

Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

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“**T**he liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is the font from which all her power flows.¹ It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God...”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1074

On November 1, 2003, the Church will mark the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the *Directory for Masses with Children (DMC)*. The Directory, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship, for use with catechetical age children, supplements the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*² –thus explaining its position next to the GIRM in the *Sacramentary*. Over the years, presbyters, pastoral ministers, catechists, and liturgists alike have become acquainted with and grown to appreciate the *Directory for Masses with Children*. The observance of this anniversary allows us to look back in appreciation

and forward with new hope and renewed dedication. The thirtieth anniversary of this document invites evaluation and reflection to support its significance and validity. It is in this spirit that these reflections remember and celebrate the *Directory for Masses with Children*.

In the first ten years after the DMC was published, the pastoral context in which the DMC found itself was a time when the Church was in an implementation mode. Energies were high as the Church was grasped by the fervor unleashed by the Second Vatican Council. The Vatican II documents were driving forces in pastoral life of the Church, in particular the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)*. This document announced the promotion of the full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgical life of the Church as the aim to be considered before all else. This is the right and obligation of a redeemed people by virtue of their baptism. It is not age, gender, race or level of education that names one among the “chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation.”³ It is baptism! And so the Church was drawn into both the realization of a baptismal identity and cultivation of a baptismal spirituality.

Thus in marking the tenth anniversary of the DMC, many authors noted in particular how this document was deeply rooted in the aim of the liturgical reform inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council, that is, fostering the full, conscious and active participation of children, because they are baptized! The Church baptizes children and, therefore, it must be concerned that once baptized they grow in communion with Christ and each other. The DMC suggests that efforts in adapting the liturgy so children can be drawn into participation is more obligation than option. “A fully Christian life is inconceivable without participation in the liturgical services in which the faithful, gathered into a single assembly, celebrate the paschal mystery.”⁴ The liturgy is the **privileged place** belonging to the baptized.

In remembering and celebrating the DMC thirty years later the Church finds itself still wrestling with the pastoral care of young people. Young people are viewed and even named “the future of the Church.” They are not the future of the Church. They **are** the Church. Often it is the adult Church that puts baptized youth in an identity crisis. We catechize

BRINGING CHILDREN TO THE PRIVILEGED PLACE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

REMEMBERING THE *DIRECTORY FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN*
— THIRTY YEARS LATER —

children baptized as infants as if they are in a “holding pattern” — waiting for the reception of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation. They are not studying, working, attending in order to receive the Holy Spirit and be a part of us; they are drenched with the Holy Spirit! Their catechesis is based on the baptism they have already received⁵ and their catechesis needs to be “intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical activity.”⁶ Does the *Directory for Masses with Children* have something to say to the pastoral ministry of the Church some thirty years later? The DMC remains a pastoral reminder that the baptismal identity is nourished at the table of the Word and the table of

the Eucharist and that it is in the liturgy that Jesus Christ “works in fullness for the transformation of human beings.”⁷ We remember and celebrate a document that “witnesses to unchanged faith and tradition”⁸ and continues to declare that the liturgy is the **privileged place** of the baptized people of God for catechizing the people of God.

“Great care has to be taken that the children be participants, not spectators. As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the *Directory for Masses With Children* and renew our efforts to implement its principles, we have to remember the issue is more a matter of making the

spirit and vision of the liturgy available for children. ‘It is necessary to take great care that the children do not feel neglected...’”⁹

The *Directory for Masses with Children* evolved out of the Church’s “special concern” for children, because “...the circumstances in which children grow are not favorable to their spiritual progress. In addition, sometimes parents barely fulfill the obligations of Christian education which they undertake at the baptism of their children”.¹⁰ And so the fear of “spiritual harm” to the youth of the Church propelled efforts in the adaptation of the liturgy for children. Thirty years have passed since the promulgation of the DMC but the Church’s concerns remain and societal situations continue to hinder the spiritual growth of young children making it necessary “to take great care that the children do not feel neglected.”¹¹ In addition, in these beginning years of the Third Christian Millennium, situations have come to light resulting in ruptured relationships between the Church and children. These violations have resulted in children losing trust in the Church and consequently losing faith, —the faith that the Church has a sacred duty to foster.¹² The necessary prescription for mending, healing and fostering faith that the DMC gave the Church thirty years ago is needed now more than ever. The needed prescription is **Sunday**. The purpose of the document is to draw children into the observance of Sunday, the day of the Church and the



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“source of the true Christian spirit”¹³ — the font from which all her power flows.”¹⁴ In his Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, Pope John Paul II exhorts and challenges the Church to have the courage to reclaim Sunday as **the first holy day of all!** Pastoral care of children in this Third Christian Millennium needs ears that hear the thirty-year-old call of the *Directory for Masses with Children* for the primacy of Sunday. It is the gathering on Sunday of the people of God that is the **privileged place** for mending, healing, and fostering faith!

“The *Directory for Masses with Children* is a landmark document of faith formation, laying the groundwork for a more unified process of faith formation for children by reinforcing the dynamic relationship between liturgy and catechesis.”¹⁵

The DMC is a document about pastoral care of children. Although the ministries of Catholic school and religious education provide for children as students, the DMC is a constant reminder that the Christian identity of children is not students but believers. The Church baptizes children and forms them into believers, and the privileged place for formation is the liturgy. What the *Directory for Masses with Children* was for the Church’s catechesis of the baptized was what the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is for the catechesis of the unbaptized. It began the shift in the pastoral care of baptized children from an

education model to a formation model. The DMC names the celebrations of the liturgical year as the source of the true Christian spirit that we hand on to children. Through it the great mystery of Christ unfolds and the gathered are catechized and formed, through the Word, symbols, prayers, gestures, and actions.

The pastoral care of children needs the DMC. The shift from an education model of ministry to a formation model is in its beginning stages. Some thirty years after the promulgation of the DMC, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) looks to initiatory catechesis for inspiration and affirms the formative power of liturgy, and emphasizes that liturgical catechesis is integral to growth in faith.¹⁶ The Church needs the DMC because Christian formation of children hinges on the **privileged place** for catechesis — the liturgy and liturgy forms primarily through participation.

The DMC remains the challenging voice in the pastoral care of children. The full implications of this document for the pastoral care of children are yet to be discovered, expressed, and practiced. The liturgy from time immemorial is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is the font from which all her power flows.”¹⁷ Anniversaries, such as this, often cause an appreciative remembering, thereby generating a new energy for a renewed dedication. This anniversary can be no

different, for the liturgy is the **privileged place** of the children of God.

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ
Director, Worship Office

¹ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) 10.

² See *Directory for Masses with Children* (DMC), no. 4.

³ See 1 Peter 2:9, 4-5 and CSL 14.

⁴ DMC 8

⁵ See *Rite of Confirmation*, 12.

⁶ *Catechesi tradendae*: “On Catechesis in Our Time,” (John Paul II, October 16, 1979), no. 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See revised *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, popularly known as the GIRM 2000, 1-11.

⁹ Sandra DeMasi, SSJ, Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the DMC.

¹⁰ DMC, 1.

¹¹ DMC, 17.

¹² See *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, p. 2

¹³ CSL, 14.

¹⁴ CSL, 10.

¹⁵ Sandra DeMasi, SSJ, Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the DMC.

¹⁶ See *General Directory for Catechesis*, 85, 87, 91.

¹⁷ CSL, 10.

YOUR KINGDOM IS A KINGDOM

FOR ALL AGES! (PSALM 145:13)

WHY CELEBRATE THE ARCHDIOCESAN SESQUICENTENNIAL WITH CHILDREN?

Over thirty years ago, in 1967, the first Synod of Bishops in Rome gathered and discussed ways of incorporating children into the liturgical life of the Church. The bishops feared for the spiritual well being of children because of the societal trends that were glamorizing and publicizing evil over good. Fear for the spiritual harm of our children remains. Just this past year, children in our society have come face to face with atrocities such as school shootings and the crying children of the Middle East. In addition, the Church in the United States is experiencing a crisis without precedent in our times — that is, the loss of trust and even faith in the Church's duty to protect young people (See "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People"). The result of that 1967 discussion was the *Directory for Masses with Children*, which reminded the adult Church of its obligation and responsibility for the faith life of children. On October 19, 2003, the Archdiocese of Newark will begin a yearlong observance of its 150th anniversary. The observance of the Archdiocesan Sesquicentennial can be a prime moment and a much-needed one for incorporating children more

profoundly into the life of this particular Church.

In a society that sends confusing messages to its youth and in some cases fosters hopelessness, the Sesquicentennial celebration can become a source of hope. Children are bombarded through the media by all the evidences of God's Kingdom that is **not yet**. The 150th Anniversary gives the Church of Newark an opportunity to "shout"¹ the Kingdom that **is!** The Third Christian Millennium is a **new advent** for the Church — a time for the Church to herald the good news: "Here comes with power the Lord God."² The anticipation and jubilation surrounding the observance of the 150th anniversary of the Archdiocese should be outward and external. **Sesquicentennial** speaks not only of an inner joy but a joy manifested. Efforts in preparing for the Sesquicentennial celebration should be filling the **airwaves** with Good News gatherings, words, songfests, good works, and other manifestations of the faith and faith life of the Christian community. Celebrations of Christian identity generate in children an enthusiasm for deeper participation in the life, worship, and mission of the Church. Observance of the anniversary of the Church

of Newark is an opportunity to propel the beginning of the third millennium beyond the confines of time — from this moment in history to a moment in salvation history.

To encourage the participation of children in a jubilee celebration of the particular Church is "to hand on"³ a tradition of the Church from "generation to generation."⁴ In addition, it also reminds the Church that her traditions belong to all generations. A Sesquicentennial celebration is an intergenerational event. The recipients and the participants are the whole Christian community of this particular Church, regardless of age. The event should be an experience of standing, praying, singing, **being** as one people of God, adults and children. To hand on the tradition of celebrating a jubilee year from generation to generation takes the experience of handing on faith and its traditions, beyond passive inheritance, to an active dynamic, generating a deeper sense of belonging. The inclusion of children in such a Church event signifies that children walk as part of the community in a new way.

The Sesquicentennial celebration can be a time to

form a **memory** for our children that is religious. A religious memory is crucial for faith development. At the times when children are searching for a favorable sign to help them discern the presence of God in their lives, their memory needs to be religious — anamnetic,⁵ rather than brief un-sustaining recall. The symbolic moments and ritual actions of the liturgical celebrations of an anniversary event, if done well, can be evocative moments arousing the religious imagination of children. Religious imagination can open minds and hearts to the mystery of God, and the development of this imagination forms memory. The repetitive simple gestures of rituals, which are built on human experiences such as kissing the Gospel book, taking the Eucharistic bread and cup, signing with a cross, sprinkling with water, anointing with oil, and laying on of hands, cannot then go unnoticed because of the power they contain.

An event as momentous as a Sesquicentennial Jubilee calls into question how we celebrate and respect time, what we understand as “fullness of time”⁶ and what we understand as **fullness of life**. The 150th Anniversary of the Church of Newark is a celebration of time “overshadowed by the Holy Spirit”⁷ and consecrated; the Church, therefore, can only experience this event as sacred. Such an event brought into light can stir great moments of faith and plunge the Church deeper into God. No less is true for children. This sacred event

appropriately celebrated can arouse children to ask the question which Scripture places in the heart of all youth: “What must I do to gain eternal life?”⁸ A celebration of **fullness of time** (sesquicentennial) can be a moment of authentic conversion for children, a putting on of the attitudes of Christ even if they are unable to articulate it. The Sesquicentennial anniversary is a 150-year-old story of holiness; children are open to stories. To consecrate this “moment in time” is to give children the confidence to move in this new millennium with the knowledge that Jesus, the Word made flesh, leads them by day and is the fire that lights the night!⁹

Enthusiasm for this Sesquicentennial Jubilee provides an opportunity for the transformation of a **people** into God’s people. An event of this magnitude pushes the Church beyond parish and even beyond diocesan boundaries into an experience of being one, holy, and Catholic. This **God event** is an experience of global citizenship, and active participation in a global Church belongs to each generation. Children are experiencing widening social circles occurring naturally in their lives. The moment of Sesquicentennial celebration can push the young Christian beyond the domestic Church and parish Church; it can insert children, not only into the broader experience of universal Church, but also into an experience of global **citizenship** where there are **no longer strangers or aliens** but one people, all “of the household of God.”¹⁰

This Sesquicentennial year is also a celebration of catechesis. It reminds the Church that the true nature of catechesis is to echo God’s word. Catechesis is not only intended to impart information but also to inspire one “to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God.”¹¹ To herald the Word having become flesh is to live the “faith which expresses itself through love.”¹² Each generation must take up this task. It is an essential part of what it means to be **Church**.

Why celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the Church of Newark with children? Simply because God’s kingdom is a **kingdom for all ages!**

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ
Director, Worship Office

¹ See Isaiah 40:9-10.

² Ibid.

³ See: 1 Corinthians 11:2.

⁴ Psalm 145:13.

⁵ Liturgical anamnesis is not the mere mental recall of something past, over and done with, nor is it the fond recollection of something or someone absent. Rather, in the church’s liturgical anamnesis before God, Christ is truly present now.

⁶ From “Eucharistic Prayer IV,” *Sacramentary* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1985), p. 557.

⁷ See: Luke 1:35.

⁸ Matthew 19:16.

⁹ Sandra DeMasi, SSJ, Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the *Directory for Masses with Children*.

¹⁰ Exodus 13:21.

¹¹ See: Ephesians 2:19.

¹² Micah 6:8.

¹³ Galatians 5:6.

SIGNS OF REVERENCE FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

The *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani 2000* (GIRM) number 160 gives four postures involved in the action of receiving Holy Communion. A brief commentary prepared by the Worship Office is given below.

1. PROCESSING

The Church understands that every procession in liturgy is a sign of the pilgrim Church, the body of those who believe in Christ, on their way to the heavenly Jerusalem. The liturgical assembly of the baptized that comes together for the Eucharist is a manifestation of the pilgrim Church.

The communion procession is an action of the Body of Christ. At Christ's invitation, extended by the priest acting in the person of Christ: "happy are they who are called to his supper", the members of the community come forward to share in the sacred meal. Each time we come to the Table of the Lord, we join the countless ranks of all the baptized who have gone before us throughout the ages. The Communion procession should move with such dignity.

The importance of processions in the celebration of Masses with children is considered in the Directory for Masses with Children.

Among the actions that are considered under this heading, processions and other activities that involve physical participation deserve special mention. ... The communion procession, if properly arranged, helps greatly to develop the children's devotion. (DMC 34)

2. BOWING OF THE HEAD

The General Instruction directs the communicant to make a sign of reverence, to be determined by the bishops of each country or region, before receiving Communion while standing. The bishops of this country have determined that the sign is to be a bow, a gesture through which we express our reverence and give honor to Christ who comes to us as our spiritual food.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 275 explains two kinds of bows: a bow of the head and a bow of the body. The bishops of the United States have determined that the sign of reverence to be made before receiving communion is a **bow of the head**.

When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. ... When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood. (GIRM 160)

3. STANDING

The norm for reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing. Communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the

faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for this norm (GIRM 160).

If adjustments to posture need to be made the significance of unity in posture and gesture is the governing factor.

...attention should be paid to what is determined by the General Instruction... rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice. A common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants. (GIRM 42)

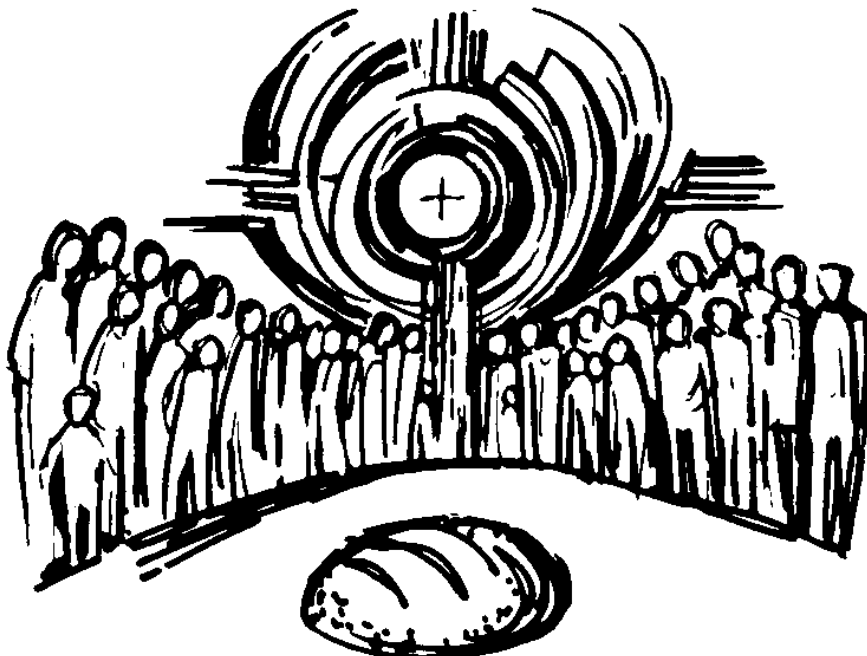
4. RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT

Holy Communion under the form of bread is offered to the communicant with the words "The Body of Christ." The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant (GIRM 160). When receiving the sacrament in the hand, one hand is placed palm up, on top of the other hand. Ancient writers called this gesture making a throne for Christ the King. After receiving the sacrament in the hand, the communicant takes a short step to the side, stops for a brief moment and then reverently takes the consecrated host using the hand which is under the hand holding the host, places it in the mouth and consumes the host.

The chalice is offered to the communicant with the words "The Blood of Christ," to which the communicant responds, "Amen."

In summary, the movement of receiving communion under the forms of bread and wine can be described in the following manner.

The communicant comes forward to communion in the usual manner. Approaching the communion minister the communicant reverently focuses on what he or she is about to do. The communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament. Then showing the consecrated host, the minister says, "The Body of Christ." to which the communicant responds, "Amen." The minister offers the sacrament, which is reverently received either in the hand or on the tongue. Likewise, if the communicant chooses to receive from the cup, he or she approaches the cup and bows before the Precious Blood. Then after the minister has said, "The Blood of Christ," the communicant responds, "Amen." The communicant takes the chalice into his or her hands, drinks, and returns the chalice to the minister.



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