



# NewsLetter

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## *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*

*On April 27, 2007, the Office for the Synod of Bishops released the lineamenta for the Twelfth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod. The topic chosen by the Holy Father is "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church." The lineamenta consists of three chapters: Revelation, the Word of God and the Church, The Word of God in the Life of the Church and The Word of God in the Mission of the Church. Each chapter concludes with a series of reflection questions. The following questions from Chapter II are provided for reflection by our readers.*

### **1. The Word of God in the Life of the Church**

What importance is shown to the Word of God in the life of your community and among the faithful-at-large? In what way is the Word of God a source of nourishment for Christians? Does the danger exist of reducing Christianity to a "religion of the book"? Describe how individuals show reverence and familiarity towards the Word of God in their personal life and in the life of the community on Sundays? Weekdays? In the special seasons of the liturgical year?

### **2. The Word of God in the Formation of the People of God**

What is being done to transmit the entire and complete teaching of the Word of God to your community and to each member of the faithful? Are future priests, consecrated persons and those responsible for various services in the community (catechists, etc.) properly formed and periodically up-dated in the biblical aspects of their pastoral ministry? Are there ongoing programs of formation for the laity?

### **3. The Word of God, Liturgy and Prayer**

What is the faithful's approach to Sacred Scripture in liturgical and personal prayer? What is their understanding of the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist? Between the Word celebrated in the Eucharist and the everyday life of the Christian? Does the Word of God have a genuine resonance in homilies? What needs to be done? Is a listening to the Word of God incorporated in the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Does the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours include a listening to and dialogue with the Word of God? Does this practice extend to lay people? Do the People of God have sufficient access to the Bible?

The full text of the lineamenta is available at:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20070427\\_lineamenta-xii-assembly\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20070427_lineamenta-xii-assembly_en.html)

#### **4. The Word of God, Evangelization and Catechesis**

Bearing in mind the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and those of the Church's Magisterium, describe the positive and negative aspects of the Word of God and catechesis? How is the Word of God treated in the various forms of catechesis (Christian initiation and ongoing formation)? Does the community give sufficient attention and study to the written Word of God? If yes, please explain? How are various groups of people (children, adolescents, young people and adults) introduced to the Bible? What introductory courses on Sacred Scripture are offered?

#### **5. The Word of God, Exegesis and Theology**

Is the Word of God the soul of exegesis and theology? Is its character as the Word-Revealed sufficiently understood and revered? Is scientific research of the Bible animated and sustained by a proper grounding in the faith? What is the customary method of approaching the scriptural text? What role does the Bible play in theological study? Is the Bible sufficiently taken into consideration in the pastoral life of the community?

#### **6. The Word of God and the Life of the Believer**

What is the impact of Sacred Scripture in the spiritual lives of the People of God? The clergy? Those in the consecrated life? The lay faithful? Is Mary's attitude of poverty and trust in the Magnificat evident? Why does seeking to pile up material goods impede a fervent listening to the Word of God? In the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations, is the Word of God a strong or weak instrument of communicating the faith? Why do various Christians seem to be cold or indifferent to the Bible? Is *lectio divina* practiced? Under what forms? Which factors favor it and which do not?

### **Pope Benedict XVI on the Word of God and the Liturgy**

In a recent talk to the Roman Major Seminary on February 17, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the important relationship between the Word of God proclaimed and the Liturgy: "Above all, it is a Word that becomes vital and alive in the Liturgy. I would say, therefore, that the Liturgy is the privileged place where every one of us can enter into the *we* of the sons of God, in conversation with God. This is important. The Our Father begins with the words: Our Father; only if I am integrated into the *we* of this Our can I find the Father; only within this *we*, which is the subject of the prayer of the Our Father, do we hear the Word of God clearly."

### **Consultation on Three New ICEL Green Books**

The USCCB is conducting a consultation on three new ICEL Green Book translations of the *Roman Missal*: Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, Ritual Masses, and Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions.

Green Books are draft translations of the various segments of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*, as prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. All of ICEL's member conferences are asked to comment on these texts to assist ICEL in the preparation of the definitive, or Gray Book text. The Holy See is also consulted by ICEL at this stage of the process. Once a Gray Book has been canonically approved by an individual Conference of Bishops, it is submitted for the confirmation of the Holy See.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has approved one Gray Book: the Order of Mass I. This text is presently awaiting the confirmation of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Consultations have been conducted on five ICEL Green Books: Order of Mass I, Order of Mass II, the Proper of the Saints, Common of the Saints, the Proper of the Seasons. Once a web-based consultation of the Bishop-members of the USCCB has been undertaken for four to seven weeks, the results of the consultation are reviewed by the members of the Committee on the Liturgy and a final report is presented to ICEL. ICEL then revises the draft translation in the light of these observations.

ICEL projects that all Green Book translations will be completed in the Spring of 2008. Forthcoming Green Books will include: Votive Masses, Masses for Dead, Appendix and Introductory Materials, and Antiphons.

## Seven Questions on Holy Water and the Liturgy

### 1. When may the Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water used?

The Church celebrates the paschal mystery on the first day of the week, known as the Lord's Day or Sunday. This is why the *Roman Missal* indicates that the rite of blessing and sprinkling of holy water may be celebrated in all churches and chapels on Sunday or on Saturday evening. It should be noted that there is no mention of this rite being celebrated on days other than Sunday. The Sundays of the Easter Season are a particularly apt time for the celebration of this rite since, during the Easter Season, we recall our Baptism in the Lord and rejoice with the neophytes in the Church.

### 2. Is the water blessed at the Easter Vigil used throughout the year?

The Liturgy provides three rites for the blessing of water. The first is the blessing of water for Baptism at the Easter Vigil, using the ancient and solemn blessing of water found in the *Roman Missal* (*Missale Romanum*, Easter Vigil, no. 54). A second form for the blessing of water is found in the *Rite of Baptism* (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, no. 354, *Rite of Baptism for Children*, no 54). A third form of the blessing of water is found in the Order for the Blessing of Holy Water outside Mass from the *Book of Blessings* (BOB, Chapter 42).

### 3. How is Holy Water used as a sacramental?

In addition to its liturgical uses, blessed water is also used as a sacramental. The *Book of Blessings* explains: "On the basis of age-old custom, water is one of the signs that the Church often uses in blessing the faithful. Holy water reminds the faithful of Christ, who is given to us as the supreme divine blessing, who called himself the living water, and who in water established baptism for our sake as the sacramental sign of the blessing that brings salvation. Water from all three forms of blessing is often placed in fonts or stoops at the doors of the church in order to facilitate the pious practice of the faithful blessing themselves with this water upon entering the church or even at home."<sup>1</sup>

### 4. Should the water used at the Easter Vigil be used throughout the Easter Season?

The *General Introduction to the Rites of Christian Initiation*, Number 21: notes "Except in cases of necessity, a priest or deacon is to use only water that has been blessed for the rite. The water blessed at the Easter Vigil should, if possible, be kept and used throughout the Easter season to signify more clearly the relationship between the sacrament of baptism and the paschal mystery. Outside the Easter season, it is desirable that the water be blessed for each occasion, in order that the words of the blessing may explicitly express the mystery of salvation that the Church remembers and proclaims. If the baptistery is supplied with running water, the blessing is given as the water flows. "

### 5. How often should Holy Water fonts be changed?

The *Book of Blessings*, number 1085 insists that the baptismal font "should be stationary, gracefully constructed out of suitable material, of splendid beauty and spotless cleanliness..." (Christian Initiation, General Introduction, no. 25). Common sense indicates that it is wise to change the water in the Holy Water fonts once a week. Before new water is put in, the fonts should be cleansed. Attention should also be given to baptismal fonts that the water is kept fresh and changed often. If any contaminants are observed the water should be changed. This would also apply to the use of the Easter water.

### 6. What of the Oils of Catechumens, the Sick and Holy Chrism?

All that is used for the Liturgy should be characterized by the same "spotless cleanliness" as the water used for Baptism. The Holy Oils should be kept fresh and new. If kept in stocks, the cotton should never be allowed to turn color.

### 7. How should Holy Water or Holy Oils which have turned rancid be disposed of?

Holy water may be disposed of by pouring into the *sacrarium* or into the earth. Holy oils may be burned or poured into the earth.

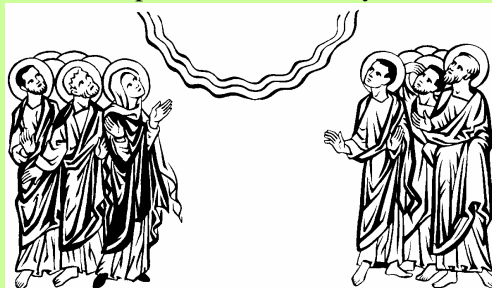
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<sup>1</sup> BOB, no. 1388.

## ON THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR....

### When is the Ascension of the Lord celebrated in the dioceses of the U.S.A.?

On November 16, 1998, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the provisions of canon 1246 §2, approved a procedure whereby the bishops of each ecclesiastical province would determine whether the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord would be transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter in their ecclesiastical province. The decision was submitted to the Congregation for Bishops and confirmed by a decree received from His Eminence, Lucas Cardinal Moreira Neves, O.P., Prefect of that same Congregation, as approved by Pope John Paul II, allowing that "the Ecclesiastical Provinces of the United States may transfer the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter." The ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, and Nebraska have retained the celebration of the Ascension of the Lord on the proper Thursday; all other provinces have transferred this solemnity to the Seventh Sunday of Easter.



### When is Saint Patrick's Day celebrated in 2008?

In 2008, the traditional date of Saint Patrick's day (March 17<sup>th</sup>) falls on Monday of Holy Week. In most of the Dioceses of the United States of America, therefore, the feast will not be commemorated liturgically.

In those places where Saint Patrick is the principal patron of a particular church (Table of Liturgical Days, no. 4c) it is, customarily, commemorated as a solemnity. Because number 60 of the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar allows that "a solemnity impeded by a liturgical day that takes precedence over it should be transferred to the closest day not listed in nos. 1-8 in the table of precedence...", this solemnity may be transferred to Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. It might be noted that, as previously announced in the *BCL Newsletter* (September, 2006), the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has established that in the year 2008, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph will be transferred from the Wednesday of Holy Week to March 15<sup>th</sup>, that is, the Saturday preceding Palm Sunday. This decision impedes the transfer of the solemnity of Saint Patrick to March 15<sup>th</sup>.

In the vast majority of the dioceses of the United States of America, where the feast of Saint Patrick is commemorated as a non-obligatory memorial, the feast will not be commemorated liturgically in the year 2008.

### Where does the Liturgical Calendar for the dioceses of the United States come from?

Each year, the USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy publishes the official *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America*. The calendar is used by the publishers of parish calendars, desk calendars, and ordos in the preparation of their products and lists each day's celebration, rank, liturgical color, Lectionary citations and Psalter cycle for the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The Liturgical Calendar for 2007 is available for free download on the BCL website (<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/index.shtml>). The 2008 and 2009 Liturgical Calendars are available for \$10.00 each, in either electronic or printed format, by writing to Sister Clelia Cecchetti, SP at the BCL Secretariat. Please make checks payable to the Secretariat for the Liturgy.