



FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP...

NOTES FOR DECEMBER 2013

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The *Book of Blessings* and the Christmas Season

While the official liturgical season that is Christmas is relatively short, there are several liturgical blessings particular to the season that are good to recognize and celebrate. The *Book of Blessings* (*BB*) and *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* (*HB*) provide the content.

Blessing of Nativity: *BB*, chapter 48; *HB*, pg. 78—Probably the most obvious blessing is the blessing the nativity scene or manger, either at the parish or at home. Chapter 48 of *BB* provides the Order for blessing the nativity either in or out of Mass. It would seem to make sense that the nativity be blessed only once over the course of the Christmas liturgies, ideally at the first Mass of Christmas Eve or prior to it. However, it could also be revered with incense at any subsequent Christmas liturgies, perhaps during the incensing of the altar and cross at the Entrance.

The shorter form found in *BB* is the same as what is found in *HB* for blessing the home nativity.

Blessing of a Christmas Tree: *BB*, chapter 49; *HB*, pg. 78—Both *BB* and *HB* also provide a blessing for the Christmas tree (*BB*, chapter 49; *HB*, pg. 78). Trees set up in the church are not blessed in the context of Mass. At home or at church, the blessing may be celebrated during Liturgy of the Hours or a liturgy of the Word.

Blessing of Family: *BB*, chapter 1—The Feast of the Holy Family is an appropriate time to recognize the sacredness of the family and ask for God's special blessing upon them. *BB* chapter 1 (nos. 62-67) would be most useful for this.

Blessing of Homes During the Christmas Season: *BB*, chapter 50; *HB*, pg. 88—The Christmas season, and especially Epiphany, is a traditional time when homes are blessed. One could also easily incorporate the Epiphany custom of marking the doors of the home with the year and the initials of the Magi (which is also an abbreviation for "May Christ bless this house" in Latin): 20+C+B+M+14.

Texts for these blessings are also available online from the USCCB at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/blessings/objects/index.cfm>.

Our joyful contemplation of the mystery of Christmas should make us realize that, as God has become one of us, we too are called to become like God: humble, close to others, especially the poor, and ever attentive to their needs.—Pope Francis, General Audience, 18 December 2013

Upcoming Conferences



*Notre Dame Center for Liturgy 2014 Symposium:
Liturgy as Healing*
June 16-19, 2014
University of Notre Dame; Notre Dame, Indiana

In 2014, the focus of the Symposium is *Liturgy as Healing*, with particular attention dedicated to the rites of penance and the pastoral care of the sick. Topics to be addressed in general sessions, and their presenters, include:

- ✘ Jesus Christ as the Great Physician (Fr. John Behr, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary)
- ✘ Healing, Medicine, and Philosophy (John O'Callaghan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Jacques Maritain Center, University of Notre Dame)
- ✘ The History of the Rites of Healing (Anne McGowan, Teaching Scholar, Department of Theology, University of Notre Dame)
- ✘ The Healing Power of Beauty (Jennifer N. Martin, Visiting Assistant Professor, Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame)
- ✘ The Theology of Reconciliation (Fr. Emmanuel Katongole, Associate Professor, Department of Theology and Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame)

The registration fee for 2014 is \$260 prior to May 16 / \$280 after May 16 (Notre Dame Liturgy Network members pay a reduced fee of \$240/\$260), and includes entry into the sessions, participation in online pre-Symposium seminars, copies of materials, and meals while on campus.

Accommodations are not included in the registration fee. Options for housing range from residence hall accommodations to reservations in area hotels, including the newly renovated Morris Inn, located on campus, directly adjacent to the symposium venue.

Online registration will be available soon; or, if you do not have internet access, please contact us at 574.631.5436 for a mailed registration form.

Register 5 or more people together and receive a \$20 discount per participant! Registrations must be sent via mail or submitted online together to qualify for the discount. Additional registrations, sent at later dates, will not be eligible. If you are interested in the group registration, please contact Matt Miller in the Office of Worship.

Treasures of the Triduum: The Spirituality of Holy Week

January 31, 2014

The Liturgical Institute; University of Saint Mary of the Lake; Mundelein, Illinois

One of the Institute's most popular one-day workshops! Come for a day which unveils the rich theology of the apex of the Church's liturgical year. Perfect for preachers, RCIA leaders, liturgy directors, musicians and all who desire to enter more deeply into the heart of the Paschal Mystery.

For more information or to register, please call (847) 837-4542, or visit <http://www.usml.edu/the-liturgical-institute>.

USCCB Approves *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición*; Marriage and Confirmation Rites

The Latin Church Bishops of the USCCB approved three major liturgical texts at the November 2013 plenary meeting held in Baltimore, Maryland. The Spanish translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*—the *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición*—passed, and the Bishops approved the final translations of the *Order of Celebrating Marriage, Second Edition* (OCM) and *Order of Confirmation*, both prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). All three texts will now be sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the requisite confirmation.

Misal Romano, Tercera Edición

For the base text of the *Misal Romano*, the body of Bishops approved using the translation confirmed for the dioceses of Mexico. This translation will serve as a unifying text for Spanish-speaking Catholics in the United States. Because the base text has already been confirmed by the Holy See, it is hoped that a speedy confirmation will take place for the United States, with a goal toward implementation in the next 2-3 years.

In November 2011, the USCCB approved the Spanish translation of the proper texts and adaptations to the *Misal Romano* as well as a series of additional adaptations in Spanish: the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, proper liturgical texts for Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, the use of the Nativity proclamation (taken from the translation used for Spain), and a series of short pastoral biographies of the U.S. saints and blessed that match the style of those in the Mexican *Misal Romano*. Biographies for the Patronal Feasts appendix were approved as well.

Once the *recognitio* for the *Misal Romano* is received, the USCCB Committee for Divine Worship will help lead a catechetical effort among Hispanic Catholics to strengthen their understanding and appreciation of the Mass, and familiarize them with notable changes to the *Misal*, including the transition from “por todos los hombres” to “por muchos” in the formula of consecration of the wine. The USCCB’s website for Spanish-language catechesis on the Mass is www.USCCB.org/prayer-and-worship/la-santa-misa.

Order of Celebrating Marriage, Second Edition

The OCM was approved along with a change in the title from *Order of Celebrating Marriage* to *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. In the text, “Matrimony” is used to refer specifically to the sacrament, and “Marriage” to convey more broadly the married life or state or the marriage celebration itself. Thus, it was recommended that the title use “Matrimony” to highlight the book as a liturgical ritual (i.e., the Sacrament of Matrimony) for the beginning of a lifelong commitment of one man and one woman.

Some U.S. adaptations to the OCM were also approved. An English translation of two adaptations originally found in the *Ritual del Matrimonio*—the blessing and giving of arras (coins), and the blessing of the lazo or veil—were approved for placement in an appendix of the OCM. In addition, the Bishops approved an alternate form of the words of consent, as well as a rubric allowing for the option of praying the Nuptial Blessing after the Universal Prayer, instead of its current position after the Lord’s Prayer. Finally, the Bishops approved the optional inclusion of a Litany of the Saints that highlights saints and blessed who were married; this litany, when used, would begin the celebration of the marriage rite.

Please note—none of the approved adaptations mentioned above take effect until the respective revised ritual book is in official use. Watch for more details on catechetical efforts for the revisions and promulgation dates from the USCCB and the Office of Worship over the coming months.

Upcoming Holy Days of Obligation and Movable Feasts

Here are a few reminders of upcoming holy days and feasts in the Christmas season:

December 25—Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)—It is always a holy day of obligation!

January 1—Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord: Mary, the Holy Mother of God—It is a holy day of obligation in 2014. Please remind the people of this in the days leading up to the New Year.

The Diocese of Evansville is under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title “Mother of God.”

January 5—The Epiphany of the Lord—While the traditional date for this feast is January 6, in the United States it is moved to the Sunday between January 2 and January 8.

Please note—in the revised *Roman Missal*, there are proper prayers to be used for Vigil Masses of Epiphany celebrated on Saturday, January 4. The readings, however, remain the same for both days.

January 12—The Baptism of the Lord—This Feast, celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany, concludes the Christmas season.



As we look forward, O Lord,
to the coming festivities,
may we serve you all the more
eagerly
for knowing that in them
you make manifest the begin-
nings of our redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

- Prayer over the Offerings, Christmas (At the Vigil Mass)

Have a blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year!