

A PRAYER SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF

SACROSANCTUM
CONCILIUM:

*The Constitution on the
Sacred Liturgy*

DECEMBER 4, 1963



FEDERATION OF DIOCESAN
LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS

A PRAYER SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE

THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF

SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM:

THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY SAINT PAUL VI ON DECEMBER 4, 1963



FEDERATION OF DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS
415 MICHIGAN AVENUE, NE
SUITE 70
WASHINGTON, DC 20017

202-635-6990
WWW.FDLC.ORG

Prepared by Rita A. Thiron for the FDLC.
Cover art by Michael Poradek, PhD

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INTRODUCTORY RITES

OPENING HYMN

see suggestions herein

GREETING

Leader: ☩ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

INTRODUCTION

Leader: On December 4, 1963, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was approved by a near-unanimous vote of the Council Fathers (2,417 to 4). It was the first of sixteen documents which the Council would debate and the first of its four major Constitutions. Saint Paul VI promulgated it that very day.

The Constitution takes its Latin title – *Sacrosanctum Concilium* -- from the very first sentence of the document. “This sacred council has several aims in view...” That first paragraph also establishes four important goals for work of the entire Council and the reasons for undertaking the reform of the Liturgy.

“This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy” (SC 1).

The Council did, indeed, reform the Church and its liturgy. It listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and recognized the vital role that the restoration of the liturgy would have in the revitalization of the Church. So it is fitting that we pause today and reflect on the past sixty years and to pray for the Spirit’s continued guidance.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Heavenly Father,
From age to age you have gathered a people to yourself
and have never failed to guide them with wisdom and mercy.
May your Church continue to learn
from the vision of the Second Vatican Council.
May we be steadfast in faith,
constant in charity,
unceasing in prayer,
and unified in mission
so that we may build your kingdom here on earth.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

All: Amen.

AN OFFICE OF READINGS

FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

Please be seated
Ephesians 1:3-14

Reader 1: A reading from the Letter to the Ephesians

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,
as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,
to be holy and without blemish before him.
In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,
in accord with the favor of his will
for the praise of the glory of his grace
that he granted us in the beloved.
In him we have redemption by his Blood,
the forgiveness of transgressions,
in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us.
In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will
in accord with his favor
that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times,
to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

In him we were also chosen,
destined in accord with the purpose of the One
who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will.
so that we might exist for the praise of his glory,
we who first hoped in Christ.

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth,
the Gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him,
were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
which is the first installment of our inheritance
toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

FROM THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

Reader 2: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #5 – On the Paschal Mystery

God who "wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), "who in many and various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1), when the fullness of time had come sent His Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to be a "bodily and spiritual medicine", the Mediator between God and man. For His humanity, united with the person of the Word, was the instrument of our salvation. Therefore, in Christ "the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth, and the fullness of divine worship was given to us.

The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life." For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth "the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church" (SC 5).

Reader 3: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* # 7 -- Christ is always present in his Church

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.

Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected

in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.

Reader 4: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #10 – Liturgy as source and summit

Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with "the paschal sacraments," to be "one in holiness"; it prays that "they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith"; the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.

Reader 5: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #14 – Full, conscious and active participation

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

Reader 6: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #21 and 34 – tradition, change, and clear expression

In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community (21).

The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation (34).

Reader 7: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #24 and 51 – on the important role of Sacred Scripture

Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony (24).

The treasures of the bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years (51).

Reader 8: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #36 -- On the use of the vernacular and legitimate variations

Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites. But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters (36).

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit (37).

Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; and this should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and devising rubrics (38).

Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books, it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music, and the arts, but according to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution (39).

FROM DESIDERIO DESIDERAVI (Pope Francis, June 29 2022)

Reader 9: Pope Francis – on the legacy of the Council as expressed in *Desiderio Desideravi*, #16

We owe to the Council — and to the liturgical movement that preceded it — the rediscovery of a theological understanding of the Liturgy and of its importance in the life of the Church. As the general principles spelled out in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* have been fundamental for the reform of the liturgy, they continue to be fundamental for the promotion of that full, conscious, active, and fruitful celebration (cf. *SC* nos. 11, 14), in the liturgy “the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (*SC* 14). With this letter I simply want to invite the whole Church to rediscover, to safeguard, and to live the truth and power of the Christian celebration. I want the beauty of the Christian celebration and its necessary consequences for the life of the Church not to be spoiled by a superficial and foreshortened understanding of its value or, worse yet, by its being exploited in service of some ideological vision, no matter what the hue. The priestly prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper that all may be one (Jn 17:21) judges every one of our divisions around the Bread broken, around *the sacrament of mercy, the sign of unity, the bond of charity*.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

"Especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation there is to be restored, after the Gospel and the homily, "the common prayer" or "the prayer of the faithful." By this prayer, in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world." (SC 53).

INVITATION

Please stand

Leader: Confident in the abiding love of the Father,
let us turn to him with our petitions.

PETITIONS

Reader: "Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as a movement of the Holy Spirit in His Church... "(43). May all the members of the Church value and understand the celebration of the Liturgy, we pray.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: "Servers, lectors, commentators, and members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people" (29). May all liturgical ministers be "deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy" (ibid.), we pray.

All: **Lord hear our prayer.**

Reader: "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence" (30) For all music ministers, we lead the assembly in sung praise, we pray.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: "Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the course of the year...Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ..., (102). May all who prepare the celebrations of the liturgical year help us recall the mysteries of salvation, we pray.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: May all our beloved dead participate in the joy of the heavenly liturgy, we pray.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us offer the prayer Christ himself taught us.

All: Our Father...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: Father,
Hear the prayers of your people gathered here.
Your grace has encouraged us to ask them;
your mercy has convinced us of your faithfulness.
May we always celebrate your liturgy with sincere hearts
and may Christ, our High Priest,
continue to intercede for us
as we offer you thanks and praise.
We ask this through that same Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

GREETING

Leader: The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.

BLESSING

Leader: May almighty God bless you,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

OR

Lay Leader: May almighty God bless ✠ us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

[HYMN]

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

All Glory is Yours	Moore	GIA
All the Ends of the Earth	Ps 98/ Dufford	GIA
City of God	Schutte	OCP
Glory and Praise to our God	Ps 65/ Schutte	OCP
How Great Thou Art	Hine	Hope/Various
In Every Age	Ps 90/ Whittaker	OCP
O God beyond All Praising	Perry/Holst	Various
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	Ps 90/ Watts	Various
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	Neander/tr. Winkworth	Various
Sing of the Lord's Goodness	Sands	OCP