

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Fiftieth Anniversary of Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

**FEDERATION OF DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS
CELEBRATES FIFTY YEARS OF “PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING”**

October Gathering of Liturgists Highlighted Past, Present, and Future of Liturgical Renewal

Washington, DC – Well-wishes and congratulations from across the globe poured into Chicago last week, where close to 200 liturgists, speakers, and their guests gathered to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), celebrating the accomplishments of the organization and looking toward the future of the liturgy in the United States. One thing made clear in the course of the gathering: The liturgy, ever ancient and ever new, continues to nourish, form, compel and transform the faithful.

Even the Vatican had a congratulatory message for the Federation:

“His Holiness Pope Francis was pleased to learn of the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, and he sends cordial greetings to all gathered at the national meeting in celebration of this event. He joins you in giving thanks to Almighty God for the work of the Federation in promoting the liturgical apostolate over these past fifty years. The Holy Father prays that the members of the Federation may always be inspired and nourished by the richness of the Church’s liturgical rites which proclaim, signify and make present the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. Commending all involved in the Federation to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, His Holiness willingly imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of peace and joy in the Lord” (Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State).

An opening rite included a procession of mementos of the FDLC’s history as well as items from the Second Vatican Council -- a chalice presented to the bishops by Saint Pope John XXIII and an original workbook from a Council session in which the bishops debated the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963)*.

The three-day event focused on the FDLC's past, present, and future. On the first day, attendees recalled the history of the liturgical movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, revisited impact of the Second Vatican Council, and reviewed the history of the Federation itself -- a collaboration of diocesan commissions which was formed by the United States Bishops in 1969 in order to provide formation on all the revised liturgical texts promulgated after the Council. Presenters included such liturgical luminaries as Rev. Ed Foley and Bishop Carl Mengeling (who was present as a page at the Council).

On the second day, delegates studied trends of growth, challenges, opportunities, and pastoral practice among American Catholics, based on research presented by Rev. Thomas Gaunt, S.J., of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). Six diocesan leaders served as panelists who offered their own insights into specific multi-cultural, pastoral, and academic realities, including clergy and lay formation.

On the third day, delegates heard from noted liturgist and sociologist Rev. Ricky Manalo and pondered how the next generation of Catholics might perceive the liturgy and how cultural demographics will impact the languages with which it is celebrated. Recent graduates in Liturgical Studies offered their own perceptions of the future of pastoral praxis and liturgical formation.

Of course, prayer was integral to the celebration! Masses and the Liturgy of the Hours were celebrated daily. A Taizé-style Liturgy of Remembrance commemorated the deceased members of the FDLC -- the giants upon whose shoulders the current organization stands. On Friday evening, the delegates travelled to Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral where Cardinal Blase Cupich presided over the liturgy. Cardinal Cupich congratulated the FDLC on its positive and far-reaching influence on the liturgy in America over the past fifty years, and disclosed that he was a member of the FDLC in its early days.

Each evening, the members celebrated with social events -- a reception with an amateur dinner theatre; a cruise on the Chicago River; and a closing banquet. At that banquet, Sr. Janet Baxendale, SC of the Archdiocese of New York was given the Alleluia Award in appreciation for her forty years of dedication to the Federation, to the archdiocesan commission, and to seminary formation.

The Frederick R. McManus Award, the Federation's highest award, recognizes significant contributions to furthering the liturgical renewal in the United States. It was presented to Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB. It acknowledged his more than twenty years of scholarly work on a revision of the Grail

Psalms. The newly-titled “Abbey Psalms and Canticles” are now approved by the Holy See for use in the liturgy.

At the end of the meeting, the FDLC resolved to work on many ongoing projects. It voiced support for further training in the *ars celebrandi* (the art of celebrating the liturgy) as proposed by Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, a member of the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship.

“Marking a fiftieth anniversary gives anyone an occasion to reminisce about the past. This year has been a “golden opportunity” to bring to mind the countless clergy and laity, liturgists and musicians, artists and scholars who have dedicated themselves to the liturgical apostolate,” said Rita Thiron, Executive Director of the FDLC. “Most of all, it has allowed us to pause and marvel at all that God has accomplished through and for his people.” ■

Additional photos may be found on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/FoDLC>
Other information may be found on the FDLC website <https://fdlc.org> or by calling 202-635-6990.
Full transcripts of the presentations will soon be loaded onto the website as they become available.



Abbot Pricard Polan, OSB and Cardinal Blase Cupich distribute Holy Communion at Holy Name Cathedral on October 11. (Photo credit Christopher Ferraro for FDLC)