CALENDAR NOTES

MAY 8
Fourth Sunday of Easter
- GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY / WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS
  Prayers for vocations should be inserted in the general intercessions.
- MOTHER’S DAY
  The prayer over the people found in the Book of Blessings might be said (cf. BB #1728).

MAY 26
Thursday after the Sixth Sunday of Easter
Note that in the Roman Missal, the propers for this Mass are printed after the Mass for the Ascension of the Lord.

MAY 27
NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Novena prayers should begin this day, 9 days before Pentecost.

MAY 29
Ascension of the Lord
- ASCENSION OF THE LORD
  The observance of the Ascension of the Lord is transferred to Sunday. All Masses said on Saturday, May 28 use the antiphons and orations from “At the Vigil Mass.” In all Masses said Sunday, May 29, texts are from “At the Mass during the Day.”

MAY 30
MEMORIAL DAY
To commemorate memorial day, Mass for Various Needs #30A/B, “For Peace and Justice,” may be said. If a cemetery is visited, a Mass “For the Dead” could be said there or the “Order for Visiting a Cemetery” may be followed as found in the Book of Blessings, #1734-1754.

LOOKING AHEAD
- PENTECOST (JUN 5)
The Vigil Mass for Pentecost can

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THE PENITENTIAL ACT, PART II

In continuation of the article found in the previous month’s newsletter, this article will begin our focus on the proper execution of the Penitential Act and underscore the scriptural roots of each option. Some may consider this to be a waste of energy: “how hard can it be?” Yet, in my long experience of attending Mass and even concelebrating and celebrating Mass, I have seen how easy it is to fumble at the beginning of the “sacred mysteries.”

First, recall from the previous article that the Penitential Act is an integral part of every Mass. It is only expressly omitted in a few Masses throughout the year, and can only be replaced by the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water on Sundays or by the psalmody of Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer when the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is combined with Mass.

Three options for the penitential act are outlined in the Roman Missal, The Order of Mass, #4, #5, and #6. For the sake of clarity we will call these Option A, Option B, and Option C. Option A includes the use of the “formula of general confession,” “I confess,” or “Confiteor.” Option B includes the responsory, “Have mercy on us, O Lord. For we have sinned against you.” Option C includes the Kyrie, eleison with Christological invocations.

Proper execution of the Penitential Act starts with deciding which option to use before the Mass begins. Especially in the case of Mass with a deacon (or multiple deacons), it is important to be clear who will be speaking after the priest introduces the Penitential Act and what they will be saying.

All options begin with the priest introducing the Penitential Act. As noted in the previous article, this invitation is fixed and not to be replaced by “similar words.” The first word is the only “replaceable” word: “brethren.” The 2010 ICEL translation favored this vocative form to call together the Christian faithful. “Brethren” etymologically is the old English plural of “brother,” but refers now in a poetic, elevated and glorified way to our common Christian “brotherhood,” regardless of gender. It can be considered “liturgical language,” and it is appropriate whether only men or men and women are present. It may be replaced by “brothers and sisters,” however, which is likewise appropriate even if one gender is not present, since the Mass is for the whole Church, militant, purgative, and triumphant. After the invitation, the rubric reads “a brief pause for silence follows.” This pause, like everything in the Roman Rite, should exhibit balance: not merely perfunctory nor
CALENDAR NOTES, CONT’D

be celebrated in an Extended Form, which mirrors the Easter Vigil, or in a Simple Form before or after EP I. The Extended Form may be appropriate among certain communities. Read more about the Extended Form in an article by Rev. Dennis Gill here.

- BVM, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH (JUN 6)
The Monday after Pentecost resumes ordinary time, and on it is now celebrated this moveable feast (Memorial). See printable lectionary resources here on the USCCB website.

Please promote and join the Eucharistic Revival in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.
The three-year initiative kicks off with a Eucharistic Procession from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral on JUNE 19 in the evening. All are invited to join in this beautiful expression of our faith in the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. More information here.

painedly prolonged, but enough time to recollect the sinfulness to be confessed.
Option A contains the reformulated “confiteor” prayer formerly prayed by priest first then servers (and the faithful present) following. Now this formula is prayed together by the entirety of the assembled mystical body of Christ. The rubric explicitly reads, “all recite together the formula...” In practice, however, the formula must be started by someone. While there is no explicit direction given here, the tradition would suggest that the priest-celebrant should be the one who begins with “I confess...” It is the priest who acknowledges his sinfulness first and foremost as he celebrates the Mass and leads the people in prayer. The phrase “I have greatly sinned,” the words of King David who first confesses his sinfulness (I Chr 21:8), models for the priest a self-placement as first among sinners. Less appropriate would it be, then, for the deacon or a lay minister to begin the “Confiteor.”
The other important rubric included in this option is found in the middle of the formula: “and striking their breast, they say...” This traditional gesture alludes to the scripturally based image of penitence (cf. Lk 18:13). While this rubric does not indicate how many times we strike our breast, the following rubric which reads “Then they continue,” two lines after the previous rubric logically suggests that the “striking of the breast” occurs during the entirety of the two lines of the formula, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” Historically, this amounted to three strikes of the breast, however the CDW clarified in a response from 1978 that a single strike of the breast suffices. Either would be considered licit. Furthermore, the strike of the breast should occur with the “palm of the hand,” as Elliott reminds us, not with a closed fist.
Option A is concluded with the Priest’s absolution, which, as GIRM 51 reminds us, “lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance.” Following the absolution, the “Kyrie, eleison” follows, which is not to be omitted.
However, while Option A is listed first, it is in practice not the most common in execution. In future issues, we will examine the other options for the Penitential Act, their proper execution, and their scriptural foundations.

Zachary M. Boazman

RESOURCES FROM OUR OFFICE

Handbook for Ministers of Care
Third Edition
Marilyn Kofler, SP and Kevin E. O’Connor, CSP

Ministers of care are commissioned by the Church to bring the compassion and communion of Christ to the sick and the homebound and to bear witness to the suffering of the members of the parish. The third edition of this award-winning resource provides lay ministers of care with a formational and training tool as they prepare to serve those who are sick and homebound. In these pages, lay ministers will learn a theology of sickness and suffering, how to preside over the rituals of the Church, how best to make pastoral visits, and how to take care of their own spiritual needs while caring for others.

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