Orantes

The monthly Newsletter of the Office for Worship of the Diocese of Worcester

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The Stational Character of the *Order for the Baptism of Children*

Among the least appreciated of the ritual elements of the Roman Liturgy is the stational character of many of the rites of the *Roman Ritual*. In particular, the significance of the Church Door as the sign of Christ, the Good Shepherd and "the door through which those who follow him enter and are safe [as they] go in and go out"\(^1\) is at the forefront of each of the rites of Baptism,\(^2\) Marriage,\(^3\) Dedication of a Church,\(^4\) and Funerals.\(^5\)

In the *Order for the Baptism of Children* the rite begins at the door,\(^6\) where the rites of greeting, naming and signing take place. Then, after a procession with singing (Psalm 84: 7, 8, 9ab are suggested as sung texts) to the Ambo,\(^7\) the celebrant invites the parents, godparents, and others present to take part in the celebration of the word of God.

If the Baptistry is not close by, a procession to the Font (using Psalm 23) takes place after the Pre-Baptismal anointing,\(^8\) where the Blessing of Water is followed by the Rites of Baptism.

Finally, there is a procession to the Altar,\(^9\) in which the lighted candles of the newly baptized are carried, followed by the Lord’s Prayer at the conclusion of the rite.

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2. Cf. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 48; *Order for the Baptism of Children* [OBC], nos. 35, 74, 107, 132, 165.


7. Cf. OBC, nos. 42, 80, 171.

8. Cf. OBC, no. 52.

9. OBC, nos. 67, 102, 127, 153.
The Pre-Baptismal Anointing in the *Order for the Baptism of Children*

In the course of our Diocesan workshops for clergy on the new *Order for Baptism of Children*, questions arose concerning the USCCB decision to make the pre-baptismal anointing with the Oil of Catechumens optional in certain circumstances.

This rubric was approved by the USCCB in accord with the provisions of the *Order for Baptism of Children*, number 51. The USA edition has been adapted to read:

51. In the United States, if, for serious reasons, the celebrant judges it pastorally necessary or desirable, the Anointing before Baptism may be omitted. In that case, the celebrant says only once:

   *May the strength of Christ the Savior protect you; who lives and reigns for ever and ever.*
   
   All: Amen.

   And immediately, without saying anything, he lays his hand on each of the children.

1. What is the purpose of the pre-baptismal anointing with the Oil of Catechumens?

The pre-baptismal anointing of catechumens and children is a sign of our prayer for “strength and protection,” a deeper understanding of the Gospel of Christ and the courage to undertake the Christian life with a generous heart. The prayer accompanying the pre-baptismal anointing of a child, likewise asks that “the strength of Christ the Savior” protect the child who is about to be Baptized.

This anointing is contrasted to the post-baptismal anointing with Chrism, which is a sign of the newly baptized child being joined with of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, and is never optional.

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10 Blessing of the Oil of Catechumens, no. 22.

11 OBC, no. 50.
2. While it is presumed that the anointing not be omitted, what might be the “serious reasons” which would cause a celebrant to determine that it is “pastorally necessary or desirable” to omit the pre-baptismal anointing?
A single celebrant of Baptism faced with a large number of children might reasonably find it “pastorally necessary or desirable” to omit the pre-baptismal anointing with the Oil of Catechumens. Indeed, it should be noted that the Rite for “Baptism for a Large Number of Children” directs that this anointing be omitted “because of the number to be baptized.” Additional pastoral necessities have also been suggested, such as a cultural or parental aversion to touch a child on the chest, an infant’s allergy to oil, or the development of a skin trauma during birth. Finally, it might be recalled that both the Prayer of Exorcism and the pre-baptismal anointing are omitted in the rite for the “Baptism of a Child in Danger of Death,” at least partially in consideration of the emergency nature of this rite.

3. Can a celebrant omit the pre-baptismal anointing based on his theological opinion that it should not have been included in a rite for the Baptism of children.
No. The Constitution of the Liturgy makes clear that no one other than those authorized by the liturgical books “may add, remove, or change anything in the Liturgy on his own authority.”

4. What happens in the normal circumstances when the pre-baptismal anointing is done?
After the Prayer of Exorcism is prayed, the formula “May the strength of Christ the Savior protect you. As a sign of this we anoint you with the oil of salvation in the same Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.” is prayed and “those to be baptized are anointed one at a time on the breast with the Oil of Catechumens” This is followed by the procession to the Baptistry.

5. What happens if the pre-baptismal anointing is omitted?
After the Prayer of Exorcism is prayed, the formula “May the strength of Christ the Savior protect you; who lives and reigns for ever

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12 OBC, no. 115.
13 OBC, no. 140.
14 Sacrosanctum concilium, no. 22, 3.
15 OBC, nos. 49, 86.
16 OBC, nos. 50, 87.
17 OBC, no. 52.
18 OBC, nos. 49, 86.
and ever.” is prayed and “immediately, without saying anything, he lays his hand on each of the children.”\textsuperscript{19} This is followed by the procession to the Baptistry.\textsuperscript{20}

The Prayer of Exorcism in the \emph{Order for the Baptism of Children}

An exorcism is a liturgical prayer that the Church uses against the power of the devil. There are two forms of exorcism: minor and major.

A major exorcism, directed "at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation from demonic possession"\textsuperscript{21} may be performed only by a Bishop or a Priest with the special and express permission of the local ordinary.\textsuperscript{22}

Minor Exorcisms are prayers for the deliverance of one who is about to be baptized from the dominion of evil which are found in the \textit{Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults} and the \textit{Order of Baptism of Children}, which “from antiquity, assure those who are preparing to be reborn as children of God that the prayers of the Church assist them in the battle against evil, accompany them on the path of good, help them elude the power of sin in order to enter into the kingdom of divine grace.”\textsuperscript{23}

The first option for the Prayer of Exorcism in the Order for the Baptism of Children\textsuperscript{24} is in two parts. The first is in a form of address of “Almighty ever-living God, who sent his Son into the world…to drive out from us the power of Satan, the spirit of evil and bring the human race, rescued from darkness, into the marvelous kingdom of your light” while the second part of the prayer humbly beseeches him “to free these children from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} OBC, nos. 51, 88.
\item \textsuperscript{20} OBC, nos. 52, 89.
\item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}, no. 1673.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Code of Canon Law, no. 1172.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Pope Francis, General Audience, 25 April 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{24} OBC, nos. 49, 86.
\end{itemize}
Original Sin, to make them the temple of your glory, and to grant that your Holy Spirit may dwell in them.

The second option addresses the “Lord God almighty, who sent your Only Begotten Son to endow humankind, imprisoned in slavery to sin, with the freedom of your sons and daughters” prays “most humbly for these children whom you know will experience the allurements of this world, and will fight against the snares of the devil” asking that “by the power of the Passion and Resurrection of your Son” God might “deliver them now from the stain of Original Sin, strengthen them with the grace of Christ, and guard them always on their journey through life.”

The Prayer of Exorcism in the *Order of Baptism of Children* is never optional.
Upcoming Courses and Workshops

Readers of *Orantes* are invited to take part in one of our upcoming courses and workshops on various liturgical topics. Please click the following links to register.

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY**
This ten session course is designed for candidates for the permanent diaconate, but is open to anyone interested in a brief introduction to the study of Roman Catholic Liturgical practice. Monsignor James P. Moroney will teach the course on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 9:00 PM in the Cenacle at Saint Paul’s Cathedral, beginning March 11th. A fee of $20 is requested to cover the cost of materials.

TO REGISTER CLICK HERE.

**AN INTRODUCTION TO LENT AND HOLY WEEK**
Based on our Diocesan Guidelines for Lent and Holy Week, this morning with the staff of the Office for Worship is designed as a review for and extended discussion with those responsible for preparing the liturgies of Lent and the Sacred Paschal Triduum. Saturday, February 22, 2019, 9:00am to noon in the Cenacle at Saint Paul’s Cathedral. Registration fee of $10.

TO REGISTER CLICK HERE.

**MORNINGS OF PRAYER FOR LITURGICAL MINISTERS**
Each of these mornings begin at 9:00am at Saint Paul’s Cathedral with mid-morning prayer, followed by a talk on the spirituality and theology of a particular ministry and concluding with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction.

A Morning of Prayer for Lectors with Fr Joseph Briody
Saturday, March 14, 9:00am-noon

A Morning of Prayer for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion with Monsignor Marc Caron
Saturday, March 21, 9:00am-noon

A Morning of Prayer for Deacons with Monsignor Moroney
NEW DATE! Saturday, April 4, 9:00am-noon

TO REGISTER, CLICK HERE
On Silence at Mass

This is the latest in a series of “bulletin inserts” which you might reproduce in your parish bulletin.\(^{26}\) It may be downloaded as a one page PDF by clicking here.

Silence says more than words. We live amidst a cacophony of noises, broadcasts, and accompanying tunes. Silence somehow washes that all away and invites us to a place deep within, a sanctuary where God comes to meet us.

The Liturgy uses silence to foster disposition, meditation, and recollection. Even before the Mass begins, we are called on to be silent in order to dispose ourselves to the awesome mysteries we are about to celebrate. After each of the readings and the homily, we meditate on the meaning of what we have heard so that it might sink in to our minds and our hearts. After receiving Holy Communion we sit in silence, recalling the Lord who has given himself to us as food and who now lives in us as we live in him.

There is no word as powerful as silence. Silence cannot be done in haste. Only silence can enable us to embrace with our hearts what is being prayed, sung, or said. Silence must come before action, and the only reaction worthy to follow a meeting with God is kneeling in silence, humility, and joy.

Pope Benedict XVI has recommended Saint Joseph as an example for each of us who seeks to cultivate an interior quiet: “[Saint Joseph’s] silence is steeped in contemplation of the mystery of God in an attitude of total availability to the divine desires. In other words, Saint Joseph’s silence does not express an inner emptiness but, on the contrary, the fullness of the faith he bears in his heart and which guides his every thought and action.”

It is a silence thanks to which Joseph, in unison with Mary, watches over the Word of God, known through the Sacred Scriptures, continuously comparing it with the events of the life of Jesus; a silence woven of constant prayer, a prayer of blessing of the Lord, of the adoration of his holy will, and of unreserved entrustment to his providence.

Let us allow ourselves to be “filled” with Saint Joseph’s silence! In a world that is often too noisy, that encourages neither recollection nor listening to God’s voice, we are in such deep need of it. During this season of preparation for Christmas, let us cultivate inner recollection in order to welcome and cherish Jesus in our own lives.\(^{27}\)


\(^{27}\) Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, December 18, 2005.
The liturgical reform in the first years of the twenty-first century has experienced a deep and growing desire for reverence in the Liturgy. In 2006, Cardinal Francis Arinze addressed the question, suggesting that nothing is more importance than reverence.

Indeed, we can say that the most important thing in divine worship is not that we understand every word or concept. No. “The most important consideration is that we stand in reverence and awe before God, that we adore, praise and thank him. The sacred, the things of God, are best approached with sandals off.”

When Moses approached God on Mount Sinai, he took off his shoes. Like Moses, when we approach the all-holy, the all-powerful God in the Sacred Liturgy, our only possible reaction is reverence, adoration, and bowing ourselves very low.

We bow very low when we approach the altar. We also show reverence for the altar by kissing it, and clothing it with cloths or candles. We reverence the Priest with a greeting that recognizes the role God has given him, and most of all we, with a genuflection, reverence Christ Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.

We also reverence God’s people with The Rite of Peace. Indeed, we are called to express our belief that Christ has gathered us into a Royal Priesthood by our deep sense of reverence for God and charity toward our brothers and sisters who celebrate the Mass with us.

We show reverence at Mass with our hearts, when, during the Eucharistic Prayer, we observe a silence which characterizes true reverence.

In an address to a body of liturgists in 1999, Archbishop Jerome Hanus, OSB, then chairman of the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy, reflected on this need for reverence: “Shunning individualism, fostering unity, seeking not so much to express myself as to express the one Lord through whom we live one faith in one Baptism. This is true reverence: to die to myself and my needs and to live according to the will of Christ and his body, the Church.”

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29 GIRM, no. 82.

30 GIRM, no. 78.

Some Final Thoughts…

There are a lot more empty pews these days and each of us spend a lot of time thinking about how to fill them. Yet in trying to evangelize and engage, I sometimes find it helpful to think back on those times (so many years ago) when I was a teenager, and not always thrilled to be sitting on that hard pew.

Times when I didn't feel much like going to Mass, but rather stewed over what it would have been like to go back to sleep or do something useful, like organizing my sock drawer. I can still see the teenage me sitting there, arms folded, doing my best imitation of an irascible two-year-old. “Good luck to you God!” “Good luck to you!”

But I can also remember the many moments when God slowly cracked the hard surface of my selfishness and began to touch my heart with the beauty of his holy and living sacrifice. My heart still thrills at those moments when God first awakened me to the idea that the paten held something more than bread and the cruet something more than wine: that mixed with those oblations were the sacrifices of my own life.

When from my pew, in the back of the chapel, from my heart and through my eyes I was invited to place all my pain, my fears, my desperation and the doubt on that Altar, mixing them with the matter for the sacrifice.

When, as I sat there, Christ, through the hands of the Priest, transformed that bread and wine, joined the little sacrifices of my young life with the perfect Sacrifice of Praise first offered on the Altar of the Cross.

And it was with that action that Christ filled up my little emptiness with his infinite love, conformed me to his image and gave me the grace to embrace the Cross, whatever Cross he would send me, whatever Cross he would share.

This is why the celebration of the Eucharist is called the source and the summit of the Christian life. And if only we could find a way to share that in love, I bet those pews would not stay empty for long.

In the Lord,

Monsignor James P. Moroney
Director