



NewsLetter

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USCCB Approves Four Liturgical Texts at Plenary Meeting; Discusses *Liturgy of the Hours* and Technology in the Liturgy

At the Nov. 2023 USCCB plenary meeting, the Latin Church bishops approved four liturgical texts presented by the Committee on Divine Worship, received a presentation on the proposed formatting of the future *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition*, engaged in a discussion period concerning the use of technology in the liturgy, and expressed their support for the addition of St. Teresa of Calcutta to the General Roman Calendar.

Three rituals were prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL): two concern the life of religious communities – the *Order of Blessing of an Abbot or an Abbess* and *Order of Religious Profession* – while the third was the *Order of Consecration of Virgins*. The blessing rite was approved 225-2, the profession rite was approved 221-3 with two abstentions, and the consecration rite was approved 224-2 with two abstentions.

Regarding the *Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition*, the bishops approved a process to complete work on a large series of supplementary texts proposed by ICEL; the vote was 222-4 with three abstentions. They also approved a short fascicle of adaptations for the dioceses of the United States. A series of optional Second Readings for the Office of Readings were added for the three “civil observances” on the U.S. proper calendar: the Jan. 22 Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, Independence Day on July 4, and Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday in November. In addition, the current breviary prescribes that the Second Reading for the Baptism of the Lord be re-used on January 6 when that day falls before the Epiphany that is celebrated on January 7 or 8, as occasionally happens in this country. To prevent the same reading being used within 3-4 days, a new Second Reading has been proposed instead. Finally, a short antiphon for Our Lady of Guadalupe was approved to be inserted in Appendix I, the additional canticles section used for an extended Office of Readings on special feasts. The fascicle was approved 214-3 with two abstentions. The bishops also expressed support for the inscription of St. Teresa of Calcutta to the General Roman Calendar by a vote of 227-3.

Finally, a short presentation was given by Bishop Steven J. Lopes, Committee Chairman, on the anticipated layout and editorial decisions for the future breviary. Bishops were invited to submit feedback during the plenary meeting which will guide the Committee’s final decision-making process. Bishop Lopes also led a 20-minute table discussion among the bishops concerning the use of technology in the liturgy, in particular screens and live-streaming. The discussion may aid in discernment on the possibility of a future Committee statement on such practices.

November 2023 Meeting of the Committee on Divine Worship

The Committee on Divine Worship met in Baltimore, Maryland on November 12, 2023 prior to the USCCB plenary meeting. Members and consultants received customary reports from the Chairman, Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish, Secretariat of Divine Worship, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, and *Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia*. They then devoted much of the meeting to discussions on sacred music in the United States, the *Roman Pontifical*, and future *Lectionary for Mass*.

The Secretariat shared an update on the existing legislation concerning the approval of music settings of the Mass and the informal regulations developed to guide the approval process to date. The Committee provided feedback and approved the drafting of new Guidelines for the Publication of Liturgical Books, which was last updated in 2009. The goal is to provide greater clarity to bishops, musicians, and publishers who approve and publish texts intended for liturgical use in this country.

Members and consultants discussed the parameters for a new edition of the *Roman Pontifical*. With the approval process of the various pontifical rites coming to an end in the next couple years, the Committee approved the creation and general specifications of a new, one-volume Pontifical, which will be published sometime after 2025. The limited market for such a ritual book prompted the Committee to consider proposals from four U.S. publishing houses and designate one exclusive publisher of the *Roman Pontifical* for use in this country.

Considering the forthcoming approval of the liturgical Bible late next year, the Committee reviewed several non-Scriptural elements of the future *Lectionary for Mass* for translation updates and discussed a possible timeline for approval and implementation of the new Lectionary. All present also reviewed the 2023 annual reports of the Committee and Subcommittee and provided feedback, as part of the USCCB strategic planning process.

One final draft translation (“Gray Book”) of proper liturgical texts for four recent celebrations inscribed on the General Roman Calendar – St. Gregory of Narek, St. John of Avila, Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and St. Hildegard of Bingen – was prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and approved by the Committee for canonical vote at the June 2024 plenary meeting. The fascicle contains texts for the *Roman Missal*, *Lectionary for Mass*, *Liturgy of the Hours*, and *Roman Martyrology*.

The Committee’s next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2024 in Louisville, Kentucky.

DDWDS Confirms Liturgical Texts of St. Faustina Kowalska

The Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has confirmed the English translation of proper liturgical texts in honor of Saint Faustina Kowalska for use in the United States; the decree was dated October 2, 2023 (Prot. n. 538/23) and received by the USCCB in early November.

Helena Kowalska was born in 1905 in Glogowiec, Poland. At the age of 20, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and took the name Sister Maria Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament. Receiving her vocation of announcing the loving mercy of God, she left a testimony of her mystical experience in her *Diary*. She undertook the work of announcing and imploring Divine Mercy throughout the whole world. She died at Krakow in 1938 and was canonized in 2000 by Pope St. John Paul II, who also instituted Divine Mercy Sunday the same day of her canonization.

St. Faustina’s optional memorial is celebrated on October 5. The proper texts were approved at the June 2023 USCCB plenary meeting and consist of a Collect prayer, Lectionary readings, biography and Second Reading for the Office of Readings in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, and *Roman Martyrology* entry. The newly confirmed texts may be found at [USCCB.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/saint-faustina-kowalska](https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/saint-faustina-kowalska).

The Transforming Power of the Liturgy: Migrants, Refugees, and the Poor

This February, the *Newsletter* introduced a seven-part series on the Transforming Power of the Liturgy, later examining the ways that the liturgy transforms us into people who care for the sick and dying (March 2023); who cherish and cultivate vocations in the Church (April 2023); who go forth with the Gospel to those on the margins and peripheries of society (May-June 2023); who uphold the dignity of all races and ethnicities (July-August 2023); and who care for our common home (September 2023). In this final article of the series, we reflect upon the ways that the liturgy prepares us to be people who gladly receive migrants, refugees, and the poor.

Theology

Persons who migrate, seek refuge, or lack life's necessities are each created in the image of God. While each person bears this image in a particular national, ethnic, and social identity, the image of God is the ultimate one, and every human being equally and fully bears it. The facts of migration, seeking refuge, or lacking life's necessities – these do not compromise God's image but rather manifest it in unique ways. Indeed, as Pope Francis reminds us: “The poor are a sacrament of Christ; they represent his person and point to him” (Message, Fifth World Day of the Poor, June 13, 2021). Christ dwells within the “least ones” (cf. Mt 25:31-46), and he reveals himself through them in a special way. This concept of human dignity is the foundation for the care which must be given to migrants, refugees, and the poor as well as the foundation of economic and migration policy.

It is also important to recognize that the human person is a member of a family, the “fundamental cell of society [...] where we learn to live with others despite our differences” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, no. 66). Thus, care is to be given to both individuals *and* families, and policies or practices that harm families must be evaluated in light of their inherent rights to remain together.

Additionally, the human realities of migration and poverty reveal something about God and ourselves. In creating the world, God goes outside of himself in love, and, in restoring it, he calls people to migrate to him (e.g., the call of Abraham). In the fullness of time, Christ came forth from the Father, emptying himself and becoming poor for our sake (Jn 16:28; Phil 2:7; 2 Cor 8:9). The call to discipleship is a call to become poor (Mt 5:3) and to journey from one way of life to another (Lk 9:57-62). At the Great Commission, Christ commands the apostles to migrate (Mt 28:19) and to proclaim God “who is rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4).

Liturgy

Every fall, the universal Church observes days dedicated to migrants, refugees, and the poor. The World Day of Migrants and Refugees takes place on the last Sunday of September, with National Migration Week celebrated in the United States in the last full week of the same month. The World Day of the Poor occurs in November on the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, a day when the annual collection for the U.S. bishop's Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) also takes place: USCCB.org/committees/catholic-campaign-human-development/cchd-collection. In addition, the feast days of Saint Josephine Bakhita (February 8) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12) are frequently observed as days of prayer for migrants and refugees, and other prayers for migrants may be found at JusticeForImmigrants.org/engage/prayer.

Among its Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, the *Roman Missal* contains a Mass “For Refugees and Exiles.” Eucharistic Prayer for Use in Masses for Various Needs IV, titled “Jesus, Who Went About Doing Good,” is appropriately used with this Mass formulary. Additionally, there are Mass formularies which are connected to the realities of poverty as well as the causes of migration, for example, “For Persecuted Christians,” “For the Progress of Peoples,” “For the Preservation of Peace and Justice,” “In Time of War or Civil Disturbance,” and “In Time of Famine or for Those Suffering Hunger.”

Action

A good place to start is the joint pastoral letter of the Bishops' Conferences of the United States and Mexico, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” available in both English and Spanish at USCCB.org/migration. Individuals and communities may take action by offering hospitality to migrants, refugees, and the poor: welcoming them into church parishes, meeting their material and spiritual needs, and inviting them to share their experience. The members of these communities are not only recipients of care but persons who mutually enrich those from whom they receive.

2024 Liturgical Calendar Advisories

During the 2024 liturgical year, there are three occasions when feast days are transferred:

- According to the *Roman Missal*, “Where the Solemnity of the Epiphany is transferred to Sunday, if this Sunday occurs on January 7 or 8, **the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord** is celebrated on the following Monday” (Proper of Time, emphasis added). Therefore, this Feast will take place on Monday, January 8, 2024, with only one reading before the Gospel. The First Week in Ordinary Time begins on the following day, Tuesday, January 9, and the readings assigned to Monday may be joined to those of Tuesday so that the opening of each book will be read.
- **The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord** on March 25 is impeded by Monday of Holy Week. According to the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, no. 60, the Annunciation is therefore transferred to Monday of the Second Week of Easter, in this case, April 8, 2024.
- Since December 8, 2024 is the Second Sunday of Advent, **the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** is transferred to Monday, December 9; the obligation to attend Mass, however, does not transfer. While Funeral Masses are not normally permitted on this day, they may take place this year since Immaculate Conception is not a day of precept (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 380). The Optional Memorial of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, December 9, is omitted.

There are also three occasions when non-obligatory Solemnities either precede or follow a Sunday: **Mary, the Holy Mother of God** (Monday, January 1), the **Nativity of Saint John the Baptist** (Monday, June 24), and **Saints Peter and Paul** (Saturday, June 29). A more thorough discussion of the issues surrounding consecutive celebrations is found in the May-June 2016 *Newsletter*, “The Liturgical Celebration of Consecutive Feast Days (and Nights).” Notably, the document at the heart of that article’s analysis, “De Calendario Liturgico Exarando pro Anno 1984-1985” (*Notitiae* 20 [1984], 603-605), describes a year that falls *almost* exactly like 2024!

- On **Sunday evening, December 31**, the Mass of the Holy Family is celebrated, while at the *Liturgy of the Hours* Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is used. In celebrations with the people, however, Evening Prayer II of the Holy Family may take place. Because Holy Mary, Mother of God falls on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated, and Funeral Masses are permitted.
- On **Sunday evening, June 23**, the Mass of the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time is celebrated, though at a Mass outside the usual schedule, the Vigil Mass of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist may take place. At the *Liturgy of the Hours*, Evening Prayer I of the Nativity of Saint John is used; nevertheless, Evening Prayer II of the 12th Sunday may take place in celebrations with the people.
- On **Saturday evening, June 29**, at normally scheduled anticipated Masses, priests should anticipate the Mass of the 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time, though at Masses outside that usual schedule, the Mass of Saints Peter and Paul may be used. At the *Liturgy of the Hours*, Evening Prayer II of Saints Peter and Paul is used.

The **Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls’ Day)** falls on a Saturday this year, a circumstance which has been more thoroughly treated in the January 2013 *Newsletter*. On Friday evening, All Saints Day is celebrated at the Mass and the *Liturgy of the Hours*, though, for pastoral reasons where it is the custom, Evening Prayer II of All Saints may be followed by Evening Prayer for the Dead. On Saturday evening, priests should anticipate the Mass of the 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time at normally scheduled anticipated Masses, though the Mass of All Souls’ Day may be used outside that usual schedule. At the Hours, Evening Prayer I of the 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time is used in individual recitation, though Evening Prayer for the Dead may be used in celebrations with the people.