted of the reception of both species in fulfillment of the Lord's command to "take and eat...take and drink." The distribution of Holy Communion of the faithful under both kinds was thus the norm for more than a millennium of Catholic liturgical practice. ([283] In all that pertains to Communion under both kinds, the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* are to be followed (see nos. 27-54, *GIRM-2002*);
- Whereas in Pope John Paul's instituting the Year of the Eucharist he states in *Mane nobiscum Domine* : [15] "There is no doubt that the most evident dimension of the Eucharist is that it is a *meal*. The Eucharist was born, on the evening of Holy Thursday, in the setting of the Passover meal. *Being a meal* is part of its very structure. "Take, eat" ... Then he took a cup and ... gave it to them, saying: "Drink from it, all of you" (Mt 26:26, 27). As such, it expresses the fellowship which God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another."
- Whereas in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (4/17/03) Pope John Paul II stated: [16] "The saving efficacy of the sacrifice is fully realized when the Lord's body and blood are received in communion. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is intrinsically directed to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through communion; we receive the very One who offered himself for us, we receive his body which he gave up for us on the Cross and his blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28).
- Whereas *Eucharistic Prayer III* states: "Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ."

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Whereas the fuller sign of the Eucharist in the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ is not being offered in many parishes, which seems contrary to GIRM 352, "The priest, therefore, in planning the celebration of Mass, should have in mind the common spiritual good of the people of God, rather than his own inclinations."

BODY OF THE STATEMENT:

It is the position of the delegates to the 2005 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions that we recommend that the BCL dedicate a Newsletter with a Question/Answer tool to assist bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians and liturgists in educating the laity, pastors and pastoral leaders on the importance and practice of Communion from the Cup in order that Holy Communion from the Cup be offered to the Assembly at all regularly scheduled Masses.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION 2005/1

Communion for those Suffering from Celiac Sprue Disease

Vote: 104 ballots cast (2/3 required to pass); 79 yes; 23 no; 2 abstentions; motion passed by 75.96%.

The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions strongly urges the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy to continue to explore with the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith alternate pastoral approaches regarding reception of Holy Communion for those people suffering from Celiac Sprue disease who are totally gluten intolerant.