

LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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

The Word of God in the Life and the Mission of the Church

Benedict XVI has convoked the 12th ordinary session of the Synod of Bishops, and has said that the theme of the Synod is to be sacred Scripture and its relationship to the activity of the Church. The Synod will take place in the Vatican from 5–26 October 2008. It will be the second synod presided over by Benedict XVI. The Holy Father presided over the synod on the Eucharist last October, which had been convoked by John Paul II.

It is reported that the post-synodical apostolic exhortation from the Synod on the Eucharist is to be published shortly, perhaps before the end of 2006. The preparation of this text has been entrusted by Pope Benedict to a group of Synod members who have met regularly to develop a text for the approval of the Holy Father.

Work continues...

Roman Missal

The Bishops of England and Wales have recently completed their consideration of the two new sections of the translation of the *Roman Missal* being prepared by ICEL.

The bishops have reviewed the first drafts of the translation of the Proper of Seasons, and the Proper and Commons of Saints. Their comments on the translations have been forwarded to ICEL to assist the bishop members of ICEL and their collaborators to prepare their final proposed translations of these texts.

It is anticipated that by the middle of next year first drafts of all the Missal texts will have been received and reviewed by the Bishops' Conference. ICEL is presently preparing revisions of its translations to take account of comments received from the various English-speaking Bishops' Conferences and those revisions will be submitted to Conferences during 2007. Once a Bishops' Conference is satisfied with the translation it must confirm its approval by a formal vote and then submit the translation to the Holy See for its *recognitio*. Only then can arrangements begin to be made for the publication and introduction of the new translation.

The complexity of the process is such no date can yet be fixed with confidence for the publication of the new translation.

The Lectionary for Mass

ICPEL, the body established by the Holy See at the request of a number of English-speaking Bishops' Conferences to prepare a new translation of the Lectionary, met at Worth Abbey in September to continue its work.

The translation of the Psalter will be based on the Grail translation, and the translation of the rest of the Scriptures will be based on the *New Revised Standard Version*. However in both cases the revised translations are being prepared so as to accord with the requirements of the Holy See's Instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam*, issued in 2001.

ICPEL is likely to submit its first draft translations to Bishops' Conferences for their consideration early in 2007. It is intended that the revised translation of the Lectionary for Mass for Sundays will be published at the same time as the new translation of the *Roman Missal*. The translation of the remaining sections of the Lectionary will be issued as soon as possible thereafter.

Holidays afford a precious opportunity to spend more time with relatives, to visit family and friends, in a word, to give more space to those human contacts whose desired cultivation is impeded by the rhythm of daily duties.

For many, vacation becomes a profitable occasion for cultural contacts, for prolonged moments of prayer and of contemplation in contact with nature or in monasteries and religious structures.

Having more free time, one can dedicate oneself more easily to conversation with God, meditation on Sacred Scripture and reading some useful, formative book. Those who experience this spiritual repose know how useful it is not to reduce vacations to mere relaxation and amusement.

Faithful participation in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration helps one to feel a living part of the ecclesial community even when one is outside his or her own parish. Wherever we find ourselves, we always need to be nourished by the Eucharist.

Pope Benedict XVI
Angelus Address, Castel Gandolfo
August 13, 2006

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Society of St Gregory Summer School

30th July to 3rd August 2007 at Sneaton Castle, Whitby. For further details go to www.ssg.org.uk

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

Consecrated for Worship

In September the Bishops' Conference published *Consecrated for Worship*, its new Directory on Church buildings and liturgical ordering. A seminar was held in Leeds to mark the event, which was attended by Bishops of the Department for Christian Life and Worship, members of the Liturgy Committee, members of Diocesan Liturgy Commissions and Historic Churches Committees and other invited guests.

Presentations were made by Dr Robin Gibbons on contemporary church ordering and design, and Mr Mark Cazalet, an artist, on the Church and the commissioning of new works of art. Welcoming the publication of *Consecrated for Worship* Bishop Arthur Roche, chairman of the Department for Christian Life and Worship said: Welcoming the publication of *Consecrated for Worship*, Bishop Arthur Roche, Bishop of Leeds and Chairman of the Bishops' Conference Department for Christian Life and Worship said:

'*Consecrated for Worship* is not intended especially to encourage a time of new church building and re-ordering. But where such work is to be undertaken this Directory is the authoritative text to inform and guide that work.

- It will assist parishes and others prepare the brief for new work.
- It is there to assist architects, designers, artists as they seek to address the brief they are given;
- It is there to help all parties to evaluating the proposals that are made in response to briefs.

Consecrated for Worship will also be helpful in a less obvious, but equally important way. It will help clergy, catechists, teachers and others, in the work of helping people to understand and value the places and spaces in which we worship.

I think that as clergy and lay people have opportunity to read *Consecrated for Worship* they will find it awakens them to the rich symbolism that informs our churches and the things that are in them. They will learn anew that altars are not just tables;

ambos not just lecterns and fonts not just something to hold the water. They will become freshly alert to the fullness of the meaning of these things, to the mysteries that they relate to, and that they relate us to.'

Consecrated for Worship is published by CTS. Further details of the Directory, and formation resources to assist with its use are provided on the Liturgy Office website: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/CFW

Still in Limbo?

Although it was widely reported in the secular press that the Church was to 'abolish' limbo, the matter remains under review.

The International Theological Commission began a study on the concept of limbo in 2004, under the presidency of the then Cardinal Ratzinger. It is considering whether there might be better ways than the concept of limbo for the Church to account for its hope for the salvation of infants who die before baptism

Fr Paul McPartlan, an English member of the Commission, said the 30 commission members were in agreement on the main thesis of the document, but it requires finishing touches.

Fr McPartlan said, 'We cannot say we know with certainty what will happen to unbaptised babies, but we have good grounds to hope that God in his mercy and love looks after these children and brings them to salvation.

'What we are trying to do is to say, "What does the church say when confronted with the situation of an infant who has died without being baptised?" That and that alone is what prompted our document.'

'The answer is not a simplistic, "Oh, don't worry; everything is fine," but rather that God's endless mercy, his love poured out in Jesus Christ and his desire to save all people gives a solid basis for hoping those children will be saved despite not having been baptised.'

Fr McPartlan has noted that the findings of the Commission will also be of benefit for those who mourn the lives of babies

whose lives are lost through abortion.

The Commission's final report may be published in 2007.

500 years and still going strong

The 500th anniversary of the foundation of the present Basilica of St Peter's Rome is marked by an exhibition at the Basilica being held until March 8th 2007.

Titled *Petros Eni* (Peter is here), the exhibition takes its title from a graffiti found on a piece of a wall found under the basilica, a witness of the Petrine devotion from the earliest years.

The exhibition includes exhibits related to the history of the site, from the foundation of the first basilica under Constantine to the present day. It includes artistic treasures from museums around the world, including the design for the present basilica by Bramante and Michelangelo and works by Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, El Greco, Caravaggio, Bernini, Borromini and Rembrandt. To testify to the pilgrimages by the Saints and Blessed to this sacred place, some extraordinary relics will be shown, such as the tunic of Saint Francis of Assisi and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's sandals.

Pilgrim Catholic

Pilgrim Catholic is the Newsletter of the Gypsy & Traveller Support Network established in England and Wales. It contains a variety of brief articles giving news and views from the Travelling community and from various Church agencies that offer pastoral support to the community. The Newsletter can be downloaded from www.catholic-ew.org.uk/citizenship/documents/PilgrimCatholicAutumn06.doc

Special Measures

In September the Holy See announced its approval for a new institute created for a group of French priests and seminarians who have left the schismatic Society of St Pius X and returned to full communion with the Catholic Church.

This action follows a recent meeting between Pope Benedict

and Bishop Fellay, the current head of the Society.

The action of the Holy See in establishing the new Institute met with a mixed response in France. Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux and head of the French Bishops' Conference, has urged French Catholics to welcome those returning to full Communion. However in an open letter published in the press, five other bishops of France, together with 30 priests, have indicated their concerns regarding the theological positions held by the 'returning' group and their association with far-right wing groups.

The reporting of these events coincides with fresh speculation that Pope Benedict may be prepared to issue further guidance to the bishops of the world with regard to the pastoral provision that might be made to those who seek a wider use of the Tridentine form of Mass.

Eucharistic Congress

The 49th International Eucharistic Congress is to be held in Quebec, Canada from June 15-22, 2008.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec has announced that the theme of the Eucharistic Congress will be: 'The Eucharist, Gift of God for the Life of the World'.

A novelty to this congress will be the Ark of the New Covenant, a replication of the Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament, which was blessed by Benedict XVI last May.

The Ark of the New Covenant will be carried in procession, from one diocese to another, from church to church, in spiritual preparation for the International Eucharistic Congress.

Benedict XVI has told Cardinal Ouellet that he hopes to come to the closing ceremony on June 22, but the trip has not been officially confirmed.

Leeds Cathedral

St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds, closed since July 2005 for a major refurbishment and re-ordering of the sanctuary, was re-opened on 13th November

with a Mass of Dedication of the Altar.

The Leeds Diocesan website provides a full account of the celebration: <http://dioceseofleeds.org.uk/>

Seek Truth, not applause

Addressing the members of the International Theological Commission at their recent meeting Pope Benedict warned: 'To speak to meet with applause, to speak oriented to what men want to hear, to speak obeying the dictatorship of common opinions, is considered a sort of prostitution of the word and of the soul. The authentic theologian needs a form of "chastity", which implies not to be subjected to such standards, not to seek applause, but to seek obedience to the truth.'

The Holy Father continued: 'And I believe this is the fundamental virtue of the theologian, this discipline, even hard, of obedience to the truth, which makes us collaborators of the truth, a mouth of truth, so that we will not speak in this river of words of today, but that we are really purified and chaste through obedience to the truth, so that truth may speak in us.'

Recalling an experience of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Holy Father explained: 'In theology, God is not the object of our speech. This is our normal conception. In reality, God is not the object; God is the subject of theology.'

'He who speaks in theology should be God himself. And our speaking and thinking should only serve to have him heard, so that the world of God can find room in the world.'

'This is the mission of the theologian: in the talkativeness of our time and of other times, in the inflation of words, to make the essential words present. In words make the Word present, the Word that proceeds from God, the Word that is God.'

An encounter with the Living Lord.

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the very thing that can keep your family truly united and centred.

Sunday becomes more beautiful, the whole week becomes more beautiful, when you go to Sunday Mass together. And please, pray together at home too: at meals and before going to bed. Prayer does not only bring us nearer to God but also nearer to one another. It is a powerful source of peace and joy. Family life becomes more joyful and expansive whenever God is there and his closeness is experienced in prayer.

Dear catechists and teachers! I urge you to keep alive in the schools the search for God, for that God who in Jesus Christ has made himself visible to us. I know that in our pluralistic world it is no easy thing in schools to bring up the subject of faith.

But it is hardly enough for our children and young people to learn technical knowledge and skills alone, and not the criteria that give knowledge and skill their direction and meaning. Encourage your students not only to raise questions about particular things, but also to ask about the why and the wherefore of life as a whole. Help them to realize that any answers that do not finally lead to God are insufficient.

Dear priests and all who assist in parishes! I urge you to do everything possible to make the parish a 'spiritual community' for people — a great family where we also experience the even greater family of the universal Church, and learn through the liturgy, catechesis and all the events of parish life to walk together on the way of true life.

These three places of education — the family, the school and the parish — go together, and they help us to find the way that leads to the sources of life, toward 'life in abundance'. Amen!

People in Africa and Asia admire our scientific and technical prowess, but at the same time they are frightened by a form of rationality which totally excludes God from man's vision, as if this were the highest form of reason, and one to be imposed on their cultures too. They do not see the real threat to their identity in the Christian faith, but in the contempt for God and the cynicism that considers mockery of the sacred to be an exercise of freedom and that holds up utility as the supreme moral criterion for the future of scientific research.

This cynicism is not the kind of tolerance and cultural openness that the world's peoples are looking for and that all of us want! The tolerance which we urgently need includes the fear of God, respect for what others hold sacred. ... This sense of respect can be reborn in the Western world only if faith in God is reborn, if God become once more present to us and in us. We impose this faith upon no one. ... Faith can develop only in freedom. But we do appeal to the freedom of men and women to be open to God, to seek Him, to hear His voice.

The world needs God. We need God. But what God? ... Jesus, the Son of God incarnate. His 'vengeance' is the Cross: a 'no' to violence and a 'love to the end.' This is the God we need. We do not fail to show respect for other religions and cultures, profound respect for their faith, when we proclaim clearly and uncompromisingly the God who counters violence with His own suffering; who in the face of the power of evil exalts His mercy, in order that evil may be limited and overcome. To Him we now lift up our prayer, that He may remain with us and help us to be credible witnesses to Himself.

Pope Benedict XVI
Homily, Munich,
September 10th 2006

Magazine

subscriptions

Since 2003 the Liturgy Office has offered readers in the United Kingdom a one-stop subscription service for overseas English language liturgical publications. This facility helps subscribers avoid the difficulties and expense of paying the subscriptions in foreign currency.

Subscriptions for 2007 are now available. Full details are provided on the Liturgy Office website.

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 views expressed in *Liturgy Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Bishops' Conference.

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An encounter with the living Lord

Benedict XVI delivered the following homily on Sunday evening in the cathedral in Munich, during the celebration of Vespers attended by first communicants, young families, and pastoral and liturgical collaborators of the Church. [http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20060910_vespers-munich_en.html]

Dear First Communicants!

Dear Parents and Teachers!

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The reading we have just heard is from the final book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. The seer is helped to lift his eyes upward, toward heaven, and forward, toward the future. But in doing so, he speaks to us about earth, about the present, about our lives.

In the course of our lives, all of us are on a journey, we are travelling toward the future. Naturally, we want to find the right road: to find true life, and not a dead end or a desert. We don't want to end up saying: I took the wrong road, my life is a failure, it went wrong. We want to find joy in life; we want, in the words of Jesus, 'to have life in abundance.'

But let us listen to the seer of the Book of Revelation. What is he saying? He is talking about a reconciled world. A world in which people 'of every nation, race, people and tongue' have come together in joy. How can this happen? What road do we take to get there?

First and most important: these people are living with God; God himself has 'sheltered them in his tent', as the reading says. What do we mean by 'God's tent'? Where is it found? How do we get there?

The seer might be alluding to the first chapter of the Gospel according to John, where we read: 'The Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us'. God is not far from us, somewhere out in the universe, somewhere that none of us can go. He has pitched his tent among us: In Jesus he became one of us, flesh and blood just like us. This is his 'tent'.

And in the Ascension, he did not go somewhere far away from us. His tent, he himself in his Body, remains among us and is one of us. We can call him by name and speak at ease with him. He listens to us and, if we are attentive, we can also hear him speaking back.

Let me repeat: In Jesus, it is God who 'camps' in our midst. But let me also repeat: Where does this happen? Our reading gives us two answers to this question. It says that the men and women at peace 'have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'.

To us this sounds very strange. In his cryptic language, the seer is speaking about baptism. His words about 'the blood of the Lamb' allude to Jesus' love, which he continued to show even up to his violent death.

This love, both divine and human, is the bath into which he plunges us at baptism -- the bath with which he washes us, cleansing us so that we can be fit for God and capable of living in his company. The act of baptism, however, is just a beginning. By walking with Jesus, in faith and in our life in union with him, his love touches us, purifies us and enlightens us.

For the ancient world, white was the colour of light. The white robes mean that in faith we become light, we set aside darkness, falsehood and every sort of evil, and we become people of light, fit for God.

The baptismal gown, like your first-Communion robes, is meant to remind us of this, and to tell us: by living as one with Jesus and the community of believers, the Church, you have become a person of light, a person of truth and goodness — a person radiant with goodness, the goodness of God himself.

The second answer to the question: "Where do we find Jesus?" is also given by the seer in cryptic language. He tells us that the Lamb leads the great multitude of people from every culture and nation to the sources of living water.

Without water, there is no life. People who lived near the desert knew this well, and so springs of water became for them the symbol par excellence of life. The Lamb, Jesus, leads men and women to the sources of life. Among these sources of life are the sacred Scriptures, in which God speaks to us and teaches us the right way to live.

The true source is Jesus himself, in whom God gives us his very self. He does this above all in Holy Communion. There we can drink directly from the source of life: He comes to us and makes each of us one with him. We can see how true this is: Through the Eucharist, the sacrament of communion, a community is formed which spills over all borders and embraces all languages — the universal Church, in which God speaks to us and lives among us. This is how we should receive holy Communion: seeing it as an encounter with Jesus, an encounter with God himself, who leads us to the sources of true life.

Dear parents! I ask you to help your children to grow in faith, I ask you to accompany them on their journey toward holy Communion, on their journey toward Jesus and with Jesus. Please, go with your children to Church and take part in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration! You will see that this is not time lost; rather, it is

Concluded on Page 3.