

Recent liturgical documents

- CDW — GIRM published for study (2000)
- CDW — Fifth Instruction for the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council – *Liturgiam authenticam* (May 7, 2001)
- CDW — Editio typica of the new “*Martyrologium Romanum*” (October 2, 2001)
- CDW — Roman Missal, 3rd edition (including GIRM) (March 18, 2002)
- CDW — “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines” (April 9, 2002)
- John Paul II — Apostolic Letter in the form of “Motu proprio” *Misericordia Dei* (May 2, 2002)
- John Paul II — Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003)
- John Paul II — Chirograph for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini* On Sacred Music (December 3, 2003)
- John Paul II — *Spiritus et Sponsa*: on the 40th anniversary of the Constitution “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*” on the Sacred Liturgy (December 4, 2003)
- CDW — Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* on certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist (April 23, 2004)
- John Paul II — Apostolic Letter on Year of the Eucharist *Mane nobiscum Domine* (October 7, 2004)

Excerpts

Spiritus et Sponsa

1. In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the first fruit of the Second Vatican Council, that “great grace bestowed on the Church in the 20th century”, the Holy Spirit spoke to the Church, ceaselessly guiding the disciples of the Lord “into all the truth” (Jn 16: 13). The commemoration of the 40th anniversary of this event is a good opportunity to rediscover the basic themes of the liturgical renewal that the Council Fathers desired, to seek to evaluate their reception, as it were, and to cast a glance at the future.
2. With the passing of time and in the light of its fruits, the importance of Sacrosanctum Concilium has become increasingly clear. The Council brilliantly outlined in it the principles on which are based the liturgical practices of the Church and which inspire its healthy renewal in the course of time.
6. Forty years later, it is appropriate to review the ground covered. I have already suggested on former occasions a sort of examination of conscience concerning the reception given to the Second Vatican Council. Such an examination must also concern the liturgical and sacramental life. “Is the Liturgy lived as the “origin and summit” of ecclesial life, in accordance with the teaching of Sacrosanctum Concilium?”. Has the rediscovery of the value of the Word of God brought about by liturgical reform met with a positive confirmation in our celebrations? To what extent does the Liturgy affect the practice of the



faithful and does it mark the rhythm of the individual communities? Is it seen as a path of holiness, an inner force of apostolic dynamism and of the Church's missionary outreach?

Ecclesia de Eucharistia

10. Unfortunately, alongside these lights, there are also shadows. In some places the practice of Eucharistic adoration has been almost completely abandoned. In various parts of the Church abuses have occurred, leading to confusion with regard to sound faith and Catholic doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament. At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet. Furthermore, the necessity of the ministerial priesthood, grounded in apostolic succession, is at times obscured and the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is reduced to its mere effectiveness as a form of proclamation. This has led here and there to ecumenical initiatives which, albeit well-intentioned, indulge in Eucharistic practices contrary to the discipline by which the Church expresses her faith. How can we not express profound grief at all this? The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation.

Mane Nobiscum Dominum

17. The Eucharist is a great mystery! And it is one which above all must be well celebrated. Holy Mass needs to be set at the centre of the Christian life and celebrated in a dignified manner by every community, in accordance with established norms, with the participation of the assembly, with the presence of ministers who carry out their assigned tasks, and with a serious concern that singing and liturgical music be suitably "sacred". One specific project of this Year of the Eucharist might be for each parish community to study the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

20. May the Year of the Eucharist be for everyone a precious opportunity to grow in awareness of the incomparable treasure which Christ has entrusted to his Church. May it encourage a more lively and fervent celebration of the Eucharist, leading to a Christian life transformed by love.

...I do not ask, however, for anything extraordinary, but rather that every initiative be marked by a profound interiority. If the only result of this Year were the revival in all Christian communities of the celebration of Sunday Mass and an increase in Eucharistic worship outside Mass, this Year of grace would be abundantly successful. At the same time, it is good to aim high, and not to be content with mediocrity, since we know we can always count on God's help.

