

**SACRED TIME  
LITURGICAL YEAR  
AND  
CALENDAR**

Lit 010

*In the Light of Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Liturgical  
Documents*

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The work of a priest is in some way comparable to that of a general advocate. In order to be able to defend cases of politicians, business people, doctors or clergy, the lawyer needs to some extent, besides acquiring the requisite knowledge in law, to be familiar with the world of these different areas. Similarly a priest in the modern world is prepared to serve the needs of men and women in different fields, peasants as well as politicians, traders as well as teachers. Now, while lawyers may specialise so that one finds legal representatives specifically for copyright law or computer technology, priests do not generally do so, with the exception perhaps of a few areas such as prison and military chaplains or those trained to form other priests. Adequate seminary training therefore, aims at producing priests who are “all rounded”, and who can feel comfortable in the different sectors of the ever-changing society. In working towards this end, seminary authorities have introduced, among other things affiliation to universities, local or foreign. This has in turn led to overloading of the seminary syllabus, to the bewilderment of students who have to cover so much more, as well as traditional seminary staff who must compress so much academic material within the given time, while at the same time giving enough room to the necessary spiritual and moral formation of the seminarians. The result is that in spite of the seven years of post-college training – a period which is longer than most university degrees – the time in the major seminary is hardly enough to produce an academically “well-baked” priest, not mentioning the other aspects of a priest’s training which are in no way less important.

This booklet is one in a series that emerged in the course of liturgy lectures in St. Paul’s National Seminary, at the time of affiliation to external universities. The writer realised like other fellow lecturers, that it was almost impossible to cover the material taught before the affiliation, while at the same time giving due time to the new university program. On the other hand reducing the areas covered in liturgy would have meant

sending out priests who were ill-prepared for their ministry in that all-important aspect of a pastor's life. The alternative course of action would then be to cover less in class, while giving a future priest a package of ready reference in his pastoral activity.

The series therefore is a form of liturgical companion, written particularly with a pastoral orientation. It is written with the realisation that in the modern world of fast-moving technology the most important thing is not to know all that is necessary in one's area of work, for that is absolutely impossible. Rather, it is to know where to look for the answers in case of questions. For that reason, a lot of effort has been put in referring to the basic liturgical sources that are available to pastors.

Because it is a form of "liturgical companion" it renders itself beneficial also to those priests and other pastoral workers who are already in the field. The book is not a substitution for the actual rituals. That would be both unnecessary since such rituals are available and impossible since it would imply reproducing a great bulk of material. Rather, it is a parallel to the corresponding ritual. It helps the pastor to see the rationale behind the rubrics. It brings in focus the importance of the General Introduction, Instructions or Norms, relating them to other relevant liturgical sources as well as adapting them to the present situation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Still within the framework of an introduction to the liturgy it appears appropriate that, before delving into a study of the different sacraments and sacramentals a study of time and the liturgical year should be made. This is in order to provide a framework in which an organised liturgical study can be made.

A question may also arise in the mind of the reader: why place together the four topics: Time, the Liturgical Year, the Calendar and the Lectionary. This is because they all a common factor that makes them linked. In one way they all concern the organisation of worship time. The liturgical year concerns the range of regular liturgical activities within a year. The calendar in about the organisation of these activities within a particular year. Thus whereas one can say that each year there are four liturgical seasons one can say that this particular year 2000 the Church celebrates the Millennium jubilee. The former is in reference to the liturgical year while the latter to the calendar. The Lectionary is the orderly selection and arrangement of readings for celebration of the word of God in the liturgical year.

Another topic which properly belongs to this section is the Liturgy of the Hours. Indeed in many books on the liturgy the Liturgy of the Hours is treated in close connection with the Sacred Time, for the Liturgy of the Hours is concerned with organisation of time of liturgical celebration. But in this manual the study of the Liturgy of the Hours is relegated to the fourth year of theology. It is assumed that at that stage the students have been ordained deacons, and given the mandate to celebrate the Church's prayer on behalf of God's people. While this mandate is recently received, and while each student has the Breviary, it is more meaningful to study the meaning of this obligation with the text in hand. Moreover the study of the Liturgy of the Hours would be too extensive to be included in the introductory topics.

Since each of the four topics in some way is a form of organisation of time for celebration, Time forms a matrix for the other three. For this reason it is considered first.

## **SACRED TIME**

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### MEANING OF TIME IN ORDINARY USAGE

We are all familiar with expressions such as "what time is it?", "don't waste my time", "time is money", "time wasted never returns", "till the end of time". Thus without perhaps being able to define precisely what "time" is, we all have a fairly clear understanding of time in the ordinary sense.

Time in the first place is understood as duration. When we talk of the "passing of time" we really mean the duration of events, for time is recognised by the events.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who has travelled by sea or by plane understands that on an open sea with no land in view or in the air with no clouds close by one may get the impression that the ship or the plane has stopped moving. One of course

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<sup>1</sup> This is the sense in which the book of Ecclesiastes describes time: in relation to events: "there is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven: a time for giving birth, a time for dying; a time for planting, a time for uprooting what has been planted..." Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8.



may know (for instance by looking at the computer screen) that one is travelling at 900 km an hour, but this is not sensed. On the other hand when the plane touches the runway it gives the impression of moving at a terrific speed, because of the objects around it that it passes by, even though it may have slowed down at a speed of about 170 km an hour. In the same way as speed is sensed by the still objects by which someone passes, so also time is sensed by the duration of events. An absorbing activity or a joyful one gives the impression that time has passed too quickly. On the other hand painful or sorrowful events give the impression of time passing too slowly. The same can be said to the experience of waiting: it gives the impression that time is dragging even if we know that the tick of the clock is always regular. Deep sleep, comas or any form of unconsciousness give the impression of time having stopped, however prolonged the period of the blackout may be. It is simply that one is not aware of the duration of events.

We also understand and calculate time in terms of set measures. This is what we have in mind when we ask others what time it is. We talk of hours, minutes and seconds; of days, months and years, as is indicated in the civil calendar. We talk of epochs, generations, eras and centuries as in the reckoning of history. We talk of aeons, millennia, millions and even billions of years as when we think in terms of geological time.

Time is established in nature by cosmic activity. The revolution of the earth around the sun sets the year with its changing seasons, while the revolution of the moon around the earth marks the months with their different phases of lunation. The rotation of the earth on its axis demarcates the day in its two major divisions of night and day; as well as the minor but recognisable changes of dawn, morning, midday, evening, and so on.

This cosmic demarcation of time forms the basis upon which human activity is organised and oriented. We mark the year on a civil calendar, giving it a specific number of days and isolating one in every four years as the leap year. We mark the months with set days, dividing the lunation into weeks. We mark the days with a specific number of hours in spite of the changing seasons and the corresponding change of the length of night and day. We further divide the day into hours of equal length, subdivided into minutes, seconds, etc.

Since the human life span is limited we can only do so much within the time of our life. That is why time is precious, not to be wasted. We value time. Life must be accomplished within a specific amount of time. Biologically living things are born, mature and grow within a specific amount of time, during which they accomplish the reason why they were created. Demographically,

societies develop and with the passing of time. Spiritually, time is an opportunity to develop and mature in faith and love. Time can be wasted, lost, abused or profitably used.

This leads to the conclusion that it is important to “organise time”, or more properly, to organise human activity. Mankind is naturally fickle, and he is often swayed by moods, feelings, etc. organisation of time helps to check that indiscipline. In particular communal activity requires use of organised time. We need appointments, timetables, schedules, and deadlines.

### TIME IN THE RELIGIOUS SENSE

In the first place we need to acknowledge that God, who is eternal and timeless, is at the same time the source and creator of time, just as he is the source of everything else. He created and set in motion all the heavenly bodies that mark the seasons, lunation and the changes of day and night.<sup>2</sup> Many religions base their patterns of worship on the natural changes of time. For example the Jews observed the Sabbath as a day of prayer and rest, because “on the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he had rested after all his work of creating.” (Genesis 2: 1-2). Christians replaced the Sabbath with the Sunday, the Lord’s day of resurrection; of recreating human nature that had fallen into the slavery of sin.

Time in the religious sense is also seen against the background of eternity, of God’s overall plan of salvation. Creation and history are moving towards a definite goal, the Lord’s day, the Last Day. In that sense time is only a phase of the whole of reality, man’s destiny is eternity. We are destined to enter the reality of him to whom “a thousand years are like one day, come and gone. Each individual’s appointed time is the period between their birth and death. Within this time they must co-operate with God’s plan of salvation for them to accomplish their destiny. This life span comes only once and it must not be wasted. Time is not just money, time is life; time is *eternal* life.

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<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1: 14-16: “And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights -- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night -- and the stars.”

## TIME IN THE LITURGICAL SENSE

We have already seen how important it is to organise time for any meaningful social activity. Schools have academic years, semesters, terms, examination periods, and holidays. The world of economics has financial years, budgets and balance sheets. Worship too which is essentially a communal activity organises its time. This it does not only on God's creation of the natural or "civil" year; but also on his activities of salvation. The central event in the history of salvation is of course the Paschal Mystery. But in the liturgical year this is extended to include the incarnation, the period of Christ's ministry, the period after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

All this comes to a division of liturgical time into the bigger sections of a liturgical cycles, (e.g. the cycles of A, B, C, for Sundays and I and II for Weekdays and liturgical years. The year is further divided into liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Eastertide and Ordinary Time. There is the liturgical week that has Sunday as its hinge. The week is further divided into the liturgical day, which ordinarily corresponds to the civil day - from midnight to midnight. The exception is Sundays and solemnities that begin from evening to evening. The day is further divided into particular periods celebrated in worship in the Liturgy of the hours. The key hours are morning and evening, with the minor periods of dawn, midday and night. The whole liturgical year is marked with some special celebrations of important occasions graded into solemnities, feasts and memorials.

### *Factors that affect organisation of liturgical Time*

#### Conflicts between civil time and liturgical time

Anyone who has tried to work in an orderly and organised way using timetables and schedules knows too well that often it is not possible to follow one's programme to the letter. There are often interruptions, some foreseen and others not. This is particularly true of pastoral work due to the various unforeseen circumstances. In the first place one can think of Sunday which from the liturgical perspective is a day reserved for prayer and rest. From the secular perspective Sunday has become in places the preferred day of recreation. Overnight weekend discos as well as weddings usually take place on Saturday such that the next day people do not have the obligation to go to work and so can stay long in bed. Other working conditions are such that people must continue working on Sunday. To insist on the Sunday obligation is to create a certain amount of anxiety to those who are conscientious and wish to fulfil their religious duty, but at the same time meet the demands of working

conditions. Others have such a busy week, waking up very early in the morning, so that they look to Sunday as an opportunity to sleep in, to take a well-earned weekend rest. The Church, in order to retain the dignity of Sunday as a day of prayer and rest, as well as to respond to the needs of the modern world, has established the possibility of shifting the Sunday obligation of attending a Eucharistic service on the evening of Saturday. This obligation does not apply to the rest and spiritual nourishment. The faithful must still be encouraged to use Sunday as much as possible as a time to regain strength to face the coming week, as well as an opportunity to give greater time for their spiritual needs.

Another area in which conflict usually occurs between the arrangement of the liturgical year and the civil calendar is the celebration of solemnities that do occur during working days. Many of these may not be national days of rest. The Church is therefore restrained either not to declare them days of obligation, or to shift them to a nearby Sunday, so that as many of the faithful as possible can attend them.

Those Christian denominations that celebrate Christmas in commemoration of the Incarnation face the difficulty of this solemnity having become too secularised and commercialised, to the extent of diminishing its religious sense for many people. For many Christmas is a time for great amusement. For others it is an opportunity to sell their goods. Yet for other it is the time for family reunions and celebration. As a result some Christian sects dissociate themselves from it, considering it a pagan practice, particularly in reference to its historical origins.

### *Change of social and cultural practices*

Another factor is the ever-continuing change in social and cultural behaviour of people. This is evident for instance in reference to the practice of celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours by the people. In the early period of the practice of celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, there were too main groups in which they were celebrated. The monastic communities could afford to gather and celebrate the different hours as part of the rhythm of their daily activity. Cathedral communities too gathered around the bishop to celebrate at least the major Hours of the day. This was possible partly because such communities were relatively smaller, partly because life was simpler. Today it is hardly realistic to expect the average working person to be able to integrate the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours on communal basis in their daily activity.

### *Difficulties due to Environment*

Other factors that affect the smooth following the Liturgical calendar in the Church's celebration include the poverty of the people which makes it difficult for them to have regular accessibility to the places of worship. This may even be aggravated by bad roads and bad weather. At the same time in many places the ministers are too few to attend to all the liturgical needs of the people under their care in scheduled times.

## **THE LITURGICAL YEAR<sup>3</sup>**

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*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 102-111; 131.

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<sup>3</sup> adaptation and revision of the liturgical year: SC 107-111; IRL 60 nature of the liturgical year SC 102; GNLY 1-2, 17-44; LMT 46-48; PS 2; GMEF 2, 9.

Congregation for Divine Worship, "Paschale Solemnitatis (Circular Letter On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts - 1998)", in *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource*, ed. Lysik A. David, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999. Pp. 51-80.

"We Follow the Life of Christ in the Liturgical Year" in Joseph Bragotti & others eds., *We Pray and Sing to the Lord*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991. Pp. 78-123.

The liturgical calendar is the basis and structure on which the liturgy of the Eucharist and hours are celebrated. The basic mystery celebrated during the liturgical year is Christ's saving work, or as commonly called, the Paschal Mystery.<sup>4</sup> It is celebrated once each week on what in the course of Church history came to be called the Lord's Day: i.e. the day of the Lord's resurrection. The same even is celebrated in a more solemn manner once a year on Easter. It is then celebrated throughout the year in the seasons that unfold his salvific work: namely the incarnation and his childhood, his evangelisation, his passion death and resurrection as well as the Church's awaiting of his return. Even the memorials of saints in a way celebrate the paschal mystery, for their feasts proclaim Christ's work in their individual lives. Their life and death is a renewed realisation of the paschal mystery of the head, Christ, in the body, the Church. Nonetheless, the number of the saints celebrated in the liturgical year must be limited in order not to overshadow the Paschal Mystery.

The aim of celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the different events of the liturgical year is our salvation. The past is brought to the present in order that souls may be oriented to the future.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul VI, **Motu Proprio**, *Mysterii Paschalis*, (approving the general norms for the Liturgical Year and the New General Roman Calendar, 14 Feb, 1966). DOL 440, pp. 152, no. 3754.

Whether we are nourished by word and Eucharist in the daily celebration or through works of penance carried out in the penitential seasons, or any other liturgical celebration, or even through accepted devotional practices<sup>5</sup>; ultimately the liturgy is oriented to our salvation.

## LITURGICAL DAYS

The liturgical day runs from midnight to midnight, but the observance of Sunday and solemnities begins with the evening of the preceding day<sup>6</sup>. Ideally every day of our life should be sanctified. It should count from the point of view of God. Liturgically we sanctify the day through the celebration of the Eucharist, through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours and through any other liturgical celebrations and devotional practices. We also sanctify it in our daily activities through putting into practice what we have celebrated in the liturgy.

In the following paragraphs we examine the different liturgical days, beginning with the most important, the Sunday.

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<sup>5</sup> GNLY, no. 2, SC 102-105.

<sup>6</sup> GNLY, 3.



## *Sunday*<sup>7</sup>

Sunday commemorates the day of the Resurrection of the Lord. It has been kept since apostolic times.<sup>8</sup> For Christians Sunday replaced the Jewish Sabbath both as a day of prayer and as one of rest from servile and hard work. It is thus a day that God has given for regain both physical and spiritual strength.

As regards its rank in the calendar, the Sunday gives way only to solemnities and feasts of the Lord.<sup>9</sup> And this is conditional too. It does not give way if it is a Sunday in the major seasons of Advent, Lent and Easter. No feast is to be permanently assigned on a Sunday apart from the following: the feast of the Holy family on the Sunday in the octave of Christmas, the Sunday of

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<sup>7</sup> "The Third Commandment." In *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pp. 508-513. (for a the meaning of the Sunday. Also gives abundant scriptural references). John Paul II, "Die Domini (Apostolic Letter On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy - 1998)", in *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource, vol. II* ed. Lysik A. David, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999. Pp. 1-50. Further studies on Sunday: importance of Sunday rest: SC 131; DD 4, 8, 11-17, 61, 64-68. Sunday and people with disabilities: DD 54. Relationship of Sunday to Easter GNLY 1, 4, DD 1-3, 8, 19-20, 32-33; PS 11, 23, 28-34, 101. Relationship to Jewish Sabbath DD 11-18, 23-26, 59-63. Sunday as an obligation: SC 106, DD 46-49; DE 115. Various meanings of Sunday: SC 42, 49, 106; GIRM 75; GNLY 4-7; CB 228; DD 27-58, 69-85.

<sup>8</sup> SC, 106. By a tradition handed down from the apostles and having its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, which, with good reason, bears the name of the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful must gather together so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection, and the glorification of the Lord Jesus and may thank God, who "has begotten them again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pt 1:3). Hence the Lord's Day is the first holy day of all and should be proposed to the devotion of the faithful and taught to them in such a way that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work.

<sup>9</sup> GNLY, 5.

the Baptism of the Lord which is the Sunday after 6<sup>th</sup> January<sup>10</sup>, Pentecost Sunday, the Sunday of the solemnity of the Holy Trinity (Sunday after Pentecost, and the Last Sunday in Ordinary time which is the solemnity of Christ the King. Other exceptions - in regions where they are not days of obligation - are Epiphany (Sunday falling between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January), Corpus Christi (assigned to the second Sunday after Pentecost). The reason is that then people are given a chance to attend these occasions.

With permission it is possible for a certain church or region to celebrate the Sunday liturgy on the evening of the preceding Saturday<sup>11</sup>.

### *Solemnities, Feast days and Memorials<sup>12</sup>*

Solemnities are counted as the principal days in the calendar and their observance begins with evening prayer I of the preceding day. Some also have their own vigil Mass for use when Mass is celebrated in the evening of the preceding day.<sup>13</sup> Solemnities also vary in rank. The solemnities of Easter and Christmas are celebrated with an octave following the actual day of the solemnity. For the other ranks in solemnities see the table below.

Lower in rank than solemnities are feasts.<sup>14</sup> Feasts are celebrated within the limits of the natural day and accordingly do not have evening prayer I. Exceptions are feasts of the Lord that fall on a Sunday in Ordinary Time and in the Christmas season and that

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<sup>10</sup> See SCSDW, **Decree**, *Celebration Baptismatis Domini*, on the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, 7 Oct 1977. DOL 461, pp. 1192ff.

<sup>11</sup> SCR, “*Eucharisticum mysterium*, (Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery 25 May 1967)”, no. 28.

<sup>12</sup> GNLY, 8-15.

<sup>13</sup> GNLY, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Note that sometimes solemnities are loosely referred to as feasts, as in the expression “Sunday and Feast Days”.

replace the Sunday office.<sup>15</sup> (Because these replace the Sunday liturgy which has evening prayer I)

Memorials are either obligatory or optional.<sup>16</sup> Their observance is integrated into the celebration of the occurring weekday in accord with the norms set forth in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the Liturgy of the Hours. Obligatory memorials occurring on Lenten weekdays may only be celebrated as optional memorials. Should more than one optional memorial fall on the same day, only one may be celebrated; the others are omitted. On Saturdays in Ordinary Time when there is no obligatory memorial, an optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary is allowed.

### *Weekdays*

The days following Sunday are called weekdays. They are celebrated in different ways according to the importance each one has. There are weekdays that have precedence over all other celebrations. These are Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week, from Monday to Thursday inclusive. There are also weekdays that have precedence over only the obligatory memorials. These are the weekdays of Advent from 17 December to 24 December inclusive and all the weekdays of Lent. All other weekdays give way to solemnities and feasts and are combined with memorials. They may be combined with obligatory memorials. Details of such combination can be obtained in the Ordo.<sup>17</sup> These weekdays are at the same level as optional memorials. That means that one is at liberty either to celebrate the Mass of the weekday or that of the optional memorial.

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<sup>15</sup> GNLY, 13.

<sup>16</sup> GIRM 316, 333-334; GNLY 8-15.

<sup>17</sup> For instance where the euchological texts are proper to the feast while the readings are of the day. In that manner the continuous reading of the biblical texts is preserved while the memorial is celebrated.

### *Rogation and Ember Days*<sup>18</sup>

On rogation and ember days the Church prays for local needs such as productivity of the land, productivity of human labour and public thanksgiving. The Episcopal Conferences have the prerogative to adapt rogation and ember days to local needs. They arrange the time and the plan of their celebration. On each of these days a suitable Mass from Masses for various needs can be used.

### *Days of Penance*<sup>19</sup>

There are also days of penance for the universal Church. Every Friday in the whole year is designated as a day of penance. In a special way Fridays during Lent are given greater emphasis, so that if one does not keep the penance during the rest of the year, at least they should make some effort during this period. Prominent among the Fridays of Penance are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

On such days of penance one may abstain either from meat, or from another food as determined by the Episcopal Conference. One may also deny the self by fulfilling more diligently and faithfully one's duties. Abstinence may also be in the form of reduction in the daily quantity of food. The day is also profitably used by a more intensive dedication to prayer and to works of charity. In this way fasting and abstinence serve like spiritual "jogging" to build the spiritual "muscle" necessary in the combat against weakness, trials and temptations. Some people fast in order to trim their bodies of excessive weight and flesh, and to give them agility and beauty. They are willing to deny themselves because of a beauty that lasts only a few years. It is only more fitting if others fast in order to trim their souls of excessive desires, and to give them spiritual agility which is greater self-control.

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<sup>18</sup> See Daniel P. Grigass, "Penitential Days", *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, pp. 939-941.

<sup>19</sup> can. 1249-1253

### *Days of Obligation*<sup>20</sup>

The days of obligation in the universal calendar are All Sundays of the year,<sup>21</sup> Nativity of our Lord (Christmas), Epiphany, Ascension, Feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord, Mary Mother of God, Immaculate Conception, Assumption, St Joseph Husband of Mary, saints Peter and Paul and All Saints' Day. The obligation consists in attending Mass on those days, Refraining from work which impedes worship, inhibits joy that is proper to the feast and inhibits due relaxation of mind and body. On days of obligation it is also recommended to carry out activities that nourish the soul such as prayer, spiritual reading and acts of mercy. Jesus frequently healed on the Sabbath to the chagrin of his enemies for it is not against the law to do good on this day. Bishops' Conferences have the prerogative to suppress or transfer a day of obligation with approval of the Holy See.

### LITURGICAL SEASONS

As an overall plan of the yearly cycle, the whole mystery of Christ from incarnation to Pentecost is celebrated<sup>22</sup>. Besides what came before and after this period of his salvific mission is also included. That is the Israel's waiting of his first coming as well as the waiting of his Second Coming in which the Church is at the moment. The celebration of this Paschal mystery includes the reflection on what it means for us today. This overall plan is cut down and lived in stages or seasons of the Church year namely, Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas and Ordinary Time.

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<sup>20</sup> Can. 1246

<sup>21</sup>Easter Sunday and Pentecost are included in 'all Sundays of the year.'

<sup>22</sup> GNLV, 7; SC, 102.

## THE SEASON OF LENT<sup>23</sup>

In the last stage of seminary formation a seminarian is quite familiar with the celebration of Lent, for it is customary for seminaries to remain open during the celebration of the Easter events. This is to give them a practical training for the ministry with regard to this most important season of the liturgical year. Everyone is acquainted with Lent as a period of fasting, almsgiving, penance and the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation<sup>24</sup> and intensive prayer and also as a period in which we refrain from some liturgical practices such as the singing of the Alleluia<sup>25</sup>, the singing of the Gloria,<sup>26</sup> the use of festive songs and decoration with flowers around the altar.<sup>27</sup> For the sake of giving a complete picture many of these familiar elements will feature again in this study.

Even what is familiar is studied because the future pastor must guide the faithful with full confidence. He should know that these practices are not obvious to all. Some of the faithful were not born in a Catholic family. Some grew up not practising their faith. Others have always done things without questioning why. As a result much of the Lenten liturgy may not be comprehensible to all.

One needs a thorough knowledge of the Lenten season also to forestall the present-day laxity on the celebration of the Triduum. There are places where the concept of the Easter Vigil is almost forgotten. The result is that it is celebrated like an ordinary Saturday evening Mass. There is also where the Triduum celebrations are not held in the usual times. Some of the reasons advanced may be inadequate such as convenience of the people.

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<sup>23</sup> Character of Lent SC 109-119; GNLY 24-31; CB 249; liturgies of Lent GIRM 308; LM 97-98; CB 260; PS 6-26; GILH 130, 133, 150; Lent and the sacrament of reconciliation CB 253.

<sup>24</sup> PS 14

<sup>25</sup> PS 18, GNLY 28.

<sup>26</sup> PS 17, CB 252.

<sup>27</sup> PS, 17

The same people often find time to celebrate night vigils for more profane activities.

The Easter Triduum is the central event upon which all Lent moves. It is central in the first place as the celebration of the main events of our salvation. We recall Christ's passion, death and resurrection; that triple even which is the complete ransom for our salvation. Secondly we focus on the Triduum as the source of power of the sacraments and sacramentals. In baptism we die with him to sin to become children of God. In confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit promised after Christ's departure.<sup>28</sup> In the Eucharist recall his words "this is my body which will be given up for you...this is my blood the blood of the new and everlasting covenant..." In penance we receive forgiveness for which he surrendered to death. In anointing the sick are assured of eternal life in him who died and rose. In holy Orders week mortals transmit the power of the risen Christ to others. In matrimony the couple reflects the total self-giving love of Christ for his Church, for there is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friends. In Christian burial the dead are given hope of sharing the life of the Risen. In consecration people surrender life to him who lay his down to take it up again.

The Easter Triduum is central also as the foundation of the liturgical year whose original feast is the resurrection. This resurrection is celebrated each week on Sunday.<sup>29</sup> It is also celebrated each year on Easter. From this all other feasts and seasons grow.

Because the Easter Triduum is the focal point of Lent many liturgists writing about the season of Lent begin with the

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<sup>28</sup> Unless I go you cannot receive the promised Helper.

<sup>29</sup> PS 2.

Triduum.<sup>30</sup> For pedagogical reasons here the season is studied chronologically, from Ash Wednesday to the Easter Triduum.

### *The season of Lent in general*

The season of Lent runs from Ash Wednesday<sup>31</sup> to the Mass of the Lord's supper inclusive. The season has a double character<sup>32</sup>, namely to prepare both catechumens and faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. The catechumens both with the rite of election and scrutinies, and by catechesis are prepared for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation. The faithful, ever more attentive to the Word of God and prayer, prepare themselves by fasting, penance and almsgiving, for the renewal of their baptismal promises. During Lent devotional exercises that harmonise with the liturgy of the season such as the Way of the Cross should be encouraged.

### *Lent as a Period of Christian Initiation*

The whole rite of Christian initiation has a markedly paschal character, since it is therein that the sacramental participation in the death and resurrection of Christ takes place for the first time. Therefore Lent should have its full character as a time of purification and enlightenment, especially through the scrutinies and by the presentations. Naturally the Paschal Vigil should be regarded as the proper time to celebrate the sacraments of initiation.

Communities that do not have any catechumens should not however fail to pray for those who in the forthcoming Paschal Vigil will receive the sacraments of Christian initiation.

In Lent there should be catechesis for those adults who, although baptised as infants, were not brought up in the faith and

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<sup>30</sup> This is the approach adapted for instance in the General Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar.

<sup>31</sup> GNLY 16, 28-29; CB 253; PS 21-22.

<sup>32</sup> PS 6.



consequently have not been confirmed nor have they received the Eucharist. During this period non-sacramental penitential celebrations should be arranged to help prepare them for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Lenten season is also an appropriate time for the celebration of penitential rites on the model of the scrutinies for unbaptised children, who are at an age to be catechised, and also for children already baptised, before being admitted to the sacrament of penance.

### *Lent as Renewal of Christian Life for the Faithful*

The catechesis on the Paschal Mystery and the sacraments should be given a special place in the Sunday homilies. The text of the Lectionary should be carefully explained, particularly the passages of the gospel which illustrate the diverse aspects of baptism and of the other sacraments, and of the mercy of God.

Pastors should frequently and as fully as possible explain the word of God, in homilies on weekdays, in celebrations of the word of God, in penitential celebrations, in various reunions, in visiting families or on the occasion of blessing of families. The faithful should try to attend weekday Mass, and where this is not possible they should at least be encouraged to read the lessons, either with their family or in private.

As regards catechesis, it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful not only the social consequences of sin but also that aspect of the virtue of penance, which involves the detestation of sin as an offence against God.

### ASH WEDNESDAY<sup>33</sup>

On Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent, the faithful receive the ashes, thus entering into the time established for the purification of their souls. This sign of penance, a traditionally

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<sup>33</sup> PS 21-23, CB 253-259.

biblical one,<sup>34</sup> has been preserved among the Church's customs until the present day. It signifies the human condition of the sinner, who seeks to express his guilt before the Lord in an exterior manner, and by so doing express his interior conversion, led on by the confident hope that the Lord will be merciful. This same sign marks the beginning of the way of conversion, which is developed through the celebration of the sacrament of penance during the days before Easter.

The significance of the ashes is further suggested by the formulas used in the smearing of the ashes. There are two formulas. One states that "remember man that you are dust and unto dust you shall return." This is an allusion to Genesis where we are told that from the dust of the earth God created the first man. Scientifically the material that one finds in the human body is the same material which one finds elsewhere in the world; in the animals, birds, plants, dust and stones, lakes and air. The difference is the arrangement. And it is equally true that when we die and the body decomposes we return to dust. The material is broken down again to feed worms and to manure the ground. The grim reminder on Ash Wednesday is to recall our attention to the fact that we shall one day die, that we must understand the relative importance of all material things and that we must pay attention to things of lasting importance.

The other formula used with the smearing of the ashes is "repent and believe the gospel." This formula reminds us of what we hear in the book of Jonah. The prophet Jonah was sent to Nineveh to preach repentance. As a sign of the readiness for repentance the people were smeared with ashes and wore sack cloth. We too are called to repentance in this season of grace, and we show our readiness for it by this sign of humility. Everyone, however dignified or beautiful, is smeared with ashes in the most conspicuous part of their bodies: the foreheads. The blessing and imposition of ashes should take place either in the Mass or

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<sup>34</sup> 2 Samuel 13:19; Esther 4:1; Job 42:6; 1 Maccabees 3:47, 4:39; Lamentations 2:10.

outside of the Mass. In the latter case it is to be part of a Liturgy of the Word and conclude with the prayer of the faithful.

The smearing of ashes is only a symbol. But more important is that Ash Wednesday is one of the set days for penance in the Roman Rite. Abstinence (which is the foregoing out of religious reasons, of what one likes and what is not forbidden) and fasting (which is the reduction or skipping of some food or of a meal) are observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All who have reached the age of 14 are bound by the law of abstinence. Others may be dispensed out of medical reasons or by old age. A good Christian seeks to see the meaning behind the law: fasting and abstinence help us to build our spiritual muscle: to gain resistance against the evil one and to control our appetites. The law is the minimum which the Church puts in place.

The practice of giving ashes was at first used in the Mosarabic rite (in Spain) and in the Gallican rite (in France) where it was connected to the entrance into the Order of Penitents. At first it was not related to Lent. However, with time the practices once reserved for serious public sinners became standard for all the faithful. In 1091 Pope Urban II ordered the imposition of ashes on the heads of all the faithful (for we are all sinners). Then the reception of ashes became mandatory and the Wednesday preceding the first Sunday of Lent came to be called Ash Wednesday.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See also can. 1251.

*The Liturgy of the Word*

*Euchological Texts*

*Resolutions for Lent*

SUNDAYS OF LENT (EXCLUDING PALM SUNDAY)

Lent have five Sundays excluding Holy Week Sundays (Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday). These Sundays take precedence over all feasts and solemnities. Solemnities occurring on these Sundays are observed on the preceding Saturday.<sup>36</sup> Occasionally they are transferred to the following Monday.<sup>37</sup>

The first Sunday is for many of the faithful who are unable to attend Ash Wednesday the beginning of the Lenten season.<sup>38</sup> For this reason it is practical in parishes to continue giving ashes on this Sunday. For the catechumens the ceremonies of Presentation<sup>39</sup> and election<sup>40</sup> take place. This is done preferably by the bishop.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> GNLY 5, PS 56ff.

<sup>37</sup> E.g. solemnity of St. Joseph Husband of Mary of the year 2000.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Roman Missal, first Sunday of Lent, opening prayer and prayer over the gifts.

<sup>39</sup> The Candidates are summoned by name. Each comes forward accompanied by his godparent. The celebrant enquires if they are ready for the sacraments: have they listened to the word of God, sought to follow it in their lives, associated with their brothers and sisters in prayer? The godparents, before God, reply in the affirmative. The celebrant then asks the candidates if they wish to receive the sacraments. On their replying in the affirmative, they are asked to give their names for enrolment. While this process is being gone through, Ps 15, for example, may be sung.

<sup>40</sup> The celebrant explains briefly what has been done, and then informs the candidates that they have been chosen for initiation.

<sup>41</sup> PS 23, CB 408-410.

The second Sunday is uneventful although more will be said about it when considering the Lectionary. On the third Sunday the first Scrutiny takes place. After the homily the elect and their godparents come before the celebrant. He invites all to pray in silence, and the elect to show their spirit of repentance by bowing or kneeling. A solemn intercessory prayer for the elect follows. After the prayer follows the rite of exorcism. The celebrant turns to the elect and says a prayer followed by the laying on of hands and then the prayer of exorcism. The celebrant then dismisses the elect. The second and third scrutiny take place on the fourth and fifth Sunday of Lent respectively.

The fourth Sunday of Lent is referred to as Laetare Sunday, it is a celebration of Christian joy even in the middle of self denial, for self denial leads to self mastery and victory. On this Sunday musical instruments may be played.<sup>42</sup>

#### PALM SUNDAY<sup>43</sup>

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. On it Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem is celebrated. Traditionally this entry is celebrated with a procession. In a parish community where several Masses are celebrated on Sunday the procession is to be celebrated only once in the Mass that is attended most. During this Mass the Passion is also read. The celebrant is urged to explain the connection between the triumph and the passion of the Lord. During the proclamation of the Passion the following should be omitted: candles, the use of incense, the greeting, the sign of the cross; thus giving the passion an appropriate austere mood. A deacon who reads the passion asks for a blessing as he does in the reading of any other gospel during the liturgy. Normally the passion should be proclaimed in full for the spiritual good of the people. After this proclamation a homily should be given.

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<sup>42</sup> PS, 25.

<sup>43</sup> GNLY 30-31; CB 263; PS 28-34.

## HOLY WEEK

During Holy Week the Church celebrates the mysteries of salvation accomplished by Christ. More specifically it celebrates the last week of Christ's earthly life. On the days of Holy Week from Monday to Thursday inclusive the final preparations for the Easter Triduum may be performed. These include penitential services, singing practices, making ready for the reception of new oils, preparation of the Easter Candle, rehearsals for the Way of the Cross, preparation of the Exultet, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, preparation of the Altar of Repose, etc.

## CHRISM MASS<sup>44</sup>

This Mass, which the bishop concelebrates with his college of presbyters and at which he consecrates the holy Chrism and blesses the other oils, manifests the communion of the presbyters with their bishop. Other priests who are working or living in the diocese, but who do not belong to the diocese, join the diocesan bishop at this Mass. Priests who take part but for some reason do not concelebrate may receive communion under both kinds. The Mass commemorates the institution of the sacrament of Orders that Christ performed at the Last Supper. However, for pastoral reasons it is celebrated separately from the evening Mass of the Last Supper.

### *Meaning and Use of the Oils*

The Christian liturgy has adopted the Old Testament usage of anointing kings, priests, and prophets with consecratory oil because they prefigured Christ, whose name means "the anointed of the Lord." The Chrism is a sign that Christians, incorporated by baptism into the paschal mystery of Christ, dying, buried, and rising with him, are sharers in his kingly and prophetic

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<sup>44</sup> Ceremonial of Bishops, 274-294. Roman Missal, Chrism Mass; Roman Pontifical: Rite of Blessing of Oils and Chrism.

priesthood and that by confirmation they receive the spiritual anointing of the Spirit who is given to them. Therefore it is consecrated by the bishop and used to anoint the newly baptised, to seal the candidates for confirmation, and to anoint the hands of presbyters and the heads of bishops at their ordination. It is also used in the rites of anointing pertaining to the dedication of churches and altars.

The oil of catechumens is used in the preparation of the catechumens for their baptism. it extends the effects of the baptismal exorcism: it strengthens the candidates with the power to renounce the devil and sin before they go to the font of life for rebirth.

The oil of the sick, for the use of which James is the witness,<sup>45</sup> provides the sick with a remedy for both spiritual and bodily illness, so that they may have strength to bear up under evil and obtain pardon for their sins.

#### *Time and place of celebration*

If it is difficult for the clergy and the people to assemble with the bishop on Holy Thursday morning, the blessing may be held on an earlier day, near Easter, with the celebration of the proper Chrism Mass. This is particularly the case where priests who come from the different parts of the diocese must rush back to be in time to celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. Some cannot possibly make it due to long distances, and, in some areas, due to the difficulty of the means of transport.

Because of its meaning and pastoral importance in the life of the diocese, the Chrism Mass should be celebrated in the cathedral church or, for pastoral reasons, in another church.

According to the tradition of the Latin liturgy, the blessing of the oil of the sick takes place before the end of the Eucharistic prayer; the blessing of the oil of catechumens and the

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<sup>45</sup> James 5:14

consecration of the Chrism, after communion. For pastoral reasons, however, the entire rite of blessing may take place after the liturgy of the word.

### *Preparations*

For the blessing of oils the following preparations are made in addition to what is needed for the celebration of a stational Mass:

In the vesting room or some other convenient place

Vessels of oil

Balsam or perfume for the preparation of the Chrism, if the bishop wishes to mix the Chrism during the liturgical service

Bread, wine and water for Mass, which are carried with the oils before the preparation of the gifts.

In the sanctuary

The Roman Missal (Sacramentary)

Table for the vessels of oil, placed so that the people may see the entire rite easily and take part in it

Chair for the bishop, if the blessing takes place in front of the altar.

### *Description of the rite*

The preparation of the bishop, the concelebrants, and other ministers, their entrance into the church, and everything from the beginning of Mass until the end of the liturgy of the word follow the provisions given for rite for a concelebrated Mass with the bishop.

After the homily, the priests stand before the bishop, and he addresses them with the questions that call on them to renew



their commitment to priestly service.<sup>46</sup> It is practical for the Master of Ceremonies to prepare a duplicate of the promises for each of the priests so that they may follow and know when to respond. If possible the congregation may also be furnished with copies so that they may know when to make their own responses.

Then, putting aside the pastoral staff and mitre, the bishop stands. The profession of faith is not said. In the intercessions, as given in the Roman Missa, the faithful are invited to pray for their pastors.

Then the bishop sits in the chair, wearing the mitre. The deacons and ministers appointed to carry the oils or, in their absence, some priests and ministers, together with the faithful who will carry the bread and the wine and water, go in procession to the vesting room (sacristy) or other place where the oils and other offerings have been prepared. Returning to the altar, they follow this order: first, the minister carrying the vessel of balsam, if the bishop wishes to mix the Chrism; then the minister with the vessel for the oil of catechumens, if it is to be blessed; the minister with the vessel for the oil of the sick; lastly a deacon or priest carrying the oil for the Chrism. The ministers or faithful who carry the bread and the wine and water for the celebration of the Eucharist follow them.

During the procession through the church, the choir leads the singing of the hymn *O Redemptor* or some other suitable song in place of the song for the presentation of the gifts (offertory song).

The bishop receives the gifts at the chair or in a more convenient place. The deacon who carries the vessel of oil for the Chrism shows it to the bishop, saying aloud, the *oil for the holy Chrism*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See RM, Proper of Seasons, Holy Thursday, rubrics for the Chrism Mass.

<sup>47</sup> These and subsequent prayers indicated in italics can be found in the Roman Missal, rubrics for the Chrism Mass.

The bishop takes the vessel and gives it to one of the deacons assisting him to place it on the table prepared for it. Those who carry the vessels for the oil of the sick and the oil of catechumens do the same.

The first says, *the oil of the sick*; the second says, *the oil of catechumens*. The bishop takes the vessels in the same way, and the ministers place them on the table. The Mass continues in the usual way, unless the entire rite of blessing takes place immediately in the alternative way.

Before the bishop says the words *Through Christ our Lord you give us all these gifts* in the Eucharistic Prayer I or the doxology *Through him* in the other Eucharistic prayers, the one who carries the vessels for the oil of the sick brings it to the altar and holds it in front of the bishop, who blesses the oil by saying or singing the prayer *God of all consolation*. After the blessing, the vessel with the oil of the sick is returned to its place, and the Mass continues until the communion rite is completed.

After the prayer after communion, the deacons place the oil of catechumens to be blessed and the Chrism to be consecrated on a table that has been placed in the centre of the sanctuary. The bishop and the concelebrants go to the table with the deacons and ministers. The bishop stands facing the people, and the concelebrating presbyters stand around him on either side, in a semicircle, and the deacons and other ministers stand behind him.

When everything is ready, the bishop proceeds to the blessing of the oil of catechumens, if it is to be blessed. Without the mitre, he stands facing the people and, with hands outstretched, says the prayer *Lord God, protector of all who believe in you*.

Then the bishop sits, wearing the mitre, and pours the balsam or perfume into the oil and in silence mixes the Chrism, unless this has been done beforehand. Without the mitre, he stands and sings or says the invitation *Let us pray that God*. As circumstances suggest, he may then breathe over the vessel of Chrism. Then,

with hands outstretched, he says one of the consecratory prayers. At the words *And so, Father, we ask you* until the end of the consecratory prayer, all the concelebrants hold the right hand outstretched toward the Chrism without saying anything.

When for pastoral reasons the entire rite of blessing of oils is to be celebrated after the liturgy of the word, the procedure is as follows. The vessels with the oils to be blessed and of Chrism to be consecrated are presented to the bishop then placed by the deacons on a table that has been placed in the centre of the sanctuary. Everything is done as already described. The Mass then proceeds in the usual way from the preparation of the gifts until the prayer after communion has been said.

When the Chrism has been consecrated after the communion rite, otherwise when the prayer after communion has been said, the bishop gives the blessing in the usual way; then he puts incense into the censer and blesses it. After the deacon has said, *The Mass is ended, go in peace* or a different formula of dismissal, the procession to the vesting room is formed. The censer-bearer carrying a censer with burning incense leads the procession, and the blessed oils are carried, each by its own minister, immediately after the cross; the choir and people sing some verses of the hymn *O Redemptor* or some other suitable song. In the vesting room or sacristy the bishop may instruct the presbyters about the reverent use and safe custody of the holy oils.

#### EASTER TRIDUUM<sup>48</sup>

The Easter Triduum consists of the three days from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday. On these three days the Church recalls Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection by which he

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<sup>48</sup> It is helpful in the days of the Easter Triduum in particular for the priest and the ministers to make a careful study of the *Ordo* because of the complexity and manifold details of the liturgy. for further information on the Easter Triduum see LM 99; GNLY 18-21; CB 295, 297, 312, 332, 371; PS 38-198; GILH 130, 133-134, 151, 208-214.

redeemed the world as we recall in the Memorial Acclamation: “dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life...”<sup>49</sup>

Because of the importance of having a worthy and well-prepared celebration of the core events of our salvation, and because of the shortage of priests and other ministers in many parts of the world it is suitable that wherever possible small communities join to celebrate these events together. Thus sub-parishes may join at the parish where this is practical. Small religious communities can join the main parish community. Groups and associations need not expect to have a separate liturgy for themselves such as on the Easter Vigil. This among other things might strain the priest’s strength who after celebrating the Easter Vigil for the parish community must also celebrate other masses in sub-parishes during the day. Even in places where more than one parish is cared for by the same priest may come together and celebrate in one central parish where this is possible. We now look at each of the days of the Easter Triduum in turn.

A worthy celebration of the Easter Triduum includes, among other things, a setting aside of other activities and concentration on the events of our salvation. The Triduum should be regarded as a prolonged retreat. It is a time of looking back and evaluating how we have lived our Lenten resolution. We then intensify our efforts like the marathon runner who approaches the finishing line.

## HOLY THURSDAY<sup>50</sup>

### *Meaning*

The Easter Triduum proper begins with the Evening Mass of Holy Thursday, which is referred to as the Mass of the Lord’s

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<sup>49</sup> GNLV 18.

<sup>50</sup> GNLV 19, 28; CB 297; PS 44-57.

Supper.<sup>51</sup> This Mass commemorates the commandment of Love symbolised by the washing of the feet of the twelve apostles. It also recalls the institution of the Holy Eucharist and of the ministerial priesthood. On this day the Church celebrates Christ's two fold giving of himself: to his enemies, to die on the cross for the life of the world. He is the paschal victim, whose blood saves his people (see Old Testament reading at this Mass). Secondly he gives himself to his friends and disciples, his Church - that is, to us - in the sacrament of his body and blood (see reading from St. Paul).

Holy Thursday is also called "Maundy Thursday" from the Latin word "*mandatum*" or "commandment". We commemorate Jesus' command to his disciples at the Last supper. After he had washed his feet he said to them: "*You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you*" (John 13:13-15).

By means especially of the homily, attention should be focused upon the mysteries which are commemorated in this Mass, namely the institution of the Eucharist and that of the priesthood, together with the Lord's command of brotherly love.

#### *Time of Celebration*

The local situation determines the appropriate time of evening when the Mass of the Lord's Supper should begin.

Priests who have already concelebrated at the Chrism Mass, or who are obliged to celebrate another Mass for the faithful, may also concelebrate at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. In accord with a most ancient tradition of the Church, the celebration of Mass without a congregation is prohibited on this day.

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<sup>51</sup> The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. GNLY, 19.

### *Liturgical Details*

The Tabernacle should be empty. Hosts should be consecrated at this Mass for the communion of clergy and people on this day and on Good Friday, as well as for the sick.

It is fitting that for the reservation of the Eucharist to serve for communion on Good Friday, a chapel should be arranged in which prayer and meditation may be fostered, but it is also highly recommended that all be marked by that austerity which is appropriate to these days. The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle, exposition in a monstrance being absolutely excluded. Nor should the tabernacle in any way have the appearance of a tomb, since the chapel of reservation is not intended to represent the Lord's tomb, but only to reserve the Blessed Sacrament for communion for the next day.

While the Gloria is being sung, the bells are rung. From the end of this hymn the bells are then silent until the Easter Vigil, unless the Episcopal conference or the Bishop of the diocese for appropriate reasons decides otherwise.

The following items are required for the preparation of this Mass:

In a convenient place in the sanctuary:

Ciborium with hosts that are to be consecrated  
also for Good Friday

Humeral veil

Second censor and incense boat

At the place for the foot-washing

Seats for the men chosen

Pitcher of water and basin

Towels for drying the feet

Apron for the main celebrant

Requisites for the washing of the hands of the  
celebrant

In the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament will be kept

Tabernacle or repository for the Blessed  
Sacrament  
Lights, flowers, and any other suitable  
decoration<sup>52</sup>

*The Washing of Feet*

“The washing of feet, which according to the tradition for this day is done for a selected number of men, shows forth the service and the love of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. It is appropriate that this tradition be maintained and its true meaning be explained.”<sup>53</sup>

*Gifts for the Poor*

In the procession bearing the gifts it is fitting that there be included the gifts destined for the poor, especially gifts which have been collected during Lent as the fruits of penance.

*Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

At the end of the prayer after communion, the procession makes its way through the church with incense and candles, bearing the Eucharist to the chapel of reservation.

At the end of the celebrations the altar is unceremoniously stripped and if possible all crosses are taken away from the church. It is appropriate that any crosses remaining in the church be veiled, if they have not already been veiled after evening prayer I of the fifth Sunday of Lent.

The faithful should be reminded to spend a suitable length of time during the night, according to circumstances of time and place, in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament reserved, in such a way, however, that after midnight the adoration takes place without ceremony.

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 299.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Ordo* 2002 p. 91 no. 7.

The procession and the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament should not take place in churches where it is not intended to celebrate the solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday.

## GOOD FRIDAY<sup>54</sup>

### *Significance*

“On this day, when Christ our paschal Lamb was sacrificed, the Church contemplates and adores the Cross of her Lord and Spouse, commemorating her own coming forth from the side of Christ as he slept on the Cross, and interceding for the salvation of all the world.”<sup>55</sup>

### *Manner of celebration*

According to a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist on this day. Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful solely during the celebration of the Lord's Passion. It may, however, be borne at any time to the sick who are unable to take part in this liturgy. There should be no celebration of the Sacraments today, with the exception of the sacrament of Penance and of Anointing of the Sick. Funerals should be conducted without singing and without organ music or the ringing of bells, and obviously without Mass.

The celebration of the Lord's Passion takes place in the afternoon, round about 3 p.m. if, however, genuine pastoral reasons require it, the celebration may take place at a more suitable time, but not before noon and not after 9 p.m. “the whole liturgy should be conducted according to the prescriptions of the liturgical books. No one should introduce changes on his own initiative.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> GNLY 20; CB 312; PS 58-72.

<sup>55</sup> *Ordo* 2001, p. 92 no. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ordo* 2001, p. 93 no. 5.



The altar should be bare and devoid of cloth, cross and candlesticks. The narrative of the Lord's Passion is read without candles, incense, initial greeting or marking of the book with the sign of the cross. It is read by the deacon, or in his absence, by a priest. It may be read even by a lector, the part of Christ being reserved if possible to the priest. At the end of the reading of the passion "this is the gospel of the Lord" is said but the book is not kissed.

The cross which is shown to the people and proffered for adoration should be sizeable beautiful. The formula for the showing of the cross and the people's response should be sung. For reasons of appropriate symbolism, there should be a single cross for adoration but care should be taken that the individual faithful are able to adore the cross, a feature of great importance in this day's celebration. The rite by which the cross is adored in silence by the whole congregation as a body should be used only if the faithful are present in very large numbers.

After the celebration on the Lord's Passion, the Blessed Sacrament should be carried back in a simple way to the place of reservation and kept there with the usual lamp burning. The altar should be stripped in private, leaving however the cross and candlesticks. It is fitting that a place be arranged (as, for example, the chapel used for reposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament the previous evening), suitable for prayer and meditation, and that the cross be placed there to be adored by the faithful.

Of great significance are also popular devotional exercises that are of pastoral importance, such as the Stations of the Cross, processions of the Lord's Passion, the commemoration of the Sorrows of Our lady. Their texts and sung parts should be in harmony with the liturgy, and should lead the people to true liturgical participation.

"Before morning Lauds on Good Friday... the Office of Readings is, if possible, to be celebrated publicly and with the

people taking part.”<sup>57</sup> But Vespers are not celebrated by those who take part in the evening liturgy.

### *Structure of the Liturgy*

The liturgy of this day is divided in four main parts: The introductory part begins with prostration of the presider and concelebrants together with the ministering deacons. This is done as a symbol of deep veneration of the Paschal Mystery. The rest of the congregation kneels in silence.

The second part is the Liturgy of the Word. Its main purpose is that the worshipers may understand the meaning of Christ’s Passion. Two readings are taken followed by the account of the Passion. The readings are followed by the Intercessions in which the congregation prays in Christ’s spirit for the needs of the world.

The third part is the Veneration of the Cross, which is a symbol of Christ’s love, passion and victory. (On this day it is customary to genuflect to the cross when set out for adoration after the evening liturgy). The cross is shown to the people three times followed by their veneration of it, preferably in pairs.

The fourth and last part is the Liturgy of the Eucharist in which the worshipping community enters into sacramental communion with Christ. The altar is laid with the altar cloth and the corporal. The Eucharist is brought with candles in silence. The liturgy begins with the Our Father. After the liturgy all depart in silence.

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<sup>57</sup> GILH, 210.

*Communal Celebration of the Office of Readings*

*Celebration of the Way of the Cross*

*The Good Friday Fast*

## HOLY SATURDAY<sup>58</sup>

### *Significance*

During the day of Holy Saturday the Church recalls the time the Lord spent in the tomb. It continues to meditate on his suffering, death and descent into hell. At the same time it waits in prayer and fasting for his resurrection.

### *Manner of celebration*

During the day an image of Christ crucified or laid in the tomb may still be set out for veneration. Alternatively an image of Our Lady of Sorrows may be used, such as the Pieta. Appropriate devotions such as those that honour our Lady of sorrows may be celebrated. On this day as on Good Friday the Eucharist is not celebrated. Communion is not given out except to the dying as Viaticum. Of the other sacraments only Penance and Anointing of the Sick may be celebrated. The altar remains bare.

As on Good Friday it is appropriate on Holy Saturday as well, to celebrate Lauds solemnly with the people and to include the Office of Readings in the celebrations.<sup>59</sup> Those who take part in the celebration of the Easter Vigil later on do not recite Compline.

Holy Saturday during the day also serves as the time to finalise liturgical preparations for the Vigil celebrations. These may include preparation of the fire, rehearsals for the readers, final

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<sup>58</sup> GNLV 20; PS 73-76.

<sup>59</sup> GILH, 210.

rehearsal of the Easter Proclamation or *Exultet*, Liturgy of the Catechumens where this will take place, acquisition of new oils to be used for baptism in the Easter Night if these are not yet procured, preparation of the water to be blessed and of the baptismal font, decoration of the Church, preparation of the vestments and seeing to all the necessary details.

*Communal Celebration of the Office of Readings*

*The Sorrows of Mary*

*Continuation of the Fast*

## EASTER VIGIL<sup>60</sup>

*Significance*

At the Easter Vigil of Saturday night the Church celebrates Christ's resurrection. The Church keeps vigil, awaiting the Lord in joyful prayer. It is important to understand that the element of waiting is part of the meaning of this long celebration. Waiting is never easy. But waiting is a sign of love for the one awaited. We have only to recall the parable of the ten bridesmaids.<sup>61</sup> Or the waiting of the apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane as their Lord prayed, a waiting which was not very successful. The waiting of Christ's faithful before his resurrection, among whom were his Mother and the Holy women was not an easy one. The Church recalls that holy waiting, but in a joyful mood for now his resurrection is a reality, a historical even. To sustain that waiting and to make it meaningful the liturgy has the long and many readings that recall the history of our redemption tracing it from its beginning. Before any pastor rashly abbreviates the liturgy of the Easter Vigil he should recall these facts. On this night the

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<sup>60</sup> LM 99; GNLY 17-21; CB 332; PS 3, 00-95; GILH 208-214.

<sup>61</sup> This keeping vigil is also symbolical of the awaiting of the Lord's Second Coming. See *Ordo* 2001 p. 95 no. 1.

Church also celebrates what the resurrection of the Lord meant for us, namely our own rebirth in baptism. For that reason new members are baptised on this occasion, while the old members renew their baptismal promises.

### *Manner of Celebration*

The whole celebration of the Easter Vigil should take place by night, in such a way that it does not begin before the onset of night and concludes by first light the Sunday. The practice of celebrating the Easter Vigil on the Saturday evening at the same time when the Sunday Vigil Masses are habitually celebrated is to be censured. The whole of the celebration is, moreover, so to be arranged that its nature as a protracted vigil is safeguarded. The celebration of a Mass without the rites of the Easter Vigil is not allowed.

The Easter Vigil may be celebrated even in churches and oratories where the liturgies of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday have not taken place, but on the other hand the Vigil is not of obligation when they have. The celebration of the Vigil is, however, compulsory where there is a baptismal font.

The whole celebration is summarised thus: “Tonight’s vigil should be so arranged that after the brief Liturgy of Light or *lucernarium* (which is the first part of the Vigil), the Church meditate on the marvels the Lord God wrought for his people from the very beginning and strengthens by his Word and his promise (the second part of the Vigil, or liturgy of the Word), until the moment when with the approaching Day of the Resurrection, together with her new members reborn in baptism (third part), she is called to the table which the Lord spread out for his people by means of his Death and Resurrection (forth part).<sup>62</sup>

The whole Easter Vigil proceeds by means of symbols and rites which call for a certain grandeur and dignity, in order that the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ordo* 2001 p. 96 no. 2.

faithful may grasp their meaning, prompted even by the words of the commentaries, invitations and prayers. It is fitting in particular that the faithful be introduced by means of a brief introduction to the understanding of the typological meaning of the Old Testament readings proclaimed during the Vigil.

### *Structure of the Liturgy*

The liturgy therefore has four parts, namely: the Service of the Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Service of the Light in turns includes the blessing of the fire, the lighting of the Easter candle,<sup>63</sup> procession into the church and the Easter Proclamation. As regards the blessing of the fire, in so far as possible a large fire should be prepared outside the church, such that its flames may truly scatter the darkness and light up the night. The Easter candle, for effective symbolism, should be made of wax, of one piece, and of a considerable size, and be renewed every year. For it must represent the figure of Christ who as the True Light, illuminates the whole world. The candle should be blessed with the words and gestures laid down by the liturgical books or which have been prescribed by the Bishops' conference. The Easter Proclamation or *Exultet* may be sung, in case of necessity, even by a cantor who is not a deacon, but in this even the cantor does not receive a blessing from the celebrant. Moreover the second part of the invitation is omitted (*Quapropter... or My dearest friends, standing with me...*) as is the greeting (*Dominus vobiscum or The Lord be with you*).

The Liturgy of the Word includes nine readings, seven from the Old Testament, one from the Epistles and the gospel reading. At least three readings are to be proclaimed from the Old Testament, and even in urgent circumstances at least two. The reading from the Book of Exodus is never to be omitted. The proclamation of the readings is followed by a homily. For the

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<sup>63</sup> Its blessing is optional. See rubrics in the Missal.

proclamation of the gospel reading incense may be used but lights may not be carried, as they would overshadow the symbolism of the Easter Candle.

The Liturgy of Baptism takes on three different forms depending on circumstances.<sup>64</sup> There baptisms are to take place this part of the liturgy begins by the calling of the baptismal candidates. This is followed by the litany of the saints. Then comes the blessing of water with the Easter candle lowered into the baptismal font. Next comes the confirmation of adults (if a minister with the appropriate faculties is available). Where there is no baptism, but there is the blessing of the baptismal font, first comes the litany of the saints. This is followed by the blessing of water with the Easter Candle lowered into the font. Next comes the renewal of the baptismal promises.<sup>65</sup> Where there is no baptism and no blessing of a baptismal font the first part consists of the blessing of water. This is followed by the renewal of the baptismal promises.

The fourth and last part which is the Liturgy of the Eucharist does not differ much from the ordinary, apart from the fact that the Preface is proper and that some Eucharist Prayers have special insertions for this night which should be remembered. Where there are adult baptisms the newly baptised may bring the gifts in procession. It is also fitting that the fullness of the Eucharistic signs be attained in the Easter Vigil by means of communion under both kinds.

#### EASTER SUNDAY (MASS DURING THE DAY)

The Mass of the Easter Day should be celebrated with great solemnity. The pastor needs to remember that many of the faithful who are unable to attend the Vigil Mass have this as their celebration of Easter. Many in fact may not even have attended

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<sup>64</sup> PS 88-89.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Charles W. Gusmer, "Baptismal vows, Renewal of?", in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 126-127.

the liturgical celebrations of the Easter Triduum and only come to this Mass. At this Mass, in place of the opening penitential rites, all are sprinkled with water blessed on Easter Night, to recall their baptism.

#### EASTER SEASON<sup>66</sup>

During the Easter Season the Easter candle should be placed near the ambo or near the altar, and kept there for the whole season until the end of Pentecost Sunday. It should be lit for the more solemn liturgical celebrations, namely Mass, Lauds and Vespers, during this time.

The fifty days from Easter to Pentecost are celebrated as a single feast. These above all others are the days for singing the *Alleluia*. Sundays rank as paschal Sundays and are named 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> etc. Sunday of Easter. The first eight days of the Easter octave are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord.

Wherever there are neophytes, the Easter season, and particularly the first week, is the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogue. The community shares with them a deepening understanding of the paschal mystery and an ever greater assimilation of it in daily life through meditation, participation in the Eucharist, and the practice of charity. The main setting of this period is the Sunday Masses of Easter, because these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the Lectionary for Mass, especially the readings for Year A, which are to be explained in the homily.<sup>67</sup> On the 40<sup>th</sup> day Ascension is celebrated. Where it is not a day of obligation it is transferred to

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<sup>66</sup> Easter and Easter season LM 99-102; GNLY 22-26; CB 371-376; relationship to Sunday observance SC 102, 131; DD 1-3, 8, 19-20, 32-33.

<sup>67</sup> See RCIA, no. 237.



Sunday. The days between Ascension and Pentecost are preparation for Pentecost.<sup>68</sup>

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

Next to the yearly celebration of the paschal mystery, the Church holds most sacred the commemoration of Christ's birth and first manifestations. This is the purpose of the Christmas season.<sup>69</sup>

Advent is a time of waiting, conversion and hope:

- Waiting-memory of the first, humble coming of the Lord in our mortal flesh; waiting-supplication for his final, glorious coming as Lord of History and universal judge;
- Conversion, to which the Liturgy at this time often refers quoting the prophets, especially John the Baptist, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2);
- Joyful hope that the salvation already accomplished by Christ and the reality of grace in the world, will mature and reach their fullness, thereby granting us what is promised by faith, and "we shall become like him for we shall see him as he really is" (John 3:2).

The season of Advent, begins with evening prayer I of Sunday closest to or falling on 30<sup>th</sup> November and ends before evening prayer I of Christmas. It has four Sundays named 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc. Sunday of Advent. The weekdays from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December prepare more directly for the first coming. Advent has a twofold character: it is a time to prepare for Christmas, when Christ's First Coming is remembered; it is a time when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming in

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<sup>68</sup> GNLY 22, 26; DD 20, 28, 76; PS 103, 107; IRL 13.

<sup>69</sup> GNLY, 32.

the last days. In this way Advent is a period of devout and joyful expectation.<sup>70</sup> During Advent, the playing of the organ and other musical instruments as well as the floral decoration of the altar should be marked by a moderation that reflects the character of this season, but does not anticipate the full joy of Christmas itself. On the third Sunday, called Gaudete Sunday, rose vestments may be worn.<sup>71</sup>

The Christmas<sup>72</sup> season runs from evening prayer I of Christmas to Sunday after Epiphany or January 6<sup>th</sup> inclusive. The solemnity of the Lord's birth celebrates the mystery of the incarnation by which the Word of God humbled himself to share in our humanity, in order that he might enable us to become sharers in his divinity. On Christmas Mass may be celebrated three times, provided each is celebrated at its proper time, that is, at midnight, at dawn, and during the day.<sup>73</sup>

The custom of celebrating a vigil to begin the solemnity of Christmas is to be maintained and fostered, in keeping with the usage proper to each Church.<sup>74</sup>

The Christmas octave includes the following: Feast of the Holy Family: Sunday within the octave of Christmas, feast of St. Stephen the first Martyr (26<sup>th</sup> Dec), feast of St. John apostle and evangelist (27<sup>th</sup> Dec), feast of Holy Innocents (28<sup>th</sup> Dec), feast of Mary Mother of God (Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>). The rest are simply days within the octave

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<sup>70</sup> CB, 235; GNLY 32, 39.

<sup>71</sup> CB, 236; GIRM, 308.

<sup>72</sup> GIRM 308; LM 95-96; GNLY 32-38; CB 234; GILH 130, 134, 215.

<sup>73</sup> CB, 239. In many pastoral situations several Masses may be celebrated during the day.

<sup>74</sup> CB, 238; GILH, 71: "From the Easter Vigil the custom grew in different Churches of beginning certain solemnities with a vigil, especially Christmas and Pentecost. This custom is to be preserved and encouraged according to the special traditions of each Church..."

## ORDINARY TIME<sup>75</sup>

Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character, thirty-three or thirty-four weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a particular element of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sundays, these weeks are devoted to the mystery of Christ in its entirety. This period is known as Ordinary Time.<sup>76</sup>

Ordinary Time begins on Monday after the Sunday following 6 January and continues until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday inclusive. It begins again on Monday after Pentecost and ends before Evening Prayer I of the First Sunday of Advent.

For the pastoral advantage of the people, it is permissible to observe on the Sundays in Ordinary Time those celebrations that fall during the week and have special appeal to the devotion of the faithful, provided these celebrations take precedence over the Sundays in the table of liturgical days. The Mass for such celebrations may be used at all the Masses at which a congregation is present.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> GNLY 43-44; CB 377-380; DD 31-54; GILH 12.

<sup>76</sup> CB, 377; GNLY, 43.

<sup>77</sup> CB 380; GNLY, 58.

## **THE CALENDAR**

### Bibliographical References:

- “The Development of the Christian Calendar” in Don Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1945. Pp. 333-360.
- “The Liturgical Calendar”, in Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: its Life and Institutions*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984. Pp. 468ff.
- L. E. Boyle, ed., “Liturgical Calendar”, in Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, vol. II, 2003, Gale, p. 641-643.

### WHAT IT IS<sup>78</sup>

The Liturgical calendar serves much the same purpose as any other civil calendar, although it may appear in a more elaborate form of a book called *Ordo*. It the liturgical calendar is found the arrangement of the liturgical functions in a specific liturgical year. Some of these have fixed dates that are the same every year such as the solemnity of Christmas. Others shift from year to year such as the Easter and all its related feasts. Yet others may occur in a particular year without recurrence, such as the celebration of the Jubilee year of 2000. When we talk of the Liturgical year we consider what comes every year; in considering the liturgical calendar we deal with what is specific to a particular year.

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<sup>78</sup> With regard to its relation to the civil calendar see SC 131, LMT 48; DD 3,21-22, 64, 75, 80, PS 3-4.

## TYPES OF CALENDARS

Liturgical calendars are of two types. The universal calendar is intended to be used in the entire Roman Rite. In the General Calendar the entire cycle of celebrations is entered: celebrations of the mystery of salvation as found in the Proper of Seasons, of those saints having universal significance who must therefore be celebrated by everyone or of saints who show the universality and continuity of holiness within the people of God.<sup>79</sup> Only the supreme ecclesiastical authority has power to establish, transfer and suppress holidays and days of penance in the General Calendar.

Particular calendars<sup>80</sup> have more specialised celebrations, arranged to harmonise with the general cycle. The individual Churches or families of religious should show a special honour to those saints who are properly their own. "Each diocese should have its own Calendar and Proper of Masses. For its part, the Bishops' Conference should draw up a proper calendar for the nation or, together with other Conferences, a calendar for a wider territory, to be approved by the Apostolic See."<sup>81</sup> Particular calendars, drawn up by the competent authority, must be approved by the Apostolic See. Such competent authority may be an individual diocese, an Episcopal conference, a group of Episcopal conferences or even a monastery.

The drafting of particular calendars is guided by these and similar rules:<sup>82</sup> The proper of seasons in the universal calendar is to be kept intact. Particular celebrations must harmonise with universal celebrations. For instance the commemoration of saints may not ordinarily be celebrated twice in the same year. Saints in the General Calendar may rise in rank in the particular calendar. For

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<sup>79</sup> GNLY, 49.

<sup>80</sup> DOL, 480-483.

<sup>81</sup> *General Instruction 2002*, no. 394.

<sup>82</sup> For the rules governing the drawing up of particular calendars see GNLY, 50-59.

instance a martyr who in the General Calendar is celebrated as an optional Memorial may be elevated to the level of a feast or solemnity in the territory of his birth. This change of rank must have the approval of the Holy See. Pastors who celebrate in a territory which has an approved particular calendar are required to respect that calendar.

#### THE PROPER DATE FOR CELEBRATIONS

For saints it is ordinarily the date of their death (or birth into eternal life. If this date is not known, then some other date associated with the saint may be chosen. If the chosen date is impeded, then the appropriate date closest to it may be celebrated. In some cases it is permissible to transfer the impeding date.

In the case of some prominent saints another date apart from the date of death may also be celebrated. Such is the case for instance when the church celebrated the Conversion of St. Paul (besides celebrating the feast of Peter and Paul, which would correspond to their martyrdom); the birth of John the Baptist, and the Nativity as well as the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**Table 1: Liturgical Days According to their Order of Precedence<sup>83</sup>**

## **Group I**

Easter Triduum of the Lord's Passion and resurrection

Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension and Pentecost

Ash Wednesday

Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday to Thursday inclusive

Days within the octave of Easter

Solemnities of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints listed in the General Calendar

All souls

Proper solemnities namely:

solemnity of the principal patron of the place, that is, the city or state

solemnity of the dedication of a particular church and anniversary

solemnity of the title of a particular church

solemnity of the title, or of the founder, or of the principal patron of a religious order

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<sup>83</sup> GNLY, 59, cf. *Ordo*, p. 5.

## Group II

Feasts of the Lord in the General Calendar

Sundays of Christmas season and Sundays in Ordinary Time

Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints in the General Calendar

Proper feasts, namely:

Feast of the principal patron of a diocese

Feast of the anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral

Feast of the principal patron of region or province, or a country, or of a wider territory.

Feasts of the title, founder, or principal patron of an order of a religious province

Other feasts proper to an individual church

Other feasts listed in the calendar of a diocese or of a religious order or congregation

Weekdays of Advent from 17 December to 24 December inclusive

Days within the octave of Christmas

Weekdays of Lent



## Group III

Obligatory memorials in the General Calendar

Proper obligatory memorials, namely:

Memorials of a secondary patron of the place, diocese region, province, congregation, etc.

obligatory memorials listed in the calendar of a diocese, or of an order or congregation

Optional memorials; but these may be celebrated even on the days listed in no. 9 in a special way<sup>84</sup>

In the same manner obligatory memorials become optional if they fall in the Lenten weekdays.

Weekdays of Advent up to 16 December inclusive

Weekdays of the Christmas season from 2 January until the Saturday after Epiphany

Weekdays of Easter season: Monday after Easter Octave to Saturday before Pentecost inclusive

Weekdays in Ordinary Time.

The following are the rules for applying the information in the above table: if more than one celebration falls on the same day, then the one of the higher or highest rank takes precedence. Other celebrations are omitted that year, if they are not

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<sup>84</sup> See GIRM and GILH...

solemnities. Impeded solemnities are transferred to the nearest day that is not listed in numbers 1-8.

If a celebration falls on a Sunday, the rule (according to no. 5 of the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar) is that Sunday gives way only to solemnities or feasts of the Lord.<sup>85</sup> Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter do not give way to any other celebration. Feasts which are not of the Lord, as well as other celebrations that are lower in rank to feasts, if impeded are not celebrated that year.

If the same day were to call for celebration of evening prayer of that day's office and evening prayer I of the following day, evening prayer of the day with the higher rank in the Table of Liturgical Days takes precedence; in cases of equal rank, evening prayer of the actual day takes precedence.<sup>86</sup>

#### TIME OF CELEBRATION OF CERTAIN MASSES

Quite often a pastor is not sure whether it is permissible or not to celebrate a particular Mass. This particularly regards the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals (ritual Masses), Masses for various needs and occasions and Masses for the dead. The table below is a succinct guide in such cases of doubt.

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<sup>85</sup> It is very important to note in this statement the role of the conjunction "or". Ordinary Sunday gives way to all solemnities, whether they are of the Lord or not. Secondly it gives way to feasts *of the Lord*, and not to any other feasts. Thus "of the Lord" must not be understood to apply to solemnities as well. This makes meaning if looking at the table we observe that Sunday ranks no. 6 after all solemnities and after the feasts of the Lord.

<sup>86</sup> GNLY, 61.

**Table 2: Rubrics governing Different Masses<sup>87</sup>**

Solemnities that are holidays of obligation	VI - DI -	
Sundays of Advent, lent, and the Easter Triduum	VI - DI -	
Solemnities other than holidays of obligation All Souls' Day	VI - DI +	
Ash Wednesday, weekdays of Holy Week	VI - DI +	
Days within the Easter Octave	VI - DI+	
Sundays of Christmas, and Sundays of Ordinary Time	VI+ DI+	V2- D2-
Feasts	VI+ DI+	V2- D2-
Weekdays 17-24 December	VI+ DI+	V2- D2+
Days within the Octave of Christmas	VI+ DI+	V2- D2+
Weekdays of Lent	VI+ DI+	V2- D2+
Obligatory memorials	VI+ DI+	V2+ D2+

<sup>87</sup> See *Ceremonial of Bishops*, Appendix III, p. 336-337; *Ordo*, p. 14.

Weekdays of Advent before 17 December	VI+	V2+
	DI+	D2+
Weekdays of Christmas from 2 January	VI+	V2+
	DI+	D2+
Weekdays of the Easter season	VI+	V2+
	DI+	D2+
Weekdays in Ordinary Time	VI+	V2+
	DI+	D2+

Abbreviations:

VI = Ritual Masses<sup>88</sup> and Masses for various need and occasions, and votive Masses, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the direction of the local Ordinary or with his permission.<sup>89</sup>

V2 = Masses for various needs and occasions and votive Masses, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the discretion of the rector of the church or the celebrating priest.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> GIRM, 330: “Ritual Masses are forbidden on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Eastertide, on solemn feasts, within the Octave of Easter, on All Souls, on Ash Wednesday and throughout Holy Week, as stated in the rubrics of the Ritual and the Missal”.

<sup>89</sup> GIRM, 333: “If a serious need or some great pastoral opportunity should occur, a Mass appropriate to the occasion may be celebrated at the behest or with the permission of the local ordinary on any day except a solemnity and the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Eastertide, the days within the Octave of Easter, All Souls, Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week.

<sup>90</sup> On obligatory memorials, on the weekdays of Advent until 16 December, on weekdays of Christmas time after 2 January and of Eastertide after the octave of Easter, masses for various needs and occasions are forbidden. But if some real need or pastoral advantage requires it, an appropriate Mass may be celebrated with the people, at the discretion of the pastor of the church or the celebrant.

V3 = Masses for various needs and occasions and votive Masses chosen by the celebrating priest for the devotion of the people.<sup>91</sup>

DI = Funeral Masses.<sup>92</sup>

D2 = Mass celebrated on receiving news of death, Mass of final burial, or on the first anniversary.<sup>93</sup>

D3 = Daily Mass for the Dead (GIRM 337), When DI and D2 are not permitted, neither, obviously is D3.

+ = Permitted

= Not permitted.

### CHOICE OF MASS AND ITS PARTS

More precise instructions are given in the General Instruction to the Roman Missal (2002) regarding the choice of Mass and its various parts. They are quoted in detail below:

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<sup>91</sup> GIRM 329b and c: Masses for special occasions are of three kinds... b) Masses for particular needs or intentions which are celebrated when required or periodically. c) Votive Masses of the Mysteries of Christ or in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a particular saint or all the saints. These may be celebrated at will, as prompted by the piety of the faithful.

<sup>92</sup> GIRM 336: Among Masses for the Dead it is the Funeral Mass which holds the first place in importance. It may be celebrated on any day which is neither a holiday of Obligation, the Tuesday, Friday or Saturday of Holy Week, nor a Sunday in Advent, Lent or Eastertide.

<sup>93</sup> GIRM, 337: A Mass for the dead may be celebrated as soon as news of a death is received, on the day of final burial, and on the first anniversary. This holds good even during the Christmas octave, on an obligatory memorial and on any weekday which is neither Ash Wednesday nor a day in Holy Week. Other “daily” Masses for the dead may be said on days through the year on which there is an optional memorial or Mass of the day, provided the Mass is in fact offered for the dead.

353. On solemnities the priest is bound to follow the calendar of the church where he is celebrating.

354. On Sundays, on the weekdays of the Advent, Christmas, Lenten, and Easter Seasons, on feasts, and on obligatory memorials:

- a. If Mass is celebrated with a congregation, the priest should follow the calendar of the church where he is celebrating;
- b. If Mass is celebrated with the participation of one minister only, the priest may choose either the calendar of the church or his own proper calendar.

355. On optional memorials,

- a. On the weekdays of Advent from 17 December to 24 December, on days within the Octave of Christmas, and on the weekdays of Lent, except Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week, the Mass for the current liturgical day is to be used; but the Collect may be taken from a memorial which happens to be listed in the General Calendar for that day, except on Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week. On weekdays of the Easter Season, memorials of Saints may rightly be celebrated fully.
- b. On the weekdays of Advent before 17 December, the weekdays of the Christmas Season from 2 January, and the weekdays of the Easter Season, it is possible to choose either the weekday Mass, or the Mass of the Saint, or the Mass of one of the Saints whose memorial is observed, or the Mass of any Saint listed in the Martyrology for that day.
- c. On the weekdays in Ordinary Time, it is possible to choose either a weekday Mass, or the Mass of an optional memorial which happens to occur on that day, or the Mass of any Saint listed in the Martyrology for that day, or a Mass for Various Needs, or a Votive Mass.

If he celebrates with a congregation, the priest will take care not to omit the readings assigned for each day in the Lectionary for weekdays too frequently and without sufficient reason, since the Church desires that a richer portion at the table of God's word be provided for the faithful.<sup>141</sup>

For the same reason he should use Masses for the Dead in moderation, since every Mass is offered for both the living and the dead, and there is a commemoration of the dead in the Eucharistic Prayer.

Where, however, the optional memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the Saints are dear to the faithful, the priest should satisfy their legitimate devotion.

When, on the other hand, the option is given of choosing between a memorial found in the General Calendar and one found in a diocesan or religious calendar, preference should be given, all things being equal and in keeping with tradition, to the memorial inscribed in the particular calendar.

## **II. The Choice of Mass Texts**

356. In the choice of texts for the several parts of the Mass, whether of the Season or of the Saints, the following norms should be observed.

### *The Readings*

357. For Sundays and solemnities, three readings are assigned: that is, from a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Gospel. By these the Christian people are brought to know the continuity of the work of salvation according to the God's wonderful plan. These readings should be followed strictly. During the Easter Season, according to the tradition of the Church, instead of the reading from the Old Testament, the reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles.

For Feasts, on the other hand, two readings are assigned. If, however, according to the norms a feast is raised to the rank of a solemnity, a third reading is added, taken from the Common.

For memorials of Saints, unless strictly proper readings are given, the readings assigned for the weekday are customarily used. In certain cases, readings are provided that highlight some particular aspect of the spiritual life or activity of the Saint. The use of such readings is not to be insisted upon, unless a pastoral reason suggests it.

358. In the Lectionary for weekdays, readings are provided for each day of every week throughout the entire year; as a result, these readings are for the most part to be used on the days to which they are assigned, unless there occurs a solemnity, feast, or memorial that has its own proper New Testament readings, that is to say, readings in which mention is made of the Saint being celebrated.

If, however, the continuous reading during the week is interrupted by the occurrence of some solemnity or feast, or some particular celebration, then the priest, taking into consideration the entire week's scheme of readings, is allowed either to combine parts omitted with other readings or to decide which readings are to be preferred over others.

In Masses with special groups, the priest is allowed to choose texts more suited to the particular celebration, provided they are taken from the texts of an approved lectionary.

359. In addition, the Lectionary has a special selection of texts from Sacred Scripture for Ritual Masses into which certain Sacraments or Sacramentals are incorporated, or for Masses that are celebrated for certain needs.

Selections of readings of this kind have been established in this way, so that through a more apt hearing of the word of God the faithful may be led to a fuller understanding of the mystery in which they are participating and may be brought to a more ardent love of the word of God.

As a result, texts spoken in the celebration are to be chosen keeping in mind both a suitable pastoral reason and the options allowed in this matter.

360. At times, a longer and shorter form of the same text is given. In choosing between these two forms, a pastoral



criterion must be kept in mind. At such times, attention should be paid to the capacity of the faithful to listen with understanding to a reading of greater or lesser length, and to their capacity to hear a more complete text, which is then explained in the homily.<sup>142</sup>

361. When a choice is allowed between alternative texts, whether they are fixed or optional, attention must be paid to what is in the best interests of those taking part, whether it is a matter of using the easier text or one more appropriate in a given group or of repeating or setting aside a text that is assigned as proper to some particular celebration while being optional for another,<sup>143</sup> as pastoral advantage may suggest.

Such a situation may arise when the same text would have to be read again within a few days, as, for example, on a Sunday and on a following weekday, or when it is feared that a certain text might create some difficulties for a particular group of the Christian faithful. Care should, however, be taken that, when choosing scriptural passages, parts of Sacred Scripture are not permanently excluded.

362. The adaptations to the *Ordo Lectionum Missae* as contained in the Lectionary for Mass for use in the dioceses of the United States of America should be carefully observed.

#### *The Orations*

363. In any Mass the orations proper to that Mass are used, unless otherwise noted.

On memorials of Saints, the collect proper to the day is used or, if none is available, one from an appropriate Common. The prayer over the offerings, however, and the prayer after Communion, unless they are proper, may be taken either from the Common or from the weekdays of the current Season.

On the weekdays in Ordinary Time, however, besides the orations from the previous Sunday, orations from another Sunday in Ordinary Time may be used, or one of the prayers for various needs provided in the Missal. It is always permissible, however, to use the collect alone from these Masses.

In this way a richer collection of texts is available, by which the prayer life of the faithful is more abundantly nourished.

During the more important seasons of the year, however, the proper seasonal orations appointed for each weekday in the Missal already make provision for this.

#### AUTHORITY TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Only the supreme ecclesiastical authority has power to establish, transfer, or suppress holidays and days of penance in the general calendar. Territorial authorities (that is, groups of Episcopal Conferences, single conferences, dioceses, etc), may draw up local calendars, and insert them into the general calendar. To do this however, they must seek the approval of the supreme authority. Even where the local Church uses the calendar of the universal Church without modifications, the local authority may make some exceptions.<sup>94</sup>

Individual pastors are required to faithfully celebrate the liturgy respecting the general or local calendar, depending on where they are. They are also urged to exploit what options are provided in the calendar.

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<sup>94</sup> “In the light of pastoral circumstances, the local Ordinary is to indicate at the beginning of the year in the diocesan liturgical calendar the practice to be followed throughout the diocese; when pastoral reasons seem to dictate preference of the one Mass over the other, he may even, if necessary, depart from what has been said in the present document” (DOL 448). This injunction may does not directly apply to the question at hand, but it provides a helpful rule that throws light on the issue: importance of pastoral necessity.



