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To: Catholic Wire Services, Diocesan Offices of Worship

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Re: FDLC National Meeting held in Erie PA, October 7-12, 2013
“The Christian Mystery and the Enduring Value of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*”

Keywords: Archbishop Piero Marini, Archbishop Samuel Aquila, Archbishop Gregory Aymond, Bishop Donald Trautman, Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, FDLC, Msgr. John Burton, Rita Thiron

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**LITURGISTS FROM ACROSS THE USA GATHER TO REFLECT ON
FIFTY YEARS OF THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY**

Truly, “the liturgical renewal is the most visible fruit of the entire work of the Council.” So spoke Archbishop Piero Marini as he addressed the participants at the annual meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. Archbishop Marini, President of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses and Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations for Blessed Pope John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, was actually quoting the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops.

First, Archbishop Marini set the Second Vatican Council in its historical context providing background on the decades that led up to the Council. He noted that it was the first Council to be a truly universal council, not simply European nor regional. Moreover, it was rightfully called a pastoral council -- unique in that this was called to address Church issues, not to react to a crisis of thought from outside entities. This fact, he assessed, tends not to lessen, but to increase, the weight of conciliar decisions.

Drawing on the writings of Blessed John XXIII, Archbishop Marini offered theological reflection on the nature of councils. “Precisely in her Councils, the Church both celebrates Christ’s union with herself and points to the presence of Christ in history. Historical events must therefore, in some sense, be interpreted by believers as a new manifestation of the incarnation: the signs of the times are signs of the continuing presence of the risen Christ in history, through his Spirit.”

Certainly, this year the Church is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (12-4-1963). But Archbishop Marini also asked the participants to look ahead. “The reform has proved faithful to the will of the Council Fathers and the basic principles on which it was built are enduring. Its concrete implementation, however, could not and cannot ever be perfect or complete. The Council is not behind us; it still precedes us.”

Archbishop Marini was one of several scholars who were asked to speak on the meeting’s theme: “The Christian Mystery and the Enduring Value of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.” Other Study Day presenters included Archbishop Samuel Aquila of Denver who reflected on the history of Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation. He offered an historical overview of the sacrament from the Acts of the Apostles to our present age. He drew on his experience of restoring the order of the sacraments of initiation in his former Diocese of Fargo.

Alluding to Pope Benedict XVI’s words in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Archbishop Aquila noted that this practice “better enables the faithful to put the sacrament of the Eucharist at the center, as the goal of the whole process of initiation.”

Further, Archbishop Aquila noted that “Confirmation is anticipated by Baptism, but the full strength and mission given by the Holy Spirit is lacking without Confirmation... The gift of the Holy Spirit given in Confirmation is ordered to the life of worship. St. Thomas Aquinas affirms that the seal given in Confirmation qualifies the Christian to participate in worship...”

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, noted Scripture scholar and professor at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, emphasized how the *Constitution* affirmed the role of Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church and set it as an integral part of all liturgical celebrations.

The Council called for an increased use of Sacred Scripture and a renewed appreciation of the Bible using the methodology of historical criticism. One must appreciate the genre of the text, the culture of the times, and for whom it was written. A preacher, then, Sr. Bergant noted, has to examine the text in all its dimensions – the word that the text creates, the world that the author creates, and the world of the hearing assembly. “The story of the Bible is that God remains faithful.”

The meeting was held in the beautiful city of Erie, Pennsylvania. Emeritus Bishop Donald Trautman addressed parish liturgical ministers and spoke on the four pillars of Vatican II -- the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, *The Constitution on the Church*, *the Constitution on Divine Revelation*, and the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. He outlined the contributions of each to modern theological understanding and pastoral practice.

He noted that the phrase ‘the People of God’ was used 140 times in the Council documents. He thanked the liturgical ministers for their role in the authentic and reverent celebration of the Church’s liturgies.

THE 2013 McMANUS AWARD

On Friday, October 11, the Federation awarded its prestigious Frederick R. McManus Award to Father Paul Turner. Father Turner is a priest of the Diocese of Kansas City -St. Joseph and a noted scholar on the liturgy. He is past president of the North American Academy of Liturgy and a prolific writer of books and articles. This award particularly recognized his outstanding contributions to dioceses, presbyterates, and parishes, as they prepared for the new English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal.

He accepted the award in his usual humble and eloquent fashion -- “I’m the wrong guy,” he quipped. But he also encouraged the assembly to listen to God’s call. “Other people might know you better than you do. Always, God knows you better than you do.... You may not know what all your gifts are. But when you figure them out, you’ll also realize that you got them for a reason. You got those gifts because you are the right person. Give them back for the glory of God.”

ABOUT THE MEETING

The meeting was co-sponsored by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and the Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship of the USCCB. Archbishop Gregory Aymond, current chair of the BCDW, and his staff provided updates on the upcoming translations of liturgical rites and the status of those texts which the Bishops have already approved.

On Tuesday, October 8, Msgr. John Burton, Chair of the Board of Directors, officially welcomed the FDLC’s new Executive Director, Mrs. Rita Thiron. She is the former Director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan. Throughout the course of the week, members heard reports and participated in enthusiastic discussions regarding the future of the Federation.

The meeting was graciously hosted by Bishop Lawrence Persico of the Diocese of Erie and the dioceses of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions was founded in 1969 by the United States Bishops as a vital network for sharing the vision of the Council and for teaching about the revised liturgical books. ■



L-R: Msgr. Richard Hilgartner, Archbishop Piero Marini, Father Paul Turner, Father Daniel Merz



Msgr. John Burton presents the Frederick R. McManus Award to Father Paul Turner