

Newsletter

BISHOPS' COMMITTEE ON THE LITURGY

NOVEMBER, 1974

Vol. 10/No. 11

Official Effective Dates

December 1, 1974, the First Sunday of Advent, is the official effective date in the dioceses of the United States for the use of the *Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick* and the *Sacramentary*.

This date, determined by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy with the consent of the president of the Conference, marks the day when the new Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick and Sacramentary *must be used* by all priests throughout the United States. Thus, beginning with December 1, the old rite of anointing and previous editions of the Sacramentary and Roman Missal are to be set aside and only the newly revised books are to be used.

Anticipated Masses

[The following clarification appeared in the May-June, 1974 issue of *Notitiae*.]

The instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* states that "where permission has been granted by the Apostolic See to fulfill the Sunday obligation on the preceding Saturday evening . . . the Mass celebrated is that assigned in the calendar to Sunday, the homily and the general intercessions are not to be omitted.

"What has been said above is equally valid for the Mass on holy days of obligation which for the same reason has been transferred to the preceding evening" (no. 28).

This is the general norm. Questions arise, however, when certain solemnities of precept occur on a Saturday or Monday. First vespers of the feast (Saturday or Monday) falls between two liturgical days since "the celebration of Sunday and solemnities begins with the evening of the previous day" (see *Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 3), and in the one and same celebration some of the faithful gather to satisfy the obligation of the day itself and others to satisfy the obligation of the next day. Thus, for example, on the evening of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, when this falls on December 24, it is possible to have both the evening Mass of the Sunday and the vigil Mass of Christmas. In the same way, when Christmas occurs on a Saturday, the evening Mass might be either that of Christmas or the anticipated Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family.

These and similar cases are not resolved by the universal norms, because diverse pastoral needs and local practice are involved. Therefore the following points are offered:

1. The general principle permitting the celebration of the festive Mass of a prescribed day on the preceding evening is found in the instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 28.

2. In those cases involving Sundays and solemnities, the integrity of the celebration of the entire liturgical day is generally better arrived at by applying to the celebration of the evening Mass the principle operative for the celebration of vespers: "If on the same day vespers of the current office and first vespers of the following day are to be celebrated, the vespers of the day holding the higher rank in the table of liturgical days takes precedence; if both days are of the same rank, vespers of the current day takes precedence" (*Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 61).

3. On the vigil of solemnities for which a specific vigil Mass is available (e.g. Christmas, Birth of John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, Assumption), the vigil Mass is celebrated even if it occurs on a Sunday.

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4. Mindful of the pastoral nature of the matter, the practice followed in the diocese should be clearly indicated by the Ordinary of the place at the beginning of the new liturgical year, even if there is reason for going contrary to what has been said above, when, for pastoral reasons, it seems preferable to celebrate one or the other Mass.

Fulfillment of Holyday and Sunday Mass Precept

In reply to inquiries it received, the Congregation for the Clergy clarified the matter of simultaneous fulfillment of holyday and Sunday obligations by attendance at the evening vigil mass.

By way of example the following dubium was presented: "Whether the faithful who attend Mass on Saturday, 15 August, would fulfill the double precept of hearing Mass on Saturday, feast of the Assumption, and Sunday, 16 August?"

The Congregation responded "Negative" to the above case and all analogous cases.

The indulgent by which the faculty is given to fulfill the obligation of attending Mass on the evening of a Saturday or of a feast day of obligation is generally granted in view of rendering easier the fulfillment of such a precept, without prejudice of keeping every Lord's Day holy.

The Distribution of Communion

[The following clarification prepared by Archbishop Bugnini appeared in *Notitiae*, September, 1974.]

Gradually the practice has been spreading in which the communicant takes the consecrated host directly from the ciborium, paten or vessel or takes the chalice with the precious blood and communicates him/herself, as the celebrant does, or as the special minister of communion does with the permission of the Ordinary.

Is this "self-service" allowed?

Response: No, not in the least bit. The action of Christ during the institution of the eucharist, shows the more fitting and dignified manner in which the consecrated bread is to be given to the faithful. Consider for example:

Matthew 26:26: "Jesus took bread . . . broke it, and gave it to his disciples. Take this and eat it, he said. . . ."

Matthew 26:27: "Then he took a cup . . . and gave it to them."

Mark 14:22: ". . . he took bread . . . broke it, and gave it to them."

Mark 14:23: "He likewise took a cup, . . . and gave it to them. . . ."

Luke 22:19: "Then taking bread . . . he broke it and gave it to them. . . ."

Luke 22:20: "He did the same with the cup. . . ."

For this reason it is stated in the rite *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*: "Holy Communion must be distributed by a competent minister, who shows and extends the consecrated host to the communicant" (no. 21).

The Church prefers to increase the number of special ministers of the eucharist, either men or women, rather than permit the biblical gesture to be lost.

Furthermore, even when an Episcopal Conference petitions the Holy See for the faculty to distribute communion in the hand (see *Memoriale Domini*, May 29, 1969), this manner of reception can in no way be imposed on the faithful. Rather, the freedom and possibility of receiving communion in the traditional manner must always be granted. Such would not be the case if the faithful *had to* take the consecrated host directly from the vessel.

Thus the faculty which would allow the faithful to take the consecrated host with their own hand from the sacred vessel is not granted and will not be granted. The practice, where it has been introduced, must be stopped, using the necessary catechesis and, if necessary, the intervention of the local authority.