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Mystagogical Catechesis Continues with the *Roman Missal*

The implementation of the text has happened. Perhaps it has happened in fits and starts, and perhaps in an ongoing way, but implementation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* has happened. The challenge that now remains is *mystagogy*: the deepening of the experience, interpreted in the light of faith. Though there is a more technical and patristic understanding of mystagogy as a form of biblical and liturgical typology—in which Old Testament events foreshadow the New Testament reality of Christ, which is then carried forward in the liturgical rites—the simpler definition suffices here.

The next step in the implementation of the *Missal* is a movement into mystagogy: to make, within our rites of worship, faith connections for living life. As the strangeness of new language slowly wears off, the layers of deeper meaning can begin to arise. For ministers and especially priest celebrants, this may be experienced first of all in the ability to pray and celebrate the sacred mysteries with greater focus and recollection—as the overarching realities communicated in the *Missal* are grasped. The task then becomes to draw attention to those deeper realities by preaching within the liturgy, especially by preaching on the liturgical texts themselves, and by teaching beyond it.

It is helpful to grasp, for example, that the Introductory Rites are intended to help the assembly transition from the cares and anxieties of the world to confidence in the saving will of God. The Collects tend to summarize those anxieties and petition for God's response. This prepares us for the Liturgy of the Word.

Mystagogy will call for a deeper understanding of the Penitential Act and how acknowledging our sins actually prepares us to celebrate the sacred mysteries. In other words, how does confession of sins lead us to rely on divine mercy which opens us to the divine working and transformation? The text of the *Gloria* which follows is not simply a beautiful song to take up time in the Introductory Rites. Mystagogy shows how that text fits with the whole structure of confession of sin, asking for mercy, and response of praise for mercy received. It is in part, after all, the praise of the angels in response to the merciful condescension of God in the Incarnation.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the presentation and preparation of the offerings are intended to place the focus on the intentions we bring, symbolized in the gifts to be offered. The Prayers over the Offerings tend to highlight the gifts that are brought forward and the desire for transformation (of gifts and of ourselves). This prepares us for the Eucharistic Prayer. The Communion Rite is the goal of the whole celebration, since the reception of Holy Communion completes the sacrifice that is offered in the Mass. The Prayers after Communion all pray in various ways that the Holy Communion

received may be effective in our lives and enable us to be faithful witnesses in the world. This prepares us to return to the world. Thus, we have moved from the anxieties we bring in coming from the world, through offering and transformation, to Communion, and then confidence in returning to that world. Perceiving these kind of structures in the liturgy (and there are many more) helps us to understand the words proclaimed within those structures.

It is also helpful to hold in mind the basic dialogical character of the whole liturgy as the dialogue between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Church gathers as the whole Christ—baptized and ordained, those called to holiness and those called to service—in order to enter into that Trinitarian dialogue. Mystagogy will lead us from a dialogue of priest and assembly to the dialogue of the Father and the Son. It can then lead us to ponder how to carry on that dialogue in the rest of our lives as well. It is the new words of the *Roman Missal* which are the gift to us in turning experience to proclamation to renewed living.

Seven Questions on Implementing the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition

Since the implementation of the Roman Missal, Third Edition on November 27, 2011, the Secretariat of Divine Worship has received a number of questions regarding the Missal, and in particular, the Order of Mass. To resolve these confusions, answers are provided here for the benefit of our readers:

1. Does the use of the word “chant” in the *Roman Missal* forbid hymnody during the Entrance and Communion processions?

No, the use of the word “chant” is a title for all sung pieces. The Secretariat has had numerous inquiries regarding the significance of this change in translation and its implications in liturgical practice. The 1985 edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) explained the “entrance song” in terms of antiphons, psalms, or another song. In the revised 2011 GIRM, no. 48 and nos. 86-87 now refer to the “Entrance Chant” and “Communion Chant,” respectively, and give as musical options: antiphons, Psalm chants, or other liturgical chants. While the 2003 GIRM rendered “chant” in lowercase, the new version has capitalized the word.

“Chant” (the translation of the Latin *cantus*) is intended here to refer not to a particular musical form (e.g., Gregorian *chant*), but as a general title for any musical piece. This is seen most clearly in the *Missal* itself. During the Good Friday celebration, the *Missal* has as a heading for one section, “Chants to Be Sung during the Adoration of the Holy Cross.” The “Chants” that follow include antiphons, the Reproaches, and a hymn. Similarly, in Appendix II, the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water, a rubric states, “one of the following chants... is sung.” There follows antiphons and a hymn. From these examples, it is clear that the *Missal* in no way forbids the use of hymns or songs for the Entrance and Communion processions.

2. How many times do we strike the breast in the *Confiteor*?

The Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship addressed this question in a 1978 *dubium* (found in *Notitiæ* 14 [1978], 534-535):

While in the Roman Missal promulgated by the authority of the Council of Trent the words were very frequently also accompanied by minute gestures, the rubrics of the Roman Missal restored by the authority of the Second Vatican Council are noteworthy for their discretion with regard to gestures. Having said this: The words *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* which are found in the *Confiteor* are introduced in the restored Roman Missal by a rubric of this sort: “All likewise... striking their breast, say...” (Order of Mass, no. 3). In the former Missal, in the same place, the rubric read like this: “He strikes his breast three times.” It does not seem, therefore, that anyone has to strike his breast three times in pronouncing those words in Latin or in another language, even if *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* is said. It suffices that there be a striking of the breast.

3. What are the new rubrics in the *Missal* regarding the *Gloria*?

In the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the rubrics call for the *Gloria* more frequently than before. Nine out of the ten Ritual Masses prescribe the *Gloria*, the only exception being the Mass for the Institution of Lectors and Acolytes. These Masses are all treated as if they were Feasts, and the *Gloria* is used for them even when celebrated during Advent or Lent. Thus for example, Masses for Confirmation, Holy Orders, or Marriage would include the *Gloria*, even when they occur during Advent or Lent. (It should be noted, though, that Ritual Masses are prohibited on Sundays of Advent and Lent.)

4. Where are all the Prefaces located in the *Missal*?

In the previous *Sacramentary*, all the prefaces were located in one section. In the new *Roman Missal*, however, prefaces that are proper, that is, which are only used with one particular feast (e.g., the Immaculate Conception) are placed with their proper formulary for the sake of convenience, and in fidelity to the layout of the Latin typical edition. All other prefaces, which may be used with more than one formulary, are placed together in the Order of Mass just before the Eucharistic Prayers. In the *Sacramentary*, the prefaces for weekdays in Ordinary Time were called Weekdays I-VI and were located after the prefaces for Sundays in Ordinary Time. In the *Roman Missal*, they are now called Common Prefaces I-VI, and are located just before the prefaces for the Dead, following all the prefaces of higher rank.

5. What does the *Missal* say about the posture of the faithful when receiving Holy Communion? What about Communion in the hand?

Both of these questions are covered in no. 160 of the GIRM. It states clearly there that the “norm” established for the United States for reception of Holy Communion is standing. In the 2003 GIRM, it stated that no one should be refused Communion if they kneel, but that afterward they should be properly catechized. In the current edition, the exhortation to catechesis is removed and the exception to the norm of standing is left to the discretion of the faithful: “unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion while kneeling.” The Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 91, is then cited. With regard to receiving Communion in the hand, there is a significant development from the 1985 GIRM to the 2003/2011 edition. Whereas in 1985, Communion in the hand was granted by virtue of an indult received in 1977, in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, Communion in the hand is now ordinary liturgical law for the United States, though every communicant retains the equal right of receiving on the tongue.

6. Will a “Book of the Chair” be published for liturgical use?

Given the size of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the Secretariat has received numerous inquiries regarding the possibility of publishing a “Book of the Chair,” which would include only those prayers used by the celebrant at the chair. In the past, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has discouraged such an initiative. Given the new pastoral situation, however, where many priests are now presiding from the altar rather than the chair due to the size of the *Missal*, the Secretariat will continue to examine this possibility.

7. When traveling abroad, what edition of the *Missal* do I use?

The *Roman Missal* is tied to the authority of the Conference of Bishops which publishes it. An American priest traveling to England, for example, is bound to the approved *Missal* of that territory, at least when celebrating publicly. An exception can be made if he is part of a pilgrimage group from the United States who will celebrate Mass primarily for their group. This also holds true regarding which liturgical calendar to use. The reverse practice should also be followed for those coming to the U.S. For example, even though the Philippines has not yet implemented the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, a stable Filipino community in the U.S. celebrating Mass in English is bound to use the third edition as published in this country, along with the liturgical calendar of the particular diocese in which they live.

Cremation and the *Order of Christian Funerals*

In April 1997, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments granted an indult for the United States to allow the diocesan bishop to permit the presence of the cremated remains of a body at a Funeral Mass. Later that year, the Congregation confirmed the special texts and ritual directives (Prot. n. 1589/96/L for both indult and texts), which were then published as an appendix to the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Frequently the Secretariat of Divine Worship receives requests for clarification or suggestions for best practices regarding the presence of cremated remains and funerals and their appropriate final disposition or committal.

The practice of cremation has grown and become more commonplace in the United States, and it is often presented as a more affordable alternative to traditional burial. What is often overlooked is the Church's teaching regarding the respect and honor due to the human body. The *Order of Christian Funerals'* Appendix on Cremation states: "Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites" (no. 413).

Ideally, if a family chooses cremation, the cremation would take place at some time after the Funeral Mass, so that there can be an opportunity for the Vigil for the Deceased in the presence of the body (during "visitation" or "viewing" at a church or funeral home). This allows for the appropriate reverence for the sacredness of the body at the Funeral Mass: sprinkling with holy water, the placing of the pall, and honoring it with incense. The Rite of Committal then takes place after cremation (see Appendix, nos. 418-421). Funeral homes offer several options in this case. One is the use of "cremation caskets," which is essentially a rental casket with a cardboard liner that is cremated with the body. Another is a complete casket that is cremated (this casket contains minimal amounts of non-combustible material such as metal handles or latches).

When cremation takes place before the Funeral Mass, and the diocesan bishop permits the presence of cremated remains at the Funeral Mass, the Appendix provides adapted texts for the Sprinkling with Holy Water, the Dismissal for use at the Funeral Mass (or the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass), and the Committal of Cremated Remains. The introduction provides further specific details about how the funeral rites are adapted. In all, the rite notes:

The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, and the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains on the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. (no. 417)

For some families, the choice of cremation is based on financial hardship, so this choice often means also that there is no plan for committal or burial of the cremated remains. As a means of providing pastoral support and an acceptable respectful solution to the problem of uninterred cremated remains, one diocese offered on All Souls' Day in 2011 an opportunity for any family who desired it the interment of cremated remains. The diocese offered a Mass and committal service at one of its Catholic cemeteries and provided, free of charge, a common vault in a mausoleum for the interment of the cremated remains. The names of the deceased interred there were kept on file, though in this case they were not individually inscribed on the vault.

As cremation is chosen more frequently, there will be many who are unaware of the Church's teaching regarding this practice. It is important for bishops and pastors not only to catechize the faithful, but to collaborate with funeral directors in providing helpful and accurate information to families planning the funeral of loved ones. Offering opportunities to family members for the respectful burial of their loved ones, who were not interred after funeral services and cremation, would give effective witness to the importance of Christian burial and our belief in the resurrection. In all, pastors are encouraged to show pastoral sensitivity, especially to those for whom cremation is the only feasible choice (see Appendix, no. 415).