

Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

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Since the dawn of human consciousness, men and women have tried to make sense of the natural world around them. Using the movements of the sun across the daily sky and the monthly phases of the night moon, humanity has been able to mark various moments, times and seasons which influenced everything from when to harvest the corn to when to slaughter the sheep. These critical moments, largely determined by sun and moon, were also to influence religious celebrations as well. In more recent times, the imperfections and inconsistencies of the earth's rotation and the moon's phases have been compensated for by the digital watch and the atomic clock, but there is no doubt that the measurement of times and seasons is still absolutely necessary for humanity to make sense of the world around it. This is no less true of our attempts to make sense of the God who created us in the here and now. When it comes to the subject of God and time, the Church has provided us with a powerful

and practical tool called the liturgical calendar: a calendar which both unfolds for us the life of Jesus and forms us into the Body of Christ. "In fact, through the yearly cycle, the Church unfolds the entire mystery of Christ and keeps the anniversaries of the saints."¹ The liturgical calendar of the church year makes use of time by marking it off with celebrations which draw our focus to the life of Christ throughout the entire year so that we can begin and end all things in Christ.

JESUS CHRIST: YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER

The Church has always taught that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. We believe that Jesus, by becoming incarnate, needed to occupy the fullness of humanity in order to redeem humanity. Furthermore, the incarnate Christ used the things of this world such as water and wine and mud and spittle to interact with humanity. God's use of the material universe continues today every time we take simple sacramental elements such as bread and wine, and use them as instruments of Christ's sacred presence among us.

Obviously, Christ did not only enter our space, but our time as well. By becoming one with us Christ sanctified all creation, and by entering human history he sanctified all time: past, present, and future.

Just as Jesus used material things in his ministry, God uses time as an instrument of divine revelation, and the liturgical calendar in turn helps us to understand and make sense of Christ's presence in our time. By weaving celebrations such as morning and evening prayer with the rising and setting of the sun, and seasons like Lent and Easter with times such as winter and spring, the Church draws on the cosmic elements of darkness and light and life and death to serve as constant reminders of Christ's own great cycle of life, death, and resurrection. "With unparalleled love you have saved us from death and drawn us into the circle of your life..."² which has been accomplished through the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

The liturgical calendar is a record of God's thorough use of our time as an instrument of Christ's sacred presence to us. We are reminded that God uses all time to be with us, not just sporadic moments throughout salvation history. When, for example, the Jewish people gather for Passover, they remember an historical reality: that they were once slaves in Egypt and that they escaped with God's help. They remember this event by transforming it into symbols such as special foods, bitter and sweet, as well as through the use of ritual, song and prayer which represent the

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Reflections on the Liturgical Year

Passover event so that they can enter the covenant now. They can do this because, although the covenant was first made on Mt. Sinai thousands of years ago, it still continues to exist today. The covenant lasts forever and, therefore, can still be entered into.

The reality of the Word becoming flesh and the resurrection of Christ are not bound by the chains of time either, but are eternal. While it is true that events such as the birth of Christ and the crucifixion were singular moments in history, the salvation brought about by these divine interventions crashes through the boundaries of time and space and is as accessible to us today as it was two thousand years ago. In fact, it is not the anniversary of a long ago event that we celebrate on Christmas or Easter morning, but instead it is the knowledge that these salvific events are present to us now that is the cause of our rejoicing. The liturgy is not a holding up of historical events for us to imitate, but rather it involves a recognition of Christ's presence now and throughout all time doing what God does: creating, redeeming, and sanctifying. The celebration of the Church's liturgies is not a return to the past, but rather it is the fullness of Christ's revelation made present now. "It is true that the Word was made flesh in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4); but it is also true that, in virtue of the mystery of his identity as the eternal Son of the Father, he is the origin and end of the universe"³

The Church has always made use of the times and seasons to determine its celebrations of the church year. Regardless of the "bad press" surrounding the excommunication of Galileo, the Church has always

had a serious interest in the movements of the sun and other heavenly bodies as well as the phases of the moon because of their importance in calculating the feasts of the Church year. Some might be surprised to discover solar observatories and images of the zodiac in the cathedrals of Medieval Europe, but the central purpose of this time-keeping and star gazing has served primarily to establish the proper order of the liturgical celebration of the mystery of Jesus Christ. The central focus of every act of worship in the Church, be it the Liturgy of the Eucharist on the 4th Sunday of Lent, Morning Prayer on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, or a weekday Mass on the Optional Memorial of Margaret Mary Alacoque is the same: the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. "The Old Testament temple and altar with their rituals and sacrifices are replaced not by a new set of rituals and shrines, but by the self-giving of a person, the very Son of God. Henceforth, true worship pleasing to the Father is none other than the saving life, death, and resurrection of Christ. And our worship is this same sacrificial existence in us."⁴ It should be no surprise that central to our lives as Christians is the person of Jesus Christ, and whenever we proclaim the death of the Lord, God continues the work of Christ's redemption⁵ in our world and in our time.

UNPACKING THE MYSTERY

The call to all the baptized to believe that Jesus is the Son of God is an awesome one and, while it is true that every time we gather to pray we celebrate this fact, it is not always easy to do all at once. This is where the liturgical year is of most help to the faithful: "During the different seasons of the

liturgical year, the Church, in accord with traditional discipline, carries out the formation of the faithful by means of devotional practices, both interior and exterior, instruction and works of penance and mercy."⁶ The liturgical year unpacks for us the mysteries of Christ in a more readable, digestible form. We can look in awe at the life of Christ spread out over the course of a year, but by breaking it down into parts we can enter more deeply into all that Christ has done for us. This is not only important for the spirituality of the individual but indeed, for the entire parish which enters communally into each season of the liturgical year and focuses as a people on the various facets of the Paschal Mystery.

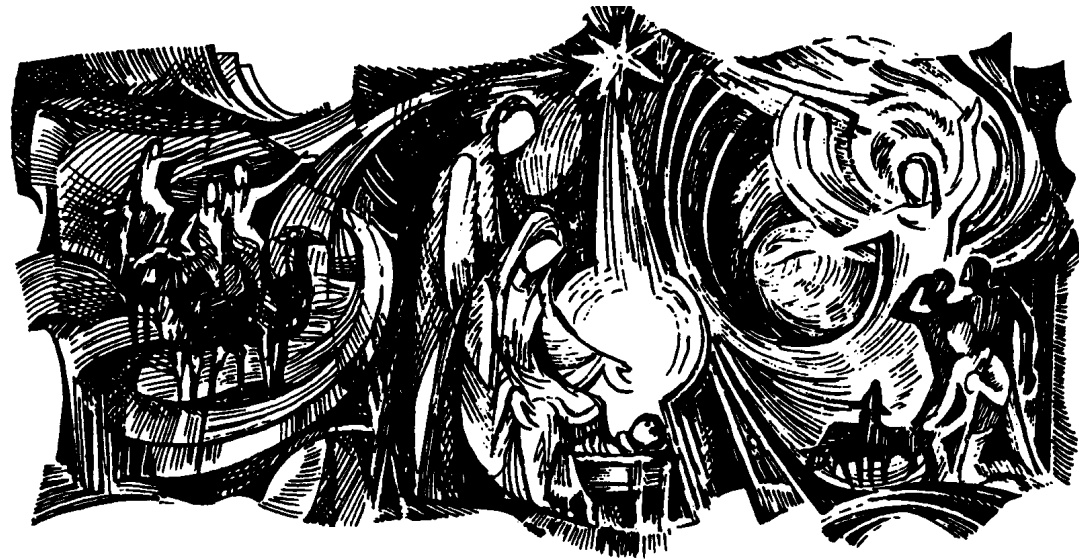
The liturgical year begins where it ends – with the season of Advent. This brings us back to a time of waiting for the first coming of the Messiah, and at the same time turns us forward as we wait in eschatological hope for the second coming of our Savior. Then our hearts and minds delve deeper into the mystery of the incarnation: Mary's "yes" to the God of her ancestors so that the Lord's ultimate revelation could be spoken to us by the Word becoming flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. We call it the Christmas season which includes not only the birth of the Lord but also such solemnities as the Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord. The Word that was spoken through the birth of Christ requires a response of faith to this greatest of all revelations. Like the astrologers who heard and responded, God's people are also called to follow the star to Christ and pay homage to the light of the world. Still, it was not enough that he "emptied himself, taking the

form of a slave, being born in human likeness,” but now we must ponder a deeper mystery, “he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7-8). Lent is upon us, a season of penance and charity, of truth and right worship when the Church speaks most especially with actions and signs of God’s great sacrificial love for the world. Indeed, it is a time of joy, for though we can come up with no clear reason why Christ would love us to the point of death, we are certainly grateful that he does. Finally, we receive the ultimate gift. We are carried safely over the flood waters; we pass through the Red Sea unharmed; we are liberated from slavery; we are guided through the darkness by a pillar of light; we rise from the dead. The mystery is that because of Christ we do not die, but now we live forever. We call this the season of Easter and it is the final word in this great story of our salvation found in the life of Christ.

The seasons of the liturgical year move us through the life of Christ over and over again, but it is not an endless circle in which we are bound to repeat the same words and motions year after year. Rather, the liturgical year draws us deeper and deeper into the Paschal Mystery by spiraling forward so that we meet Christ anew with each passing year, and we are brought closer and closer to oneness with the divine.

SUNDAY

When we look at the liturgical calendar, we see a whole host of memorials, feasts, solemnities, and seasons. While space does not allow for a thorough look at each of these parts of the calendar, one in particular needs to be



mentioned, and that is Sunday itself. While many historical events of the New Testament are celebrated in our liturgies today (e.g. the birth of Jesus), there is only evidence of one particular holy day being celebrated by early Christians in the New Testament itself, and that, of course, is Sunday. Sunday, the first day of the week, was no doubt chosen as the day for Christians to gather because it was the day that Christ rose from the dead; but a more careful look at the Scriptures will show us that Sunday was important for many reasons, thus bolstering its importance in the Christian tradition. Sunday is the day when Jesus rose from the dead, made his post-resurrection appearances, shared meals with his disciples and ascended into heaven. It was on a Sunday that the apostles were sent forth into the world to be witnesses of the good news. Outside of the gospels, there are three additional references to the first day of the week in the New Testament: Acts 20:6-11, 1Cor. 16:1-2 and Rev. 1:10. In Acts we see that it was a Sunday when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church at Pentecost. Later in Acts a collection is taken up for the Church in Jerusalem on the first day of the week. In 1

Corinthians we see Paul preaching in a home on a Sunday where early Christians had gathered to break the bread and listen to Paul preach. Finally, in the Book of Revelation, John tells us that his great heavenly vision occurred on a Sunday. Each of these events adds new dimensions to the Christian understanding of the first day of the week.

The early Christians used different names when referring to Sunday such as the “Lord’s Day,” the “eighth day” and the “first day.” The term “Lord’s Day” is a reference to Jesus’ title of “Christ the Lord,” and it may also have its roots in the “Lord’s Supper;” but Jesus ate many meals with his disciples on the first day, so another dimension of Sunday is to share a meal with Christ. This broadens the meaning of Sunday for us, beyond the single notion that it was the day that Christ rose from the dead, to see it as a day on which Christ appears to his disciples and further desires to share a meal with them. Because there is no “eighth day” in the week, the notion of an eighth day was that it was something yet to be. This day was seen as the first day of the new creation in which the final



age of the world would be fulfilled, giving Sunday an added eschatological dimension which is extremely important to our understanding of this day. "Sunday is not only the first day, it is also 'the eighth day,' set within the sevenfold succession of days in a unique and transcendent position which evokes not only the beginning of time but also its end 'in the age to come.'"⁷ Another numerical reference to Sunday is the "first day." This comes from the Jewish tradition of the seven day week in which Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead, was simply known as the "first day." This name reflects the story of creation found in Genesis in which the earth was made in six days, and on the first day God's Spirit moved over the waters and created light. Christians saw this as a direct connection to Christ who, when he was baptized in the Jordan, had the Spirit of God move over the waters and descend upon him, signifying the beginning of a new creation in which Jesus himself was the light (see Jn 8:12 and Luke 2:32).

We can reasonably conclude that Sunday encompasses many elements of the life of Christ in addition to the resurrection. It is a total

symbol of the new age of the Messiah, drawing together things like ministry and baptism, word and meal, mystery and Spirit. It is everything that it means to be a Christian. To seek out a "theme" for each Sunday of the week is to limit the point of why Sunday exists, which is to bring us into the saving events of our God as they are manifested through our Savior Jesus Christ in the past, present, and future. The only theme of the Sunday celebration is that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose from the dead for no other reason than to save us from sin and death. A true celebration of Sunday enables us not only to know this fact but to feel it, believe it, and most importantly, to live it in our daily lives.

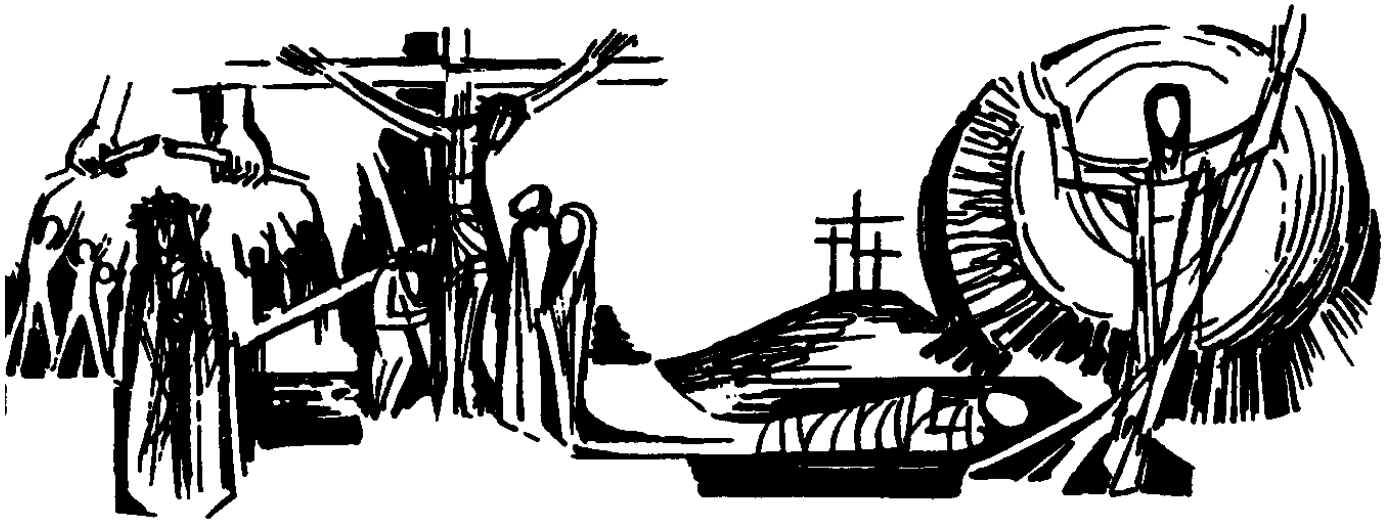
TRIDUUM

"Christ redeemed us all and gave perfect glory to God principally through his paschal mystery: dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life. Therefore, the Easter triduum of the passion and resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. Thus the solemnity of Easter has the same kind of preeminence in the liturgical year that Sunday has in the week."⁸ To mention the liturgical year and not

reference the triduum would be impossible. As the norms state, the three days of the triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are to the year what Sunday is to the week. The Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Passion of the Lord, and the Easter Vigil constitute one continuous liturgy in which the entire Paschal Mystery is summed up and swallowed whole. It is the liturgical year consolidated into three glorious days and when properly carried out, they place before us the entire jewel of the Paschal Mystery to be worshiped and fully entered into as the baptized people of God.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

To hold true to the liturgical year is no easy task. Unfortunately, it often seems that the gathering of people on a Sunday becomes a temptation to insert other things into the liturgy. Too often the thinking that "that's when most of our people are present" becomes an excuse to railroad trendy ideas and other special activities through the liturgy and the liturgical calendar. They may be part of the life of a parish, but they are not appropriate during the liturgy. It is important to remember why so many people



come to Church on a Sunday: to meet the Lord, not the agenda of the liturgy committee or any other group or person.

There is only one theme to our liturgies and that is Christ. It is impossible to say that the theme of our Mass is anything other than him. It may be Scout Sunday or Respect Life Sunday, but the Mass and the liturgies of the Church belong exclusively to Christ and his people. Of course, being committed to Christ is outwardly expressed in our respect for human life, our desire to do good for others, and especially in our desire to share our time and resources with the Church and the poor, but these things must be derived from our relationship with Christ as discovered when we encounter the Lord in the Church's liturgies. The liturgical year and the structure of the liturgy itself inspired by the Holy Spirit and handed on by the Church provide enough guidance and focus to our communal prayer and help us keep the focus on Christ, not on any particular group or individual.

It is of the utmost importance that we do not "historicize" the liturgy but instead recognize that Christ is present to us in

the here and now. The liturgy commemorates historical events by making present to us the saving reality which Christ brought about through these events, but it is not a re-enactment of the past. Although dramas and pageants may play a role in the life of the Church or the local parish, they do not belong in the liturgy. They leave us with a picture of something that happened to different people a long time ago, but they do not invite us in. In drama, the audience are spectators; in liturgy, the assembly are all players.

The liturgical year makes every day of the year a tile in the mosaic of the life of Christ. Seasons and feasts help us to focus on and contemplate the many layers of the mystery of Christ's incarnation, passion, and resurrection, but together they make up the picture of what we hold at the center of our faith - the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Taking care to realize that this mosaic is placed over the current day and year makes us remember that Christ is present not only in the past, but in the present, and in the future as well. As God's people, we are summoned to enter the life of Christ each day, and with the help of the liturgical year, we can

accomplish this as a community of believers journeying to and with Jesus Christ.

Rev. Thomas A. Dente
Associate Director of Liturgical Formation – Worship Office

- 1General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar. Chapter 1, 1.
- 2The Sacramentary (Catholic Book Publishing Company: New York) 1985 Alternative Opening Prayer, 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time.
- 3John Paul II, Dies Domini (Liturgical Training Publications: Chicago) 1998, #8.
- 4Robert Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN) 1993, pg 335.
- 5See The Sacramentary (Catholic Book Publishing Company: New York) 1985, Prayer Over the Gifts, 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time.
- 6General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar. Chapter 1, 1.
- 7John Paul II, Dies Domini (Liturgical Training Publications: Chicago) 1998, #26.
- 8General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar. Chapter 1, 19

Introduction to the Book of the Gospels

I. THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND HER LITURGY

In the fullness of time, God “sent His Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to be a bodily and spiritual medicine, the Mediator between God and man...”¹ Entrusted by the Lord to his Apostles, this Gospel was set down by the Holy Evangelists in written form so that the events fulfilled in Jesus might be known and believed, and that through this belief every person in every time might “have life in his name.”²

Thus, the Church has received the Gospel from the Apostles to whom the Lord explained the Holy Scriptures.³ From that time onwards the Church has never failed to come together to read “what referred to him in all the Scriptures”⁴ and to celebrate the paschal mystery wherein “the victory and triumph of his death are again made present.”⁵

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the word of God proclaimed is the foundation of every liturgical celebration and “the rule and support of all our life. The working of the Holy Spirit precedes, accompanies, and brings to completion the whole celebration of the Liturgy. But the Spirit also brings home to each person individually everything that in

the proclamation of the word of God is spoken for the good of the whole gathering of the faithful. In strengthening the unity of all, the Holy Spirit at the same time fosters a diversity of gifts and furthers their multiform operation.”⁶

From the time of the Apostolic Fathers, the Church has consistently read the Sacred Scriptures, especially the Gospels, as an integral part of the celebration of the Eucharist which helps to prepare the congregation for the Liturgy of the Eucharist itself. While the whole corpus of the Scriptures is venerated by the Church as the word of God, the Gospels have always been proclaimed as the very voice of her Bridegroom. Especially on Sunday, “the day of the Resurrection...the day of Christians...our day,”⁷ the

Church proclaims the Gospel passages which are at the heart of her faith.⁸

THE BOOK OF THE GOSPELS

Formal liturgical books containing readings from Sacred Scripture have been common in the Church from the time of Saint Gregory the Great.⁹ In our own day every effort is made to assure that the Scriptures are bound in books which are “worthy, dignified, and beautiful.”¹⁰

This is particularly true of the *Book of the Gospels* which is venerated above all the books of readings by Churches of both East and West.¹¹ So clearly is the *Book of the Gospels* a sign of Christ present in the liturgy, that it is revered with the same holy kiss given to the altar.



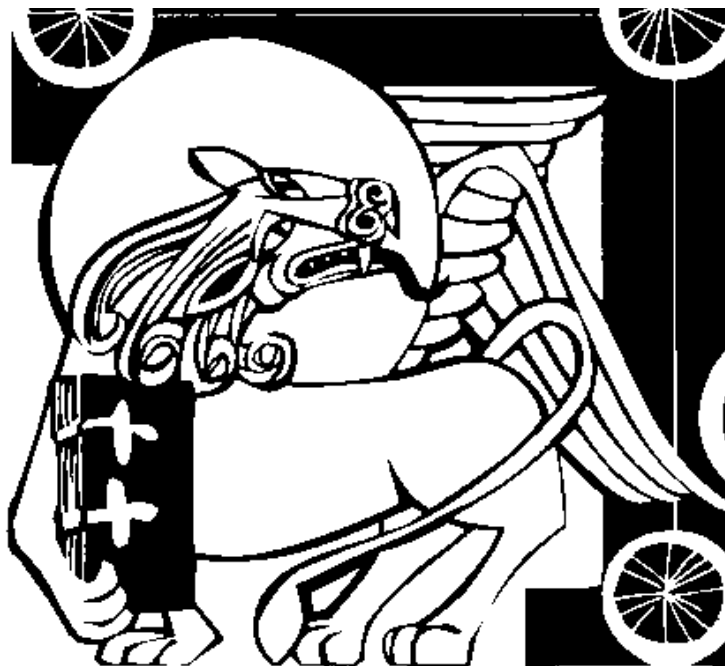
For this reason it is desirable that “cathedrals and at least the larger, more populous parishes and the churches with a larger attendance possess a beautifully designed *Book of the Gospels*, separate from any other book of readings.”¹²

Thus the *Book of the Gospels* as a sign of the presence of Christ in his word proclaimed is always accorded a place of honor in the Church’s liturgy. It is borne by the deacon in solemn procession for the veneration of the entire congregation and accompanied by candles and incense at Mass. The imposition and presentation of the *Book of the Gospels* to a newly ordained Bishop illustrate that the faithful preaching of the word of God¹³ is among his principal duties. The presentation of the *Book of the Gospels* to the newly ordained deacon “symbolizes the office of the

deacon to proclaim the Gospel in liturgical celebrations and to preach the faith of the Church in word and deed.”¹⁴ Finally, the enshrinement of the *Book of the Gospels* whenever the Church gathers in a council or synod is a sign of the presence of Christ himself as teacher and guide.¹⁵

II. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AT MASS

Every time the Church unites herself with Christ in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Body of the Lord and the eternal Word of divine truth are received as from a twofold table, as participation in the one sacrifice of praise.¹⁶ While opening up a vast treasury of Sacred Scripture in the Liturgy of the Word, the Church nonetheless acknowledges the preeminent place of the Gospels¹⁷ by according



“special marks of honor” to their proclamation.¹⁸ The proclamation of the Gospel is reserved to the deacon, if he is present, or to a priest. It can be preceded by a procession which marks the coming of Christ, present in the words of

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECREE

In accord with the norms established by decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in *Cum. nostra aetate* (January 27, 1966), this edition of the *Book of the Gospels* is declared to be the vernacular typical edition of this liturgical book in the Latin rite dioceses of the United States of America, and is published by authority of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The *Book of the Gospels* was canonically approved for use by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 16, 1999 and was subsequently confirmed by the Apostolic See by decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on May 23, 2000 (Prot. 2742/99/L).

On the feast of Saint Jerome, September 30, 2000, the *Book of the Gospels* may be published and used in the liturgy. On the First Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2000, its use is mandatory. From that day forward no other English version may be used.

Given at the General Secretariat of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C., on June 29, 2000, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul.

Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza
Bishop of Galveston-Houston
President
National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Reverend Monsignor Dennis M. Schnurr
General Secretary

life he unfailingly addresses to his followers whenever, as members of the Church, they gather in his name. The procession may be accompanied by particular marks of reverence, above all, the use of incense and lighted candles. To the proclamation and the accompanying manifestations of reverence, all the faithful present respond in faith, receiving the message of the Gospel into their hearts and praying that it may purify and transform their lives, building up the Body of Christ which is the Church.



ENTRANCE PROCESSION

In the Entrance Procession the vested deacon reverently carries the *Book of the Gospels* before him so that it may be seen by the faithful.¹⁹ With the priest he makes the proper reverence and goes up to the altar, placing the *Book of the Gospels* on it. The deacon then kisses the altar at the same time as the priest.²⁰ In the absence of a deacon, the reader reverently carries the *Book of the Gospels* in procession. The reader follows the acolytes and other ministers in procession. The reader places the *Book of the Gospels* on the altar, but the reader does not kiss the altar.

PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL PROCESSION

After a brief silent reflection on the last reading from the *Lectionary*, or as the occasion dictates, after the responsorial Psalm, the reader removes the *Lectionary*. The candle bearers go to the altar where the *Book of the Gospels* has been placed.

The faithful stand to welcome and acclaim the Word made flesh and to honor the *Book of the Gospels*, which is a sign of his presence. All sing the Gospel Acclamation which ends when the deacon reaches

the ambo.²¹ The deacon, accompanied by the thurifer, goes to the priest celebrant. As the congregation begins to sing the Gospel Acclamation, the deacon assists the priest who puts incense into the thurible.²²

BLESSING

After the preparation of the incense, the deacon bows before the priest and asks for the blessing.²³ The priest blesses him with the words, *The Lord be in your heart...* The deacon answers, *Amen*.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A DEACON

When no deacon is present, a concelebrating priest may proclaim the Gospel.²⁴ When no concelebrant is present, the priest celebrant proclaims the Gospel. Unless the celebrant is a Bishop, the concelebrant bows before the altar, praying inaudibly, *Almighty God, cleanse my heart...*²⁵

When the celebrant is the Bishop, the priest asks for the blessing in the same manner as the deacon.²⁶ Everything else is carried out by the

concelebrating priest in the same manner as a deacon.

PROCESSION

After receiving the blessing, the deacon, preceded by the thurifer and acolytes with lighted candles or other symbols of reverence that may be customary, takes the *Book of the Gospels* from the altar and carries it to the ambo, accompanied by the Gospel Acclamation.²⁷

PROCLAMATION

Once he has reached the ambo and placed the *Book of the Gospels* on it, with hands joined, he greets the faithful. Acolytes with candles may position themselves on either side of the deacon at the ambo as he proclaims the Gospel.

Then the deacon announces the reading while making the sign of the cross with his thumb, first on the book at the beginning of the Gospel passage he is about to read, then on his forehead, lips and breast. Together with the deacon who proclaims the Gospel, the faithful sign themselves similarly that the

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Word may enlighten their minds, cleanse their hearts and open their lips to proclaim the praise of the Lord.²⁸ All present respond with the words: *Glory to you, Lord*. The deacon then incenses the book three times, to the center, left and right.²⁹ The Gospel is then proclaimed in a clear voice.

In order to stir the hearts of the faithful and convey the importance of the Gospel itself, the greeting, the announcement of the reading, the concluding acclamation and even the entire Gospel may be sung.³⁰ Musical settings should be easily understood and enhance rather than obscure the meaning of the sacred text.³¹

ACCLAMATION AT THE END OF THE GOSPEL

At the end of the Gospel, the deacon proclaims *The Gospel of the Lord* without raising the book from the stand. All present respond with the words: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*.³²

Then the deacon kisses the book, saying in a low voice:

*“Through the words of the Gospel...”*³³ If the celebrant is a Bishop, the deacon either may bring the *Book of the Gospels* to the Bishop, who reverences it with a kiss, or he may kiss the book himself. The *Book of the Gospels* is then reverently taken to some other suitable place.³⁴

The *Book of the Gospels* is not carried in the procession at the end of Mass.

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 5.

² John 20:31; cf. Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-2.

² Cf. Acts 8:30-31; Saint Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 2, 2 and 2. Luke 24:27.

³ Luke 24:27.

⁴ See Council of Trent, sess. 12, 11 October 1551, *Decr. De ss. Eucharist.* cap. 5; see also Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium* no. 6.

⁵ *Lectionary for Mass for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (editio typica altera, 1998), no. 9.

⁶ Saint Jerome, *In die dominica Paschae*, II, 52; Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, 2.

⁷ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 65.

⁸ Saint Gregory the Great, *Hormilia in evangelia*, 14,1.

⁹ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 36.

¹² See *De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum* (editio typica altera, 1989), no. 26; see also Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, Christus Dominus*, no. 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 188.

¹⁴ *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* (editio typica, 1984), no. 1172.

¹⁵ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 17.

¹⁷ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, nos.60, 175.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 172.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 173.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 132, 175; *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 17; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 140.

²¹ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, no. 931; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 140.

²² *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, no. 175; *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 17; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 140.

²³ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 49.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 17.

²⁵ *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 74.

²⁶ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, no. 175; *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 17; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 74, 140.

²⁷ *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 74, 141.

²⁸ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, no. 175; *Ceremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 74.

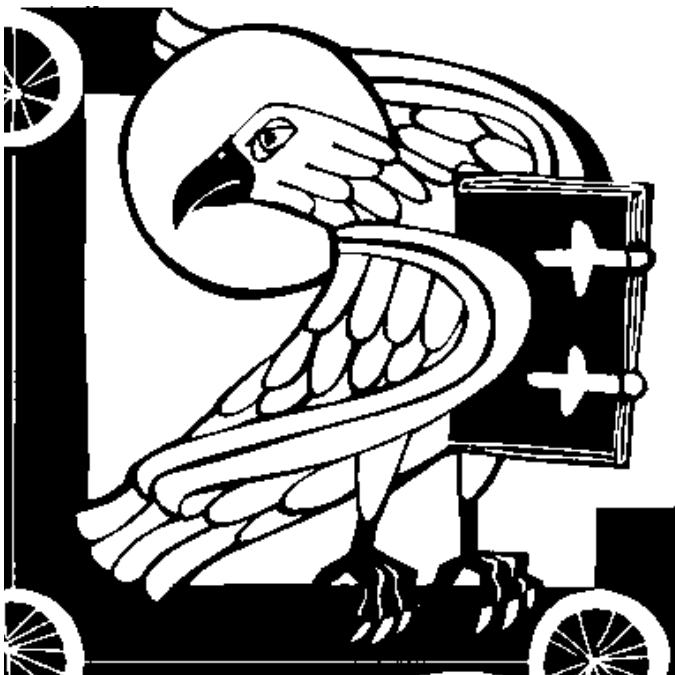
²⁹ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 17.

³⁰ *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 14.

³¹ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, no. 134; *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 17.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, no. 74.



CELEBRATION TO CLOSE THE JUBILEE YEAR

This celebration to close the Jubilee Year is most appropriately celebrated on the afternoon or evening of January 5, 2001. A priest, deacon, or lay minister may preside. Any of the texts may be modified as needed. The prayer from "Go and Make Disciples" should be reproduced (on cards or in a worship aid) for all participants. The celebration was composed by the Third Millennium & Jubilee Year 2000, National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference.

OPENING SONG

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain" or another appropriate song

Presiding Minister:

For the past year, we have celebrated a year of Jubilee, a year of favor from the Lord. Our theme has been "Open Wide the Doors to Christ." We have opened our hearts to the coming of Christ and at Christmas, we welcomed him once again into our hearts.

Though the Jubilee Year has drawn to a close, our work is not done. As we opened the doors of our hearts to Christ, so must we open the doors of our church, our homes, and our schools to those who feel excluded and unwanted. We must bring the good news of Christ to the world, so that we may hasten the coming of the reign of God.

And so we pray:

**God of mercy and compassion,
you call all people to yourself
and give us the promise of your eternal
kingdom,
a kingdom of justice, peace, and blessing.**

**Grant us the strength to preach your
good news to the world
and make us worthy to share in your
kingdom.**

**We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

READING I

Hebrews 13:1-8

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 72 (any setting)

GOSPEL

Matthew 28:16-20

REFLECTION

The presiding minister may invite silent reflection or give a brief reflection on the need to evangelize and bring the good news of Jesus to all those we meet. Often, the witness of our lives of faith and commitment may draw people to Christ. We must also continually strive to make our parish communities places of hospitality where newcomers and inquirers will feel welcome.

INTERCESSIONS

Presiding Minister:

Jesus promised to be with us until the end of time, so we have the courage to make our prayers of petition.

Assisting Minister:

That the Church may never fail to preach the good news of Christ to all nations and peoples. We pray to the Lord.

That world leaders will seek policies that enhance the dignity of all people, especially the most vulnerable. We pray to the Lord.

That those gathered here will be good messengers of the gospel. We pray to the Lord.

That those who begin new endeavors this year will find success and joy. We pray to the Lord.

That those who seek meaning in their lives will, through our actions, come to know the light of Christ. We pray to the Lord.

Presiding Minister:

**Father,
we trust in your mercy and love.
hear the prayers we make to you
and answer them according to your will.
Amen.**

Presiding Minister:

As a sign of our willingness to open the doors that all may know Christ, we pray:

All:

That Catholic people will be set ablaze with a desire to live their faith fully and share it freely with others.

We ask God to open the heart of every Catholic, to see the need for the Gospel in each life, in our nation and on our planet.

We ask Mary, the one through whom Jesus entered our world, to guide us in presenting Jesus to those who live in our land.

May her prayers help us to share in her courage and faithfulness. May they lead us to imitate her discipleship, her turning to Jesus, her love for God and for all.

May the compassion that Mary has always reflected be present in our hearts.

We pray that the fire of Jesus enkindled in us by God's Spirit may lead more and more people in our land to become disciples, formed in the image of Christ our Savior.

Presiding Priest:

**My brothers and sisters,
the Jubilee Year has come to a close.
let us go forth and continue to make the good news known
through our words and deeds.
May almighty God bless you all
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

A lay minister who presides signs himself or herself with the cross and say:

**May God bless us and keep us always.
Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

“Take Christ to the World” (Paul Inwood) or another appropriate song

This celebration might be followed with a Twelfth Night party or a parish open house for those in the community. Such open houses could become a monthly occurrence. A parish might invite all the people living in a given neighborhood or section of the parish to these open houses. Special invitations should be given to newcomers and the unchurched. Such gatherings can make people feel welcome in the Church and may help to create opportunities for ecumenical or inter-religious community projects.

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