

Liturgicae Instaurationes

*Instruction on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy
Congregation for Divine Worship – September 5th 1970*



Pope Paul VI

The liturgical reforms put into effect thus far as applications of Vatican Council II's Constitution on the Liturgy have to do primarily with the celebration of the mystery of the Eucharist. "For the Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ Himself. He is our Passion and living bread; through His flesh, made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, He is bringing life to people and thereby inviting them to offer themselves together with Him, as well as their labors and all created things." The repeated celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass in our worshipping communities stands as evidence that the Mass is the center of the Church's entire life, the focal point of all other activities, and that the purpose of the ritual renewal is to inspire a pastoral ministry that has the liturgy as its crown and source and that is a living-out of the paschal mystery of Christ.

The work of reform, accomplished step by step over the past six years, has served as a passage from the earlier to a new liturgy, presented, since publication of the Roman Missal with its Order of Mass and General Instruction, in such a clearer and fuller form that it truly opens a new path for pastoral-liturgical life, permitting great achievements. In addition, the recently published Mass Lectionary together with the wealth of prayer forms contained in the Roman Missal provide a wide range of options for celebrations of the eucharist.

The many options regarding texts and the flexibility of the rubrics are a great advantage to a living, pointed, and spiritually beneficial celebration, that is, one adapted to local conditions and to the character and culture of the faithful. There is, then, no need for purely personal improvisations, which can only trivialize the liturgy.

Measured transition to new and fresh forms of worship, conducted with both the overall work of renewal and the wide range of local conditions as its criteria, has been welcomed by the majority of clergy and faithful. Still, there have been here and there both resistance and impatience. In the cause of holding on to the old tradition, some have received the changes grudgingly. Alleging pastoral needs, others became convinced that they could not wait for promulgation of the definitive reforms. In consequence, they have resorted to personal innovations, to hasty, often ill-advised measures, to new creations and additions or to the simplification of rites. All of this has frequently conflicted with the most basic liturgical norms and upset the consciences of the faithful. The innovators have thus obstructed the cause of genuine liturgical renewal or made it more difficult.

The result is that many bishops, priests, and laity have asked the Apostolic See to bring its authority to bear on the preservation and growth in the liturgy of the effective union of spirit that is to be expected as the right and the characteristic of the family of Christians gathered in God's presence.

What seemed untimely during the process of the Consilium's assiduous work on the reform has now become possible in view of all that has now been solidly and clearly established.

The first appeal must be made to the authority of the individual bishops; the Holy Spirit has chosen them to rule the Church of God and they are "the chief stewards of the mysteries of God, and the overseers, promoters, and guardians of all liturgical life in the particular Churches entrusted to their care." They have the duty of governing, guiding, encouraging, or sometimes reproofing, of lighting the way for the carrying out of true reform, and also of taking counsel, so that the whole Body of the Church may be able to move ahead single-mindedly and with the unity of charity in the diocese, the nation, and the entire world. Such efforts of the bishops are the more necessary and urgent because the link between liturgy and faith is so close that service to the one redounds to the other.

With the cooperation of their liturgical commissions, bishops should have complete information on the religious and social condition of the faithful in their care, of their spiritual needs, and of the ways most likely to help them; bishops should also use all the options the new rites provide. They will then be able to evaluate what favors or hampers true reform and with care and discernment to suggest and control courses of action in such a way that, all genuine needs being given their due, the entire undertaking will nevertheless evolve in accord with the norms set by the new liturgical laws.

The bishops' mastery of the knowledge needed greatly assists priests in the ministry they exercise in due hierarchic communion and facilitates that obedience required as a fuller sign of worship and for the sanctification of souls.

With a view to making the bishop's function more effective for an exact application of liturgical norms,

especially those of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, as well as for the sake of restoring discipline and order in the celebration of the eucharist, center of the Church's life, "a sign of unity and a bond of charity", it seems worthwhile to review the following principles and suggestions.

1. The new norms have made liturgical formularies, gestures, and actions much simpler, in keeping with that principle established in the Constitution on the Liturgy: "The rites should be marked 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 as a rule not require much explanation." No one should go beyond these defined limits; to do so would be to strip the liturgy of its sacred symbolism and proper beauty, so needed for the fulfillment of the mystery of salvation in the Christian community and, with the help of an effective catechesis, for its comprehension under the veil of things that are seen.

The liturgical reform bears absolutely no relation to what is called "desacralization" and in no way intends to lend support to the phenomenon of "secularizing the world". Accordingly the rites must retain their dignity, spirit of reverence, and sacred character.

The effectiveness of liturgy does not lie in experimenting with rites and altering them over and over, nor in a continuous reductionism, but solely in entering more deeply into the word of God and the mystery being celebrated. It is the presence of these two that authenticates the Church's rites, not what some priest decides, indulging his own preferences.

Keep in mind, then, that the private recasting of ritual introduced by an individual priest insults the dignity of the believer and lays the way open to individual and idiosyncratic forms in celebrations that are in fact the property of the whole Church.

The ministry of the priest is the ministry of the universal Church: its exercise is impossible without obedience, hierarchic communion, and the will to serve God and neighbor. The hierarchic character and sacramental power of the liturgy as well as the respectful service owed to the believing community demand that the priest fulfill his role in worship as the "faithful servant and steward of the mysteries of God". Without imposing any rite not decreed and sanctioned by the liturgical books.

2. Of all the texts read in the liturgical assembly the books of sacred Scripture possess the primacy of a unique dignity: in them God is speaking to His people; Christ, in his own word, continues to proclaim his Gospel. Therefore:

a. The liturgy of the word demands cultivation with the utmost attention. In no case is it allowed to substitute readings from other sacred or profane authors, ancient or modern. The homily has as its purpose to explain to the faithful the word of God just proclaimed and to adapt it to the mentality of the times. The priest, therefore, is the homilist; the congregation is to refrain from comments, attempts at dialogue, or anything similar. To have only a single reading is never allowed.

b. The liturgy of the word prepares and leads up to the liturgy of the eucharist, forming with it the one act of worship. To separate the two, therefore, or to celebrate them at different times or places is not permitted. As for integrating some liturgical service or part of the divine office before Mass with the liturgy of the word, the guidelines are the norms laid down in the liturgical books for the case in question.

3. The liturgical texts themselves, composed by the Church, are to be treated with the highest respect. No one, then, may take it on himself to make changes, substitutions, deletions, or additions.

a. There is special reason to keep the Order of Mass intact. Under no consideration, not even the pretext of singing the Mass, may the official translations of its formularies be altered. There are, of course, optional forms, noted in the context of the various rites, for certain parts of the Mass: the penitential rite, the eucharistic prayers, acclamations, final blessing.

b. Sources for the entrance and communion antiphons are: the Graduale romanum, The Simple Gradual, the Roman Missal, and the compilations approved by the conferences of bishops. In choosing chants for Mass, the conferences should take into account not only suitability to the times and differing circumstances of the liturgical services, but also the needs of the faithful using them.

c. Congregational singing is to be fostered by every means possible, even by use of new types of music

suited to the culture of the people and to the contemporary spirit. The conferences of bishops should authorize a list of songs that are to be used in Masses with special groups, for example, with youth or children, and that in text, melody, rhythm, and instrumentation are suited to the dignity and holiness of the place and of divine worship.

The Church does not bar any style of sacred music from the liturgy. Still, not every style or the sound of every song or instrument deserves equal status as an aid to prayer and an expression of the mystery of Christ. All musical elements have as their one purpose the celebration of divine worship. They must, then, possess sacredness and soundness of form, fit in with the spirit of the liturgical service and the nature of its particular parts; they must not be a hindrance to an intense participation of the assembly but must direct the mind's attention and the heart's sentiments toward the rites.

More specific determinations belong to the conferences of bishops or where there are no general norms as yet, to the bishop within his diocese. Every attention is to be given to the choice of musical instruments; limited in number and suited to the region and to community culture, they should prompt devotion and not be too loud.

d. Broad options are given for the choice of prayers. Especially on weekdays in Ordinary Time the sources are any one of the Mass prayers from the thirty-four weeks of Ordinary Time or the prayers from the Masses for Various Occasions or from the votive Masses.

For translations of the prayers the conferences of bishops are empowered to use the special norms in no. 34 of the Instruction on translations of liturgical texts for celebrations with a congregation, issued by the Consilium, January 25, 1969.

e. As for readings, besides those assigned for every Sunday, feast, and weekday, there are many others for use in celebrating the sacraments or for other special occasions. In Masses for special groups the option is granted to choose texts best suited to the particular celebration, as long as they come from an authorized lectionary.

f. The priest may say a very few words to the congregation at the beginning of the Mass and before the readings, the preface, and the dismissal, but should give no instruction during the eucharistic prayer. Whatever he says should be brief and to the point, thought out ahead of time. Any other instructions that might be needed should be the responsibility of the "moderator" of the assembly, who is to avoid going on and on and say only what is strictly necessary.

g. The general intercessions in addition to the intentions for the Church, the world, and those in need may properly include one pertinent to the local community. That will forestall adding intentions to Eucharistic Prayer I (Roman Canon) in the commemorations of the living and the dead. Intentions for the general intercessions are to be prepared and written out beforehand and in a form consistent with the genre of the prayer. The reading of the intentions may be assigned to one or more of those present at the liturgy. Used intelligently, these faculties afford such broad options that there is no reason for resorting to individualistic creations. Accordingly priests are instructed to prepare their celebrations with their mind on the actual circumstances and the spiritual needs of the people and with faithful adherence to the limits set by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

4. The eucharistic prayer more than any other part of the Mass is, by reason of his office, the prayer of the priest alone. Recitation of any part by a lesser minister the assembly, or any individual is forbidden. Such a course conflicts with the hierarchic character of the liturgy in which all are to do all but only those parts belonging to them. The priest alone, therefore, is to recite the entire eucharistic prayer.

5. The bread for eucharistic celebration is bread of wheat and, in keeping with the age-old custom of the Latin Church, unleavened.

Its authenticity as sign requires that the bread have the appearance of genuine food to be broken and shared in together. At the same time the bread – whether the small host for communion of the faithful or the larger hosts to be broken into parts – is always to be made in the traditional shape, in keeping with the norm of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

The need for greater authenticity relates to color, taste, and thickness rather than to shape. Out of reverence

for the sacrament the eucharistic bread should be baked with great care, so that the breaking can be dignified and the eating not offensive to the sensibilities of the people. Bread that tastes of uncooked flour or that becomes quickly so hard as to be inedible is not to be used. As befits the sacrament, the breaking of the consecrated bread, the taking of the consecrated bread and wine in communion, and the consuming of leftover hosts after communion should be done with reverence.

6. In its sacramental sign value communion under both kinds expresses a more complete sharing by the faithful. Its concession has as limits the determinations of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no. 242) and the norm of the Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship, Sacramentali Communione, on the extension of the faculty for administering communion under both kinds, June 29, 1970.

a. Ordinaries are not to grant blanket permission but, within the limits set by the conference of bishops, are to specify the instances and celebrations for this form of communion. To be excluded are occasions when the number of communicants is great. The permission should be for specific, structured, and homogeneous assemblies.

b. A thorough catechesis is to precede admittance to communion under both kinds so that the people will fully perceive its significance.

c. Priests, deacons, or acolytes who have received institution should be present to offer communion from the chalice. If there are none of these present, the rite is to be carried out by the celebrant as it is set out in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal no. 245.c

d. The method of having the communicants pass the chalice from one to another or having them go directly to the chalice to receive the precious blood does not seem advisable. Instead of this, communion should be by intinction.

e. The first minister of communion is the priest celebrant, next deacons, then acolytes, in particular cases to be determined by the competent authority. The Holy See has the power to permit the appointment of other known and worthy persons as ministers, if they have received a mandate. Those lacking this mandate cannot distribute communion or carry the vessels containing the blessed sacrament.

The manner of distributing communion is to conform to the directives of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (nos. 244-252)d and of the June 29, 1970 Instruction of this Congregation. Should there be any concession of a manner of distribution differing from the usual, the conditions the Apostolic See lays down are to be observed.

f. Wherever, for want of priests, other persons – for example, catechists in mission areas – receive from the bishop, with the concurrence of the Apostolic See, the right to celebrate the liturgy of the word and distribute communion, they are to refrain absolutely from reciting the eucharistic prayer. Should it seem desirable to read the institution narrative, they should make it a reading in the liturgy of the word. In the kind of assemblies in question, then, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the distribution of holy communion with the prescribed rite immediately follow the liturgy of the word.

g. Whatever the manner of distributing, great care is to be taken for its dignified, devout, and decorous administration and for forestalling any danger of irreverence. There is to be due regard for the character of the liturgical assembly and for the age, circumstances, and degree of preparation of the recipients.

7. In conformity with norms traditional in the Church, women (single, married, religious), whether in churches, homes, convents, schools, or institutions for women, are barred from serving the priest at the altar.

According to the norms established for these matters, however, women are allowed to:

a. proclaim the readings, except the gospel. They are to make sure that, with the help of modern sound equipment, they can be comfortably heard by all. The conferences of bishops are to give specific directions on the place best suited for women to read the word of God in the liturgical assembly.

b. announce the intentions in the general intercessions;

c. lead the liturgical assembly in singing and play the organ or other instruments;

d. read the commentary assisting the people toward a better understanding of the rite;

e. attend to other functions, customarily filled by women in other settings, as a service to the congregation, for example, ushering, organizing processions, taking up the collection.

8. Sacred vessels, vestments, and furnishings are to be treated with proper respect and care. The greater latitude granted with regard to their material and design is intended to give the various peoples and artisans opportunity to devote the full power of their talents to sacred worship.

But the following points must be kept in mind.

a. Objects having a place in worship must always be “of high quality, durable, and well suited to sacred uses”. Anything that is trivial or commonplace must not be used.

b. Before use, chalices and patens are to be consecrated by the bishop, who will decide whether they are fit for their intended function.

c. “The vestment common to ministers of every rank is the alb”. The abuse is here repudiated of celebrating or even concelebrating Mass with stole only over the monastic cowl or over ordinary clerical garb, to say nothing of street clothes. Equally forbidden is the wearing of the stole alone over street clothes when carrying out other ritual acts, for example, the laying on of hands at ordinations, administering other sacraments, giving blessings.

d. It is up to the conferences of bishops to decide whether it is advisable to choose materials other than the traditional for the sacred furnishings. They are to inform the Apostolic See about their decisions.

As to the design of vestments, the conferences of bishops have the power to decide on and to propose to the Holy See adaptations consistent with the needs and customs of the respective regions.

9. The Eucharist is celebrated as a rule in a place of worship. Apart from cases of real need, as adjudged by the Ordinary for his jurisdiction, celebration outside a church is not permitted. When the Ordinary does allow this, there must be care that a worthy place is chosen and that the Mass is celebrated on a suitable table. If at all possible, the celebration should not take place in a dining room or on a dining-room table.

10. In applying the reform of the liturgy, bishops should have special concern about the fixed and worthy arrangement of the place of worship, especially the sanctuary, in conformity with the norms set forth in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the Instruction Eucharisticum mysterium.

Arrangements begun in recent years as temporary have tended in the meantime to take on a permanent form. Even some repudiated by the Consilium continue, though in fact they are in conflict with the sense of the liturgy, aesthetic grace, and the smoothness and dignity of liturgical celebration.

Through the collaboration of diocesan commissions on liturgy and on sacred art and, if necessary, through consultation with experts or even with civil authorities, there should be a complete review of the blueprints for new constructions and of the existing adaptations. The aim is to ensure a fixed arrangement in all churches that will preserve ancient monuments where necessary and to the fullest extent possible meet new needs.

11. An understanding of the reformed liturgy still demands an intense effort for accurate translations and editions of the revised liturgical books. These must be translated in their entirety and other, particular liturgical books in use must be suppressed.

Should any conference of bishops judge it necessary and timely to add further formularies or to make particular adaptations, these are to be incorporated after the approval of the Holy See and by means of a distinctive typeface are to be clearly set off as separate from the original Latin text.

In this matter it is advisable to proceed without haste, enlisting the help not only of theologians and liturgists, but of people of learning and letters. Then the translations will be documents of tested beauty; their grace, balance, elegance, and richness of style and language will endow them with the promise of lasting use; they will match the requirements of the inner richness of their content.

The preparation of vernacular liturgical books is to follow the traditional norms for publishing texts: translators or authors are to remain anonymous; liturgical books are for the service of the Christian

community and editing and publication is by mandate and authority of the hierarchy, which under no consideration is answerable to outsiders. That would be offensive to the freedom of church authority and the dignity of liturgy.

12. Any liturgical experimentation that may seem necessary or advantageous receives authorization from this Congregation alone, in writing, with norms clearly set out, and subject to the responsibility of the competent local authority

All earlier permissions for experimentation with the Mass, granted in view of the liturgical reform as it was in progress, are to be considered as no longer in effect. Since publication of the *Missale Romanum* the norms and forms of eucharistic celebration are those given in the General Instruction and the Order of Mass.

The conferences of bishops are to draw up in detail any adaptations envisioned in the liturgical books and submit them for confirmation to the Holy See.

Should further adaptations become necessary, in keeping with the norm of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* art. 40, the conference of bishops is to examine the issue thoroughly, attentive to the character and traditions of each people and to specific pastoral needs. When some form of experimentation seems advisable, there is to be a precise delineation of its limits and a testing within qualified groups by prudent and specially appointed persons.

Experimentation should not take place in large-scale celebrations nor be widely publicized. Experiments should be few and not last beyond a year. A report then is to be sent to the Holy See. While a reply is pending, use of the petitioned adaptation is forbidden. When changes in the structure of rites or in the order of parts as set forth in the liturgical books are involved, or any departure from the usual, or the introduction of new texts, a point-by-point outline is to be submitted to the Holy See prior to the beginning of any kind of experiment.

Such a procedure is called for and demanded by both the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the importance of the issue.

13. In conclusion: it must be remembered that the liturgical reform decided on by the Council affects the universal Church. It thus requires in pastoral meetings a study of its meaning and practice for the Christian education of the people to the end that the liturgy may become vital, touch the soul, and meet its needs.

The contemporary reform aims at making available liturgical prayer that has its origin in a living and honored tradition. Once available this prayer must appear clearly as the work of the entire people of God in all their orders and ministries. The effectiveness and authenticity of this reform has as its sole guarantee the unity of the whole ecclesial organism.

Prompted by a ready obedience to church laws and precepts and by a spirit of faith, and putting aside purely personal preferences or idiosyncrasies, pastors especially should be ministers of the community liturgy through personal example, study, and an intelligent, persistent catechesis. They will thus prepare for that flowering spring expected from this liturgical reform, which looks to the needs of the age and which repudiates the secular and arbitrary as lethal to itself.

Pope Paul VI has approved this Instruction, prepared at his mandate by the Congregation for Divine Worship, and confirmed it with his authority on September 3, 1970, ordering its publication and its observance by all concerned.