Celebrating the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy for Ministers of Liturgical Environment

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which was the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council in 1963, states that the Church has always been a “friend of the fine arts, has ever sought their noble help, and has trained artists with the special aim that all things set apart for use in divine worship are truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of the supernatural world” (122). As a minister of environment, you take these words to heart as you put them into practice in the parish.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which put forth norms and principles for the reform and promotion of the liturgy, dedicated one of its seven chapters to sacred art and sacred furnishings. The Council Fathers spoke of the importance of sacred art and the materials used in worship, as they are “oriented toward the infinite beauty of God” with the purpose of “advancing God’s praise and glory to the degree that they center on the single aim of turning the human spirit devoutly toward God” (122).

This document asks that sacred artists, and by extension, ministers of liturgical environment, “should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator and are concerned with works intended to be used in Catholic worship, to uplift the faithful, and to foster their devotion and religious formation” (127). This line beautifully captures the spirit you are to engage and foster through your stewardship of sacred art and environment.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Church offers gratitude for your contribution and engagement in the liturgy. We encourage you to reflect further on the value of your ministry, and to explore the rich text of this document on your own or with a study group. Finally, we pray that our liturgical celebrations increasingly gather the entire Body of Christ into deep and lasting communion.