

Dear companions at the Table,

As we enter Lent, I am reminded of the wonderful privilege we have of journeying with our candidates and catechumens, and of celebrating the liturgies of the Church with them. I hope that we can join our prayer, fasting, and charity to the journeys they are taking towards the Easter Sacraments, and on the way find our own baptismal calling renewed.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

Lenten Fast and Abstinence

FAST—Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast. On days of fast, one full meal and two lesser meals are allowed. Eating between meals is not permitted. Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are bound to fast.

ABSTINENCE—Ash Wednesday and all of the Fridays of Lent are also days of abstinence. On days of abstinence, meat may not be taken. The law of abstinence binds all Catholics fourteen years of age or older. If members of the Faithful are unable to observe the fast and abstinence regulations because of ill health or other reasons, they are urged to practice other forms of penance and self-denial suitable to their condition.

RESOURCES

The Eucharistic Community

This series of colorful and well-written pamphlets produced by the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (PNCEA) would make a great addition to a literature rack or “new parishioners” packet. They are intended to introduce newcomers to the Mass and “help Catholic parishioners know, love and share the Mass in a variety of ways.” For more information, please visit www.pncea.org/store.

EnVisionChurch

...is a new online resource concerned with liturgy, spirituality, and sacred art and architecture. Sponsored by the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Washington, D.C., the site creates a forum for learning and networking for anyone who is interested in the construction, renovation, and/or design of worship spaces, the creation of artwork, the enhancing of spaces for the liturgical seasons and other occasions, the celebration of liturgical rites, the interrelationship between art, architecture, liturgy and spirituality, and much more! Membership is free and registering takes less than one minute. Supporting memberships are also available for professionals who offer services/products in church construction, religious artwork, worship space design, liturgical celebrations, etc. So visit www.envisionchurch.org today and become part of the growing global EnVisionChurch community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DIOCESAN LITURGIES

The Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at St. John Vianney Church, Bettendorf, on Monday, March 10, at 5:30 p.m. I would ask that we all encourage the members of our parishes—especially those in the RCIA or preparing for Confirmation—to attend this beautiful and important liturgy. Information on “ordering” oils will be sent to priests/parishes in the near future.

The Care and Reception of the Sacred Oils

Only the Sacred Oils blessed at the Chrism Mass are to be used in the following year. The new oils are to be received by the parish on Holy Thursday, and the old oils are to be disposed of properly.

How are the oils to be received?

A rite for the Reception of the Holy Oils Blessed at the Chrism Mass can be found at the USCCB’s website: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/holyoils.shtml>. The oils are presented as part of the procession of the gifts, before the bread and wine. The presentation can be accompanied by words of explanation followed by a sung response.

How are the oils to be disposed of reverently?

The Sacred Oils from the past year are to be burned—either in an oil-burning sanctuary light or in another oil lamp in the church, or in the new fire at the Easter Vigil. If such burning is not possible, the oils may be buried in the ground in a place that is unlikely to be disturbed.

What if we run out of oil during the year?

In the first place, there is no reason to anticipate that a parish would ever be without the Oil of Catechumens or Oil of the Sick: the priest may always bless oil for a particular celebration (note: such oil is not to be “stored” like oil blessed at the Chrism Mass; it is disposed of after the rite for which it was blessed in the manner described above). The Bishop will always bring chrism for confirmation, so having a sufficient supply of that oil should not be a problem.

What if there is a real emergency?

As mentioned above, it is the intention of the Church that the Sacred Oils are to be replaced each year with a fresh supply blessed at the Chrism Mass. Therefore, there really should be no recourse to “old oils” that are kept around. If for some reason oils from the previous year are available, they may validly (but not licitly) be used in a true emergency. In extreme situations, more oil may validly (though not licitly) be added to the blessed oil to increase its volume—as long as the unblessed oil makes up less than 50% of the resulting mixture. However, this should not be done except in necessity (and not, for example, just to increase the amount of oil in the vessel for the sake of appearance). The provision applies to all three oils.

Bottom line: replace the oils; bless more for particular rites if needed; don’t plan on adding more.

CONTINUING FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES:

Notre Dame Center for Liturgy

The Forgotten Sacraments (June 16-18): The annual liturgy conference will focus on the sacraments of healing (anointing of the sick and reconciliation) and the sacraments at the service of communion (marriage and holy orders).

SummerSong 2008 (July 7-18): A two-week intensive for liturgical music ministers including graduate level study of liturgy, private lessons, and clinics—all in the context of communal prayer.

For more information, visit their website at www.liturgy.nd.edu.

Focus in Initiation: Catechumenate

The North American Forum on the Catechumenate will be presenting this two-day workshop on July 18-19, 2008, in the Diocese of Des Moines. For more information, please contact Rev. Tim Fitzgerald at 515-237-5026 or formation@dmdiocese.org.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

RCIA: MYSTAGOGY

In the Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis (or Mystagogy), a number of rites can be celebrated—the most important of which are the “neophyte Masses” in which all those who have been baptized at the Vigil gather together again to celebrate the liturgy. Pentecost Sunday and the anniversary of their baptism would be other special days to keep in mind. Please see RCIA # 244-251.

RCIA AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

There are times when a member of an Eastern Orthodox Church requests to come into full communion with the Catholic Church. It is important that those who work in RCIA and related ministries are aware of the important differences between an Orthodox and an Anglican or Protestant who wishes to come into full communion because there are important implications that affect other sacraments (such as marriage and orders) later.

Please recall that there are 22 Catholic Churches; 21 Eastern Catholic Churches and the Roman (Latin Rite) Catholic Church. When Orthodox come into full communion with the Catholic Church, they become members of the Eastern Catholic Church that corresponds to their Church of origin. Therefore, it is crucial that you obtain a baptismal certificate from the church of baptism in order to determine of which Eastern Orthodox Church the person is a member.

An Orthodox Christian is usually chrismated (confirmed) and receives Eucharist when baptized, even as an infant. They are already fully initiated. Therefore, all that is required is the profession of faith, made by reciting the Nicene Creed and then adding the words: “I believe and profess and that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God” (RCIA §§474, 491). An Orthodox Christian should NOT be confirmed (unless it is proven that they were not chrismated as an infant). The sacramental record should note the profession of faith and to which of the Eastern Catholic Churches the person now belongs. This fact may have important ramifications when it comes to the sacraments of marriage or holy orders, or if entering religious life.

This is another reason why a careful history must be obtained from those coming into RCIA or related programs. If you have questions when a specific situation arises, please call the Office of Liturgy and, with the Tribunal, we will be happy to help you determine the proper course of action.

LITURGY PREPARATION

THE FOOTWASHING

This is the time of year that liturgy offices get inundated with questions regarding the washing of feet on Holy Thursday.

The first question that often arises is whether or not it is permissible for women to have their feet washed. While the literal Latin of the rubrical instructions concerning the footwashing state that the priest is to wash the feet of men (*virii*; no number is specified) in this optional rite, it is also true that the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy has stated that the practice of washing women's feet is pastorally appropriate. And, in response to Boston Archbishop O'Malley's direct inquiry on the matter, the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship has “provided for a ‘pastoral decision’ to include women” in the rite (*Ministry and Liturgy* 32:7 Sept. 2005 p. 21). In other words, it is allowed to wash the feet of woman on Holy Thursday.

Another question that is asked is whether or not we may substitute the washing of feet with the washing of hands. The answer is no. The Footwashing enjoys a 2000-year history in our tradition. In some places, such as Milan, it even achieved quasi-sacramental status. For symbols, or metaphors, to “work,” they have to have a clear point of reference. On Holy Thursday, the Johannine account of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper is proclaimed: that is the referent for the ritual action that follows. The connection is clear: the ritual action serves as a reminder and encouragement to follow the example of Jesus' selfless service. The fact that we may be “squeamish” about washing feet (or having our feet washed) is indeed a good thing: self-emptying service in fidelity to Jesus *is* uncomfortable, challenging, and messy. In our language, “washing feet” is a well-understood metaphor for serving others while “washing ones hands” of something means to avoid responsibility or involvement. Which action honors what the scriptural account and the Church's liturgy want to proclaim?

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Easter Season and Pentecost

The days of the Easter Octave are celebrated as solemnities. The double alleluia is added to the dismissal and its response (just for the octave; not for the entire season). The Sequence is required on Easter Sunday but optional on the other days of the octave.

The Second Sunday of Easter is also celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday. Information for celebrating the day may be found on the USCCB website at:
<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/innews/022003.shtml>.

Have the neophytes (the newly baptized) sit in a special place during the Easter Season. Remember them in the intercessions. Please see RCIA # 244-251.

The paschal candle should be kept by the altar or ambo, and lit during liturgies until Evening Prayer II on Pentecost.

The Easter Season is a great time to celebrate infant baptisms at the Sunday liturgy, and to use the Sprinkling Rite instead of the Penitential Rite.

This is also a traditional time for home blessings (see Book of Blessings #1597-1621).

Remember: we “fast for 40” but we “feast for 50!!”

INTERCESSIONS

(1) “Intercessions for Life” may be found on the USCCB website at:

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/wolarchive.shtml>

(2) Monthly intercession for vocations:

For the clergy of our diocese—the infirm, elderly, and retired priests; the priests who serve our parishes and other institutions; the deacons; and our bishop; we pray...

(3) Weekly intercessions from the Liturgical Commission:

March 2 4th SUNDAY OF LENT

For all who are blinded by prejudice, hatred and selfishness; we pray...

March 9 5th SUNDAY OF LENT

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones, their health or are suffering despair: we pray...

March 16 PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

That we may come in the name of the Lord as we reach out to the hungry, homeless and the unemployed; we pray...

March 23 EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

That we share the Good News of Easter by our daily deeds and actions toward others; we pray...

March 30 2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER: Divine Mercy Sunday

For leaders of all nations, that the power of the Holy Spirit might grant them the wisdom to seek peace throughout the world; we pray...

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