

*una caritate,  
una regula,  
similibusque  
vivamus moribus*



*Liturgia est culmen  
ad quod actio Ecclesiae tendit  
et simul fons unde  
omnis eius virtus emanat.*

SECRETARIUS LITURGIÆ  
Ordinis Cisterciensis

Liturgical Newsletter 2020-1

Stift Heiligenkreuz, 27. November 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At the end of a year in which even the liturgy has been permeated by the COVID-19 topic, I am sending the liturgical newsletter to you all once again. Time and again in these past months the Holy See and regional bishops' conferences have had to intervene in order to assure safe and responsible liturgies on the one hand, while reminding the faithful of the necessary continuation of the liturgy as a constitutive element of the Church's life, on the other. Some of the interventions were very harsh. They hurt, but they also showed us once again how much the liturgy shapes and determines our monastic identity. We had to make painful sacrifices, we had to learn how to do some things in a new way, but in many ways it was an enriching experience. I would like to invite you all to consciously reflect in your community on this experience and the liturgical adjustments you have had to make. Think about what is worth keeping and what should be promptly reintroduced into your life of worship as soon as it is possible.

I won't go into the details of COVID-19 adjustments since so many of the directives and liturgical norms during the pandemic are only relevant at specific times and in specific places. You can get information about these directives from your bishop or the bishops' conference in your area.

#### A Monastery and its own Liturgical Calendar

Due to the increasing number of beatifications, canonizations, and days of remembrance that have been added to the Roman general calendar, the Order's calendar and the various diocesan calendars, Abbot General Mauro-Giuseppe Lepori has asked me to call to mind the regulations that currently apply to calendar issues.

The Second Vatican Council gives us the basic rules for the liturgical year in the Constitution on the Liturgy („Sacrosanctum Concilium“) in paragraphs 102-111: „107. The liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times; their specific character is to be retained, so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of Christian redemption, and above all the paschal mystery. [...] 108. The minds of the faithful must be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the mysteries of salvation are celebrated in the course of the year. Therefore, the proper of the time shall be given the preference which is its due over the feasts of the saints, so that the entire cycle of the mysteries of salvation may be suitably recalled. [...] 111. The saints have

been traditionally honored in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration. For the feasts of the saints proclaim the wonderful works of Christ in His servants, and display to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation. Lest the feasts of the saints should take precedence over the feasts which commemorate the very mysteries of salvation, many of them should be left to be celebrated by a particular Church or nation or family of religious; only those should be extended to the universal Church which commemorate saints who are truly of universal importance.”

In addition, the Council reminds us that particularly each Sunday and the Season of Lent should shine in a new way. In order to put all of this into practice, the Church’s calendar was massively reduced. The liturgists selected saints from various “categories” in a balanced way, taking gender, church status, geographical continent, century, etc. into consideration. In addition, the levels of solemnity were reduced to five: Sollemnitas, Festum, Memoria obligatoria, Memoria ad libitum, pro Missa ad libitum. The reform designed an easy-to-use list of liturgical days which can be found in the breviary and missal.

The general Roman calendar is fundamental for the calendar of each specific monastery. It is binding for the entire Roman Church. It is reproduced in our order’s own directory and regularly updated.

Each diocese has its own diocesan calendar, which is approved by the diocesan bishop and the Holy See. Religious communities only adopt the following from this calendar: They celebrate the main patron saint of the diocese as a solemnity, the patron of the geographical region (e.g. continent) and the dedication day of the diocesan cathedral as feasts. Any other memorial days from the diocesan calendar are not relevant for religious orders and do not have to be celebrated. Please inform the editor of our order’s directory about which commemorations your community observes so that he can include them in the directory; he has no way of knowing this without news from you.

Our order, like every order, has a specific calendar that is approved by the General Chapter and the Holy See. It is binding for the entire order. It is reproduced in our order’s liturgical directory and updated regularly.

The main patron saint of a town or city is celebrated as a solemnity; if there are additional, lesser patron saints, then they are ranked as memorials. In every chapel and church (and monastery church) there are further local celebrations: The solemnity on the anniversary of its consecration (if it was consecrated); the solemnity of the title of the church; the feast day of a saint or blessed who is buried there (if that saint is recorded in the martyrology or its appendix). Since these details are not known to the editor of our order’s directory, they must be made known to her so she can include them in the directory.

If there is no solemnity, feast, or obligatory memorial to be celebrated on a given day, you are free to celebrate an optional memorial, a saint of the day from the diocesan calendar, or one from the Martyrologium Romanum. If you want to celebrate a blessed, first confirm that he has been beatified for the relevant area (region, diocese, order). Saints may be celebrated liturgically in the church universal, but blessed are only to be celebrated in particular regions or orders. Their commemoration must remain at the level of an optional memorial. Under no circumstances are optional memorials to be upgraded just because they are the name days of superiors or members of the community.

In general, it is important to ensure that the calendar does not get overloaded, especially during Advent and Lent. It is often better to include fewer saints in the in-house calendar and to focus on selecting those who have special significance for the community. It is not in the interest of the Church to celebrate the full diocesan calendar and the full religious calendar including all the optional memorials. The celebration of the annual liturgical cycle is of great value in itself. I would kindly ask that you review your in-house calendars carefully. If they vary significantly from the standards explained above, please re-adjust them. Once again I invite you to regularly consult the information provided in the official directory and update the details which pertain to your community, if necessary. Simply write an email to Frater Xavier Guanter O.Cist. (Poblet): [biblioteca@poblet.cat](mailto:biblioteca@poblet.cat). I would like to thank Brother Xavier for his important work, and I can only recommend consulting the directory regularly. It is a way of connecting with the saints celebrated in other communities and of praying for deceased Cistercians who departed this world in the previous year: They are listed in the appendix.

#### News concerning the Church and the Order

At the Pope's request, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued a decree dated October 7, 2019 (Prot. Nr. 404/19) including the commemoration of "Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto" in the Roman Calendar on December 10; it is a "memoria ad libitum" and now can be celebrated all over the world. The Latin collect (opening prayer) follows:

Deus, qui promíssa Pátribus adímplens  
beátam Vírginem Maríam elegísti,  
ut matrem fíeret Salvatóris,  
concéde nobis illíus exéempla sectári,  
cuius humílitas tibi plácuít,  
et oboediéntia nobis prófuit.  
Per Dóminum.

The Mass readings are:

LECTIO I Isaiah 7,10-14; 8,10, n. 707, 7.  
PS. RESP. Lk 1, 46-47. 48-49. 50-51. 52-53. 54-55, n. 709, 5.  
ALLELUIA Cf. Lk 1, 28, n. 711, 1.  
EVANG. Lk 1, 26-38, n. 712, 4.

This is the Second Reading for Vigils:

Ex Epístola sancti Ioánnis Pauli II papæ pro VII sæculári anniversário Almæ Domus Lauretánæ  
(Lettera a Mons. P. Macchi, 15 agosto 1993: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, XVI/2, 526-537)

Translations will be commissioned and distributed by the bishop's conferences.

I received the following message from the Brazilian Congregation:

About the new Divine Office in the Brazilian Congregation: they use the psalms according to scheme 1 of the Rituale Cisterciense, without dividing vigils into two weeks. The Vaussin

Hymnarium is almost untouched in its simplicity (but perhaps the final version also brings many Bernardine hymns and those from Stephen Harding); the traditional antiphony (largely the same as the Westmalle editions, with some additions by Fr. Bernard Kaul); short readings and responsories are from the “Liturgia horarum”. The new office should be introduced in all the congregation’s monasteries and, if necessary, offers two options: one that is closer to our tradition and one that is more connected to the actual “liturgia horarum”. It worked very well. The new arrangement seems to be pleasing to all (which is almost a miracle). Even the monasteries that used the psalm scheme of the “Liturgia Horarum” spread over four weeks had no problems with the new books. Thank God all the monasteries in our Congregation have accepted this book very well, and we finally have a common breviary again. *We congratulate you very much on this great accomplishment!*

Missal: The plan is to have this revised translation confirmed by the Holy See and to publish a beautiful edition with a separate lectionary. The final version would contain the “Ordinarium Missae” and the Cistercian ritual for Holy Week as an appendix (cf. *Rituale Cisterciense* 1998). It will also include musical notation, a “Missa in cantu”, prefaces with melody, and so on. Of all these things, we only have the revision of the Missae Propriae in Portuguese finished so far. For the next steps, we will have to wait for the Order's calendar and the new Brazilian translation of the 2002 Missal before we can start working on the edition.

Martyrology: We already have the Roman martyrology in Portuguese. However, after years of use, we found that this edition absolutely cannot be used in the chapter house (or in the refectory, as many communities do today) because it is too long, includes too many saints, etc. What’s more, it is very far from our tradition. So we started to convert the current martyrology into a more traditional form, using the old entries from the Cistercian martyrology whenever possible. A very complicated project, I confess. The book will also include the Rule of St. Benedict in the classical Cistercian subdivisions (four complete readings distributed over a year). This was actually intended for use in Itatinga, but it is also available to other monasteries.

In addition, work is advancing on the lectionary to be used during Vigils for the Dead. The Brazilian translation needs to be revised and printed in an appropriately dignified edition.

#### Activities of the Secretariat for Liturgy

A meeting of those responsible for the liturgy in their communities was to take place in Helfta in February 2021. Unfortunately, it had to be canceled due to COVID-19. I hope to set up a new date as soon as possible.

Work is progressing on a complete Latin-German breviary. The *Graduale Cisterciense* is also taking shape. If you are interested in these projects, please contact me at any time.

As of today, 198 users are registered in the online thesaurus. If you are not yet registered, you are welcome to do so at any time: [www.liturgia-ocist.org](http://www.liturgia-ocist.org)! You can already choose from 132 files to download, you can exchange ideas on liturgical topics in a forum, and upload valuable materials for the benefit of others. Please enrich this unique liturgical platform with your materials and your personal input.

## New Books and other Publications

The Benedictine Nuns of Abbaye de Notre-Dame de Fidélité have set themselves the goal of recording the complete repertoire of Gregorian chant. This means 7,000 hours of singing. Information at: [www.neumz.com](http://www.neumz.com)

The Benedictines of the Italian Abbey Praglia have now published volume II of their antiphonary: “Antiphonale Monasticum – De Sanctis”. This antiphonary has been compiled for “Scheme B” (Füglister’s psalm distribution) and, in conjunction with volume I, contains all of the Divine Office for the entire church year except for vigils. Very beautiful and noble books, both inside and outside. Order them here: [www.praglia.it](http://www.praglia.it)

Alicia Scarcez, *L’antiphonaire cistercien primitif d’après les sources musicales de 1136/1140, Le premier chant de Cîteaux retrouvé*. Spicilegium Friburgense No. 47, ISBN 978-3-402-13636-2. This book of impressive dimensions (855 pages!), expressly aims to be the musical counterpart to the text editions Chrysogonus Waddell published in the same series. Scarcez opens up largely unknown musical territory with archaeological flair. Her topic is the first Cistercian antiphonary, which was issued under Stephen Harding in Cîteaux and used in all other monasteries in the Order until the beginning of the 1140s. The author, a Belgian liturgical scholar born in 1978, teaches and engages in research at the Université de Fribourg in Switzerland. She is well versed in musicology, liturgical singing (she is a cantor and choir director), musical palaeography, and the cultural history of medieval orders. Her 2012 dissertation on the choral reform of the Cistercians under Bernard of Clairvaux, the so-called second chorale reform, won awards and good reviews. Her newest book is meticulously prepared and presents immense amounts of information in a very clear manner.

The Benedictines of the French Abbey Solesmes reissued the “Liber hymnarius” in 2019. The only adjustments to liturgical developments since 1983 are the references to communal hymns for the saints included in the Roman calendar since 1983; there are no new chants. What is striking, however, is that the old foreword by Dom Cardine, with which “the monks of Solesmes” recommend a semiological interpretation of the chant, has been cut. All references to an interpretation of the chants in the light of the oldest neumes have been deleted from the notation. This is probably a silent but clear statement by the editors that the monastery has now officially said goodbye to the semiological interpretation propagated by their confrere Cardine. Whether the old foreword and thus the semiological method of interpretation can really be considered obsolete remains to be seen. Through projects such as the *Graduale Novum*, this school of choral interpretation remains vibrant. It is primarily oriented towards liturgical theology, which is just as important to Cistercians as it is to Benedictines in central questions of interpretation. ISBN-13: 978-2852743199, ISBN-10: 2852743191

The third edition of the Italian missal has been published (*Messale Romano, terza edizione*). Some peculiarities should be emphasized: The Our Father request “do not lead us into temptation” reads in the future in the official Italian version “do not leave us to temptation”. In the Words of Consecration for the chalice it continues to use “for you and for all”. In the Gloria, “Peace on earth for people of good will” is replaced by the phrase “Peace on earth for the people loved by God”. In addition, there is a lot of local material added and attention to inclusive language like “fratelli e sorelle”. In the Kyrie, the Greek original version of this venerable prayer will be preferred in the future. The new missal can be used immediately and is binding as of Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021.

## Answers to Questions Received

\* What should be done if All Souls' Day (November 2nd) falls on a Sunday?

The matter is clear from the hierarchy of the liturgical feasts: All Souls' Day is listed here under I.3. (like solemnities) and Sundays are under II.6. (like feasts). Thus All Souls' Day would suppress the Sunday. The rubrics in the Breviary and Missal regulate the matter as follows: Mass is to be celebrated with the readings of All Souls' Day, but the Liturgy of the Hours is to be held as on Sundays. In the event that lauds and vespers are celebrated with the people, one MAY use lauds and vespers from All Souls' Day. Here it is easy to notice how the mystery of the resurrection, which we celebrate on Sunday, can only be celebrated in unity with the memory of the deceased and is inseparable from it.

\* In our order, we practice the deep bow instead of the genuflection. Does that also apply when you walk past the tabernacle?

For the Roman liturgy, genuflections and bowing are regulated in IGMR 274: "The genuflection, in which the right knee is bent down to the floor, expresses worship; it is therefore reserved for the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration of the Friday from the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday) to the beginning of the Easter Vigil. During the mass the priest genuflects three times: after elevating the host, after raising the chalice, and before receiving communion. Special features that must be observed during the concelebrated mass are specified in this passage (cf. nos. 210-251). If a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament is in the sanctuary, priests, deacons, and other liturgical servers genuflect when they approach the altar and leave it, but not during mass. Otherwise everyone who passes before the Blessed Sacrament genuflects, unless they are in a procession. The acolytes who carry the processional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting."

The Cistercian tradition was last regulated in 1998 in the *Rituale Cisterciense*. There it says on p. 43 under no. 2.2.a.: "Permission is granted to adopt the new Roman Missal (including the alterations), taking into account [lat. "Habitatis prae oculis"]: [...] a deep bow instead of the genuflection prescribed in the Roman Missal [...]."

The question of whether all genuflections should be replaced by deep bows often makes for an emotional discussion and is ultimately not easy to answer. Each monastery follows local and cultural traditions that are valuable in themselves. Every form of reverence ultimately honors the one true God and that is the essence of the gesture; it must be internalized and authentic.

\* The monasteries of our order are exempt and therefore not under the influence of the local bishop. Does that mean that the abbot or the abbess can freely arrange the liturgy in the abbey; are we bound by the diocesan bishop's instructions?

The exemption for religious orders is described in the decree "Christus Dominus – Concerning the Pastoral Office of the Bishops" (No. 33-35) of the Second Vatican Council and is canonically regulated in Can. 678 CIC. There it says:

"CD 35.3: [...] The institute of exemption, by which Religious are called to the service of the supreme pontiff or other ecclesiastical authority and withdrawn from the jurisdiction of bishops, refers chiefly to the internal order of their communities so that in them all things may be properly coordinated and the growth and perfection of the Religious common life promoted. These

communities are also exempt so that the supreme pontiff can dispose of them for the good of the universal Church and any other competent authority for the good of the churches under its own jurisdiction. This exemption, however, does not exclude Religious in individual dioceses from the jurisdiction of bishops in accordance with the norm of law, insofar as the performance of their pastoral office and the right ordering of the care of souls requires."

"Can. 678 §1. Religious are subject to the power of bishops whom they are bound to follow with devoted submission and reverence in those matters which regard the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate. §2. In exercising an external apostolate, religious are also subject to their proper superiors and must remain faithful to the discipline of the institute. The bishops themselves are not to fail to urge this obligation if the case warrants it. §3. In organizing the works of the apostolate of religious, diocesan bishops and religious superiors must proceed through mutual consultation."

As a result, it is the competence of bishops or bishops' conferences to regulate pastoral care and public worship. Of course, monastic superiors should settle the liturgical matters not regulated by the bishop, and non-public worship is to be held according to the relevant constitutions. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that when it comes to liturgy, meaningful organization and structures result not only from authority, but also from competence and harmony. It is always useful and sometimes necessary to gather advice from within the community or help from experts.

\* Are we as members of the Cistercian Order allowed to sing sequences?

In church music, a sequence is a lyrical, hymn-like chant. In the Roman Rite, there are some solemnities in which a sequence is an obligatory part of the Holy Mass. The term sequence comes from the Latin word *sequi* (Latin for "to follow"), because the chant immediately followed upon the Alleluia as the jubilus – that is, a richly crafted, wordless melody sung to the last *a* of the Alleluia. Sequences became very popular in the late Middle Ages: about 5,000 examples are known! The Council of Trent (1545 to 1563) reduced the sequences for the Roman liturgy to four: (1) "Victimae paschali laudes" (Easter), (2) "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (Pentecost), (3) "Lauda Sion Salvatorem" (Corpus Christi), (4) "Dies irae" (Requiem). The "Stabat mater" (on the memorial of Mary's suffering) was added as the fifth sequence in 1727. In the post-Vatican II liturgy, the requiem sequence "Dies irae" was removed from the missal and moved into the Liturgy of the Hours: it can now be used as the "hymn" during the last week of the church year or for All Souls' Day. According to the basic order of the Roman Missal (IGMR No. 64), the sequence is sung today between the second reading and the Gospel, before the Alleluia. It is mandatory on Easter Sunday (Victimae paschali laudes) and Pentecost Sunday (Veni Sancte Spiritus). The other sequences (Lauda Sion Salvatorem, Stabat mater) are optional during the mass on their respective feast day. The Directory of the Cistercian Order follows the new Roman practice.

The reason why we Cistercians avoided the sequences for centuries and still avoid them in some places lies in the past. The original Cistercian rite is essentially the rite of the diocese of Chalon-sur-Saône (ecclesiastical province of Lyon) – Cîteaux Abbey was located in this diocese. Using a sequence was simply not common in this Gallic-Franconian rite. Since the Council of Trent recognized the independence of our Cistercian ritual, the sequence was not inserted in it. Even as the Cistercian liturgy became more and more Roman, the sequence never found its way into our liturgical books, although many other elements did. Clearly, it became necessary for our Directory to explain the sequence: Those who want to follow the old Cistercian tradition and leave it out are certainly free to do so. It may, however, be worthwhile for us to meditate on these beautiful and

profound texts or to use them in worship. For this reason they were printed in the booklet “Laudes Vespertinae seu Cantus Diversi ad Benedictionem SS. Sacramenti” back in 1926 (Westmalle).

Conclusion

Thanks for your interest. Stay healthy. The Lord bless you and your communities.

With brotherly greetings,

Your Frater Cœlestin Nebel, O.Cist.

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