

An Introduction to Some of the Changes Associated with the Roman Missal

September 2011

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Within the last decade the Church has issued at least ten major documents on the Eucharist, including an apostolic exhortation following the 2005 Synod, five apostolic letters, an encyclical, two instructions, and the third edition of the *Missale Romanum*.¹ However, the one that will touch the lives of the faithful most dramatically will be the 2002 Roman Missal with its General Instruction. As this Roman Missal has been introduced around the world, there have been a number of responses to this new text.

In this presentation, I want to provide some background to the 2002 Roman Missal and its General Instruction, including how this text has evolved. Then I will consider some of the issues connected with the promulgation of a new liturgical text, including the process of promulgation, the need for liturgical adaptations, the challenge of liturgical translations. I will examine some of the changes that were incorporated in this General Instruction. I will close by considering the importance of interpretation and implementation as this text gets introduced into our local churches.

A. The Nature of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal

On March 25, 2002, the third edition of the *Missale Romanum* was released with the new Latin edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal as an integral part of the Missal. This General Instruction consists of 399 numbered norms, which are divided into an introduction and nine chapters. All the changes are now in effect, even though the applicable vernacular translation has not yet been approved in some countries. Complete implementation of the GIRM will not occur until after the vernacular version of the new Roman Missal is approved and published, and its contents are effectively communicated to all concerned.

This new General Instruction is the introductory text to the third edition of the Roman Missal. The other two editions of the Missal were issued in 1970 and 1975, each containing a General

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum caritatis*, on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, February 22, 2007; BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Letter, *Motu Proprio, Summorum Pontificum*, on the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970, July 7, 2007; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, For the Year of The Eucharist, October 7, 2004; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Spiritus et Sponsa*, On the 40th anniversary of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 2003; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy, May 31, 1998; JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, Norms concerning the more grave delicts reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, April 30, 2001; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, April 17, 2003; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS (CDWDS), Instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, April 23, 2004; CDWDS, Fifth Instruction for The Right Implementation of The Constitution on The Sacred Liturgy of The Second Vatican Council, *Liturgiam authenticam*, on the Use of Vernacular Languages in The Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy, March 28, 2001

Instruction. Aside from these three editions of the General Instruction, there have been other texts and variations as preliminary versions (in 1969 and 2000) and as relatively minor updates of existing versions (in 1972 and 1983). In this approach, the GIRM is viewed not as a document wholly distinct from the Missal but as an integral part of it.

As universal law, the GIRM has the highest authority of any kind of written juridic norm, equivalent to the canons of the Code. The GIRM is a unique kind of document, a text of liturgical legislation of the universal Latin Church, which contains doctrinal and pastoral orientations and marks “a significant shift away from the highly rubrical and juridical nature of the introductory documentation to the Tridentine rites.”²

Some historical background to the new General Instruction will provide a context for appreciating its significance.³ The 1570 Roman Missal,⁴ promulgated with the apostolic constitution *Quo primum* on July 14, 1570, was very similar to the 1474 edition, which in turn faithfully followed the Missal used at the time of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). To provide norms for the celebration of Mass, the 1570 Missal included three introductory sections that were placed before the liturgical texts themselves; these sections focused on the ritual and rubrical elements of the Mass. It was compulsory that all future reprints and editions of the *Missale romanum* start with a preliminary text containing these rubrics for the celebrant; furthermore, following these rubrics became compulsory.

The first section in the 1570 Missal was entitled *Rubricae Generales Missalis* (General Rubrics of the Missal) and included general norms about the ranks of feasts, the choice of Mass texts, the time for celebrating Mass, the color of vestments, the preparation of the altar, etc. The second section entitled, *Ritus Servandus in Celebratione Missae* (The Rite to be Observed in the Celebration of Mass), gave detailed instructions for the priest and the server on how to celebrate Mass. This section was rooted in the Roman *Ordines* of the seventh century and reflected a time when people received communion infrequently, did not receive communion under two kinds and understood Latin minimally. The third section was entitled *De Defectibus in Celebratione Missarum Occurrentibus* (Concerning Defects Occurring in the Celebration of Masses) and highlighted various problems that could occur during Mass with the appropriate solutions, e.g., what to do if the priest discovered that water rather than wine had been poured into the chalice.

The 1570 Missal remained substantially unchanged until the 1950s when Pope Pius XII

² Kevin W. IRWIN, “The Revised *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*: Issues in Liturgical Theology and American Pastoral Implementation,” *The Jurist*, 60 (2000), p. 235.

³ For a summary of this background, see Joseph JUNGMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite. Its Origins and Development*, revised and abridged (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1959); Frederick MCMANUS, “From the *Rubricae Generales* and *Ritus Servandus* of 1570 to the *Institutio Generalis* of 1969,” Kathleen HUGHES, ed., *Finding Voice to Give God Praise* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), pp. 214-221; Dennis SMOLARSKI, *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal 1969-2002. A Commentary* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), pp. 5-11. For references to the first four versions of the GIRM, see *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts [DOL]* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1982), documents 203-208.

⁴ *Missale romanum, ex decreto sacrosancti Concilii tridentini restitutum summorum pontificum cura recognitum cum versionibus lingua anglica exaratis et a rite approbatis actis ab apostolica sede confirmatis* (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1964).

introduced changes in the rites of Holy Week⁵ and the first section, the General Rubrics, was revised in the 1960s. Then with the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the Second Vatican Council called for a revision in the rite of Mass “in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly shown, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.”⁶ For the next several years, the Consilium for the Implementation of the Sacred Liturgy revised the Order of Mass by keeping the basic structure of the Mass intact and making changes based on a renewed understanding of the origins of the liturgy. Some changes tried to deal with issues such as the clericalization of the liturgy with the priest reciting all the texts of the liturgy, while others permitted the possibility of some optional prayers. Within this revision, an appreciation of liturgical place developed with a new awareness of the whole gathering space of the assembled community as well as the various locations used for the variety of liturgical actions, i.e., a chair for the presider, an ambo for the proclamation of the word and an altar for the Eucharistic action. These changes provide background for an understanding of the new General Instruction.

After the Second Vatican Council, the first GIRM was published on April 6, 1969, when the Sacred Congregation of Rites promulgated the *Ordo Missae*.⁷ However, certain groups believed that the revised Order of the Mass was a break with the tradition of the Church.⁸ As a result, an introduction was added to the second edition of the GIRM, which was released when the Roman Missal was first published on March 26, 1970.⁹ This introduction with separate numbering was separate in all the versions of the GIRM until the 2000 text. Moreover, as early as November 1969, the Congregation for Divine Worship felt obliged to issue a declaration explaining that the GIRM should not be looked on as a doctrinal, dogmatic statement, but rather as a pastoral and ritual instruction.¹⁰ It included pastoral explanations of the meaning of the various parts of the Mass, based on solid historical research and pertinent liturgical principles. In contrast to the introductory sections of the 1570 Roman Missal, the 1970 GIRM was considered “a very impressive document,”¹¹ with a broad theological framework, regulations that were flexible and intelligible, and directives that could facilitate pastorally effective celebrations.

The next edition was promulgated by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship on December 23, 1972. It incorporated the changes necessitated by the abolition of the subdiaconate and

⁵ Since 1570, some changes were introduced to the Roman Missal by Clement VIII (1604), Urban VIII (1634), Leo XIII (1884), Pius X (1911 and 1913), Benedict XV (1920), Pius XII (1955), and John XXIII (1962).

⁶ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1963, n. 50, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, rev. translation (New York: Costello Publishing, 1996), p. 135. [Hereafter, abbreviated SC. All quotations from the council will be taken from this text.]

⁷ See *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 83 (1969), pp. 319-356.

⁸ For a description of this strong opposition, see Annibale BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, M. J. O'CONNELL, trans. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), pp. 284-290, and p. 386, footnote 53.

⁹ See *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 84 (1970), pp. 226-240

¹⁰ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, declaration, *Institutio Generalis Missale Romani*, November 18, 1969, in *DOL*, no. 204, par. 1369.

¹¹ R. Kevin SEASOLTZ, *New Liturgy, New Laws* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980), p. 86.

the expansion of the duties of the acolyte.¹² The next edition of the GIRM was published when the second edition of the Roman Missal was promulgated on March 27, 1975. The fifth version is that of September 12, 1983 when the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* was promulgated and minor changes (impacting only thirteen norms) were introduced into the GIRM.¹³

The third edition of the Roman Missal was approved by Pope John Paul II on Holy Thursday, 2000 (April 10, 2000) and promulgated by the CDWDS on April 20, 2000. A version of the GIRM was released on July 27, 2000 so that the Church might prepare for the publication of the third edition of the Roman Missal. While the Missal took effect the same year, on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (June 25, 2000), it was not published until March 25, 2002, when a new version of the GIRM was included in the Missal. Here we can note the distinction between the promulgation of a liturgical text and its publication.

B. Issues Connected With the Promulgation and Publication of a New Liturgical Text

I. Process for Promulgation and Publication

The usual procedure for the publication of a new liturgical book involves two phases, each with a number of stages.¹⁴ The first phase consists of the actions of the CDWDS, while the second occurs in the country which prepares and uses the vernacular edition of the book. For the new edition of a liturgical book, the Congregation undertakes many years of preparatory work involving consultation with scholars and other research. When the text is completed by the Congregation, an *editio typica* in Latin is approved by the Holy Father, promulgated by decree of the CDWDS, and published. This is the authoritative version upon which all translations are based. The liturgical laws in the book, both *praenotanda* and rubrics, enter into force on the date the rite itself takes effect, as indicated in the decree of promulgation.

The second phase in the publication of a new liturgical ritual involves the translation of the *editio typica* into the vernacular. For example, the conference of bishops in each English-speaking country obtains the assistance of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), which provides a translation to the conference. While the translation is being done, the liturgical commission connected with the conference of bishops begins to prepare the local adaptations that are permitted in the rite itself. Once the translation and adaptations have been approved by the conference, the text is sent to the CDWDS for the required *recognitio* (c. 838, §3). The Congregation may make some changes to the text, or it may direct the conference to make certain changes. The Congregation attempts to ensure that all translations faithfully reflect the official Latin text, in

¹² See *Ephemerides liturgicae*, 87 (1973), pp. 121-124.

¹³ See *Notitiae*, 19 (1983), pp. 540-543. Some of the changes concerned the homily, concelebration, reservation of the Eucharist, and the architecture of churches.

¹⁴ For an analysis of these phases, see John M. HUELS, *Liturgy and Law. Liturgical Law in the System of Roman Catholic Canon Law* (Montreal: Wilson & Lafleur, 2006), pp. 91-93. See also Ann REHRAUER, "Current Issues in Liturgical and Sacramental Law," in *Canon Law Society of America Proceedings*, 62 (2000), pp. 245-259.

accordance with the principles of translation of the 2001 instruction, *Liturgiam authenticam (LA)*.¹⁵ Once the Congregation approves the translation, the conference of bishops issues a decree declaring that the new text is to be used in all the dioceses of the conference territory; however, the Latin *editio typica* may also be used (cf. c. 928).

In the case of the third *editio typica* of the Roman Missal, the preparation process took more than ten years. Pope John Paul II approved a new edition of the Roman Missal on January 11, 2000. On Holy Thursday, April 20, 2000, the CDWDS promulgated the *editio typica tertia* of the Roman Missal, noting that it would become effective on the Feast of Pentecost, June 25, 2000.¹⁶ However, the text of the Roman Missal was not published at this time. In July 2000, the Congregation released the General Instruction of the Roman Missal apart from the Missal itself, even though this GIRM was not promulgated separately. This was done so that the contents of the GIRM could become familiar and that the translation work might begin.

On March 18, 2002, the CDWDS presented the third published edition of the *Missale Romanum* to Pope John Paul II, and this text was released to the press on March 25, 2002. In light of the variety of important dates associated with the GIRM, one may legitimately refer to the 2000 Roman Missal (date of promulgation) or the 2002 Roman Missal (date of publication).

The 2002 version of the GIRM introduced a significant number of changes to the 2000 text.¹⁷ Some of these include the possibility of kneeling after the *Agnus Dei* (n. 43), singing the sequence before the Alleluia instead of after it (n. 64), singing the offertory chant even without a procession with the gifts (n. 74), an explanation for the commingling (n. 83) and for the dismissal (n. 90c), and the option that the principal celebrant at a concelebration may sing or recite the doxology alone (n. 236).

With the publication of the Roman Missal, conferences of bishops began preparation of the vernacular translations of the Missal and the GIRM. Some countries, e.g., Canada, require translations into more than one official language, e.g., English and French. With respect to the implementation of the new edition of the Roman Missal in Canada, the directives of the diocesan bishop are to be followed, taking into account some of the actions of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

¹⁵ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, March 28, 2001. For a reflection on this instruction, see Peter JEFFERY, “A Chant Historian Reads *Liturgiam Authenticam*,” *Worship*, 78 (2004), pp. 2-24, 139-164, 236-265, 309-341.

¹⁶ This will become a key date to resolve various questions and cases related to the GIRM as well as the date used to decide when various customs might attain the force of law. See HUELS, *Liturgy and Law*, p. 94.

¹⁷ See the “Chart of Changes Introduced into 2002 Edition of the *Institutio Generalis*,” in International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *The English translation of the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal,”* 2002, p. xxvii. “It should be noted that the version of the *Institutio* that appears in the third edition of the *Missale Romanum* has introduced a number of changes into the 2000 edition of the *Institutio* (see Chart of Changes, p. xxvii). Some seventy-four minor changes involve spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or footnote numbering or placement. The other changes, contained in 130 paragraphs of the *Institutio*, involve, for example, additions of texts, deletions of texts, changes of words, and additions of references” (*Ibid.*, p. v).

(CCCB). Moreover, as permitted by the GIRM, each country seeks approval of several adaptations,¹⁸ which will become particular law for that country.¹⁹ While awaiting the response of the Apostolic See on these matters, the CCCB had recommended that diocesan bishops advise pastors and the rest of the faithful to continue their present practices. As of September 25, 2011, dioceses in Canada can begin to implement some of the changes that will be coming with the introduction of the revised Roman Missal.

II. Translation of Liturgical Texts and *Liturgiam authenticam*²⁰

One of the most important issues connected with understanding the new Roman Missal involves translation of liturgical texts. On March 28, 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments issued the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy. It took effect on April 25, 2001. The document provides detailed rules, principles, and criteria to assist conferences of bishops, and those who advise them, in the translation of the liturgical books from Latin to the vernacular languages, both the prayer and scriptural texts and the liturgical laws. The document consists of 133 articles and 86 footnotes and establishes many new norms, far too many to summarize here. Articles 19 to 33 are on general principles for all translation.

Liturgiam authenticam is the fifth in a series of Instructions for the right implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, and it supersedes all earlier norms on liturgical translation,²¹ except those in the 1994 Instruction on the Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, *Varietates legitimatae*. The guiding principle of *Liturgiam authenticam* may be found in article 20: “[...] it is to be kept in mind from the beginning that the translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in

¹⁸ The CCCB is considering adaptations for the following paragraphs of the GIRM: nn. 43, 48, 74, 82, 87, 160, 275, 279, 283, 301, 326, 329, 339, 342, 346, 373, 393, 394. See *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Including Proposed Adaptations for the Dioceses of Canada* (Ottawa: CCCB, October 2004).

¹⁹ Other conferences of bishops have received the *recognitio* of the CDWDS for their adaptations and translation of the GIRM. For example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops received approval for its adaptations on April 17, 2002 (Prot. N. 1381/01/L) and for the translation of the GIRM on March 17, 2003 (Prot. N. 2235/02/L); the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales received approval for the translation of the General Instruction on August 17, 2004 (Prot. N. 2368/02/L).

²⁰ See Amy Jill Strickland, “*Liturgiam authenticam*: Canonical Implications,” unpublished article; John M. Huels, “*Liturgiam authenticam*: Canonical Observations,” *Rite* published by Liturgy Training Publications (August/September 2001); John M. Huels, “Canonical Notes on *Liturgiam authenticam*,” in *Celebrate!*, 1/41 (Jan.-Feb. 2002), pp. 24-27; Anscar J. Chupungco, “*Liturgiam Authenticam* and Inculturation,” *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 39 (2002), pp. 95-100; Frederick McManus, “Liturgical Translation before *Liturgiam Authenticam*,” in *Celebrate!*, 2/41 (March-April 2002), pp. 21-24; Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb, Chairman of the Committee on the Liturgy, address at plenary meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on June 14, 2001.

²¹ Chupungco notes that the instruction gives no consideration to its predecessor *Comme le prévoit*, the Instruction that the *Consilium* issued in 1969 as guide to the translation of liturgical texts (“*Liturgiam Authenticam* and Inculturation”, pp. 99-100).

the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.” For example, vernacular translations are not to strive to utilize “inclusive” or “non-discriminatory” language (nn. 27 and 31). Instead, “it is the task of catechists or of the homilist to transmit that right interpretation of the texts that excludes any prejudice or unjust discrimination on the basis of persons, gender, social condition, race or other criteria. Although considerations such as these may sometimes help one in choosing among various translations of a certain expression, they are not to be considered reasons for altering either a biblical text or a liturgical text that has been duly promulgated” (n. 29). The instruction notes that the vocabulary of the vernacular translation must be at once comprehensible to ordinary people and still expressive of the dignity and oratorical rhythm of Roman liturgical texts. Liturgical translation must permit us entry into the Church’s dynamic dialogue of faith and praise with the Blessed Trinity. At times, modern modes of expression must give way to expressions which, drawn from patristic sources and harmonized with biblical texts, may strike some as less contemporary, but which have traditionally evoked the mysteries of our faith in deep and inexpressible ways.

While translations of texts take place using various methods, e.g., formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence, it seems that *Liturgiam authenticam* leans heavily on formal correspondence, as it subtly warns against the dangers of dynamic equivalence. It urges the preservation of Latin rhetoric, grammatical usages and vocabulary (*LA*, nn. 57-59). It acknowledges that, while liturgical prayer is formed within a culture, it is also formative of culture and thus calls for a liturgical language that might be expected to diverge from ordinary speech.

Since “it is recommended that there be a single translation of the liturgical books for each vernacular language” (n. 87), *Liturgiam authenticam* allows for “the establishment of ‘mixed commissions,’ that is, those in whose work several Conferences of Bishops participate” (n. 92). These commissions are erected by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, at the request of the bishops’ conferences involved. They must clearly be seen as instruments of the Bishops who bear the sole responsibility for developing vernacular typical editions.

The direction set by *Liturgiam authenticam* has implications not only for the translation of the GIRM but also for that of the new missal. For example, while *Liturgiam authenticam* envisions few changes in texts that people have committed to memory (*LA*, nn. 64 and 74), the translation work that followed this instruction seems to have made several changes, e.g., in the *Confiteor*, the *Gloria*, the dialogue that begins the Eucharistic prayer, the *Sanctus*, and the prayer in preparation for Holy Communion.

The changes in the people’s parts include:

THE GREETING

Priest: The Lord be with you. *People:* **And with your spirit**

PENITENTIAL RITE, FORM A

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have **greatly sinned**, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, **through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;** **therefore** I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

PENITENTIAL RITE, FORM B

Priest: **Have mercy on us, O Lord.** People: **For we have sinned against you.**

Priest: **Show us, O Lord, your mercy.** People: And grant us your salvation.

THE GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, **and on earth peace to people of good will.**

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, **Only Begotten Son**, Lord God, Lamb of God, **Son of the Father**,
you take away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us;**

you take away the **sins** of the world, **receive our prayer;**

you are seated at the right hand of the Father, **have mercy on us.**

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things **visible and invisible.**

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the **Only Begotten** Son of God, **born** of the Father **before all ages.** God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial with the Father;** through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, **and** by the Holy Spirit **was incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he **suffered death** and was buried, **and rose again on the third day** in **accordance** with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son **who** with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, **and in** Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, **who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,** was crucified, died and was buried; he descended **into hell;** on the third day he rose again **from the dead;** he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand **of God the Father almighty; from there he will come** to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Priest: Pray brothers and sisters, that **my sacrifice and yours** may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

People: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his **holy** Church.

THE SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord **God of hosts.** Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER PREFACE

Priest: The Lord be with you. *People:* **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts. *People:* We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *People:* **It is right and just.**

MYSTERY OF FAITH (formerly the Memorial Acclamation)

Priest: **The mystery of faith.**

People: (one of the following is used)

A. We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

B. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, **O Lord**, until you come again.

C. Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

COMMUNION

Priest: **Behold** the Lamb of God, **behold him** who takes away the sins of the world.

Blessed are those **called to the supper of the Lamb.**

People: Lord, I am not worthy **that you should enter under my roof**,
but only say the word and **my soul** shall be healed

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These were made partially because ICEL accepted one crucial point found in *Liturgiam authenticam*, namely, the significance of the language of Sacred Scripture in the translation of the Mass. As one reflects on these examples, one recognizes that they attempt to be practical examples of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Yet, these new translations will require many new musical settings for the people's parts of the Mass, so the faithful will be faced with the challenge of incorporating these new settings into their current repertoire.

C. Structure of the 2002 GIRM and Reasons for Changes

As we review the structure of the GIRM, we realize that it remains largely unchanged from the 1975 edition, although the number of paragraphs has increased from 340 to 399, with a new chapter concerning adaptations by the diocesan bishop and by the conferences of bishops. Since the new GIRM is primarily a repetition of the doctrinal and pastoral principles expressed by the Second Vatican Council and the earlier General Instructions, the Church is challenged to return to the principles of the liturgical renewal.

Various authors have analysed the various changes in the new GIRM. For example, Dennis Smolarski describes six categories: editorial changes; insertions to correct inconsistencies; insertions and emendations based on liturgical documents issued since 1975; omissions and emendations due to twenty-five years of experience; additions for consistency with recent liturgical books; and other changes.²² Many of the changes have come from the documents that have been published since the 1975 edition of the GIRM, including *The Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar* (May 29, 1977); the second edition of the *Lectionary for Mass* (January 21, 1981); the *Book of Blessings* (May 31, 1984); the *Ceremonial of Bishops* (September 14, 1984); the second edition of the *Ordo cantus Missae* (November 22, 1986); the second edition of the *Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests,*

²² Dennis Smolarski, "A General Look at the New General Instruction," in *Rite*, vol. 32, no. 1 (January 2001), pp. 7-9; Dennis Smolarski, *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal 1969-2002. A Commemorative* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), pp. 26-38.

and of Deacons (June 29, 1989); the Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Varietates legitimae*, on the Roman liturgy and inculturation (January 25, 1994); the interdicasterial Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the lay faithful in the ministry of priests, *Eccelsiae de mysterio* (August 15, 1997); and two apostolic letters of John Paul II (*Vicesimus quintus annus*, December 4, 1988 and *Dies Domini*, May 31, 1998).

John Huels has used similar categories in classifying the changes in the GIRM as “editorial changes; fuller descriptions of liturgical actions; clarifications and explanations (e.g., that the absolution of the Penitential Rite lacks sacramental efficacy, in n. 51); general exhortations (e.g., on welcoming priests to concelebrate, in n. 200); and theological statements.”²³ Huels also notes that some abuses have been corrected by emphasizing what was implicit in the previous GIRM. Moreover, he notes that the new GIRM introduces seventy-two new universal laws.²⁴ Twenty-three of these are rules that are not rigid; some allow variations while others make recommendations. The remaining forty-nine call for a greater uniformity in the liturgy. In this latter category, many of these pertain to minor rubrical matters, e.g., norms for incensation, while others involve restrictions, e.g., the sequence is to be sung, not recited (n. 64). Still other changes clarify the roles of acolytes and extraordinary ministers of communion, e.g., only a priest or deacon places the gifts on the altar (n. 75).

Recognizing these numerous changes, this section will focus on the fundamental theological and liturgical principles underlying the new GIRM.

D. Fundamental Theological and Liturgical Principles Underlying the Changes in the GIRM

Since the new GIRM is primarily a repetition of the doctrinal and pastoral principles expressed by the Second Vatican Council and the earlier General Instructions, the Church is challenged to return to the principles of the liturgical renewal.

I. Importance of the Assembly

One of the first themes that emerges from the GIRM is the importance of the assembly: “The Eucharistic celebration is an action of Christ and the Church, namely, the holy people united to and ordered under the Bishop. For this reason, the Eucharistic celebration pertains to the whole Body of the Church, manifests it, and has effects on it” (n. 91). This theology challenges “any appearance of individualism” (n. 95) and constantly reiterates the importance of the unity of the assembly. The GIRM calls for standing for the Eucharistic Prayer, except for the consecration, and then remaining to stand until all have received communion. The concern for unity is found in reference to the posture of those assembled: “a common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the Sacred Liturgy” (n. 42). Those assembled will receive communion in the hand or on the tongue after making a simple bow in reverence. Even

²³ John Huels, “The New General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Subsidiarity or Uniformity,” *Worship*, 75 (2001), p. 505.

²⁴ Huels, “The New General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Subsidiarity or Uniformity,” pp. 505-507.

the design of a church is addressed, as an element which should “bring about a close and coherent unity that is clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people” (n. 294).

The issue of posture is one example of this focus of the unity of the assembly: “A common bodily posture, to be observed by all those taking part, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered together for the Sacred Liturgy, for it expresses the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also fosters them” (GIRM, no. 42). The faithful should stand from the invitation, *Orate, fratres* (Pray, brethren), before the Prayer over the Offerings until the end of Mass, except for the consecration. Traditionally, the common posture for Christian prayer in the early Church was standing. Standing was seen as a mark of respect, honor, and Easter joy; the Council of Nicea (325AD) prescribed that, on Sundays and during the Easter Season, prayers should always be said standing, rather than while kneeling (canon 20).

Despite this focus on unity, the new GIRM reiterates the roles proper to the ordained and to the lay faithful with precise terminology of “ordinary,” “extraordinary,” “commissioned,” “installed” and “ordained” ministers. It outlines the responsibilities of a number of lay liturgical functions: psalmist, cantor, choir, sacristan, commentator, those who take up the collection, greeters and ushers, master of ceremonies (nn. 100-106). It clearly defines the liturgical role of the deacon who has his own proper functions at Mass (nn. 94, 171) and urges that when he is present he should exercise his ministry (n. 171). The GIRM stresses that this variety of offices and roles is desirable and should be maintained; each group should carry out solely that which pertains to it (nn. 5, 91). One consequence of this principle is that a reader should proclaim the readings; a deacon or, in his absence, a priest other than the celebrant should proclaim the Gospel (n. 59); if there are several readings, it is better to distribute them among a number of readers (n. 109). Since each minister should ideally do only what is part of his or her specific ministry, it is preferable not to have one person serve as both reader and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at the same Mass. The ideal envisioned by the GIRM is a community of faith with an adequate number of ministers, each of whom performs his or her assigned task during the Eucharistic celebration, all in service of the community’s worship of God.

II. The Bishop and the Liturgy

The GIRM also places a new emphasis on the role of the bishop in the liturgical ministry of his diocese. It explicitly states that he is the “moderator, promoter, and guardian” of the liturgical life of the diocese (n. 22). The GIRM challenges the bishop to assist the faithful of his diocese to “grasp more deeply a genuine sense of the rites and liturgical texts, and therefore be led to an active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist” (n. 22). In part, this is accomplished in leading by example, as celebrations where the bishop presides are to be “a model for the entire diocese” (n. 22) and are to follow the norms for episcopal celebrations as outlined in the 1984 *Ceremonial of Bishops* (n. 112). Furthermore, the GIRM reminds the bishop that he may establish local norms regulating the discipline of concelebration, altar servers, Communion under both kinds, and matters dealing with the design, construction, and furnishing of churches (n. 387).

III. Role of the Priest

The GIRM also highlights the role of the priest, who acts *in persona Christi capitis* when

presiding at the Eucharist (nn. 27, 93). The priest addresses God “in the name of the whole people” (n. 2), who are referred to as the “royal priesthood of the faithful” (n. 5). These prayers addressed to God in the name of the entire people are referred to as “presidential prayers” (n. 30), which must be spoken in a loud and clear voice, while the assembly listens attentively (n. 32). In contrast, when the priest prays in his own name seeking divine assistance to exercise his ministry, this is done quietly (n. 33), e.g., before the reading of the Gospel. While the prayers of blessing during the Preparation of the Gifts may be prayed aloud, the other prayers at this time should be recited quietly (nn. 142, 143, 145).

IV. Role of the Deacon

A new section is added describing the ministry of the deacon, including both an enumeration of the particular responsibilities of the deacon at Mass, and several clarifications. Directions are given for carrying the *Book of the Gospels* in the entrance procession, for assisting the priest during incense (n. 173), for asking for the blessing before the Gospel (n. 175), for inviting the assembly to exchange the sign of peace (n. 181), for giving the final admonition with hands joined (n. 185), and for wearing the dalmatic, the vesture of the deacon (n. 338). His role is outlined: he “proclaims the gospel reading, sometimes preaches God’s word, announces the intentions of the general intercessions, ministers to the priest, prepares the altar and serves the celebration of the sacrifice, distributes the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and from time to time gives directions regarding the people’s gestures and posture” (n. 94).

V. Emphasis on Sign and Symbol

The new GIRM has a marked emphasis on sign and symbol,²⁵ which calls for a need to be aware of developments in liturgical theology. The GIRM demands that the ritual forms be taken seriously so that the liturgy can contribute to an experience of the paschal mystery. For example, the practice of communion under two kinds is encouraged not merely because this is more faithful to the Lord’s command but because of the sign value of the full act of communion (n. 282; cf. nn. 14 and 85). Underlying this emphasis on the sign value of the Eucharist is the appreciation of the difference between engaging in a “theology of liturgy” as opposed to practising “liturgical theology.”²⁶ The first uses the liturgy to illustrate doctrine, while the latter views the liturgy as a basic source of theological thinking, allowing the symbols of the liturgy to echo within those who experience them, so that the ritual and the symbols themselves

²⁵ For a critique of the use of symbol in the new GIRM, see Gerard Moore, *Understanding the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2007), pp. 32-39.

²⁶ This distinction was articulated by Alexander Schmemmann and developed by Aidan Kavanagh, Kevin Irwin and David W. Fagerberg. See Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh Moorhouse (London: Faith Press, 1966); Thomas Fisch, ed., *Liturgy and Tradition. Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Valdimir’s Seminary Press, 2003); Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992); Kevin Irwin, *Context and Text. Method in Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994); David W. Fagerberg, *What is Liturgical Theology? A Study in Methodology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992); David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima. What is Liturgical Theology?* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004).

communicate to a given assembly. This corresponds to what Pope Benedict calls the *ars celebrandi*, “an attentiveness to the various kinds of language that the liturgy employs: words and music, gestures and silence, movement, the liturgical colours of the vestments. By its very nature the liturgy operates on different levels of communication which enable it to engage the whole human person.”²⁷

Applied to the rubrics of the liturgy, this method views liturgical gestures as reflecting some of the intended meaning of the rite. As one views the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, one notes that the Church has arranged its elements to correspond to Christ taking the bread and wine (Preparation of the Gifts), blessing them (Eucharistic Prayer), breaking and giving them to his disciples (the Fraction and Communion). In this regard, the liturgical gestures within the Liturgy of the Eucharist highlight three levels at which the bread and wine are to be held: slightly above the altar in a gesture of placing gifts on the altar after they are blessed; showing the consecrated bread and consecrated wine to the people during the consecration and at the invitation to communion; and elevating the gifts at the doxology and Amen at the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer.²⁸ To use gestures of offering at the Preparation of the Gifts or a gesture of elevation at the consecration represents an obvious misunderstanding of the reform of the Eucharist, as well as a misunderstanding of the power of the actions of words, e.g., the blessing of the gifts does not signify offering, whereas the action of the lifting of the gifts on high does. With this in mind, one may appreciate why the new GIRM specifies that it is the priest who puts the gifts on the altar, for “*the preparation of the gifts is fundamentally an action, the action of placing bread and wine on the altar, and not a rite of offering in which the prayers are primary (emphasis in original).*”²⁹ Once the plate and the cup have made physical contact with the altar, the preparation is over. Baldwin notes that a ritual naiveté has characterized the contemporary reform of worship, i.e., an intellectualised bias that disregards the importance of gesture.³⁰

VI. Role of Silence

Another challenge found in the new GIRM involves the fact that silence should be seen as an integral part of a liturgical celebration. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* mentions reverential silence during the liturgy (SC, n. 30) and 1975 GIRM included some guidelines about silence. The 2002 GIRM not only repeats these guidelines (n. 45) but adds a paragraph which highlights the importance of silence “before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily” (n. 56; cf. nn. 66, 128, 130). The purpose of silence at different points in the liturgy depends on the particular part of the

²⁷ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission, February 22, 2007, n. 40.

²⁸ John F. Baldwin, “*Accipit Panem*: The Gesture of the Priest at the Institution Narrative of the Eucharist,” in Nathan MITCHELL and John F. BALDOVIN, eds., *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 125.

²⁹ Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass*, pp. 75-79. See also Dennis C. Smolarski, *Q & A: The Mass* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002), pp. 50-51.

³⁰ Baldwin, “*Accipit Panem*: The Gesture of the Priest at the Institution Narrative of the Eucharist,” p. 131.

celebration: “within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts” (n. 45). As well, silence is essential after the priest invites the assembly to join in prayer by means of the words “Let us pray” so that the assembly may have an opportunity for genuine prayer and “may be conscious of the fact that they are in God’s presence and may formulate their petitions mentally” (n. 54). Through this emphasis on silence, the new GIRM challenges the faithful to reflect on the inclusion of appropriate moments of reflective silence during all liturgical celebrations so that silence might become a regular and comfortable dimension of parish worship and that the faithful may pray in their own way during these reflective moments.

VII. The Homily

The new GIRM strengthens the norms on the homily, noting that it is an integral part of the liturgical action (n. 29). It challenges the homilist to foster a living commentary on the word by leading the assembly to a “fuller understanding and greater effectiveness of the word” (n. 29). The homilist must ensure that the homily is not so much an exegesis but a proclamation of God’s works and an exposition of how God challenges and sustains us in our lives.³¹ The homiletic tradition of the early doctors of the church challenges all homilists to a reflective and prayer-filled contemplation of the scripture readings or the liturgical texts. Homilists need to draw on the scriptures to interpret people’s lives, reflecting “on human life with the aid of the Word of God and [showing] by their preaching as by their lives, that in every place and at every time it is indeed right to praise and thank the Lord.”³²

VIII. Role of Singing and Music

Another new emphasis in the GIRM challenges the faithful to view singing as a fundamental dimension of all celebrations, “well integrated into the overall celebration.”³³ All editions of the GIRM emphasize singing at the Eucharist, especially at liturgically key places, such as before the gospel and during the Eucharistic prayer. The 2002 GIRM enhances such encouragement of singing (nn. 39-41) by emphasizing that “every care must be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and holy days of obligation” (n. 40). Moreover, the 2002 GIRM has been emended in several places so that the

³¹ For a discussion of the importance of liturgical preaching, see National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1982); John Baldovin, “The Nature and Function of the Liturgical Homily,” in *The Way Supplement*, 67 (Spring 1990), pp. 93-101; Charles E. Miller, *Ordained to Preach* (New York: Alba House, 1992); Kevin W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), pp. 96-121; Catholic Association of Teachers of Homiletics, *The State of Homiletics in the Seminaries and Graduate Schools of Theology in the United States. A White Paper of the Catholic Association of Teachers of Homiletics*, 2002, online July 30, 2007 <<http://www.cathomiletics.org/whitepaper.htm>>.

³² National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1982), p. 28.

³³ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission, February 22, 2007, n. 42.

words “sung or” are added to the words “is said,” e.g., for the *Kyrie* (n. 125), the *Gloria* (n. 126), the profession of faith (n. 137), and the preface (n. 216). In the case of the *Sanctus*, the words “sings or recites” in the 1975 GIRM (n. 55b) have been changed to “sings” (n. 79b). These changes implement a principle from the *Ceremonial of Bishops*: “The phrase ‘sing or say’ . . . is to be understood as referring to singing, unless some other consideration rules out singing” (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 118). Furthermore, the faithful are challenged to revisit the common practice of the “recessional” hymn, especially since neither the 2002 GIRM nor the 1975 GIRM makes any reference to this practice. At the same time, the 2002 GIRM does mention a canticle of praise or hymn sung by the assembly after the prayer after communion (nn. 88, 164), thus challenging the community to consider how this might be incorporated into Sunday liturgies.

Connected to the issue of singing is the area of liturgical music. In terms of liturgical music, we recall Vatican II’s teaching on liturgical music, namely, that the Council assigned a certain ministerial function (*munus ministeriale*) to music; this means that “wherever there is song, its root meaning comes first and foremost from the ritual action that is taking place, not from the music.”

Music can accompany ritual actions or might constitute the rite itself, but there is always a dynamic relationship as music weds itself to particular rituals. There are three distinct yet complementary musical-ritual ingredients: the music itself, any text employed with music, and any ritual action accompanying the music and/or text. In light of these ingredients, we can distinguish four specific combinations. The first one, music alone, emphasizes that instrumental music can be a powerful form of ritual music. The second one, music wed to ritual action, involves a situation where textless music is so fused to a specific ritual action that together they form a single unit of meaning. The third one, music united to a text, consists of a text joined to music without any accompanying ritual action. The fourth, music wed to a text, accompanying an action, brings together all three elements in a single ritual moment.

Three criteria are always involved in choosing music for the liturgy: a musical judgement, a pastoral judgement and a liturgical judgement. Keeping in mind the principle of progressive solemnity, the GIRM calls for preference to be given to those parts that are of greater importance (n. 40). There are four different categories:

- a. Acclamations: The acclamations of the Eucharistic Liturgy and other rites arise from the whole gathered assembly and include the Gospel Acclamation, the *Sanctus*, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen
- b. Psalms and Canticles: The Responsorial Psalm “holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God” (no. 61). The *Gloria* should normally be sung on Sundays.
- c. Procession Songs: The Entrance and Communion chants with their psalm verses serve to accompany the two most important processions of the Mass: the entrance procession and the Communion procession, as the People of God gather at the beginning of Mass and as the faithful approach the holy altar to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. Music may also accompany other processions, i.e., procession with gifts and recessional.
- d. Litanies: The Liturgy also has texts like litanies that may be sung; these include the *Kyrie*, the response to the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass, and the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass.

- e. Ritual dialogues and other Hymns: At Mass, many dialogues take place at Mass. As well, other congregational hymns may be used, provided that they are appropriate to the liturgical action.

IX. The Prayer of the Faithful

The GIRM also poses a challenge that involves the prayer of the faithful, which is an exercise of the people's baptismal priesthood as they offer prayers to God for the salvation of all (n. 69) and express the prayer of the entire community (n. 71). In the prayer of the faithful, the presider's introduction to these prayers is not a prayer to God but a statement to the assembly, inviting the faithful to join in prayer for the intentions that will be proposed. The particular structure of the prayer of the faithful requires the presiding priest always to introduce and conclude this part of the liturgy but not to offer the intentions (n. 71). All the faithful need to appreciate and be challenged anew by some of the aspects of this rite:³⁴ the invitations to prayer are statements addressed to the assembly (not to God or Jesus) inviting them to pray for specific topics of concern; in themselves these invitations are not prayers; the actual prayer is said by the assembly in a response such as "Lord, hear our prayer"; prayers of thanksgiving do not belong in this rite; the intentions should not be overly localized, for this prayer of the faithful provides an opportunity for the local church to reach out to the universal church in prayer and concern. Since the prayer of the faithful is essentially a litany, its singing would accentuate the participation of the whole assembly.³⁵

X. Reception of the Eucharist

Another challenge involves the integrity of the Eucharistic liturgy itself, for the GIRM strongly encourages all the gathered assembly to receive communion consecrated at that Mass. Nowhere is it explicitly mentioned that consecrated hosts already in the tabernacle may be used during the communion rite at Mass;³⁶ the GIRM finds this idea so opposed to the spirit of the Mass that it never gives directions concerning such a practice.³⁷ Based on the teachings of the Council of Trent, the Church has called for the practice of receiving communion from the Eucharist consecrated at each particular Mass in order to emphasize that the Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice. Pope Benedict XIV asserted this in 1742,³⁸ and this teaching was repeated by Pius XII in his encyclical *Mediator Dei*,³⁹ by the Second Vatican Council (*SC*, n. 55), by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1967,⁴⁰ in the previous editions of the GIRM, and now

³⁴ For a summary of the ritual issues associated with this rite, see Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass*, pp. 70-72.

³⁵ Joyce A. Zimmerman, "The General Intercessions: Yet Another Visit," *Worship*, 65 (1991), p. 319.

³⁶ Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass*, pp. 74-75. See also Dennis C. Smolarski, "What is the best practice for avoiding going to the tabernacle for extra hosts during Mass?" *Rite*, vol. 38, no. 3 (May-June 2007), p. 28.

³⁷ Paul Turner, *Let Us Pray* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), p. 130.

³⁸ Benedict XIV, encyclical *Certiores effecti*, November 13, 1742, n. 3, online August 22, 2007, <<http://digilander.libero.it/magistero/b14certi.htm>>.

³⁹ Pius XII, Encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, On the Sacred Liturgy, November 20, 1947, n. 121.

⁴⁰ Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, on Eucharistic Worship, May 25, 1967, n. 31.

in the 2002 GIRM where it is strongly encouraged (nn. 85, 243). Irwin notes that this practice has been encouraged for purely theological reasons: “if the faithful customarily received hosts from the sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, they might separate the enactment of the Mass as a *sacrifice* from the reserved *sacrament* located in the tabernacle.”⁴¹ Mass is different from a communion service. Furthermore, pastors need to heed the advice about offering Communion from the chalice whenever permitted: “It is most desirable that the faithful [...] in the instances when it is permitted [...] participate in the chalice” (n. 85). The GIRM also reinforces the symbolic value of this way of receiving Communion (n. 281). This teaching from legislative authority certainly outweighs the provision of the 2004 instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, which states that the chalice should not be administered “where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated” (n. 102).⁴²

XI. Liturgical Objects

A further challenge concerns the dignity and symbolic nature of liturgical objects. For example, the new GIRM highlights the ancient tradition of the altar representing Christ, the living stone (n. 298), thus recognizing the altar as the architectural symbol of Christ in a church. Therefore, the altar is revered by the priest and deacon at the beginning and the end of a Eucharistic liturgy and only those things necessary for the liturgy should be placed on the altar (n. 306). Only the Book of the Gospels should be on the altar before the proclamation of the Gospel, while only the bread and wine and items absolutely necessary, e.g., corporal, purificator, Missal, during the Liturgy of the Eucharist (n. 306). Flowers are better placed around the altar rather than upon it (n. 305). The new GIRM highlights the altar on which Mass is normally celebrated by requiring an altar cloth where “the memorial of the Lord” is celebrated (n. 304) and discourages the decoration of old altars not in use (n. 303). The prayer which follows the Litany of the Saints in the Rite of the Dedication of an Altar highlights the theology associated with the altar: “May this altar be the place where the great mysteries of redemption are accomplished: a place where your people offer their gifts, unfold their good intentions, pour out their prayers, and echo every meaning of their faith and devotion.”

The section on the place of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament has been adjusted and expanded (nn. 314-317). A paragraph on the location of the tabernacle notes that the location of the tabernacle should always be determined “according to the judgment of the diocesan Bishop” (n. 315). It presents two options for such a location: either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, or in another chapel suitable for adoration and the private prayer of the faithful, and which is integrally connected with the church and is conspicuous to the faithful.

In connection with the dignity and symbolic nature of liturgical objects, one might note that the liturgical environment itself represents another challenge posed by the new GIRM. Mark

⁴¹ Kevin W. Irwin, “Overview of GIRM,” *Liturgical Ministry*, 12 (Summer 2003), p. 128.

⁴² For a discussion of this provision of *Redemptionis Sacramentum* in relationship to the new GIRM, see John Huels, “New Eucharistic Discipline in the Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* and the Need for a Reform of Canons 29-34,” *Studies in Canon Law*, 2 (2006), p. 53.

Boyer has outlined five principles associated with the liturgical environment: suitability, simplicity, genuineness, audibility and dignity.⁴³ These principles emphasize that the place or liturgical object must fit its use or purpose, e.g., a suitable place for the celebration of the Eucharist which enables active participation and conveys the image of a gathered assembly (n. 294) poses a definite challenge for all involved in the renovation or construction of churches. The principles also apply to the one altar (n. 299), the cross with the figure of Christ crucified upon it (n. 308), the ambo (n. 309), the chair for the presider (n. 310), places for the faithful (n. 311), the choir (n. 312), place for the reserved sacrament (n. 314), sacred images (n. 318), vessels (n. 329), vestments (nn. 344-345), and liturgical books (n. 349). Recognizing and following these principles will contribute to truly worthy, beautiful signs and symbols of heavenly realities (n. 288).

XII. Clarification of Issues in Previous Instructions

Another challenge involves the way that the GIRM tries to clarify issues that are ambiguous in previous editions, e.g., a paragraph is added regarding the omission of the introductory rites when some celebrations are combined with Mass (n. 46); emphasis is given regarding the importance of the bread and wine being placed on the altar by the priest (n. 75); no reference is made regarding the limitation of women ministering in liturgical ministries (n. 107); the Book of the Gospels, not the Lectionary, is carried in the procession (n. 120d); reference to the coadjutor and the auxiliary bishops is permitted in the Eucharistic prayer, but not other bishops who may be present (n. 149); during Mass the ministers do not genuflect to the tabernacle (n. 274); the cross is to have a figure of Christ crucified upon it (n. 308); Eucharistic Prayer IV with its own preface may be used during Sundays in Ordinary Time (n. 365d). With these clarifications, pastors will be challenged to adjust their liturgical practices accordingly.

As well, the faithful might note some of the new terms and new translations of terms used by the GIRM and should attempt to utilize this more refined vocabulary, e.g., thurible, not censer; entrance chant, not opening song; profound bow, not low bow; collect, not opening prayer; act of penitence, not penitential rite; Roman Missal, not Sacramentary; lector, not reader; prayer of the faithful, not general intercessions; credence table, not side table; prayer over the offerings, not prayer over the gifts; chalice, not cup; communion under both kinds, not communion under both forms.⁴⁴

While some lesser changes in the content of the new GIRM seem to be overemphasized (e.g., the purification of the vessels), resulting in the criticism that the new GIRM is a return to rubricism, the faithful need to remember that the GIRM reinforces basic principles and practices found in the original edition, and it is this content that provides some of the major challenges of the 2002 GIRM.

⁴³ Mark Boyer, "Five Principles Applied to the Liturgical Environment," *The Priest*, vol. 63, no. 6 (June 2007), pp. 35-39, 48.

⁴⁴ Paul Turner, "The Germ of the GIRM," *Ministry & Liturgy*, vol. 30, no. 10 (December 2003-January 2004), p. 10.

E. The New GIRM Needs Interpretation

I. The Art of Interpretation

Besides an awareness of the changes associated with the content of the new GIRM, one must also be aware of the challenge of the art of interpretation. Due to several recent developments, i.e., the centralization of liturgical authority, a restriction in cultural adaptation and a preoccupation with liturgical abuses, liturgical law has become a sophisticated discipline based on the principles of hermeneutics. When investigating the meaning of particular texts in the GIRM, all must be aware of the appropriate rules for interpreting these texts. Canons 7-22 of the *Code of Canon Law* provide some basic rules of interpretation which apply to the interpretation of liturgical laws.⁴⁵

As one reads the GIRM, it is immediately apparent that this text has within it, not only norms of liturgical law, but also statements that provide valuable doctrinal, liturgical and pastoral statements. In fact, these various statements serve as the broader context within which one must interpret and apply a particular provision of the GIRM. Ladislav Örsy has developed this aspect of the context of the law, emphasizing that context is an important dimension in the interpretation of a particular norm. Örsy notes that no word stands alone but appears in a context, and the fuller meaning of particular words can be grasped only in that broader framework. The context for liturgical law includes a variety of disciplines, e.g., systematic and sacramental theology, liturgical theology, philosophy, empirical sciences, history, anthropology and other social sciences, pastoral studies, etc.⁴⁶ This presents another challenge associated with the new GIRM, for the interpreter must ensure that the larger context for liturgical law is always used in its interpretation and application.

Moreover, within the GIRM, theological and juridical statements are often combined in the same text. Knowledge of the doctrinal foundation of a text will enable the interpreter to consider the norms in light of the deepest purpose of the law. A good interpreter of liturgical law must know the theology on which liturgical law is based, as well as differing degrees of weight that are attributed to these theological statements. Furthermore, one must be able to distinguish the literary forms in the text as well as the different levels of obligation imposed by the particular literary form. For instance, one needs to acknowledge the difference among the following kinds of statements: one that uses words such as “is obliged,” “is necessary,” “is required”; one expressed in the form of an exhortation, e.g., using words like “should”; one that involves a recommendation, not imposing any legal obligation, but expressing an ideal or preferred manner of acting; and one that involves a discretionary norm which allows an option. One also needs a certain sensitivity to the cultural context in which the law is being applied, as well as a respect

⁴⁵ For a consideration of the nature of liturgical law, see Huels, *Liturgy and Law*, pp. 83-117; Frederick McManus, “Liturgical Law,” in Anscar Chupungo, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. I (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997), pp. 399-420; Thomas Richstatter, “Changing Styles of Liturgical Law,” *The Jurist*, 38 (1978), pp. 415-425; Thomas Richstatter, *Liturgical Law: New Style, New Spirit* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1977); R. Kevin Seasoltz, *New Liturgy, New Laws* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980).

⁴⁶ Frederick McManus, “*Praenotanda* of Ordination: The Doctrinal Context of the Liturgical Law,” in *The Jurist*, 56 (1996), p. 490.

for the local customs of a particular community. One of the best ways to discover how a law is to be interpreted and implemented is to consider how local Christian communities actually observe it.

II. The Nature of Rubrics

Another challenge in the interpretation of the GIRM involves the proper understanding of the nature of rubrics. While *rubrics* may be understood in a technical way as the precise directions to the minister, printed in red, found in the text of the rites themselves and describing what the minister is to do in the celebration of the rite, they always need to be understood in the larger context of the *praenotanda* or the introductions to the various liturgical rites. The rubrics of a given liturgy are based on tradition, theology, culture, the nature of symbol, the demands of the Gospel, and the needs of the community. Paul Turner reminds us that “the Mass should not be confused with its rubrics any more than a building should not be confused with its blueprints. [...] The Mass needs the rubrics in order to be the Mass, but it takes more than rubrics to pray.”⁴⁷ He captures a necessary balance and the appropriate attitude as one tries to implement the rubrics and the *praenotanda* of the Roman Missal.

F. The New GIRM Needs Implementation

When one considers the implementation of the new GIRM, one becomes aware of several other challenges, the first being the need for an appropriate attitude.⁴⁸ While the changes in the GIRM in no way compare with the changes in the liturgy that followed Vatican II, pastors need to avoid any unnecessary pain associated with ongoing liturgical renewal. The entire parish community needs to be informed about changes impacting the liturgical life of the parish. Since liturgical practices deeply affect the life of a community, a certain amount of patience will be essential. Rapid change in this area must be avoided at all costs in order to avoid conflict, resistance and resentment, no matter how worthy or liturgically correct these changes may be.

Perhaps the most significant issue in initiating any liturgical change revolves around the preparation of all the faithful for any proposed changes. Priests, people and all entrusted with the task of bringing about liturgical changes will need to understand clearly the reasons behind the changes. Besides convincing reasons for the change, all will need time, repeated instruction and gentle persuasion before the changes can be implemented gracefully.

During the implementation all need to have both an appreciation of unity within liturgical rites⁴⁹ as well as a certain tolerance for diversity in the disciplinary laws of the GIRM. While

⁴⁷ Paul Turner, *Let Us Pray* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), p. 169.

⁴⁸ For a consideration of the attitudes needed for the implementation of liturgical changes, see David Hascha, “Liturgical Differences,” *America*, vol. 190, no. 16 (May 10, 2004), p. 6.

⁴⁹ John Huels has considered this theme in many of his writings; for example: “Unauthorized Liturgical Adaptations,” in *More Disputed Questions in the Liturgy*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996, pp. 9-31; “Principles of Liturgical Adaptation in Light of Justice and Forgiveness,” *Proceedings of the Canon Law Society of America*, 61 (1999), pp. 1-26; “The New General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Subsidiarity or Uniformity,” *Worship*, 75 (2001), pp. 482-511.

uniformity of liturgical practice is of high value, expressing and deepening the unity of faith, uniformity is a means to unity and not an end in itself. Too great an insistence on uniformity may well have the opposite effect, causing a parish to be more divided rather than more unified. The value of unity involves a certain degree of uniformity in the celebration of the rites, for the nature of ritual demands the consistent performance of set actions within the fixed structure or pattern found in the established texts. The various liturgical rites contain basic structures and essential elements that cannot be changed or adapted or dispensed, e.g., each sacrament requires for validity certain essential elements and certain words. In addition, there are ritual structures which belong to the authentic nature of a particular rite, e.g., the liturgy of the word requires readings from scripture and the liturgy of the Eucharist requires Eucharistic prayers. While the unity of the liturgical rites demands that the basic structures must be maintained in fidelity to the tradition, this unity does not require uniformity in every detail. Thus, the GIRM calls for the substantial unity and integrity of the Roman Rite, while allowing for local options and adaptations on matters not requiring wider uniformity, e.g., in liturgies with special groups, all might gather around the altar from the preparation of the gifts to the reception of communion.

At the same time, one needs to understand that a certain nuance may characterize the many reasons why various differences may occur in particular celebrations of the Eucharist. A diverse practice in a parish may not automatically be the result of disobedience on the part of a priest or community. It may be that the priest or community may not know that a particular practice is not in accord with the new GIRM. The priest or community may have an excusing cause, e.g., not being bound to the impossible (either morally or physically) due to serious fear, harm or inconvenience, especially in relationship to the seriousness of a particular provision. Furthermore, a factual custom of a particular community might lead to a consideration of the possibility of a diverse practice. In addition, the canonical possibilities that deal with dispensation, *epikeia* or particular law may be other reasons that lead to a practice that differs from what has been regulated in a particular text.

At the same time, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* emphasizes that the faithful have the right to the liturgy of the Church (*RS*, nn. 11, 12, 18, 162). The priest is the servant of the liturgy and is not permitted, on his own initiative, “to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass” (*SC*, n. 22). Bishop Thomas Paprocki provides some reasons why the minister should follow the texts of the liturgy: the virtue of justice, the promise of obedience, and the good of the Church.⁵⁰ He also states that, since liturgical language is based on theological definitions, it is far too easy to make heretical statements in an effort to be original or creative. Thus, following the texts of the liturgy protects the integrity of the liturgy, preserves communion and tradition, and respects the right of the Christian community to pray according to the authorized rites of the Church.

Since the new GIRM continues to emphasize the importance of liturgical ministers, dioceses will be challenged to invest significant amounts of time, money and resources in the proper training of all liturgical ministers. It will be more necessary than ever to intensify

⁵⁰ Thomas P. Paprocki, “Why Stick to the Book?” in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, vol. 104, no. 11 (August/September 2004), pp. 8-15

liturgical life within communities by means of appropriate formation of the pastors and of all the faithful with a view to promoting the active, conscious and full participation in liturgical celebrations desired by the Council. Moreover, church leaders must deal with the reality of the decrease in the number of priests and the increase in the frequency of celebrations of the liturgy of the word. This calls for a conscious reflection on the liturgical implications stemming from the decrease in the number of priests and the need to ensure the proper formation of permanent deacons and lay persons to serve effectively as leaders of liturgical prayer.

Connected to the awareness of appropriate formation is the specific and essential challenge associated with the liturgical formation of priests. The liturgical renewal since the Council has developed in large measure because of priests who have been committed to the task. When it did not occur, the reason often lay partially in the fact that priests had not been given sufficient supports to enable them to take on their indispensable role in this task. In his 2003 Gaudete Address in Chicago, Bishop Wilton Gregory states: “One of the great unmet challenges of the council fathers is the liturgical formation of our pastors – a task of unbelievable complexity yet with unimagined rewards.”⁵¹ Essential to this formation will be the development of a spirituality of being a liturgical presider.⁵² Priests need to reflect on some of the fundamental practices that exist in relation to their celebration of the Eucharist. Various suggestions for encouraging the formation of the priests might include: inviting priests to videotape a liturgy where they preside and then invite a trusted friend to offer a critique; inviting new priests to practice Mass with no words to see how the ritual gestures communicate the meaning of the rite; inviting priests to visit other churches to see how the liturgy is celebrated there; and encouraging priests to review the GIRM on a regular basis. Ultimately, priests need to recognize that following the rubrics of the liturgy will not automatically guarantee success or failure; however, overlooking basic liturgical principles can lead to disastrous liturgical celebrations. Becoming sensitive to the principles behind the GIRM will reconfirm for priests that the worship of God is more than minimally correct actions and words.

Conclusion

The publication of the new GIRM challenges all the faithful to appreciate a theological and spiritual vision of the liturgy that pays attention to several foundational theological principles. However, the publication of the new GIRM will not guarantee that it will be faithfully implemented or that its theological vision will be universally welcomed. It continues to challenge the whole Church to a new mindset, a new vision and a renewed understanding of

⁵¹ Bishop Wilton Gregory, “Liturgical Reform Today: Points of Progress and Challenge,” in *Origins*, vol. 33, no. 34 (February 5, 2004), p. 578.

⁵² Peter E. Fink, “Spirituality for Liturgical Presiders,” in Eleanor Bernstein, ed., *Disciple at the Crossroads* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), pp. 49-62. He notes that this spirituality involves the development of the ministry of prayer, the ministry of unity, the ministry of faith spoken to faith and the ministry of being a double icon: of Christ ‘gathering and associating with himself’ and of the Church ‘calling out’ and ‘offering worship’ to Abba (p. 57). The entire contents of *Liturgy*, vol. 22, no. 2 (April 2007) deals with different aspects of being a presider. One particular article describes an online course on presiding that combines readings in pastoral care, liturgy, the arts, and practical liturgical sources (Daniel T. Benedict, “No Cowardly Spirit: Teaching Pastors and Priests to Preside,” *Liturgy*, vol. 22, no. 2 [April 2007], pp. 27-34).

what it means to celebrate the Eucharist. The doctrinal, pastoral and legal orientations within the new GIRM are concrete ways of highlighting the nature and importance of the liturgy in the life of the church. Ultimately, all need to be convinced that, no matter how rubrically correct a liturgy is, if it has not in some way helped those assembled experience a conversion, deepened their union with and love of our triune God, and led them to help God's kingdom of love and justice become more of a reality in our world, something has been missing from that liturgy. As one reflects on the challenges associated with this pivotal phase in the renewal of our liturgy, one might recall the often quoted truth from the 1972 statement of the United States Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship*: "Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it" (n. 6).⁵³ The work of implementing the GIRM in light of its liturgical and theological principles will see its true purpose realized only to the extent that it contributes to a renewed faith of the community that gathers at the table of the Lord.

⁵³ United States Conference of Bishops, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Guidelines, *Music in Catholic Worship*, 1972, n. 6, in *The Liturgy Documents. Volume One* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991), p. 277.