



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Diocesan Study Days addresses liturgy meaning and changes

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

A loving spirit of unity is called for when it comes to the implementation of a new English translation of prayers and instructions for celebrating Mass, the director of the national liturgy office said during diocesan Study Days Oct. 20-21, 2010 in Saskatoon. (*The subject was further explored at a Diocesan Congress Day Nov. 16, see article Page 4.*)



Rev. Bill Burke, Director of Liturgy Office of CCCB

Rev. Bill Burke called on pastoral leaders to set aside any annoyance and frustration with parts of the new translation to examine the document as a whole, to try to appreciate all that it does have to offer, and then to help the faithful understand the changes.

“The nature of the General Instruction goes way beyond rubrics. It’s the doctrinal, pastoral context in which the rubrics are being enacted and it reminds us of the challenges,” he said, stressing the liturgy is about a meaning that goes “way beyond the use of words.”

The new translation of the Roman Missal and its revised General Instruction is being implemented in all the English-speaking countries of the world, with different national groups at different stages in the process, reported Burke, who is director of liturgy for the office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB).

“There are 11 different English-speaking conferences,” he said. “Each one has to submit their text to Rome for approval for that country.”

While the American documents have been approved, the Canadian bishops are still waiting a response from Rome about several requested adaptations, explained Burke. Until the final version is certain, the CCCB cannot move forward with implementation, he said, noting that since Canada is a bilingual country, the bishops had to arrive at one set of adaptations for both French and English translations.

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“We will likely be a few months behind the Americans,” said Burke, reporting that the USCCB has set the date of implementation for the Church in the United States as the start of Advent 2011.



Burke said resources for explaining and reflecting upon the changes, and on the liturgy as a whole, are being prepared by the CCCB to assist in implementation of the new missal and General Instruction, along with new musical settings of parts of the Mass, such as The Gloria.

Burke began his presentation by asking parish representatives and ministry coordinators from across the diocese to examine the value of “this awesome gift of the Eucharist in your lives.”

Acknowledging that there is a diversity of opinions and theologies in the faith community, Burke stressed the need for keeping a respectful perspective. “Every one of us is here because we profoundly love this sacrament. That’s the bottom line.”

In today’s culture of individualism, some question why a General Instruction is needed at all, said Burke, noting that many Catholics do not know or understand the traditions of their faith, something which pastors encounter when meeting families seeking a wedding or a funeral.

“The need for ritual is coded into our DNA as human beings. It’s part of who we are, and how God made us,” he said, describing how this hunger for ritual can be seen in the impromptu roadside shrines that spring up after an accident or death.

But the liturgy goes far beyond such rituals, Burke said, noting how through the ages the Church has treasured and guided the celebration of the Eucharist. “Through the liturgy we are incorporated more deeply into the very life of the Trinity, the life of deeper love, the life that is eternal, and a glory, that in the words of St Paul, goes way beyond anything we can ever imagine,” he said.

“We don’t go looking for new meanings. We don’t invent the mystery of faith; we don’t invent the gift of the Eucharistic liturgy... We receive it, we celebrate it and we pass it on,” he said.

The new document emphasizes transcendence and a sense of the sacred. Instructions about the use of silence at certain points in the liturgy; more references to the action of the Holy Spirit; an expanded section on the Liturgy of the Word in the celebration of Mass; and notes about posture at different points in the Eucharistic celebration were explored in Burke’s presentation.

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The General Instruction also emphasizes the need for unity, Burke said. The document addresses questions of posture, for instance, with the goal of having uniformity of posture among the assembly within a celebration.

“The General Instruction talks about reverence expressed in kneeling, in standing, in sitting, in quiet meditation, in participating in the gospel acclamation,” Burke said. “It has a whole variety of gestures and postures that express reverence, that are appropriate to the particular moment of the celebration.”

As part of his presentation, Burke presented examples of rubrics from the General Instruction, encouraging his listeners to try and determine the value that a particular rubric attempts to protect. He noted that some rubrics will be clear and accepted by all, while others are less clear, and will raise questions and disagreements.

“There is going to be not only discussion, there is going to be some disagreement,” he said, adding that some of the issues raised in this document will undoubtedly be addressed in some future round of changes. “This is not a new situation ... it’s been like that throughout the history of the Church.”

Burke also explored prayers and passages from the new translation. He invited observations and discussion about some of the changes, and stressed the need for good catechesis, homilies and explanations as the new translation is implemented.

“We are going to find a diversity of reaction to these prayers,” predicted Burke, noting the extremes being heard on the “blogosphere” about the new translation and the General Instruction, suggesting that those on both sides are misreading the document. “There has to be a much more respectful dialogue.”

There is great richness in the new translation, added Burke, noting how portions of the translation that at first felt awkward, he now finds profound. And in the end, the “sacrament of unity” is about more than words, it is about redemption, he concluded.

In closing remarks, Saskatoon Bishop Don Bolen also emphasized a need to preserve unity. “The Church has invited us to have love, charity, and Christian discipleship at the heart of the way in which we engage in this process,” said Bolen. “Unity itself is a precious gift.”

Diocesan Congress Day held Nov. 16 at Queen's House: continues exploration of liturgy and will be followed by a second Congress Day in New Year at three locations in the diocese

The 2010 day-long Diocesan Congress at Queen's House in Saskatoon included a number of local speakers leading breakout sessions on such subjects as connecting the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist to every day life, the art of presiding and participating,



Leah Perrault, Kathy Hitchings, Fr. Nestor Gregoire, OMI, Theresa Winterhalt, Sharon Powell, Fr. Tony Bidgood, CSsR, Bishop Don Bolen and Blake Sittler (l-r) were among the presenters at the Diocesan Congress Day 1 at Queen's House Nov. 16, 2010.

liturgical change in Church history, and liturgy that engages families. This followed the earlier Study Days presentation by Rev. Bill Burke of the national liturgy office, which addressed upcoming changes to the English translation of the Roman Missal and its General Instruction.

The Congress day also included the first meeting of Bishop Don Bolen with the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC), consisting of representatives from deaneries across the diocese, as well as a number of Catholic organizations and groups, including youth, religious sisters, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women's League. The DPC gathers three times a year to provide discussion and feedback on items brought forward by the bishop and to provide a forum for discussing issues and concerns arising from the parishes and deaneries.

"Day 2" of the diocesan Congress will be offered in three locations throughout the diocese in the New Year, with Bishop Don Bolen in attendance. Topics for discussion at each of the three meetings will be liturgy, the diocesan policy for the protection of vulnerable persons, and the Evangelization priority of the "Rooted in Christ" Diocesan Vision.

All are welcome to attend the Congress Day 2 sessions (box at left), with more details about registration to be announced in the near future.

Diocesan Congress "Day 2"

Join Bishop Don Bolen in a diocesan day of discussion and enrichment, to be held in three locations across the diocese:

Eatonia and Kerrobert deaneries:

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 15
at St. Joseph, Kindersley

Outlook, Saskatoon City, and Saskatoon Rural deaneries:

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12
(Location in Saskatoon to be announced)

Wadena and Humboldt deaneries:

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 26
at St. Augustine, Humboldt

Mark your calendars and watch for more details about registration, coming soon in your parish bulletin and on the diocesan website. Everyone is welcome!