

REPORT OF THE CHAIR
of the FDLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
San Antonio, Texas
7 - 11 October, 2003

Forty years ago this December, the bishops gathered in Ecumenical Council at the Vatican, promulgated its first solemn document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, this in the form of a Dogmatic Constitution. This document set in motion a reform of the Church's entire liturgy, so that all might derive from its constant celebration the riches found at this summit of all the Church's activity, and find in its celebration the fountain of all her power. (Cf. Art. 10)

Today we gather for this National Meeting to celebrate the promulgation of this pivotal document, and to be renewed and refreshed by its vision. I am honored to welcome you to this national gathering of Worship Directors, Chairs of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, and Diocesan Liturgical Personnel.

I am especially honored to welcome to our gathering, His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. Your Eminence, it is a privilege to have you with us at this National Meeting. Your insights on this fortieth anniversary of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* will enable us to deepen our understanding of this foundational document and, so enriched, to assist our bishops in their work as chief liturgist of their dioceses, and to help our people come to that full, conscious and active participation in the Sacred Liturgy, which is their right and their obligation by reason of their baptism. (Cf. Art. 14) I hope that you will find a place of welcome in our midst. I ask, too, that on your return to Rome, you will bring to our Holy Father, Pope John Paul, our devoted loyalty, our warmest congratulations, our deep affection and most of all our heartfelt prayers as he completes his twenty-fifth year as the successor of Peter.

We also want to welcome in a special way, His Eminence, Francis Cardinal George, Chair of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. Your Eminence, we are grateful for your report, but more for your presence. These are especially challenging times, and your presence here with us makes us all the more aware of our responsibility to provide our Bishops with the best possible advice as they carry out their role "chief steward of the mysteries of God, and the overseer, promoter, and guardian of all liturgical life in the particular Church entrusted to his care." (Cf. Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 9 and *Christus Dominus*, no. 15). We are especially grateful for your fine efforts to facilitate the visit of Cardinal Arinze to this National Meeting.

To Monsignor James Moroney and the Staff of the Secretariat for the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, thank you for your diligent work on behalf of the Liturgical Reform. The Federation remains grateful for your support of the Liturgical Commissions and Offices of Worship throughout the country.

We cannot forget to thank our wonderful staff at the FDLC National Office. Lisa Tarker has done a monumental job of managing the office, responding to inquiries, and serving the Board of Directors with inspiring dedication to the task. She has provided excellent input to the Board of Directors in every matter facing it. And always she has done it with a grace and good humor that has made even the most challenging of tasks pleasant. Joe Skeffington, Associate Director, has kept us on track with his wisdom and his wit, not to mention his deep knowledge of the Federation, its structure, its Bylaws and its history.

This is a year of transition. I am pleased to welcome eight new Board members to the Board of Directors. They are: Sister Sandra DiMassi, from the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, Region 3; Father Michael Carrier from the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, Region 4; Father Thomas Ranzino from the diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Region 5; Mrs. Rita Thiron from the diocese of Lansing, Michigan, Region 6; Sister Sharon Stola from the diocese of Joliet, Illinois, Region 7; Mr. Dean Daniels from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Region 8; Sister Mairlu Covani from the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, Region 11; and Sister Jeremy Gallet from the Diocese of Portland, Oregon, Region 12. Thank you for your willingness to embrace this work in service to our bishops and to all the lay faithful.

As we look forward to a new Board which begins its work at the conclusion of this National Meeting, we owe a debt of thanks to eight members who are completing their terms of service this year. They are Father Michael Barth, Region 5, completing two years of service; Father John Sauer, Region 8, serving a second non-consecutive term, completing three years service. Mr. Doug Reatini, Region 4, completing three years of service. Mr. David Reilly, Region 6, completing seven years of service. David has given invaluable service to the Board and to all of you as Treasurer of the organization and member of the Executive Committee. Mrs. Sheila McLaughlin, Region 7, completes two consecutive terms, eight years of service. Mrs. Mary Ann Fallon, Region 11, also completes eight years of service; Father Edward Hislop, Region 12, completes twelve years of service. Ed has served with distinction as Chair of the Board, Chair of the Eucharist and Liturgical Year Committee, and Delegate at Large on the Executive Committee. Finally, Ms. Joan Turel, Region 3, completes thirteen years of service to the Board of Directors. Joan has served as Chair of the Ministry committee, Chair of the Eucharist and Liturgical Year Committee. She has also served as Chair of the ad hoc committee for the Seminary Liturgical Formation Forum, now a regular part of this National Meeting. Together, these dedicated people have contributed fifty-six years of service to the Board of Directors and to and to all of you. On behalf of all of us Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

If you have had the opportunity to review your packets, you may have had the opportunity to review some of the progress of the Position Statements, Resolutions of Immediate Concern and Statements of the Body Gathered which have been passed at previous meetings. These Statements and Resolutions, passed by this body, become the work of your Board of Directors. It is quite a feat to address these challenges during one meeting together in January, and throughout the year at home juggling diocesan and parish responsibilities with the challenge of doing the Federation's work.

This can only be accomplished with the vigilance and the energy of the Chairs of our Standing

and Ad Hoc Committees. I would like to introduce them to you, and to provide you with a brief update of their work.

- Joan Turel, Chair of the Eucharist and Liturgical Year Committee, Joan also serves as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for Seminary Formation.
- Sheila McLaughlin, Chair of the Ministry Committee.
- Mary Ann Fallon, Chair of the Sacraments Committee.
- Patrick Gorman, Chair of the Music and Liturgical Arts Committee.
- Father Paul McLouglin, Chair of the National Process Committee.
- Father Robert Webster, Chair of the ad Hoc Committee on the Formation of an Association for Parish Liturgists
- Judy Bullock, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of the Lectionary.

Thanks you to all for your generous leadership, and for the hard work of your committees. So much has been done this year. So much to challenge us as we work with dwindling budgets, increasing demands at home, and a Church still reeling from the heartache of these last few years. It is no wonder that there have been increasing demands from the Membership to develop our on line capabilities. In addition to our continued work on the development of on line certification programs, I am pleased to tell you that we have already provided for two of our twelve Regions (Regions 2 & 3) a Regional Discussion Forum. This program, accessible with a password for each user can be accessed only by the members of the particular region, This program is available to all the Regions and to the member dioceses of the Federation throughout the country. This becomes a means of relatively instant communication for groups of people at a time when travel must be kept to a minimum.

Collaboration with other offices and organizations has also been established as a priority for the Board and for the National Office for many years. In addition to our own Networking Luncheon with representatives of other liturgical organizations, present at this National Meeting, a regular feature at the National Meeting for many years now, Lisa Tarker participates in a monthly breakfast for Executive Directors of similar organizations in the Washington area. This association has opened for us, and I hope for them, numerous possibilities for mutual support and sharing as we continue to do the Lord's work for his Church. We would like to offer special words of thanks to the National Federation of Youth Ministries for their invitation to join them in reviewing *From Age to Age*, now under revision.

We also wish to thank Mr. James Alphen of the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, for joining us in undertaking a survey of bishops, diocesan directors, and of priests ordained within the last ten years. Each group considered priests ordained within the last ten years. Each group was asked about their opinion of the liturgical formation provided by the seminary. These results will be posted on the members' page our web site after this National Meeting. They will also be shared with the seminary faculties and with the Bishops.

These have been challenging days for all of us. Tensions abound both within the Church and outside of it. I doubt that it has ever been otherwise in any age. It is why we have the treasure of the Liturgy, a point of gathering for all of us regardless of our differences, to discover that despite it all we are one in Jesus Christ who sits us at his table to feast on the banquet of life that is our participation in his dying and rising.

As we continue our work of assisting our bishops, we dare not forget the vision of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which calls us all to active and fruitful participation in the Church's liturgy and to find there refreshment on our journey, peace in the midst of tension, and unity in the midst of discord. In a word, to discover in our doing this sacred work, the awesome mystery of Jesus Christ whose death is our life and whose resurrection is our hope. In a recent book about the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*, Archbishop Mariano Magrassi commented on what happens when scholarship separates from the mystery of encounter: "...so proud of its scientific tools, but so lacking in spiritual power."

Mariano Migrassi. *An Introduction to Lectio Divina*. 1998: Collegeville. p.78

We have the tools. Until we are able to lead all to the spiritual power within the Church's liturgy, we still have work to do. Let us continue, then, until we all can find our rest in the only one who can give it, Jesus Christ, our food and our life.

Rev. John H. Burton
7 October 2003