

# LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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A Quarterly Newsletter prepared for the Liturgy Office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

**THE EDITOR WRITES:** "Any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already in existence." This quotation from Vatican II (*Sac. Conc.* 23) forms the concluding words of the Instruction *Comme le prévoit* which has governed the project of liturgical translation since 1969. It also expresses an age-old principle not just of liturgical development but of Church teaching and discipline in general, the principle of organic development which proceeds not by radical discontinuities but by incorporating and building on previous statements, to establish continuity and consolidate authority (see the footnotes of any encyclical).

The new Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* is a profoundly untraditional document. In 133 paragraphs and 86 footnotes it never once mentions the document it supersedes, and in so many respects it appears to repudiate or subvert not only its immediate predecessor but also the project of Paul VI whereby the people's prayer becomes the prayer of the Church while at the same time remaining perfectly accessible to them.

This troubling document is, sad to say, rather mean-spirited. Its attitude to the vernacular seems wholly grudging and concessive and is hard to reconcile with the positive openness to other cultures and languages displayed by Vatican II (e.g. *Ad Gentes* 19, 21) and Paul VI (e.g. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 62, 63). It is mistrustful of bishops and bishops' conferences and claws back the *jus liturgicum* restored to them by the Council. It claims the right to overrule their choice of collaborators and even to impose the Congregation's own translations on them. Without supporting evidence, it imputes serious errors to existing translations which have been approved over and over again by conferences and confirmed over and over again by the selfsame Congregation in Rome.

It is authoritarian, not to say totalitarian in tone. It speaks openly in terms of the exercise of "power", spurns ecumenical convergence, requires biblical translations to be conformed to the Latin liturgy and both to be conformed to the Catechism, and sets out to control even punctuation, capitalisation and the numbering of paragraphs.

It is doubtful whether the vitality of local churches and the energy of the Holy Spirit at work in them can be so constrained and controlled. The very attempt smacks of fear and desperation.

Chris Walsh

## At Rest in the Lord

17 June, **Cardinal Thomas Winning**, Archbishop of Glasgow, aged 76. Though better known in support of other causes, he was a good friend of the liturgy who sponsored new church music in Scotland as well as a number of significant church building projects. As a vigorous champion of ICEL, in his last months he was deeply and passionately involved internationally in defence of the liturgical responsibilities and prerogatives of bishops' conferences.

27 June, **Professor Balthasar Fischer** of Trier, aged 89. A pioneer and giant of the liturgical movement in Germany and worldwide, he held the first chair of liturgy in Germany, was a co-founder of the German Liturgical Institute at Trier (1947) and a peritus at Vatican II. Some readers will remember his address to a conference on liturgical formation at Kensington Square in the early eighties. The whole Church is in debt to his work. As a member of the Consilium, he was involved in

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*In the mind of the Lord, the Church is universal by vocation and mission, but when she puts down her roots in a variety of cultural, social and human terrains, she takes on different external expressions and appearances in each part of the world.*

Paul VI,  
*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 1975

*English-speaking Catholics have an obligation to offer their own contributions to the living corpus of prayer that they have received. Our faith experience of Jesus, reflecting our contemporary culture, is just as valid as the faith experience of those in previous millennia.*

Bishop D. Trautman,  
America, March 2001

God of mercy and love, grant to Thomas and Balthasar, your servants and priests, a glorious place at your heavenly table, for you made them here on earth faithful ministers of your word and sacrament. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Order of Christian Funerals

## Coming Events

Following the May conference of the European Catechumenate Network, the England and Wales RCIA Network is holding its annual conference at Hinsley Hall, Leeds from 5-7 September, entitled 'New Wine: New Wineskins. RCIA and its Challenge to be Sponsoring Communities'. For further information, contact Nicky Stevens at 01932 345753, or [nicky@nstk.demon.co.uk](mailto:nicky@nstk.demon.co.uk)

The SSG Autumn School of Liturgy and Music will take place at Ushaw College, Durham, 22-26 October. The theme is 'Give us this day our daily bread', and the week will include the usual lectures, workshops, excursions and liturgies, as well as events for children. For information and booking, contact 01661 871513.

**Liturgy Office new phone numbers**  
Since July the Liturgy Office has a new telephone number: 020 7901 4850 and fax 020 7901 4821

## Further Information

**Liturgiam authenticam**  
[www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccdd/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdd/index.htm)

**Liturgical Press:**  
[www.litpress.org](http://www.litpress.org)  
Distribution in UK – Columba Books:  
00 353 1 294 2556  
[www.columba.ie](http://www.columba.ie)

**Liturgy Training Publications (LTP):** [www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org)  
Distribution in UK – McCrimmons  
01702 218 956  
[www.McCrimmons.co.uk](http://www.McCrimmons.co.uk)

**Decani Music**  
[www.decanimusic.co.uk](http://www.decanimusic.co.uk)  
01638 716 579

**Society of St Gregory**  
[www.ssg.org.uk](http://www.ssg.org.uk)

Southwark Liturgy Commission  
020 8643 6116

drawing up the rites of infant baptism (1969) and adult initiation (1972), and chaired the working parties which produced the Directory on Masses with Children (1973) and the three eucharistic prayers for children (1974). His guiding motto, from St Augustine, was "to use the language not of the learned but of the simple".

## 'Authentic Liturgy'

On 7 May, a fifth Instruction (for the implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy) entitled *Liturgiam authenticam* appeared in Latin on the Vatican website, along with a lengthy press-release-cum-commentary and an English version described as a "supplement". It prescribes new norms for the use of the vernacular and revokes all previous directives on the subject. It lays down detailed regulations concerning which languages are to be allowed into the liturgy at all (nos 12–18), principles and norms to be followed in translating liturgical books and preparing lectionaries, with specific directives concerning vocabulary, syntax and style (nos. 19–69). It then prescribes in detail a process for the preparation, approval and recognition of translations (nos. 70–108), for the publication of liturgical books (nos. 109–125), and for the preparation of local and religious propers (nos. 126–130). It concludes with the requirement that all previously approved and confirmed texts now in use be brought into conformity with the new norms in a defined period of time (nos 131–133).

The document was approved and confirmed by the Pope on 20 March and "entered into force" on 25 April, even though its existence was not revealed until 7 May, and then only on the internet. It has still, so far as we know, not been sent to bishops or bishops' conferences.

## ICEL

The eleven bishops of ICEL met in Washington, 20–22 July. As they organise themselves and their secretariat under a new constitution for the next phase of ICEL's work, it may be appropriate to record the contribution of Eng-

land and Wales to the first 36 years of ICEL. Archbishop Francis Grimshaw of Birmingham was one of its founding fathers (along with Archbishops Paul Hallinan of Atlanta, Denis Hurley of Durban and Guilford Young of Hobart) and hosted its first meeting at the English College, Rome in 1963. He was succeeded in turn by Archbishop George Dwyer, Bishop Gordon Wheeler, Bishop Joseph Gray and Bishop Thomas McMahon. On the Advisory Committee which, under the bishops, organised the work of the commission, England and Wales normally had two members, including over the years Professor HPR Finberg, Fathers Harold Winstone, Tony Boylan, Eddie Matthews, Chris Walsh and Geoffrey Steel.

## Liturgy Institute

Canon Chris Walsh completed his five-year term as director of the ecumenical Institute for Liturgy and Mission at Sarum College, Salisbury in June. While the bishops explore the best means of providing for continuing liturgical formation throughout the country, Canon Alan Griffiths of Portsmouth diocese will be representing the Conference in the work of the Institute.

## Morning & Evening Prayer

Two more fascicles of the supplementary resource prepared by the Pastoral Liturgy Committee, *From the Rising of the Sun to its Setting*, vols 1 (Advent) and 2 (Christmas), will be available from the Liturgy Office in September.

## Meeting of Euro-Catechumenate

EuroCat 2001 was an international gathering of around over 40 people involved in adult initiation across Europe and the United States. The title of the Conference was "From the Threshold". It was a great opportunity to share our different and common experiences of initiation practice, to recognise the importance of the welcome that people need to receive if they are to move from the threshold into full communion with the body of Christ.

## Tried and Tested

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no 313 in the current missal, 352 in the new edition), each celebration of Mass will achieve the greatest effect if it takes account of the "needs, spiritual preparation and aptitudes" of the participating congregation, whose members should be involved in its planning and preparation. We have a long way still to go! Various resources are available to assist such conscientious preparation.

**Living Liturgy Year A** (Liturgical Press, July 2001), a workbook for those planning liturgy for Sundays and solemnities, contains the readings and suggestions for the psalm and other music, model texts for the intercessions, catechetical notes for music ministers and liturgy groups, and a two-page reflection on the spirituality of the day as a resource for preaching and prayer.

**Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons 2002** (Liturgy Training Publications, September 2001) continues the long-running series with valuable overviews of each season, background themes, resources and suggestions for planning and celebrating in the parish and at home, with day-by-day commentary on the lectionary, music and sacramental suggestions, notice of forthcoming feasts.

*Beware: both books use the scriptures in the NAB translation!*

**Liturgy Planner** (Decani Music, three times per year) contains liturgical notes and reflections plus extensive music listings, together with useful seasonal overviews.

**Music and Liturgy** (Society of St Gregory, quarterly) includes a planner consisting of a brief thought for the day and extensive suggestions for psalm, music and hymns.

**Southwark Liturgy Bulletin** (quarterly) has a planner with seasonal overviews, notes on the readings, suggestions for music and choices from the sacramental.

*A word of warning, however. All such aids can be invaluable, but they can also become a substitute for pondering and wrestling with the scriptures and the liturgical books themselves.*

## Kasper vs Ratzinger: a Liturgical Corollary?

Before the reforms of Vatican II, the liturgy was celebrated ‘*ne varietur*’ with identical words, rubrics and actions regardless of the context, the congregation, the circumstances. You might say it worked like clockwork. The post-conciliar liturgy has been altogether more demanding. In pursuance of the objective of “full, conscious, active participation” by everyone present as their baptismal right and duty, the revised rites require the celebration to be adapted “as closely as possible to the needs, spiritual preparation and aptitudes of the participants” who should be consulted and involved in the preparation (GIRM 352(313)). Simply put, this must mean not just that a school Mass will be somewhat different from Mass in a convent

chapel or a cathedral, but also that the parish 8.30 will quite likely be different from the 10.30.

Quite rightly, too, because liturgy is a dialogue in Christ between God and his people, God and his Church. That Church is the Body of Christ existing throughout time and space, but it takes flesh and becomes actual and active wherever two or three gather in his name, in every local congregation. And so the words in which it responds to the Lord, though uttered “in the name of the entire holy people” are also the words of “all present” (*Sac. Conc.* 33). Both the Roman Missal (as cited above) and the previous instruction on translation, *Comme le prévoit*, are quite clear that the words used must become the genuine prayer of the particular congregation, and that

everyone present should be able to find and hear themselves in them (see no. 20 on p. 4 below).

*Liturgiam authenticam*, one trusts, is not in disagreement, but its emphasis is certainly very different. The liturgy seems to be regarded more as a timeless and transcendent dialogue between God and the Church universal in time and space, whose terms are fixed in language which transcends the vagaries, or one might say “the needs, spiritual preparation and aptitudes” of those concrete people actually taking part. (see no 27 on p. 4 below). Is this really what Pope Paul VI meant when he declared that the vernacular, the people’s prayer, has become the prayer of the Church?

Chris Walsh

### Reading the Reviews

*Liturgiam authenticam* (LA) has drawn passionate comment from around the world. Herewith is just a selection:

The general principles the new text sets forth seem to smack of good common sense: if the Roman Rite is to survive throughout the Latin Church, then the prayers of the Rite in all their rich doctrine and expressiveness have to survive... For the serenity of the faithful who look to Rome for sure guidance, the Holy See should be involved in the process, and not just at the end... Moreover, on the juridical level, when the Holy See gives a faculty to the Bishops’ Conference, it doesn’t mean that the Holy See loses the ability to exercise the same faculty. (*Osservatore Romano*, 30 May).

By definition, a vernacular is the language in use in a particular place. A living language is constantly evolving... It seems to me that what the document calls a ‘sacral vernacular’ is scarcely a vernacular at all... If the norms are applied rigidly, we will

end up with complex, archaic, obscure ‘liturgy-speak’. The liturgy will become disconnected from life and become part of a ghetto, inaccessible to those who seek spiritual nourishment. (Editorial, *Liturgy News* (Australia), June).

Reading LA after reading the speeches from the pope’s latest trip (Greece and Syria) presents a basic question: is LA a product of the same church that speaks in the person of John Paul II? ... What is puzzling is that, just as the pontiff in his role as bridge-builder offers the olive branch to those whom enmity has long separated, the Congregation for Divine Worship is busily laying the foundations for more alienation – this time within the church... In his trips to the Holy Land, Greece and Syria, John Paul stood before the world with the courage and the cultural daring of a Paul. The CDW’s document is more reminiscent of something the disciples, cowering paralysed in their locked upper room, might have produced. (Editorial, *Celebrate* (Canada), June).

LA is a form of western colonialism masquerading as ecclesial unity. It doesn’t reflect thirty five years (of liturgical experience); it wants to wipe them out. (Mark Francis, superior-general of the Viatorians, *National Catholic Reporter* (USA), May).

For more than two years the bishops appointed to represent the English-speaking countries have tried to meet with the Congregation to discuss these matters. The various excuses given for not meeting are an interesting study in themselves. They do nothing for collegiality. (Bishop Peter Cullinane, president of New Zealand Bishops’ Conference, *New Zealand Catholic*, May)

I’ve got a summary, which I took off the internet, but I haven’t got the document. In itself this says there’s something wrong. (Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, president of South Africa Bishops’ Conference, *National Catholic Reporter*, May)

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May 2001

The use of overhead projectors instead of hymnbooks leads to a centralisation of power in the hands of the few who choose the hymn... No sooner has the verse been sung than the words disappear and the worshipper cannot look back and muse on what has been sung... To be able to thumb through a hymnbook is to have access to a treasury of spiritual wisdom which might not otherwise be available to the majority of worshippers.

Church of Scotland report, 2001

### Further Information

**Comme le prévoit**  
[webelieve.cc/html/issues.htm](http://webelieve.cc/html/issues.htm)  
or  
[webelieve.cc/html/commeleprevoit.htm](http://webelieve.cc/html/commeleprevoit.htm)  
(note address does not begin with www)

# Two Roman Instructions on Translation

Sooner or later we shall be faced with the need to create our own liturgical language, a language that will express the faith, the religious sentiments, the mentality of English-speaking Christians. It will have to be a language that emerges from our way of thinking and doing things, as did the Latin that was the language of the Roman rite for a thousand years.

J.D.Crichton,  
*The Once and Future Liturgy* 1977

Much ink has been spilt recently about the 'quality', the 'beauty' of liturgy - and not before time. However, we must not forget that liturgy is beautiful in the same way that the Church is beautiful - 'you give us grace upon grace to build the temple of your Spirit, creating its beauty from the holiness of our lives' (Roman Missal).

A Griffiths,  
Priests and People June 2001

## Liturgy Newsletter

[www.liturgy.demon.co.uk/Newsletter.html](http://www.liturgy.demon.co.uk/Newsletter.html)

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## Comme le prévoit 1969

6. "Liturgical translations become the voice of the Church" (Paul VI, 10 Nov.1965). To achieve this end, it is not sufficient that a liturgical translation merely reproduce the expressions and ideas of the original text. Rather it must faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language, that which the Church by means of this given text originally intended to communicate to another people in another time. A faithful translation, therefore, cannot be judged on the basis of individual words: the total context of this specific act of communication must be kept in mind, as well as the literary form proper to the respective language.

20. The prayer of the Church is always the prayer of some actual community, assembled here and now. It is not sufficient that a formula handed down from some other time or region be translated verbatim, even if accurately, for liturgical use. The formula translated must become the genuine prayer of the congregation and in it each of its members should be able to find and express himself or herself.

15. The language should be that in "common" usage, that is, suited to the greater number of the faithful who speak it in everyday use, even "children and persons of small education" (Paul VI, *ibid.*) However, the language should not be "common" in the bad sense, but "worthy of expressing the highest realities" (*ibid.*). Moreover, the correct biblical or christian meaning of certain words and ideas will always need explanation and instruction. Nevertheless no special literary training should be required of the people, liturgical texts should normally be intelligible to all, even to the less educated.

12. The translator must always keep in mind that the "unit of meaning" is not the individual word but the whole passage...

29. It is to be noted that if any particular kind of quality is regarded as essential to a literary genre (for example, intelligibility of prayers when said aloud), this may take precedence over another quality less significant for communication (for example, verbal fidelity).

43. Texts translated from another language are clearly not sufficient for the celebration of a fully renewed liturgy. The creation of new texts will be necessary. But translation of texts transmitted through the tradition of the Church is the best school and discipline for the creation of new texts so "that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already in existence" (*Sac. Conc.* 23).

## Liturgiam authenticam 2001

27. Even if expressions should be avoided which hinder comprehension because of their excessively unusual or awkward nature, the liturgical texts should be considered as the voice of the Church at prayer, rather than of only particular congregations or individuals; thus, they should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression. If indeed, in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, it is often enough by virtue of this very fact that the texts become truly memorable and capable of expressing heavenly realities. Indeed, it will be seen that the observance of the principles set forth in this Instruction will contribute to the gradual development, in each vernacular, of a sacred style that will come to be recognized as proper to liturgical language. Thus it may happen that a certain manner of speech which has come to be considered somewhat obsolete in daily usage may continue to be maintained in the liturgical context... These principles, in fact, should free the liturgy from the necessity of frequent revisions when modes of expression may have passed out of popular usage.

47. While the translation must transmit the perennial treasury of orations by means of language understandable in the cultural context for which it is intended, it should also be guided by the conviction that liturgical prayer not only is formed by the genius of a culture, but itself contributes to the development of that culture. Consequently it should cause no surprise that such language differs somewhat from ordinary speech.

Liturgical translation that takes due account of the authority and integral content of the original texts will facilitate the development of a sacral vernacular, characterized by a vocabulary, syntax and grammar that are proper to divine worship, even though it is not to be excluded that it may exercise an influence even on everyday speech, as has occurred in the languages of peoples evangelized long ago.

107 It is to be borne in mind that the composition of new texts of prayers or rubrics is not an end in itself, but must be undertaken for the purpose of meeting a particular cultural or pastoral need... New texts composed in a vernacular language, just as the other adaptations legitimately introduced, are to contain nothing that is inconsistent with the function, meaning, structure, style, theological content, traditional vocabulary or other important qualities of the texts found in the *editiones typicae*.