

LITURGYNOTES – FOR JUNE 2015

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CONTACT:

Deacon Frank Agnoli, MD, DMin
Director of Liturgy &
Director of Deacon Formation
E-Mail: agnoli@davenportdiocese.org
Phone: 563-888-4257

Liturgical Formation Webpage:

<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/lit/litformation.htm>

SOME THOUGHTS ON MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' DAYS

Because they are celebrated on Sundays, these civil observances can have an impact on our Sunday liturgies – and this calls for careful discernment.

I was prompted to think about this while at Mass on Mothers' Day. The intercessions included mention of mothers who have given the gift of life, there was a blessing for mothers (they were asked to stand), and they were brought up during Mass and given a flower before the final blessing and dismissal. All, I am sure, was well-intentioned. But I began to wonder (not for the first time): how would someone who wants to be a mother but cannot be, someone who is struggling with infertility, experience all this? What if past pregnancies have ended in miscarriage or stillbirth? What about those whose memories of their mother are less than positive: those who have been neglected or abused? What of those mourning the death of a mother this year? And what of those who mourn the decision to end a pregnancy?

Does that mean we should ignore these holidays? No, I don't think so. While we need to make sure that the civil tail doesn't wag the liturgical dog, celebrating parenthood is a good thing. Parents most certainly need

the prayers and support of their Christian community! I don't think we need to change the holidays to a generic celebration of women and men...

But I also think we need to celebrate *honestly*... not while looking through rose-colored glasses, and certainly not at the expense of those for whom these holidays are a source of pain more than joy. Can we honor mothers and fathers while *at the same time* name the reality that many of our parishioners and visitors face? Can we celebrate *and lament* at the same time? I believe that not only *can* we – but we must. Otherwise, our liturgy is dishonest, a sham.

On a practical level, what does this mean?

To begin with, I think we need to look carefully at our intercessions. We need to respectfully name those in particular need and intercede on their behalf (without being condescending). We need to be willing to suffer with them (be com-passionate) and not pretend they do not exist. We forget that lament is a legitimate form of worship.

What about blessing parents? Sure. Do we ask them to stand – to single them out (which, at the same time, draws attention to those who are not standing)? Or do we follow the pattern of blessings at other

rites, such as ordinations, baptisms, and weddings: while the blessing prayer refers to certain individuals (the ordinands, the parents and child, the couple) the whole assembly is standing? I would argue that serious consideration needs to be given to the latter approach.

What about gifts? Again, to form a procession during Mass not only disrupts the flow of the liturgy but also draws attention to who is and who is not a 'worthy' recipient of the parish's gift. Perhaps better to hand gifts (like a flower) out on the way out the door instead.

Any thoughts? Please let me know at: agnoli@davenportdiocese.org.

RESOURCE: HOMILETIC DIRECTORY

Summary §§9-15

"What, then, is the homily" (#9)? In order to answer this question, the *Directory* first turns to the introductions to the liturgical books we use at Mass: the Missal and the Lectionary.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) calls the homily "necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life" and describes it as an "exposition of some aspect" of the scriptural readings or liturgical texts, which takes into account both the liturgical ("the mysteries being celebrated") and social ("the particular needs of the listeners") contexts (GIRM 65).

The introduction to the *Lectionary for Mass* (OLM) expands on this description, stressing that Word and Sacrament form a single act of praise of God and proclamation of the paschal mystery. The OLM reiterates the Church's teaching that "Christ himself is present and active in the preaching of his Church" and that the homily is to help lead to a fruitful and active celebration of the Eucharist. In order to do so, the homily must "be truly the fruit of meditation, carefully prepared, neither too long nor too short, and suited to all those present, even children and the uneducated" (OLM 24; *Directory* 10).

What makes the homily particular is its liturgical context (#11); the homily is not a theology lecture or bible study session. The homily bridges the Liturgy of the Word (during which the paschal mystery is proclaimed; #12) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (where the paschal mystery becomes present; #13). But the homily does not stop there: it must lead the listener not only from Word to Eucharist, but also from liturgy to life (#14).

Response

I am always gratified to see a reminder that homilists must always keep context in mind: the liturgy we are celebrating and the people who are gathered, not to mention what is happening in the community and world, ought to intimately inform our preaching.

As I've mentioned before, according to sacramental theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet there is a certain dynamic to liturgy: gift → reception → return-gift. I think we see this dynamic playing out here in this discussion of the homily. The proclamation (gift) is actualized in Eucharistic communion (reception); but we know we have truly received the gift (opened ourselves to it) *only* if we live Eucharistic lives. The homily, then, can echo that same dynamic and help the assembly make those connections and draw out the implications of celebrating the liturgy in their lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

See the Liturgy Events webpage at: <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/lit/litevents.htm>.

DIOCESAN LITURGIES

Ordination

Ordinations of three seminarians to the diaconate and presbyterate will be celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Saturday, June 6, at 10:00 a.m. Deacons Guillermo Treviño and Bill Roush will be ordained to the presbyterate and Ross Epping will be ordained to the diaconate.

Please consider including the candidates for ordination in your intercessions, for example:

For those who will be ordained this June for ministry in our diocese; we pray to the Lord:

That those who will be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood this June will faithfully follow the Good Shepherd as they serve the Diocese of Davenport; we pray to the Lord:

CONTINUING FORMATION FOR LITURGY / LITURGICAL MINISTRY

TeamRCIA: August 14-15, 2015 – St. Patrick, Iowa City (6:30pm Friday to 4pm Saturday)

Registration: <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/lit/litevents.htm#Formation>

Our conference will focus on “Making Disciples” - the basic process and skills needed for RCIA... a great review for veterans and the perfect introduction for ‘newbies’! This offering aims to help participants:

- *Discover how the RCIA is a powerful conversion process
- *Learn how to apply the core principles of the RCIA to any faith formation process
- *Acquire the skills to build an evangelizing parish that involves the entire community in the RCIA
- *Know how to recruit and build a thriving RCIA team
- *Learn how to grow a pool of passionate, engaged sponsors

Please note that this workshop is made possible in part by a Forum Legacy Grant, which honors the work of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate. A letter of invitation is also being sent with this edition of *LiturgyNotes*.

Music Workshops

Does your parish or choir have certain hymns that are done well for the glory of God? Are you looking for new hymns for your assemblies and/or choirs? Do you want to get together and sing/share music with other musicians from across the diocese? Then these free workshops are for you!

We are inviting music ministers from around the diocese to come together and share resources for the various liturgical seasons: three workshops at three different sites around the diocese:

Place	Date and Time	Liturgical Seasons
St. John Vianney Bettendorf	Sunday, July 19, 2015 2:00pm-4:00pm	Advent / Christmastime
St. Mary Iowa City	Saturday, November 7, 2015 10:00am-Noon	Lent / Triduum / Eastertime
St. Alphonsus Mt. Pleasant	Saturday, May 7, 2016 10:00am-Noon	Ordinary Time Feasts & Solemnities

To register, simply send your music to the host at each site; that's all! No other registration is needed and there is no fee for attending. Please see the attached flyer as well, which you can use to promote the first workshop.

For more opportunities, see the Liturgy Events webpage at: <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/lit/litevents.htm>.

LITURGY PREPARATION

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Life of St. Isidore and S. Maria de la Cabeza

St. Isidore, the Farmer, was born in Madrid, Spain, about the year 1110. He came from a poor and humble family. From childhood he worked as a farm hand on the De Vargas estate. He was very prayerful and particularly devoted to the Mass and the Holy Eucharist. Isidore loved the good earth; he was honest in his work, and careful in his farming practices. It is said that domestic beasts and birds showed their attachment to him because he was gentle and kind to them. Master De Vargas watched Isidore at plowing and he saw two angels as his helpers. Hence, the saying arose, "St. Isidore plowing with angels does the work of three farmers." Isidore married a sweet and pious maidservant by the name of Maria. They had only one son who died in youth. Both were most charitable and ever willing to help neighbors in distress and the poor in the city slums.

St. Isidore died on May 15, 1170; his saintly wife, a little later. He was canonized on March 22, 1622. The earthly remains of the holy couple are found over the main altar of the cathedral in Madrid, Spain. S. Maria was not officially canonized, but is honored as a saint throughout Spanish countries. Her head (cabeza) is carried in solemn processions during times of drought.

By a special decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dated February 22, 1947, St. Isidore was constituted as the special protector of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and American farmers. How beautiful and appropriate for the Catholic farm family to be devoted to this simple and saintly couple, who like farmers everywhere are "partners with God," in furnishing to the world food, fiber, and shelter.

To that end, here is a link to a Novena in honor of St. Isidore:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/catholicrurallife/wp-content/uploads/IsidoreNovena.pdf>

Appropriate times for the Novena include:

- May 7-15: To end on the feast of St. Isidore. It is suggested that seeds be blessed on the feast day (or nearest Sunday) in the parish church.

- August 7-15: To end on the feast of the Assumption (called also the feast of Our Lady of the Fields). It is an immemorial custom in the Church to bless herbs & flowers on that day.
- November, eight days preceding Thanksgiving Day: As Americans we join the nation in a day of thanks to God for all benefits received. This can be the Harvest Novena.

Lent/Triduum 2016

Next year, *Ash Wednesday* falls on February 10.

We will celebrate the *Rite of Election* at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Sunday, February 14 at 3pm (1st Sunday of Lent) and at St. Mary of the Visitation in Ottumwa on Sunday, February 21, at 3pm (2nd Sunday of Lent).

The *Chrism Mass* will be celebrated on Monday, March 14, at 5pm at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

The Triduum falls on Thursday, March 24 through Sunday, March 27 – with the *Easter Vigil* falling on the night of Saturday, March 26. On that night, the earliest that the Vigil may begin is 8:15pm.

INTERCESSIONS

Here are resources for the Universal Prayer:

(1) Intercessions for various life issues may be found on the USCCB website at:

<http://usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/intercessory-prayers-for-life.cfm>

(2) Intercession for vocations (in English and Spanish) keyed to the lectionary cycle may be found at the Diocese of Arlington website:

http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations/voc_intercessions.aspx

(3) Lectionary-based intercessions focused on social justice can be found at the Center of Concern website:

<http://www.coc.org/ef>

(4) The Center for Liturgy website offers general intercessions for each Sunday as well:

<http://liturgy.slu.edu/>

(5) The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops offers intercessions and homily ideas as part of their Pastoral Initiative for Life and Family:

<http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/church-in-canada-and-world/catholic-church-in-canada/life-and-family/3296-documents-and-activities-proposed-by-the-ccb>

(6) See also our website for prayer resources in times of crisis:

<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/lit/litlibrary.htm#Prayers>

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Phone: 563-888-4220

E-Mail: hoefling@davenportdiocese.org