

BISHOP CAMPBELL ISSUES LITURGICAL NORMS FOR THE NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY IN THE DIOCESE OF LANCASTER



Rt Rev Michael G Campbell OSA, Bishop of Lancaster issued the following norms on 28 May 2017:

"The Neocatechumenal Way has been active in our Diocese for many years and has been a blessing to many people. Recent years have seen a growing sense of unease about the multiplication of small community Masses in some of our already quite small parishes and about some of the differences in the way the Mass is celebrated among the communities of the Neocatechumenal Way.

Here I am mindful that *'Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity," namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops.*

Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation.'

(Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 26)

"Precisely to encourage people who have drifted away from the Church or have not received an appropriate formation to draw close to the riches of the sacramental life, the Neocatechumenal Way may celebrate the Sunday Eucharist in the small community, after the first Vespers of Sunday, according to the dispositions of the diocesan bishop" (Statute, aft. 13). However, every Eucharistic celebration is an action of the one Christ together with His one Church and is therefore essentially open to all who belong to His Church.

Here, I exercise my authority to establish norms regarding the regulation of the liturgy, as a way of fostering clarity concerning the celebration of the Eucharist. As many of you know, there are some permissions concerning the celebration of the Eucharist particular to the Neocatechumenal Way. The Rite of Peace is transferred to just after the Prayer of the Faithful. There may be brief admonitions given in advance of the readings, and, "regarding the distribution of Holy Communion, whereby Communion is administered under the two species, and the faithful receive it standing, remaining in their place"

Mindful of the words of Emeritus Pope Benedict and exercising my responsibility and authority to direct the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy here in the Diocese of Lancaster, I establish the following norms:

- i. As a sign of the unity of the Eucharist within the parish community and the essential openness to all, the Sunday Eucharist after First Vespers and all

Solemnities of the small communities must be celebrated at a consecrated altar, either in the main sanctuary or in an approved chapel (GIRM 296 – 302). If we cannot find unity among ourselves at the one Altar of Sacrifice, where else will we find it?

ii. If the Mass is one of the regularly scheduled Masses of the parish, its special character must be noted in the bulletin.

If the Mass is additional to the regularly scheduled Saturday evening Mass, some portion of the collection taken should go directly to the parish in order to cover costs. The same principle holds for Masses in an approved chapel.

iii. The Parish Priest has the authority to direct how many of such additional Masses may be allowed. Being mindful of Canon 905 §1, a priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except in cases where the law permits him to celebrate or concelebrate more than once on the same day. §2. If there is a shortage of priests, the local Ordinary *can* allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

iv. I understand that it may take some time to rearrange Mass schedules in order to celebrate at a consecrated altar. In light of that reality, I will allow for a period of four weeks to adjust to this norm. That is to say that I expect all Masses to take place at a consecrated altar or in an approved chapel **by 1 July 2017.**

v. It has also come to my attention that there is some confusion concerning the liturgical rubrics about receiving communion "standing, remaining in their place." Fortunately, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal gives us very clear direction. I quote the rubrics below as an aid to our understanding:

a) Regarding the priest: "After this (i.e. after the response ending '... shall be healed'), the priest says quietly, 'May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life,' and reverently consumes the Body of Christ. Then he takes the chalice [...1 and reverently consumes the Blood of Christ." (GIRM, para. 157, 158)

b) Regarding the communicant: "If Communion is given only under the species of bread, the priest raises the host slightly and shows it to each, saying 'The Body of Christ.' The communicant replies, 'Amen' and receives the Sacrament on the tongue *or*, where this is allowed, in the hand. The choice lying with the communicant. As soon as the communicant receives the host, he or she consumes the whole of it." (GIRM, para. 161)

c) These norms concerning the consummation of the Sacred Species must be followed in every celebration of the Eucharist. The priest is to consume the Body and Blood of Christ as soon as he has said the respective prayers, and he must do so prior to distributing the Sacred Species to the communicants (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, No. 97). The communicants are to consume the Body and Blood of Christ as soon as the host or the chalice is placed in their hands. There is to be no delay.

Regarding these norms concerning the reception of the Eucharist, **these take effect on 1 July 2017.'**

Bishop's Office, Lancaster
1 June 2017