Secretariat for Liturgy OCist & Commission for Liturgy OCSO

Liturgical Newsletter 2025

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Stiepel Monastery, August 1 in the Holy Year 2025

Dear Sisters, Dear Brothers,

We send you warm greetings from Stiepel Monastery in Germany, where we have been holding our annual working meeting over the past few days.

We are in the middle of the Holy Year 2025, which Pope Francis has placed under the motto "Pilgrims of Hope." And how wonderful it is that God allowed him to return to the Father's house at Easter during this Holy Year. We rejoice at the election of Pope Leo XIV, who will continue this Holy Year.

The last liturgical newsletter was published for the years 2023-2024 with a slight delay. We aim to return toour annual rhythm and publish the letters promptly following our yearly meetings.

Holy Year 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

During the Holy Year 2025, which Pope Francis has dedicated to the theme "Pilgrims of Hope," we are invited to deepen our understanding of the mystery of God's love: a love that calls us to walk together, united in faith, toward the fulfillment of our Christian vocation.

This year, we are called to celebrate the mysteries of God with open hearts, allowing the Lord to transform us into the image of Christ and make us instruments of hope in our community and in the world. We offer here a few suggestions for communal or personal meditation:

1. Eucharist: Source of Hope

Reflect on how the Eucharist nourishes us on our journey through life, giving us strength, comfort, and the reassuring presence of Christ among us. Consider how, as a community, can live the Eucharist daily – becomoming broken bread for the world.

2. Journeying together: Unity in diversity

As we embark on this pilgrimage of hope, let us celebrate the richness of our diverse liturgical traditions and recognize that our unity in Christ transcends all boundaries. We are called to become one body, journeying together toward the wedding feast of the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. Liturgy: School of Hope

Participating in the liturgy and perceiving it as a place where we grow in all virtues - especially in faith, hope, and love - this year, let us focus on how the liturgy teaches us to live with hope in times of trial and to trust in God's providence.

4. Pilgrimage of the Soul: Personal and Communal Conversion

The liturgical year invites us to ongoing conversion so that our hearts may be formed by the mysteries we celebrate. Participation in the liturgy can lead to personal and communal transformation, fostering a deeper commitment to justice, peace, and the common good.

5. Moments of Reflection

This year, let us plan special moments dedicated to deepening our liturgical life. May we embrace these opportunities with joy and openness, ready to be renewed in faith and hope.

Finally, let us remember that we are not alone on this journey. The Holy Spirit is ever with us, guiding and sustaining us on our pilgrimage of hope. With hearts full of hope, strengthened by the Eucharist, let us continue walking together toward the fulfillment of God's promise. May this year be a time of blessing and grace for evert member of our Cistercian family.

News from our Orders

Working meeting of the OCSO Liturgical Commission and the OCist Liturgical Secretariat

From July 28 to August 1, 2025, the annual working meeting of the OCSO Liturgical Commission and the OCist Liturgical Secretariat took place at Stiepel Monastery in Germany. The meeting began with a study day led by Br. German Herzog on the theme "Monastic Liturgy and Community Life as Reflected in the Ecclesiastica Officia."

The following topics were then discussed:

- Communities that cannot celebrate the Eucharist daily.
- Liturgical formation in our orders.
- Translations and modifications of the Rituale Cisterciense.

It was a productive meeting in a very fraternal atmosphere.

Graduale Cisterciense

Work on the new edition of the Graduale Cisterciense is progressing well, though the original timeline proved to be too optimistic. It now seems realistic that the finished book can be printed in 2026. As before, suggestions, questions, comments, etc. can be sent to graduale@stift-heiligenkreuz.at. Since the project is already in an advanced stage, not all suggestions can be incorporated. However, we are still looking for good designs for the cover of the book.

Online course: Lived Liturgy

In June 2025, the OCist Secretariat for Formation offered an online course titled "Lived Liturgy." Interest was overwhelming, and the feedback was exceptionally positive. We would like to thank Abbot General Mauro-Giuseppe and Procurator General Fr. Lluc for the initiative and organization. The lectures were recorded with simultaneous translations. To request acess to the recordings, please contact Fr. Lluc (lluc.torcal@ocist.org).

News from the Universal Church

St. Teresa of Calcutta in the Roman General Calendar

On December 24, 2024, it was announced that Pope Francis – responding to requests from pastors, religious, and associations of the faithful and in view of the power of the spirituality of St. Teresa of Calcutta in various parts of the world – had ordered that the name of St. Teresa of Calcutta, Virgin, be entered into the Roman General Calendar and that her optional memorial be celebrated annually on September 5 throughout the Church.

The official decree is available in multiple languages on the Holy See's website. It also includes the Latin liturgical texts. These are to be translated, approved, and published by the bishops' conferences after confirmation by this dicastery.

https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2025/02/11/0125/00250.html#francese

Mass formula for the Holy Year 2025

As in previous Holy Years, a special Mass form (*Missa Pro Anno Sancto*) has been created for the Year of Hope. It includes additional prayers for the Holy Year and is available for download in various languages from the Holy See's website: https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/it/giubileo-2025/testi-liturgici-giubileo.html

Further translations into national languages will be provided and published by the respective bishops' conferences.

Mass formula for creation

On July 3, 2025, a new Mass form was introduced into the Missale Romanum. It is entitled *Missa Pro Custodia Creationis*. The Latin version is available online:

https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/romancuria/culto-divino/Missa%20pro%20custodia%20creationis%20-%20Exemplar%20originale.pdf

The translations into the local languages will be provided and published by the relevant bishops' conferences. Since the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si'," there has been an increasing number of requests from around the world to the Holy See to provide a liturgical form that considers the concerns of the encyclical.

Questions & Answers

For questions & answers, you can also use the forum at www.liturgia-ocist.org.

All answers reflect the private opinions of the authors and do not claim to be complete or correct.

You are welcome to send us further questions in your language at any time: liturgia@ocist.org

*** When the abbot celebrates a pontifical Mass, may he—like the bishop—greet the people with the words *"Pax vobis"*? Does he receive the Gospel book to venerate after the reading of the Gospel? Does he bless the people by preceding the blessing with the words *"Sit nomen Domini benedictum"?* Does he use a mitre and staff like the bishop? Or are there any exceptions in the rite?**

The abbot has the right to use the pontificals during the celebration of the liturgy. In terms of external form, he may celebrate the services in a manner similar to a bishop. The regulations governing this are found in the Caeremoniale Episcoporum (2nd edition 1985, since subsequent reprints), as well as in the respective national language editions. However, abbots can always omit the *mitre*; if a *pileolus* is worn, it is typically white or black in our Order.

Canon 390 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* (CIC) states: "The diocesan bishop can exercise the pontificals throughout his diocese, but outside his own diocese only with the express or at least reasonably presumed consent of the local ordinary." According to the motu proprio Pontificalia Insignia of Pope Paul VI, issued on June 21, 1968, regarding the reform of the use of pontifical insignia, abbots are permitted to use pontifical insignia for the duration of their term of office in all monasteries of their order. They may use these insignia only within their own monastery and, with the permission of the competent superior, also in other monasteries of the same Order.

*** Are the hands covered during prayer if no cowl is worn?**

We find little information about specific liturgical customs in the Rule of St. Benedict. The most important source on the subject is the "Ecclesiastica Officia" from the 12th century. At that time, however, it was not customary to wear the scapular in the liturgy. The cowl was the usual garment for liturgy, meals, travel, etc. It was only taken off for work and the scapular was put on. Today, it is customary in the monasteries of our Order to take meals without a cowl and also to pray parts of the liturgy without a cowl. Where do the hands go then? It is true that there is an ancient monastic tradition of covering the hands during prayer, which is almost inevitable when wearing the cowl. This is an attitude of contemplation, prayer, and silence, sometimes also in conjunction with the hood pulled over the head.

If one wishes to cover your hands (without a cowl), this can be done by placing them inside the sleeves of the habit (as with the cowl) or under the scapular. If you do not wear a cowl because of the summer heat, but cover your hands, the cooling effect will be hardly noticeable. Additionally, we are accustomed to consciously stepping out of the stable during the Gospel, Our Father, blessing, etc., and letting our hands fall freely (with the sleeves covered by the cowl). This reflects an attentive, open attitude towards God. However, in some places it is customary to cover the hands when no cowl is worn. It is important to note here that there are no uniform rules, and that each community will find a solution that suits its own practice. Interestingly, these questions often have the potential to spark lengthy discussions within communities. Every solution has its justification. What matters most is that harmony is maintained.

*** How can the washing of feet be performed on Maundy Thursday?**

There are several possibilities here: The washing of feet (*Mandatum*) can be performed during Mass. In this case, the rubrics of the Roman Missal should be followed. However, according to the ancient custom of our Order, it can also be celebrated during the day, outside of Mass. In the past, there was the washing

of the feet of the poor and the washing of the feet of the brothers. Inspiration for this can be found in the oldest testimony of foot washing in our Order, the *Ecclesiastica Officia*.

Chapter 21:7-21 describes the washing of the feet of the poor: after singing the None, the brothers lead the poor into the cloister. They let the poor take their seats there and take off their shoes, starting at the church door through which the monks usually exit and enter the cloister. They carry bowls, linen cloths or towels, and warm water, needed for the foot washing, arranging everything neatly. The washing of the feet of the poor is then performed in the cloister. After they have washed and dried and kissed the feet of the poor, the monks wash their own hands. Then, the individual brothers give each of the poor a coin while kneeling and kiss the hands of the poor. Afterwards, the brothers rise together, perform another *venia* before the poor, and sing *Suscepimus Deus Misericordiam Tuam In Medio Templi Tui*. The poor are then led back to the guest room, where the abbot and his assistants pour water over their hands; afterwards, they refresh themselves.

Chapter 21:28-44 describes the washing of the brothers' feet. At that time, it took place between supper and Compline – a time no longer appropriate according to today's liturgical order. After the convent has risen from the evening table, the brothers bring warm water to the cloister. The sacristan strikes the *tabula* for the washing of the feet. The community sits down in the cloister, and the prior takes the abbot's place. The cantor begins the antiphon *Dominus Iesus*, and the monks sit down on both sides. The abbot and his assistants tie linen cloths around themselves and wash, dry, and kiss the feet of all. Each time they pass the prior, they bow – both the abbot and the others. When the service is complete, the abbot washes the feet of his two assistants, and the others wash each other's feet. Finally, the elder of the abbot's two assistants washes the abbot's feet, and the other dries and kisses them. Afterwards, the abbot and the others pour water over each other's hands. Then they put their cowls back on. The prior rises and gives his place to the abbot, and everyone stands together. When the abbot sits, everyone else sits. As a collation reading, the deacon appointed by the cantor reads the Gospel *Ante Diem Festum Pasche*, seated as on other days. Afterwards, Compline is prayed.

*** In our monastery, the anniversary of the consecration of the church is celebrated on an apostle's feast day. Is this now postponed to the next day, or is it omitted?**

In principle, the liturgically higher-ranking day – the Solemnity of the Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church – takes precedence over the lower-ranking day, feast of the apostles.

In Paul VI's Missal from 1970, it was stipulated that the feast of the apostles would then be transferred to the next available day. However, this rule is no longer found in John Paul II's Missal from 2002. Therefore, both the postponement and the cancellation of the feast of the apostles can be augmented.

Conclusion

We can all be reached via our shared email address: **liturgia@ocist.org,** as well as via our personal email addresses, by post, and by telephone at our respective monasteries.

We are happy to reaffirm our willingness to be available to you. We are always grateful for your suggestions and constructive criticism. We ask you to pray for our work.

With warm regards and prayers,

Fr. Antoine, Fr. Cœlestin, Sr. Judit, Sr. Karla, Fr. Thomas, Sr. Patrizia, Fr. Ruben, Fr. Ugo

Links:

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@CistercianLiturgicalCommission

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/show/53Tkd7jrycR4crDqlXavDq

Thesaurus Liturgiae Cisterciensis: https://www.liturgia-ocist.org/