

Press Release

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FROM: The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

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NATIONAL MEETING OF LITURGISTS FOCUSES ON CATHOLIC IDENTITY, THE ROMAN MISSAL, AND THE MULTICULTURAL DIMENSION OF THE CHURCH

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

191 delegates from 102 dioceses gathered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 14-17, 2008, 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 Divine Worship (BCDW) assembled diocesan Directors of Worship and members of diocesan Liturgical Commissions to identify national and regional priorities in the area of worship, and to provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas among participants, and for prayerful celebrations of the liturgy.

In his report to the Federation, BCDW Chair, Bishop Arthur Serratelli announced that the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has completed its work on the translation of the *Missale Romanum, edition typical tertia*, and ICEL's work is scheduled to be reviewed by the USCCB and voted on in stages during the USCCB General Assemblies between November 2008 and November 2010. Msgr. Anthony Sherman, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Divine Worship stated that the BCDW website (www.usccb.org/liturgy) has many materials to assist dioceses and parishes in educating the faithful about the translation and general catechesis about the Eucharist. He also indicated that when the FDLC had completed and posted to the FDLC website (www.fdlc.org) its materials on the Roman Missal, the BCDW website will contain a link directing viewers to that site.

Ms. Joan Workmaster, Chair of the FDLC Ad Hoc Committee on Roman Missal Formation, gave a report on the status of the FDLC project for catechesis on the Roman Missal and the Eucharist. Prior to the meeting, delegates were sent drafts of two of four study papers and a detailed outline of a third:

1. *Liturgical Participation of God's People* by Rev. Mark R. Francis, CSV
2. *Divining the Vernacular of Ritual Texts* by Rev. Paul Turner
3. *Liturgical Implementation of the Roman Missal* by Rev. J.M. Foster, JCD

A fourth paper, *Liturgical Leadership in a Time of Change* by Most Rev. Gerald Kicanas, is still in process. These papers will serve as a foundation for more pastoral materials to be developed by the FDLC (and perhaps other collaborating national organizations). During their regional caucus times, delegates were offered an opportunity to review and comment on the documents and thus contribute to the final drafts. Ms. Workmaster affirmed that the FDLC would have a complete program, including budget, products, delivery method, and marketing plan, in place by the 2009 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions in Plymouth, Michigan (October 6-9, 2009).

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During the meeting the delegates adopted two Executive Committee Resolutions:

Executive Committee Resolution 2008/1

Vote: 93.97%; for 109; against 4; abstain 3. total votes 116

The Eucharist is central to the life of the Church. In obedience to the dominical command, the Church has gathered on the Lord's Day, to celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy (Mass) for over two millennia. In this ancient practice, we encounter the living God, are nourished by his word and sacrament, and build his Church.

In the past several decades, many dioceses in the United States have faced the growing reality of parishes without resident priests. Various models of leadership have emerged thanks to the varied gifts of the Spirit. But the declining number of ordained presbyters has forced bishops and parish communities to develop ways to ensure that the faithful have an opportunity to worship on the Lord's Day. Often, a priest travels to serve several parishes; in other cases parish communities raise up trained and authorized leaders of prayer to lead them in Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. There are unintended consequences to these practices, including declining attendance at worship and an impoverishment of Catholic identity.

We applaud recent efforts by national organizations, which have provided research and have engaged the country in regional and national discussions on this matter. We especially recognize the work of the Catholic Extension Society and Catholic Home Mission Society, who have invited bishops of mission dioceses and others to reflect on possible future Catholic praxis.

Resolution

1. The delegates to the 2008 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
2. are resolved that this dialogue concerning the importance of Sunday Eucharist must continue.
3. We ask that the Chair of the Board of Directors write a letter of support to those national organizations.
4. The letter should further express the FDLC's interest
5. in participating in this dialogue,
6. particularly regarding the liturgical formation of the faithful
7. and the importance of regular celebrations of Sunday Eucharist
8. as central to the faith of God's holy people.

Executive Committee Resolution 2008/2

Vote: 94.92 %; for 112; against 1; abstain 1; total votes 118.

[T]he hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth. (Jn 4: 23-24)

Resolution

1. We, the delegates of the 2008 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions,
2. believe that "the hour is coming, and is now here" for us, as a Federation,
3. to make a more intentional effort to advance the dialogue on multicultural and intercultural liturgy.
4. Therefore, we are committed to examine the complex and multifaceted subject of culture and the liturgy.
5. We are resolved to support, encourage, and learn from the efforts of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Task Force on Cultural Diversity and the BCDW.

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6. and are resolved to call forth and listen to all voices because they are vital to our membership and discussions.

In discussing and planning for the implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal in the near future, and especially on a broader scale, as an opportunity to promote a deeper attachment to the liturgical reform begun by the Second Vatican Council, delegates came to recognize more fully that our identity as the Catholic Church in the USA is now, and will increasingly become, multicultural and intercultural. The delegates representing Region 12 (the Archdioceses and Dioceses in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington). and Region 11 (the Archdioceses and Dioceses in California, Hawaii, and Nevada) have committed to developing a two-year theme exploring multicultural and intercultural liturgical celebrations and concerns for the 2011 and 2012 National Meetings of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

A Study Day during this year's meeting focused on the theme, "To Worship in Spirit and Truth: Liturgy in the Shaping of Catholic Identity." In a process facilitated by Ms. Sheila McLaughlin, Executive Director of the Joseph Bernardin Center for Theology and Ministry in Chicago, delegates were engaged by multi-media presentations by Sister Mary Bendyna, RSM of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in Washington, DC, Rev. Robert Barron of the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Chicago, and Rev. Jan Michael Joncas of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. After each presentation, delegates had the opportunity to pose questions to the presenter and enter into facilitated group discussion. The following evening, Most Reverend Blase Cupich, Bishop of Rapid City, spent two hours with the delegates reviewing the presentations of the previous day and discussing the importance of catechizing the faithful about the liturgy as a necessary step in a successful implementation of the English translation of the *Missale Romanum, edition typical tertia*.