



Viator Web

NEWSBRIEF OF THE GENERAL DIRECTION

Number 55

January, 2013

Message from the Superior General

Liturgy: What We Dare to Do Because of Love!

Every person is a complex being who lives and flourishes in a world that is no less mysterious. That experience helps us to realize that life is not a series of events accumulating one upon the other until their totality traces the outlines of a personal history, but that it is the links between and among people that create those events. And it is precisely the hyphens that link together life's meaningful events that constantly invite us to those precious moments when questions, doubts, and acts of faith do not have to be dealt with alone. Does not the liturgy, first and foremost, have the ability to call forth those who are searching for truth and happiness from their isolation?

In its *"for our reflection"* section, the present issue of *Viator Web* proposes several perspectives regarding liturgy. Viatorians say that they are concerned about celebrating well, of doing so worthily, in an adapted manner, with due respect for what our tradition offers us. What can we say? While the contributions that we asked for will launch us along different paths, it remains up to each of us to complete them according to our particular context.

In this present Year of Faith, which invites us to revisit the convictions of the Vatican II Council Fathers, let us recall that we, as rich and complex human beings, need "to be together" in order to capture traces of God in our personal history. Therefore, words and actions seize upon us and go beyond us, leading us toward something that is greater than ourselves, but without us being strangers. That is the Church, the mystery of Christ that brings us together and send us forth on a mission. Ritualized moments, which provide a unique and natural approach to all of life's mysteries, and creativity come together as the creative movement is born. Is that not faithfulness, in its most beautiful expression, to the God who created us and who ceaselessly calls us to be builders of his Kingdom?

The liturgy presents the mystery of Christ, who offers us crossroads where our more or less wandering footsteps come together. And it is then that words and actions re-create the identity that we need. To the extent that it opens wide the horizons of life, liturgy is to faith what words are to love. Celebrating well means letting love express itself in such a way that it gives us a new beginning!

In 2013, we pay tribute to:

- Brother Fermín Ochoa Ochoa de Echagüen of Spain, who celebrates 75 years of religious life.

- The confreres celebrating 50 years of religious life:

Br. Raoul Breton (Ca)	Fr. Paul Charbonneau (Ca)
Br. José Domaica (E)	Br. Alberto Elgoibar (E)
Br. Segundo Fernández (E)	Br. José Julián Ortiz de Landaluce (E)
Fr. Claude Fortin (Ca)	Br. Gaétan Fortin (Ca)
Br. Raymond Maltais (Ca)	Fr. Julien Rainville (Ca)
Br. François Veyrié (F)	Br. Dale A. Barth (Ch)
Fr. Charles G. Bolser (Ch)	Br. Patrick T. Drohan (Ch)
Fr. Erwin M. Savela (Ch)	

- The confreres celebrating 25 years of religious life:

Fr. Nestor Fils-Aimé (Ca)	Fr. Kénel Verna (Ca)
Fr. Ángel Maria Ipiña (Es)	Br. Jean-Marc Saint-Jacques (Ca)
Br. Jocelyn Dubeau (Ca)	

- The associates celebrating 25 years of their commitment:

Mr. Daniel Gonzáles Morales (Ch)	Ms. Nancy Araya Morales (Ch)
Ms. Élizabeth Salinas Fonseca (Ch)	Mr. Raphaël Bé Kouadio (CI)
Mr. Douyeri Jules Yeo (CI)	Ms. Esther García Pinilla (Es)
Mr. Luis Llanes González (Es)	Ms. Felisa Toledano Parra (Es)

For Our Reflection

Liturgy is a Constitutive Element of our Charism

Considering that the process of refounding and revitalizing the Viatorian Community is also based upon the intuition of our Founder, who considered the liturgy and liturgical activities as essential aspects of the life of every Viatorian,

... local Viatorian communities should place special emphasis on preparing, leading, and evaluating liturgical celebrations so as to offer to the wider Church the fullness of our charism. (2000 General Chapter, page 26.)



Liturgy and History: A Crucial Relationship

It was commonly heard before the Second Vatican Council that you could go anywhere in the world and Mass would be celebrated the same way. It was also taught that the celebration of the Eucharist had remained practically the same over the course of the centuries. These were claims that Catholics were proud of. They were part of the arguments that supported the superiority of the Catholic Church over the “poor Protestants” who had no such uniformity of worship. This idea of the universality of the Roman Catholic Mass was so much a part of the Catholic commonly held belief that it appeared in the deliberations of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council. One bishop even remarked that he was against the reform of the liturgy because he wanted to continue to pray in the language Jesus used at the Last Supper—in Latin!

Thankfully, more informed voices prevailed and the Council fathers approved the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) by a vote of 2,147 to 4. As we know today, the celebration of the Mass and the other liturgies of the Catholic Church have undergone important changes over the course of history. The original way of celebrating the Eucharist, for example, was in intimate gatherings in private homes in the context of a full meal, shared by members of the Christian community (See I Cor 11:17-33). For centuries the language of worship was that spoken by the common people. Because most of the Christians of Rome in the early centuries were immigrants or children of immigrants from the East of the Roman Empire, the language of the liturgy was Greek until the middle of the fourth century when Latin became the norm.

A style of liturgy developed in Rome that was influenced by two elements: the former pagan religious practices of the people and the ceremonial of the imperial court. The style of the Roman Canon is reminiscent of pagan sacrificial prayer and the liturgical vestments that are worn today are versions of the court dress of imperial courtiers in the late fifth century—chasubles, stoles, dalmatics, miters, episcopal rings are all derived the dress of imperial officials (not from Jesus).

During the Middle Ages, when there was a desire to communicate a sense of awe and reverence and Latin became a language only known by the clergy, the altar was placed against the wall and the priest presided with his back to the people—ritually emphasizing the priest's role as mediator between God and the Christian community.

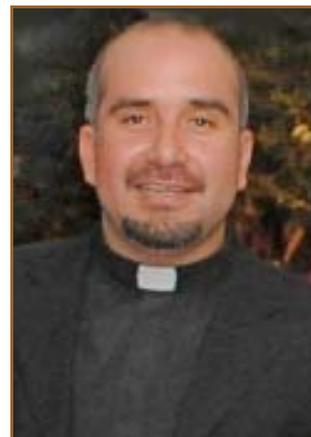
Today, thanks to Vatican II, the liturgy has changed again. It is celebrated in a language all can understand and the priest faces the assembly of the baptized that comes together to be a full part of the celebration. While our Eucharist is essentially the same as that described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians, the Mass celebrated in Africa, South America or Europe is open to different liturgical elements that better express the Good News of Jesus in the culture of the people.

For Viatorians, today, the challenge remains to prepare liturgies faithful to our Catholic heritage while being attentive to do what our ancestors in faith did: enable our worship to more effectively proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

Mark R. Francis, c.s.v.,
Chicago, United States

Liturgy and the Young

There does not exist in life a specific moment or a specific stage that is called “youth.” Suffice it to say that “youth” is a complex reality. In light of that consideration and at the risk of caricaturizing, I would like to share, with a minimum of words, three elements that draw young people to liturgical celebrations:



Emphasis on images and things visible

Young people “consume” thousands of images on the Internet, on television, and on the street. As opposed to adults, who interrelate more through words, the world of the young is visual and immediate. An image that does not attract their attention at the moment is rapidly discarded. For that reason, liturgical signs must be attractive, clear, and specific about what is being celebrated. It is not through the words of a priest that young people celebrate; rather, it is through the beauty that liturgy itself projects, since every young person is aware of images and things visible.

Importance of playfulness, affection, and community

Young people are generous and value a spirit of generosity. In the liturgy, they discover something different: a God who is close to them (Father) and who goes looking for them (Shepherd). As in a game, which is played for the sake of being played, young people discover in the liturgy a God who is playful and generous, who asks for nothing in return, and who gives generously (Redemption and Salvation). Additionally, however, young people’s liturgies call for a pretext and a context, which are provided by the community. And, as happened with the first Christians, the community is converted into a necessary substitute for the family.

Curiosity as the door that leads into the mysterious

A closed door is all that is needed to bring young people to want to open it and to see what is behind it. Something similar happens in the liturgy: young people are not accustomed to silence and to mystery (constant music and YouTube do not leave room for listening to God or time for entering into Mystery). Nevertheless, young people are inquisitive and know that the liturgy, little by little, shows them who God is. The Mystery of a hidden God attracts young people and provides them with a never-ending task that re-situates them with a certain degree of importance in their Christian lives.

I do not know if these three elements are universal in all of those places where Viatorians celebrate their faith. But, what does unite all of us is the desire to bring young people to practice their faith and to celebrate that faith along with them as companions and as brothers and sisters.

Rodrigo Andrade García, c.s.v.,
Ovalle, Chili

Speaking to the young today about liturgy is no small challenge!



We have to recognize the fact that traditional Catholic liturgy reaches very few young people in our North American society. Is that surprising? No! It is a reality. But does that mean that we should throw in the towel and abandon our primary mission as educators?

My experience with young people leads me to ask questions about certain aspects of the challenge of trying to adapt the liturgy to the realities of our world. I will speak briefly about three of those.

First of all, I feel that it is urgent to return to the basis for any Gospel-based undertaking: the call to live out loving unity in significant places after the example of the first Christians (Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47). In the Life Preparation Service, we try to create spaces where young people get to know themselves and to be recognized by others. In those circumstances, it is possible for them to share their lived experiences, the beautiful as well as the destructive aspects of their lives, what it is that hurts them or oppresses them. Liturgy is not a reality in itself, immutable and forever unchangeable. In order to celebrate our God, we must form community. Are our parish and community settings still places where it is good to live, to love, to share, and to celebrate?

My second conviction is fundamental. Gospel values retain their full importance today. We are called to give new life to those values, to make them visible in our world through our actions, our words, our proofs of solidarity. When young people, who are increasingly city-dwellers and who are caught up in a deafening rhythm of life, hear the Word of God, they have the impression that they are listening to a dusty text written by farmers. Our role as educators is therefore to find the words to restore to the Word the same impact that it had in our lives. Let us strive to be those who provide life with flavor.

Finally, we will have to invent signs to accompany young people at the most important moments in their lives. What are those signs? While I really do not know, are we able, as a community, to celebrate when a young person is going through a difficult moment? Are we able to open our spirits so that the Gospel is also a part of our commitment to peace, justice, protection of our planet, truth, and freedom? Are we there to celebrate Earth Day, Human Rights Day, and any other event that touches young people today?

In a word, let us live alertly and let us celebrate life!

Jean-Marc St-Jacques, c.s.v.,
Montréal, Canada



Liturgy as a Catechetical Moment

Since 2005, I have been the catechetical leader in the Diocese of San Pedro Sula. Every year, on the Feast of the Ascension, which is Catechist Day in Honduras, we have celebrated wonderful gatherings of catechists, at the last of which more than three thousand catechists were present. These last two years, our themes were “Catechist: welcome, live, celebrate, and proclaim the Word” (in 2011 after the publication of *Verbum Domini*) and “Catechist: revivify, transmit, and celebrate the gift of faith by being witnesses of hope” (in 2012 on the threshold of the Year of Faith). Those themes summarized the richness of our experiences. That was a living and clear example of the continuity between catechesis and liturgy.

Here in Honduras, we can see clearly that an integral catechesis has to culminate in a joyful celebration of faith as a community and that a liturgical celebration lived with full meaning is already, in itself, an excellent catechesis. I would even call it the summit of catechesis. We live that out each day, each week, in the little churches of the small communities that are cared for by lay people – Delegates of the Word – who have been prepared for that task. In order for that to happen, it is necessary, in my opinion, that the following conditions be met:

- That there be a genuine appreciation of and a deep desire for listening to and welcoming the Word of God, the Living Word made flesh.
- That there be regular times of personal and family prayer centered in the revealed Word.
- That celebrations connect with real life, with the struggles and the yearnings of the community, with the dreams of a better world that overcomes injustices and inequalities. It is necessary to accommodate the Word with today’s situations without betraying it.
- That language, signs, songs, silent moments, accentuations, prayers ... flow forth from the journey of the community, which comes together to celebrate its faith as the motivating force of its life.
- That ritualism and rubricism be overcome so that, with creativity and depth, each person will feel himself or herself immersed in the “liturgical action” by participating in it with soul and head and heart.
- That the entire community feel that it is responsible for the quality of the celebration by seeing to it that all the groups in the community (children, young people, grass-roots ecclesial communities, catechists, families, pastoral social workers, and Cursillo participants) are involved in the preparation process.

- Jesus employed actions and symbols constantly. Our people are affected by sentiments and by the meaning of symbols, which have something personal to say to all of us. We must very carefully use the evocative capacity of symbols.
- It is very important that the one who is called upon to preside try to break free from what is routine and permit himself to be touched by the novelty of people's lives and by the novelty of Jesus' Gospel. Bridges must be constructed between life and faith, between the mystery that escapes from us and the harsh reality that presses down upon us.

It is obvious that I had to remain brief and that there would be many other conditions that would help to promote a fully catechetical liturgy. I have spoken out of the celebrative experience of our parish. I remember certain unforgettable Paschal Vigils carefully prepared by the young people for the entire community, a Palm Sunday with the participation of the catechetical children, certain Penance Services filled with symbolism and beauty, and many special occasions on which the life of the community came forth with all of its richness in liturgical actions. For that to happen, we must have available something that we oftentimes do not: PREPARATION AND TIME. Here, the length of the celebration is increased. And when it ends, the people remain seated in their pews. They want to continue singing and celebrating. In other contexts, celebration time is reduced and a "chill" pervades the experience. We do not take time to taste or to share what is happening. That becomes harsher and drier.

Father Víctor Cámara, Viatorian religious,
Jutiapa, Honduras

Confided to Our Prayers

- Br. Antonio ARCHAMBAULT (Ca) died on November 29, 2012, at the age of 92, in his 74th year of religious profession.
- Ms. Régine CHÉNIER (Ca) died on December 24, 2012, at the age of 66, in her 12th year of commitment as an associate.