

Ars Celebrandi

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Celebrating and Concelebrating Mass

Paul Turner



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Foreword

What a pleasure and honor it is to be writing a foreword for a book by the Rev. Paul Turner. For a number of years, he has been my guru and go-to source in matters liturgical. He brings true scholarship and an impressive body of knowledge together with down-to-earth pastoral experience in his daily service as a parish priest. No pie-in-the-sky theoretician, he.

Most people know me today as bishop of a border diocese, the Diocese of El Paso, and for various efforts in which I have participated in the area of social justice. However, in a former life I studied liturgy and taught for a number of years while I was on the formation team at Holy Trinity Seminary at the University of Dallas. That work came before my nineteen years of service as a parish pastor. My love of the church's worship and my concern for the fruitful celebration of the liturgy never left me.

As a bishop I have come to believe with even greater conviction that one of the most fruitful undertakings that could be promoted for the renewal of the church would be to simply learn to celebrate the liturgy better. Nearly sixty years after the much-needed reform of the liturgy, we find ourselves with new rites, new texts, but sadly unreformed understandings and priorities.

What a treasure we have in the liturgy, this life-giving gift bestowed upon the church by Christ himself! I have often observed with all sincerity that everything I ever learned about the practice of the faith and particularly about social justice I learned at the altar of God, in the celebration of the liturgy. As we have often heard, "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows" (*Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 10). These are far more than mere high-sounding words. All that the church is and does is summed up in the action

we call worship. In our act of worship within the church we become our truest self; we are transformed and nourished that we might do the work of Christ and make him present in the world.

The liturgy of the church is thus an inestimable treasure, the very heart of our life as sons and daughters of God. It is in the liturgy that we discover the seed of Catholic teaching and the grace to live as Christ taught us. All the actions of the church and of the Christian have their source and their highest expression there. As the ancient dictum says, *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. To translate this phrase loosely, but I think accurately, "The church's worship is the source of the church's belief." Taking this a step further, we can say that all social action undertaken by the Catholic Christian is done under the impulse of what we have received in worship and also leads us back to worship.

Accepting this, no further arguments are needed to make clear why we must all do our utmost to worship faithfully and well. The liturgy deserves the attention of the members of the church and their best efforts. If that is the case for all the members, then how much more is this true of those ordained to the ministerial priesthood. Those of us who are ordained to the priesthood find our deepest identity in the act of worship. We are ordained to lead the members of the church in the praise of God and every other aspect of our service grows out of this one reason for our being.

These days we rightly eschew any implication that the liturgy is the private purview of the priest. No! The liturgy is the action of the entire people of God who are being more perfectly formed into the Body of Christ. The Second Vatican Council's seminal teaching that the people of God are called to full, conscious, and active participation is based upon this fundamental recognition. At the same time, we cannot deny that at the liturgy there is no one who has a more profound impact upon the celebration than the priest whose task it is to bring "holy order" to the gathered assembly. The document of the US bishops says this succinctly and well: "No other single factor affects the Liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the priest celebrant, who 'prays in the name of the Church and of the assembled community'" (*Sing to the Lord*, 18–19).

The liturgy, as we know, is a language and a certain style of communication that comes down to us from the ages but is also constantly

adapting under the guidance of the Spirit in every age. It is a language of signs and symbols that are read universally by people in the church. To be sure, there are regional and cultural aspects that are rightly represented as local communities worship, but these are secondary to the expressions that unite us across times and places. It is of great importance that we ourselves understand the “language” of the symbols.

It serves us well to give attention to the “grammar” of this language from time to time. The church is not looking for rigid robotic uniformity. Each community will very rightly incarnate the liturgy according to their own place and time, but hopefully not in a way that seems to make the liturgy more about them than about God.

This is particularly the case in regard to each priest’s style, his *ars celebrandi*. The way a priest celebrates should allow him to be more and more transparent as an instrument of God. God wants to use the priest and to use his gifts to make him a sign of Christ present in the flesh presiding at our act of worship.

In our effort to “do what the church does” and to allow the Lord to be present, we should see the rubrics as helpful and necessary guides to the effective and faithful celebration of the liturgy. The rubrics are like the directions that come with recipes. Unless you are a very experienced cook, you would be foolish to try to bake without them. If I might continue the cooking analogy, we could say the rubrics allow us to cook up a dish that all can recognize as the irreplaceable food that Christ continues to prepare and to serve the people of the church.

And so, I would like to commend you to the guidance of the Master Liturgical Chef, Fr. Paul Turner. If you take the time to reflect upon your own *ars celebrandi* in light of his careful analysis as I have, you will find that you are personally challenged to rededicate yourself to the mysteries you celebrate and to employ the full richness of the renewed Roman Rite. The sacramental signs that you enact will reveal their power, and the transformative work of Jesus Christ will unfold in your life and the life of the community you serve.

Most Rev. Mark J. Seitz, DD
Bishop of the Diocese of El Paso

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P.T.

Introduction

Irony

“I am suspending the celebration of public Masses throughout the diocese.” The announcement on March 17, 2020, surely shocked the priests of the Diocese of Sale, Australia, but they barely flinched. Bishop Patrick O’Regan was departing shortly for Sydney to attend a meeting with other members of the Australian hierarchy to discuss among other topics how to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented suspension of public celebrations of the Mass responded to directives from civic authorities to limit public gatherings in an extraordinary effort to stem the spread of the contagious and deadly virus.

The bishop’s announcement came just before the lunch break at a workshop I was presenting to his priests that day. I had set aside three weeks for a series of lectures in six different Australian dioceses, including the National Biennial Liturgy Conference in Parramatta. After Brisbane and Sale, I’d intended to speak in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

When the Sale priests regathered after lunch, I turned my attention to the announced topic: *ars celebrandi*. The irony hit me hard. The bishop had just told his priests that for the foreseeable future they could not preside at Mass in public, and my task was now to suggest how to improve their presiding at Mass in public. I acknowledged the situation, shared a moment of sorrow with them, and pressed on.

My hosts and I canceled the rest of my talks. I flew back to my diocese in the United States and put myself into a fourteen-day quarantine away from my residence, to make sure I was healthy enough to go back inside the building that serves as both home and office for several people, all of whom use the same kitchen.

With time on my hands, at the midpoint of Lent 2020, I turned to the book I'd promised Liturgical Press that I would begin after Easter. That would be this one. The same topic, *ars celebrandi*, seems out of place amid the other concerns facing the world.

Still, I pray that by the time this book sees the light of day, priests will have returned to presider's chairs and the faithful will have filled the nave. Perhaps after a hiatus, priests may consider afresh some principles for presiding at Mass. If so, I hope this book will help.

Ars Celebrandi

Literally, *ars celebrandi* means "the art of celebrating." It implies that presiding over the liturgy takes more than following instructions. It requires a certain style.

Pope Benedict XVI highlighted the expression in the year 2007 within his postsynodal exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*,¹ and the concept has drawn more attention in the intervening years. The pope was responding to the 2005 synod of bishops, which itself had gathered following the Vatican-promoted 2004 Year of the Eucharist.

Pope Benedict addressed *ars celebrandi* in the second part of his exhortation, "The Eucharist, a Mystery to Be Celebrated." He laid out the classical balance of prayer and belief, and he exhorted the role of beauty in the liturgy as an expression of God's mysterious glory. He reminded readers that the subject of the liturgy's intrinsic beauty is Christ himself, who includes his body the church in his work. The celebration of the Eucharist implies a living tradition from the time of St. Paul (1 Cor 11:23), Benedict continued, and the church cannot change its basic structure.²

These preliminary arguments set up Pope Benedict's paragraphs on *ars celebrandi*:

In the course of the Synod, there was frequent insistence on the need to avoid any antithesis between the *ars celebrandi*, the art of

¹ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission (February 22, 2007), http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html.

² *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 34–37.

proper celebration, and the full, active and fruitful participation of all the faithful. The primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself. The *ars celebrandi* is the best way to ensure their *actuosa participatio*. The *ars celebrandi* is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness; indeed, for two thousand years this way of celebrating has sustained the faith life of all believers, called to take part in the celebration as the People of God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (cf. 1 Pet 2:4-5, 9).³

When the pope translated *ars celebrandi* inside this paragraph, he used a dynamic equivalence, rather than a strict adherence to the Latin phrase. He called it not “the art of celebrating,” but “the art of proper celebration.” The insertion of the word “proper” stresses ritual fidelity, and the change from “celebrating” to “celebration” applies the term to aspects beyond the behavior of the priest. Nonetheless, Pope Benedict forged an important link between proper celebration and the active participation of the people: A good *ars celebrandi* is the fruit of adhering to liturgical norms. That, he argues, will in turn enhance participation.

Bishops, priests, and deacons have a specific responsibility, Pope Benedict wrote, especially the bishop who is to ensure unity and harmony in the liturgy of his territory. His celebrations at the cathedral are to be carried out “with complete respect for the *ars celebrandi*,” and are thus models for the diocese.⁴ His liturgies are to reflect not just any style of celebrating, but “the art of proper celebration.”

Only then did Pope Benedict detail the implications. *Ars celebrandi* includes liturgical norms, a sense of the sacred, outward signs, the harmony of the rite, liturgical vestments, furnishings, sacred space, and propagation of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) and the Order of Readings for Mass. Equally important, he says,

is an attentiveness to the various kinds of language that the liturgy employs: words and music, gestures and silence, movement, the liturgical colors of the vestments. By its very nature the liturgy operates on different levels of communication which

³ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38.

⁴ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 39.

enable it to engage the whole human person. The simplicity of its gestures and the sobriety of its orderly sequence of signs communicate and inspire more than any contrived and inappropriate additions. Attentiveness and fidelity to the specific structure of the rite express both a recognition of the nature of Eucharist as a gift and, on the part of the minister, a docile openness to receiving this ineffable gift.⁵

Even as Pope Benedict stressed faithfulness to the rites, he acknowledged that they operate on different levels of communication, engage the whole person, and require a minister's docility. These subjective aspects result from dispositions and style, not just from adherence to rubrics.

Pope Benedict concluded his treatment of *ars celebrandi* with sections on sacred art and liturgical song.⁶ Here he moved from his concerns of faithfulness to words and rites back to his opening remarks about beauty and mystery. Many elements make up the "art of proper celebration," including the looks of a building and the sound of its music.

A few years after Pope Benedict's 2007 *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Vatican promoted another thematic observance, the Year of the Priest. During that year, the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff posted "Observance of Liturgical Norms and 'Ars Celebrandi.'" ⁷ The statement is undated, but the web address assigns it to July 29, 2010. The author is unacknowledged, but the same statement appeared through Zenit news agency a few weeks earlier as a translation of an article in the Spirit of the Liturgy series, written by Father Mauro Gagliardi, a consultant of the same office and professor at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome.⁸

Gagliardi claimed general agreement that liturgical abuses increased "in the celebratory field after the Council," and that the recent magisterium called for "the strict observance of the norms." He ad-

⁵ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 40.

⁶ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 41–42.

⁷ http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/details/ns_lit_doc_20100729_osservanza_en.html.

⁸ Father Mauro Gagliardi, "Observance of Liturgical Norms and Ars Celebrandi," Zenit (Rome, July 9, 2010), <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/observance-of-liturgical-norms-and-ars-celebrandi-4263>.

mitted that liturgical laws are “much more ‘open’ in relation to the past,” yet he alleged that a great number of priests enlarged “the space left to ‘creativity’.” His examples included the “frequent change of words or whole phrases” in the liturgical books, the insertion of new “rites” foreign to the church’s tradition, and inappropriate vestments, vessels and decorations that were sometimes “ridiculous.”⁹

For his definition of *ars celebrandi*, Gagliardi wrote, “it does not consist only in the perfect execution of the rites according to the books, but also and above all in the spirit of faith and adoration with which these are celebrated.” The *ars celebrandi* “cannot be carried out, however, if it is removed from the norms established for the celebration.”¹⁰ Gagliardi thus balanced the “perfect execution” of the rites with a “spirit of faith and adoration.” Priests especially bring their personal faith to their liturgical duties. *Ars celebrandi* begins within.

A view balancing precise fulfillment of liturgical laws with personal conduct had emerged in *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, a 1967 instruction on eucharistic worship from the Vatican’s Sacred Congregation of Rites.¹¹ Gagliardi cited it in a footnote: “To foster the correct development of the sacred celebration and the active participation of the faithful, the ministers must not limit themselves to carry out their service with precision, according to the liturgical laws, but they must conduct themselves in such a way as to inculcate, through it, the meaning of sacred things.”¹² In the early days after the Council, the Vatican asserted the ineffectiveness of liturgical laws unless they are carried out with meaning.

From the council itself, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy stressed the importance of the interior dispositions of all the faithful at worship:

But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds be attuned to their voices, and that they

⁹ “Observance of Liturgical Norms,” 1.

¹⁰ “Observance of Liturgical Norms,” 3.

¹¹ Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*: Instruction on Eucharistic Worship (May 25, 1967), <https://adoremus.org/1967/05/25/eucharisticum-mysterium/>.

¹² “Observance of Liturgical Norms,” 3, citing *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 20.

cooperate with heavenly grace lest they receive it in vain (see 2 Cor 6:1). Pastors of souls must, therefore, realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, their obligation goes further than simply ensuring that the laws governing valid and lawful celebration are observed. They must also ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite and enriched by it. (SC 11)¹³

Priests' "obligation goes further." For generations, a priest found comfort in the principle that sacraments achieved their effects in themselves, *ex opere operato*, regardless of how personally, sincerely, and accurately he engaged the liturgical rite itself. The council now held priests responsible for helping the people participate meaningfully. The fruitfulness of the liturgy increases with catechetical instruction before worship and artful presiding during it.¹⁴

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) described the impact of the priest at the Mass in strong terms:

No other single factor affects the Liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the priest celebrant, who "[prays] in the name of the Church and of the assembled community" (GIRM 33). "When he celebrates the Eucharist, [the priest] must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he pronounces the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ" (GIRM 93).¹⁵

Many Catholics participate better when the priest's obligation goes further than the words and gestures. His attitude, style and bearing all contribute to the art of celebrating.

Different church agencies have thus contributed to a definition of *ars celebrandi*. The Sacred Congregation of Rites asked ministers to

¹³ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [SC] Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. Quotations of Vatican II documents are taken from Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations; The Basic Sixteen Documents* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014).

¹⁴ I am grateful to Bruce Cinquegrani for these insights from his research.

¹⁵ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, Pastoral Liturgy Series 4 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007), 18.

rely not just on the ceremonies but to inculcate the meaning of sacred things. Pope Benedict expressed the interrelated values of ritual fidelity, the engagement of the whole person, and beauty. The Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff favored a perfect execution of the rites and a spirit of faith and adoration. The Second Vatican Council solicited the help of priests in engaging the meaningful participation of the faithful. The USCCB appealed to priests to refine their attitude, style and bearing.

Robert Hovda, writing about *ars celebrandi* in the first years after the post-Vatican II liturgical reforms, explored this blend of person and responsibility:

When one functions as a presider or other minister, it is the whole person, the real person, the true person, the full and complete person who functions. . . .

Of course the personal nature of the presider's presence was always evident in liturgy, but more as a reluctant concession to humanity than as a desirable and valuable gift.¹⁶

For the sake of this book, I am using the simplest definition of *ars celebrandi*: namely, the art of celebrating. I will argue in favor of both words, not individually, but together. "Celebrating" does indeed imply "proper" celebration. It means an execution of the liturgy according to the liturgical books. Some priests say that they diverge from the books for "pastoral" reasons, often meaning reasons that are "practical" or "personal." One's own subjective judgment of being pastoral is not always a convincing argument for doing something different from what the liturgy provides. Following the liturgical books is a most pastoral thing to do. Even so, a priest's obligation goes further.

"Art" acknowledges that every priest is different. Each brings patterns of speech, distinctive actions, personal faith, and social abilities that affect how he presides. He personally assimilates the signs and symbols of the liturgy that are the church's heritage. Because of individuality, his assimilation of this timeless tradition will be unique. Art is less definable. But it does have good and bad expression. The

¹⁶ Robert W. Hovda, *Strong, Loving and Wise: Presiding in Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976), p. 57.

judgment of good art is subjective, though people can agree on certain principles.

Both words are important. One could precisely celebrate according to the rubrics, though in an artless way. Or, one could use personal artistic gifts that abandon liturgical genius. Good presiding is artful presiding. It is knowledgeable and inspirational. It faithfully grasps the church's heritage and gives it personal expression. It keeps the priest transparent, or, in the words of Father Michael Driscoll, "It seeks to allow Christ to be the artist."¹⁷

Overview of This Book

This book will apply these principles for artful presiding:

- *Less is more.* In paragraph 40 of *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict promoted the simplicity of gestures and sobriety of signs. This undergirds the artful principle that less is more.
- *Do what it says. Don't do what it doesn't say.* This principle also finds support in paragraph 40, where Pope Benedict dismisses contrived and inappropriate additions to the liturgy. Most priests agree with the first half of this principle, but, whether they lean toward the liturgical left or right, they struggle to apply the second half. The rubrics are neither aimless expressions of self-absorbed authority nor incomplete suggestions inviting impulsive interpretations. They are windows into deep theological meaning of rituals that unite the universal church in fundamental ways.
- *Offer sacrifice and share communion.* Artful presiding includes spiritual skills such as a strong personal prayer life, a habit of thanksgiving, making sacrifices, and serving the people. It presumes a eucharistic theology consistent with the prayers and rubrics of the Mass, and with the conduct of a priest's life.
- *Be intentional.* *Eucharisticum Mysterium* says that priests must conduct themselves in ways that inculcate the meaning of sacred things. This is best achieved through intentionality: under-

¹⁷ "The *Ars Celebrandi* and Beauty," *Beyond the Sanctuary: Essays on Liturgy, Life and Discipleship* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2020), p. 59.

standing what is being done and executing it with purpose. This applies to words and actions in the liturgy.

- *Involve the people.* Vatican II said that the full, conscious, active participation of the people “is the paramount concern” (SC 14). Artful presiding engages the assembly through the rite and calls forth active participation. This means encouraging the people “to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes” (SC 30). The people thus do not enter a spiritualized “actual” participation, but an intentionally “active” one. As Pope Benedict stated, proper presiding fosters active participation. Proper presiding is more than *celebrandi*. It is also *ars*.

In *Sacramentum Caritatis* Pope Benedict included art and music in the broad areas that contribute to *ars celebrandi*. He has a point. However, this book will focus on the presiding style of the priest.

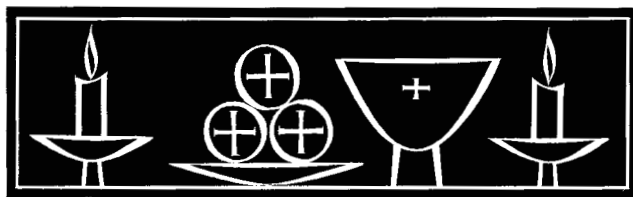
This book starts with the calendar in order to examine some of the options available to a presider, especially on weekdays. A priest may increase interest in the Mass for himself and for the people if he takes advantage of this variety.

Then it will apply the principles summarized above to the different parts of the Mass. It will treat interactions with other ministers. It will view some frequently overlooked rubrics that could lend more meaning to the celebration.

This section concludes with a few thoughts about how presiding intertwines with other aspects of a priest’s ministry. It blends how the priest presides with who the priest is.

The book concludes with a substantial section on concelebration, which proposes an *ars concelebrandi*. After surveying a brief history of concelebration and the theological issues it poses, the book closely examines the rubrics, words, and demeanors of concelebration.

Thank you for giving this book some time when the world is sorting through the effects of a pandemic. You obviously understand that a well-prepared and celebrated liturgy is the church’s best response to crisis. No matter on what page of history books they enter the story, priests can always improve the most important work anyone in civilization could ever do: presiding artfully for the celebration of the Mass.



1

Understanding the Calendar

Blending liturgical fidelity with personal gifts begins with the calendar. Some celebrations never move even in a pandemic—such as the Paschal Triduum. Consistently honoring important days demonstrates that individuals belong to a bigger history. The timeless God intervened in time, which the church celebrates at certain sacred times.

Other days, however, carry less significance and come with some freedoms, especially the weekdays of Ordinary Time. *Ars celebrandi* begins when the priest sets his mind on the liturgy at hand. In some cases, he may make surprisingly strong decisions that affect the prayers and readings for the Mass of a particular day.

Solemnities, Feasts, and Memorials

The Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and Calendar (UNLYC) occupy some of the first pages of the Roman Missal. These norms underwent significant changes with Vatican II. The fruits have affected the dates for observing the memory of certain saints and the ranking of some days above others.

For example, the norms establish the differences among solemnities, feasts, and memorials. Solemnities begin with Evening Prayer I from the Liturgy of the Hours, or vespers of the preceding day. At Mass a solemnity calls for the Gloria and the Creed, even if one falls

on a weekday during Lent, such as the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25). The *Lectionary for Mass* generally assigns three Scripture readings and a responsorial psalm for solemnities.

Some solemnities come with their own vigil Mass, such as the Ascension of the Lord, Pentecost Sunday, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24), Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29), and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15). These are to be used at any evening Mass on the preceding day (UNLYC 11). The vigil masses annoy many preachers who want to prepare one homily for the weekend, such as on Pentecost. Nonetheless, the readings for the vigil are to be used. A presider with services on both the vigil and the day may preach more broadly on the theme of the solemnity, solicit the help of another priest or deacon to preach the extra Mass, or prepare two different homilies.

Feasts are celebrated within the natural day, so they have no Evening Prayer I on the preceding night (UNLYC 13). When celebrated at a weekday Mass, feasts call for the Gloria but not the Creed, and the lectionary offers no second reading after the psalm before the gospel. However, Feasts of the Lord form a special category. When one of them falls on a Sunday, the celebration begins on Saturday evening. These include The Presentation of the Lord (February 2), The Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6), The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), and the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (November 9). These do include a second reading before the gospel, as well as the Creed on Sundays.

Memorials are obligatory unless they are marked “optional” (UNLYC 14), when the priest may opt in or out of that celebration. Whenever the memorial is observed, the priest must pray its collect, and he may use a preface proper for the day. If a saint’s memorial does not include a proper prayer over the offerings or prayer after communion, the priest may select these from the appropriate commons in the following section of the Missal. The Mass for memorials includes neither Gloria nor Creed. Nor does it have a second reading before the gospel.

The Table of Liturgical Days

Immediately following the norms on the calendar near the front of the Missal comes the Table of Liturgical Days. This determines

which occasions replace others whenever two occur on the same day. The table is numbered 1 through 13 with many subgroups.

Ranking atop all is the Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord. This will surprise no one except those who insist that Christmas is the best day of the year. Christians participate more personally and consequentially in the paschal mystery than they do in the incarnation.

Christmas ranks atop the days grouped under number 2. However, it shares equal space with the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pentecost. Others in this grouping are the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter; Ash Wednesday; the weekdays of Holy Week through Thursday morning; and the days within the Octave of Easter.

Then come the solemnities together with All Souls Day, which is kept on a separate line because it does not have all the markers of a solemnity, such as the Gloria, even when it falls on a Sunday.

Number 4 contains a most interesting list of proper solemnities. These are *local* solemnities, rather than global ones. This rank starts with the patron of the place. For example, if a city is named for a saint, that saint's day ranks as a solemnity in the churches within that city.

The next local solemnity is the dedication of a church or the anniversary of its dedication. A church may not be dedicated on any of the days associated with numbers 1-3 on the table. The anniversary becomes a solemnity in that parish every year. If the parish mistakenly does not observe annually the date of its dedication, this needs to be researched and celebrated. It has an impact on the parochial liturgical calendar. The date may be fixed on the anniversary itself, an Ordinary Time Sunday close to the date, or the Sunday before All Saints, "in order to spotlight the bond that links the earthly Church with the heavenly Church." If the date cannot be known, the bishop may assign a date such as the Sunday before November 1 or October 25.¹

The title of the parish church also ranks as a solemnity. For example, if the building was dedicated to St. Munchin, who does not even appear on the universal liturgical calendar, then January 2 becomes a solemnity in that parish, replacing the local observance of Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, because the Roman Martyrology also assigns January 2 to St. Munchin. If through a

¹ "Documentorum Explanatio: De Celebratione Annuali Dedicacionis Ecclesiae," *Notitiae* 8 71/3 (March 1972): 103.

restructuring process a combined parish receives a new name, the title of the church cannot be changed, and the date associated with the church's original title remains a solemnity in that parish, whose new patron is celebrated as a feast.²

A parish may celebrate its titular day or anniversary of dedication on a Sunday in Ordinary Time when the actual day falls on a weekday. In fact, any day of special interest to the people may be observed on a Sunday in Ordinary Time as long as it ranks at numbers 4 or 5 in the Table of Liturgical Days (UNLYC 58). Usually it is moved to the Sunday before or after, and that seems to be the intent of this permission. But it does not exclude another nearby Sunday.

Numbers 5 and 6 show the ranking of Feasts "of the Lord" above the Sundays in Ordinary Time, which explains why, for example, the Transfiguration is observed on August 6 every year, even when it falls on a Sunday. Other feasts on the general calendar occupy level 7.

Number 8 lists proper feasts; that is, those pertaining to the local church, not the universal church. These include the principal patron of the diocese and the patron of a parish if different from the title of the parish church.

The anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral, a solemnity in the cathedral itself, is observed as a *feast* throughout the rest of the diocese. Every parish has the *cathedral's* anniversary of dedication on its annual calendar. The priest uses the presidential prayers from the commons for the dedication of a church, and the readings come from the same section of the lectionary. Mass that day includes the Gloria, even if it falls on a weekday in Advent or Lent. If the cathedral's anniversary date lands on a Sunday in Ordinary Time, it is observed only at the cathedral that year. If the dedication anniversary falls on any day that ranks above number 4, even a weekday in Holy Week, then the cathedral observes its solemnity on the next available date, but the parishes do not observe the feast that year.

The weekdays of Lent are at number 9, just below the weekdays from December 17–24 and the days within the octave of Christmas.

² Table of Liturgical Days, 8e; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Patronus, Liturgica Acceptione*, "On Patron Saints," March 19, 1973, 3a, in International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*, ed. and trans. Thomas C. O'Brien (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982), 477.