

LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life & Mission of the Church

11th Ordinary General Assembly of Synod of Bishops

The Synod on the Eucharist convened by the late Pope John Paul II, and by Pope Benedict XVI met in Rome from the 2–23 October 2005.

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales was represented by its elected delegates Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor and Bishop Brian Noble. In addition Bishop Arthur Roche, Chairman of the Department for Christian Life and Worship, was invited to attend by appointment of Pope Benedict XVI. Also attending the Synod from England and Wales were Bishops of the Church of England, invited as ecumenical guests, representing the Anglican Communion.

The Vatican website, [http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/] provides extensive information about the Synod, including the interventions of the English Bishops. The Interventions by the bishops of England and Wales were on a variety of topics including the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist; on the importance of the relationship between the Eucharist and the *koinonia*, the Communion of the Church; the importance of ensuring that sufficient priests are available for celebrations of Sunday Mass; and the importance of pastoral sensitivity to the particular situation of those who are divorced and remarried.

The Synod Fathers issued a final message which ranged over many of the themes explored over the three weeks of the Synod. One particularly strong theme was that of the Communion of the Church, and the need to work and pray for unity: 'We are all responsible for this unity, as we are all members of the family of God because of our Baptism, graced by the same fundamental dignity and sharing in the remarkable sacramental gift of divine life. We all feel the sadness of separation which prevents the common celebration of the Eucharist. We wish to intensify the prayer for unity within communities, the exchange of gifts between the Churches and ecclesial communities, as well as the respectful and fraternal contact among everyone, so that we may better know and love one another, respecting and appreciating our differences and our shared values.'

The Synod Fathers presented a series of propositions to the Holy Father, a summary of issues they had explored. It is expected that these will inform his Apostolic Exhortation, (expected in about 12 months time), his personal response to the experience of collegial reflection on the themes of the Synod. Uniquely Pope Benedict instructed that these propositions themselves be published. They can be read in an unofficial translation at [<http://www.zenit.org>]

Birmingham Eucharistic Congress 2005

A Eucharistic Congress on the theme 'Behold the Lamb' was held in Birmingham from 14–17 July. The Congress was organised by the Archdiocese of Birmingham, with support from the dioceses of Nottingham, Northampton and Birmingham. Speakers included Fr Raniero Cantalamessa OFM Cap, Preacher to the Papal Household, Fr John Edwards SJ, Bishop Malcolm

McMahon OP of Nottingham and Bishop Peter Doyle of Northampton. Liturgical celebration provided a major part of the Congress. Three days of the four day event took place at Newman College; the fourth at Oscott College. 600 people attended the opening day; 800 the events of the Friday; over 1000 those of Saturday; and upwards of 4000 took part in the events of the Sunday

The dictates for an authentic renewal of the liturgy in the Second Vatican Council's spirit are in the new liturgical books, but their implementation cannot be left to amateurs or nostalgic people, or be obstructed by fear. We need hope and courage to complete this renewal. The result will depend on the sensibility and the courage of all the Church, guided by her pastors.

Primo Carlo Braga
quoted in *Voices from the Council*,
edited by Michael R. Prendergast
and M.D. Ridge. Pastoral Press,
Oregon, 2004

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Coming Events

**Society of St Gregory
Annual Crichton Lecture**
To be given at Westminster
Cathedral Hall on Saturday
November 12th.

NNPM Conference
28th to 30th July 2006. To be
held at Worth Abbey. For further
details go to www.nnpm.org

**Society of St Gregory Summer
School**
This too is being held at Worth
Abbey, but from 31st July to 4th
August 2006. For further details
go to www.ssg.org.uk

CIEL Conference.
Merton College, Oxford, Eng-
land, on 13th - 16th September
2006. Full details are available at
www.ciel2006.org

Society of Liturgical Study
The 2006 Conference will be
held from 22nd to 24th August.
The location is still to be con-
firmed, but is likely to be Mirfield

News of coming events can also
be found at: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Newsletter/News.html

which included the celebra-
tion of Mass in the grounds of
Oscott College.

New Norms for Beatification

New procedures have been
published by the Congrega-
tion for the Causes of Saints. In
future the rites of beatification,
although always celebrated
with the authority of the Holy
Father, will be presided at by
his representative, usually the
prefect of the Congregation for
Sainthood Causes. The rite will
generally take place in the dio-
cese that promoted the cause
of the new blessed, although
it may take place in Rome at
the request of the bishops and
proponents of the cause, and
the consent of the Holy See's
Secretariat of State. The rite
of beatification will take place
during a celebration of Mass,
unless special liturgical reasons
suggest that it is more appro-

priate to take place during a
celebration of the Word or of
the Liturgy of the Hours.

Canonization, which attributes
to the Blessed the devotion
of the whole Church, will be
continue to be presided over
by the Supreme Pontiff.

Off to Oz?

Following swiftly on the
announcement that World
Youth Day 2008 is to be held
in Sydney, Australia.

Adelaide has been chosen to
be the centre of events for the
next World Day of the Sick, to
be held from February 9-11,
2006. Two congresses will be
held to prepare for the World
Day: one of a theological-pas-
toral character and the other of
a scientific nature. The events
will culminate on Feb. 11, feast
of Our Lady of Lourdes.

What's going on?

The Australian Catholic Bish-

ops' Conference has commis-
sioned a research project to
identify why it is that some
adults, often after many years,
cease to take part in the cel-
ebration of Sunday Mass. The
project is being conducted by
the Pastoral Office of the Aus-
tralian Catholics Bishops' Con-
ference.

Bob Dixon, director of the pas-
toral projects office has said:
'While there have always been
Catholics who are not regular
Mass attendees, some bishops
felt that there are more long
time practising Catholics who
after 20, 30 or 40 years are ceas-
ing to attend Mass, and they
wanted to investigate that.'

This project follows closely on
*Who Goes When? Mass attenders
and their usual Mass time*, a report
to the Australian Catholic Bish-
ops based on the 2001 National
Church Life Survey. This report
can be downloaded from www.ppo.catholic.org.au

The Gift of Scripture

*Let us take up this book! Let
us receive it from the Lord who
continues to offer it to us through
the Church! Let us devour it, so
that it can become our very life!
Let us savour it deeply: it will
make demands of us, but it will
give us joy because it is sweet as
honey. Filled with hope, we will
be able to share it with every man
and woman whom we encounter
on our way.*

Pope John Paul II. *Ecclesia in Europa*, 65

The Bishops of England and
Wales, together with the Bish-
ops of Scotland, have recently
issued a teaching document
The Gift of Scripture. The
document is intended to help
people 'hear, understand and
live God's word'.

In its section 'Living the Word
of God' *The Gift of Scripture*
underlines the way in which
from the earliest days the
proclamation of the Scriptures

have been an integral part of
the liturgy.

A range of resources to assist
parishes, deaneries and others
have been produced by the
Liturgy Office. They focus
especially on the Sacred Scrip-
tures and the Liturgy.

These liturgical resources are
available for free download
from www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

Other more general resources
are also available and can be
accessed from the website of
Bishops' Conference of Eng-
land and Wales.

- Opening the Gift of Scripture
*Materials to enable Deanery
meeting reflection on The Gift of
Scripture*
- Preaching the Word
*Reflections on preaching drawn
from The Gift of Scripture*
- Celebrating the Word
*Guidance on preparing a liturgy
of the word*

- Praying the Word
*Lectio Divina and the Sunday
Scriptures*
- Sharing the Word
*An Introduction to Lectionary
based Catechesis*
- Proclaiming the Word
*Guidelines for Ministering the
Word at Sunday Mass*
- Ministers of the Word
Liturgy Office Guidelines

Comments on the usefulness of
this and other resource mate-
rial for Liturgy Commissions,
parishes and other groups and
communities is always wel-
come. Especially welcome are
suggestions as to how it might
be made more useful to those
who wish to use it.

The Gift of Scripture is pub-
lished by CTS at £3.95. It is
shortly to be available also to
download from the Bishops'
Conference website.

Yours, I think

The Congregation for the Clergy has taken over from the Congregation for Divine Worship the responsibilities for cases in which priests or deacons seek a dispensation from the clerical state.

Under certain circumstances, a cleric can be released from the vow of celibacy, thus making him free to marry. The Dicastery has the authority to rule whether or not, in a particular case, the reasons presented by a petitioner are sufficient to justify dispensation from the vows of ordination.

Civil Marriage Ceremony

The Registrar General has conducted a consultation exercise concerning Civil Marriage Services. Presently mention of God is not permitted in such services — so as to indicate their strictly secular nature. Sometimes this requirement means that those marrying are restricted in their choice of readings and music. In responding to the consultation the Department for Christian Life and Worship indicated that it had no objection to permission being given for the use of readings and songs which contained incidental reference to a god or deity. However it indicated it would not support the use of, for example, the Scriptures or the liturgical rites of the Church (or other world religions) in a secular setting. The Department held that such usage would tend to diminish the religious particularity of the patrimony of the Church.

Stella Maris

The Congregation for Divine Worship has granted recognition to the inclusion of the Feast of Our Lady, Star of the Sea into the proper Calendar of the Bishops of the Forces and of the Apostleship of the Sea on International Maritime Day, the 4th Thursday of Sep-

tember each year. Texts have been approved for the Mass and Office of the Feast. (This new addition to the Calendar for the Forces does not affect other Diocesan calendars.)

Consecrated for Worship

The Bishops' Conference has approved the text of a new Directory on church building and liturgical ordering. Called *Consecrated for Worship* it supersedes the former Directory, *The Parish Church*, published in 1984. *Consecrated for Worship* will be published early in 2006.

Celebrating Sunday Evening Prayer

This volume, issued by the Liturgy Office, is a resource prepared to assist parishes with the worthy celebration of Sunday Evening Prayer, giving full attention, for example to the singing of the liturgy, and the richer use of symbol. Publication is expected early in 2006. Details of publication date, cost etc. will be posted on the Liturgy Office website as soon as they are confirmed.

Cultural Patrimony

Rome's Gregorian University has established a Faculty of the History and Cultural Patrimony of the Church. They offer three degree courses. The first is a three year Baccalaureate. The second, lasting two years is a Licentiate. The third is a research Doctorate. Full details of the courses can be downloaded from www.unigre.it/pug/storia/StoriaB.pdf

Celebrations of Word and Holy Communion

The Bishops' Conference is intending to produce a new ritual book to assist parishes celebrating the liturgy in the absence of a priest. This volume will not be available until 2006 at the earliest. In the meantime the interim rite for *Celebrations of the Word and Holy Communion*

will continue to be available. It will be available as a free download from the Liturgy Office website, but as A4 sheets for inserting into a leader's folder, rather than the paper leaflet sold previously.

Rest in Peace

Abbot Alan Rees of Belmont Abbey died tragically on October 2 2006. Abbot of Belmont from 1986–1993, Alan Rees was a notable composer and promoter of good liturgical music. His abilities were readily placed at the disposal not only of his own community and the Archdiocese of Cardiff but through ICEL, the whole English speaking Church. He was also an active supporter of the Society of St Gregory.

Br Roger of Taizé was killed during the evening prayer on Tuesday August 16, in the midst of the crowd surrounding the Community in the Church of Reconciliation at Taizé. A woman — probably mentally disturbed — struck Brother Roger violently with knife blows. He died a few moments later.

The next morning this prayer was read in the church:

*Christ of compassion,
you enable us to be in communion with those who have gone before us, and who can remain so close to us.*

We confide into your hands our Brother Roger.

He already contemplates the invisible.

In his footsteps, you are preparing us to welcome a radiance of your brightness.

Under the leadership of Br. Roger the community of Taizé, has made a considerable contribution to the Church both in terms of advancing ecumenical dialogue and the resourcing of diverse Christian communities for prayer in common.

If the Church tells us that the Eucharist is an essential part of Sunday, this is no mere positivism or thirst for power. On Easter morning, first the women and then the disciples had the grace of seeing the Lord. From that moment on, they knew that the first day of the week, Sunday, would be his day, the day of Christ the Lord. The day when creation began became the day when creation was renewed. Creation and redemption belong together. That is why Sunday is so important.

It is good that today, in many cultures, Sunday is a free day, and is often combined with Saturday so as to constitute a "week-end" of free time. Yet this free time is empty if God is not present.

Dear friends! Sometimes, our initial impression is that having to include time for Mass on a Sunday is rather inconvenient. But if you make the effort, you will realize that this is what gives a proper focus to your free time.

Do not be deterred from taking part in Sunday Mass, and help others to discover it too. This is because the Eucharist releases the joy that we need so much, and we must learn to grasp it ever more deeply, we must learn to love it.

Let us pledge ourselves to do this - it is worth the effort! Let us discover the intimate riches of the Church's liturgy and its true greatness: it is not we who are celebrating for ourselves, but it is the living God himself who is preparing a banquet for us.

Pope Benedict XVI
21st August 2005

Something very interesting at Taizé is how the formula of calming repetition has been taken up in the liturgy; that is, it is not used only in personal prayer, but also in prayer together or common prayer. Some young people, who know almost nothing of mystery, are introduced to it here, and they begin to learn how to pray."

Olivier Clément

Magazine subscriptions

In 2003 the Liturgy Office began to offer readers in the United Kingdom the opportunity to subscribe through the Office to overseas English language liturgical publications. This facility helps subscribers avoid the difficulties and expense of paying the subscriptions in foreign currency.

Those interested in taking out subscriptions for 2006 were invited to place orders before 1st November. Have a look now to see whether you'd like to email the Liturgy Office to register an interest in subscribing for 2007. We will email you next year when new subscriptions are available.

Book reviews

Brief reviews of recent liturgical publications have previously been carried in *Liturgy Newsletter*. Because of pressure of space it has been decided that all further reviews, and details of books received, will be put directly on the Liturgy Office website. This has the advantage of allowing more substantial reviews of a broader selection of materials.

www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Newsletter

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The Eucharist in the Life of the Church

Homily of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day

Dear Young Friends,

At the celebration of the Eucharist, we find ourselves in the 'hour' of Jesus, to use the language of John's Gospel. Through the Eucharist this 'hour' of Jesus becomes our own hour, his presence in our midst. Together with the disciples he celebrated the Passover of Israel, the memorial of God's liberating action that led Israel from slavery to freedom. Jesus follows the rites of Israel. He recites over the bread the prayer of praise and blessing.

But then something new happens. He thanks God not only for the great works of the past; he thanks him for his own exaltation, soon to be accomplished through the Cross and Resurrection, and he speaks to the disciples in words that sum up the whole of the Law and the Prophets: 'This is my Body, given in sacrifice for you. This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood'. He then distributes the bread and the cup, and instructs them to repeat his words and actions of that moment over and over again in his memory.

By making the bread into his Body and the wine into his Blood, he anticipates his death, he accepts it in his heart, and he transforms it into an action of love. What on the outside is simply brutal violence – the Crucifixion – from within becomes an act of total self-giving love. This is the substantial transformation which was accomplished at the Last Supper and was destined to set in motion a series of transformations leading ultimately to the transformation of the world when God will be all in all.

In their hearts, people always and everywhere have somehow expected a change, a transformation of the world. Here now is the central act of transformation that alone can truly renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and death into life.

Since this act transmutes death into love, death as such is already conquered from within, the Resurrection is already present in it. Death is, so to speak, mortally wounded, so that it can no longer have the last word.

To use an image well known to us today, this is like inducing nuclear fission in the very heart of being – the victory of love over hatred, the victory of love over death. Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can then trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world.

This first fundamental transformation of violence into love, of death into life, brings other changes in its wake. Bread and wine become his Body and Blood.

But it must not stop there; on the contrary, the process of transformation must now gather momentum. The Body and Blood of Christ are given to us so that we ourselves will be transformed in our turn. We are to become the Body of Christ, his own Flesh and Blood.

We all eat the one bread, and this means that we ourselves become one. In this way, adoration, as we said earlier, becomes union. God no longer simply

stands before us as the One who is totally Other. He is within us, and we are in him. His dynamic enters into us and then seeks to spread outwards to others until it fills the world, so that his love can truly become the dominant measure of the world.

I like to illustrate this new step urged upon us by the Last Supper by drawing out the different nuances of the word 'adoration' in Greek and in Latin. The Greek word is *proskynesis*. It refers to the gesture of submission, the recognition of God as our true measure, supplying the norm that we choose to follow. It means that freedom is not simply about enjoying life in total autonomy, but rather about living by the measure of truth and goodness, so that we ourselves can become true and good. This gesture is necessary even if initially our yearning for freedom makes us inclined to resist it.

We can only fully accept it when we take the second step that the Last Supper proposes to us. The Latin word for adoration is *ad-oratio* – mouth to mouth contact, a kiss, an embrace, and hence, ultimately love. Submission becomes union, because he to whom we submit is Love. In this way submission acquires a meaning, because it does not impose anything on us from the outside, but liberates us deep within.

Let us return once more to the Last Supper. The new element to emerge here was the deeper meaning given to Israel's ancient prayer of blessing, which from that point on became the word of transformation, enabling us to participate in the 'hour' of Christ. Jesus did not instruct us to repeat the Passover meal, which in any event, given that it is an anniversary, is not repeatable at will. He instructed us to enter into his 'hour'.

We enter into it through the sacred power of the words of consecration – a transformation brought about through the prayer of praise which places us in continuity with Israel and the whole of salvation history, and at the same time ushers in the new, to which the older prayer at its deepest level was pointing.

The new prayer – which the Church calls the 'Eucharistic Prayer' – brings the Eucharist into being. It is the word of power which transforms the gifts of the earth in an entirely new way into God's gift of himself, and it draws us into this process of transformation. That is why we call this action 'Eucharist', which is a translation of the Hebrew word *beracha* – thanksgiving, praise, blessing, and a transformation worked by the Lord: the presence of his 'hour'. Jesus' hour is the hour in which love triumphs. In other words: it is God who has triumphed, because he is Love.

The full text of this homily, preached at Marienfeld, Cologne on 21st August 2005 can be found on the Vatican website.