CALENDAR NOTES

SEP 1
- WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CREATION
  Several options are given in the Ordo on how to liturgically celebrate this day.

SEP 5
- LABOR DAY
  Suggested: Mass for the Sanctification of Human Labor, VN #26 A or B.
- ST. THERESA OF CALCUTTA
  Mass may be celebrated as for an optional memorial for St. Theresa of Calcutta today. See note in the Ordo.

SEP 11
Twentieth Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
- REMEMBERING THE EVENTS OF 9-11-2001
  For Sunday Masses, the usual Mass for the Twentieth Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time should be celebrated. However, the events can be remembered in the following ways: in the Universal Prayers, an intercession may be for the country, emergency responders, those who have died, etc.; Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II or Eucharistic Prayer for Use in Masses for Various Needs III may be prayed; music and hymns appropriate for the theme of reconciliation and healing may be sung.

LOOKING AHEAD
- ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP (OCT 15)
  Outside of the cathedral parish, this day is to be celebrated in every parish of the Archdiocese as a feast using the texts of the Common of a Dedication of the Church. Masses in the evening should be for the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, however.

ARS CELEBRANDI

THE SPRINKLING RITE

Having discussed the Penitential Act over the course of several issues, we make an addendum now to investigate the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water, found in Appendix II in the Roman Missal.

Before the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council, the solemn Sunday Mass was often preceded by a sprinkling rite. While the chants of Asperges or Vidi Aquam were sung, holy water sprinkled on the people reminded them of their baptism and prepared them for the Holy Mass.

In the reform of the Missal, this rite was kept as an appendix to be used “From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter time...” (GIRM 51). The reform of the rite did several things. The revision made it not routine for every solemn Sunday Mass but suggested it be used more occasionally. It inserted the rite into the Mass itself, following the entrance chant and the greeting. And it included a blessing of water (and salt) within the rite itself so that a stronger connection might be made between the blessing and the people who are sprinkled.

When should the sprinkling rite be used, then? As indicated in the rubrics, it may only be used on Sundays, and an emphasis is placed on the Sundays in Easter. Other Sundays might suggest its use as well, for example, the Baptism of the Lord (if celebrated on a Sunday). Circumstances might suggest its use as well, for example the need to replenish Holy Water in the fonts or in a receptacle. Finally, it might be appropriate to make it a regular and recurring part of the liturgical life of a parish, occurring monthly or quarterly, for example.

The Sprinkling Rite may only be celebrated within Mass. Before Mass, one or several holy water buckets (aspersoria) filled with unblessed water along with aspergilla should be prepared near the presider’s chair. If salt is to be blessed and mixed with the water, it should also be placed in a separate container nearby.

After the priest at the chair makes the Sign of the Cross and greets the people, he begins the Sprinkling Rite. The structure includes an invitation to prayer, the prayer of blessing of the water, the prayer of blessing of the salt and the mixing (if salt is used), the sprinkling, and a prayer which is similar to the absolution prayer after the penitential act.

A few notes about each. The invitation to prayer may be adapted using “these or similar words” (“Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling
of Water” #2). The other prayers, however, may not. There are three options for the prayer of blessing including one exclusively for use in Easter time. Each prayer is prayed with hands joined (not extended over the water), and the sign of the cross is made over the water when indicated in the text by the red cross.

The mixing of salt is optional for use “where the circumstance of the place or the custom of the people suggest” (“Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water” #3) that it occur. No further clarification on these criteria seem available. However, if it is used, the salt is blessed then poured into the water afterwards, “without saying anything.” Traditionally, salt was poured in making the sign of the cross.

The sprinkling follows the blessing(s), and the rubrics are specific that first the priest sprinkles himself. Traditionally, this occurs by making the sign of the cross with the aspergillum as if with the hand, touching it to the forehead, the chest, and each shoulder. Then the priest sprinkles the ministers, then the clergy, and then the people. He may move through the church, “If appropriate” (“Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water” #4). The rubrics do not indicate the assistance of other clergy or ministers for this; nonetheless, in larger churches, that is often the practice. Several options for chants are given to be used during the sprinkling itself.

The sprinkling is concluded by a prayer which is similar in content to the “absolution” prayer which follows the Penitential Act. The missal should be prepared for the priest to pray this immediately when he returns to the chair to assist the flow of the liturgy.

The sprinkling rite replaces the Penitential Act. However, as the rubrics indicate, it seems to replace the Kyrie eleison as well. Thus, if the Gloria is said at the Sunday Mass (i.e., a Sunday Mass not in Advent or Lent) then it follows immediately after this prayer.

In conclusion, the sprinkling rite should be considered as a option on occasional Sundays throughout the year, especially in Easter Time, best used in moderation. Like the options for the Penitential Act, it must be well prepared and communicated with the musicians and other ministers who will be assisting. However, it can be a beautiful and powerful reminder of our baptism and a liturgical reminder of the efficacy of Holy Water.

**RESOURCES FROM OUR OFFICE**

**The Book of the Names of the Dead**

Second Edition

Many churches have the custom of giving a place of honor to a book in which parishioners write the names of their dead. This is such a book that has been carefully prepared—in its dimensions, paper, binding, and art—to be both beautiful and worthy of its task. In most parishes, this one volume will be large enough to receive names over many years.

This beautifully bound volume features a gold embossed cover, that matches other ritual editions, for a place of reverence in the parish. On the title page there are two thin lines. These may be used to inscribe (perhaps in calligraphy) the name of your parish and the years when this book was used to record names. There are also lines on the pages themselves on which parishioners may write the names of their loved ones. Beautifully inscribed on these pages are English quotations from the Order of Christian Funerals. These poetic texts may be a source of inspiration and comfort during times of grief.

In addition to this unique book, you will also receive access to a FREE electronic handout that explains the tradition associated with the book, important theological concepts surrounding its use, and other important information. These reproducible PDFs print on 8 1/2” x 11” paper and can be used as bulletin inserts or as handouts for adult faith formation or catechetical sessions. Available in English only and Bilingual.

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