

Implementation of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* of Pope Benedict XVI in the Diocese of Raleigh

In his Christmas address to the members of the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005, His Holiness Benedict XVI, shared his vision of shepherding the Church on a path of greater unity, continuity, reform, and renewal. As an essential part of this vision, on July 7, 2007, the Holy Father released his Apostolic Letter, *Summorum Pontificum*, clarifying the status and usage of the Missal of Blessed Pope John XXIII, published in 1962, prior to the liturgical reforms of 1970. The document also governs the use of other ritual books in use prior to these reforms.

Accompanying the Apostolic Letter, the Holy Father also wrote an explanatory letter to all the Bishops of the world providing the context in which the faithful should understand the objectives of the document. The Holy Father explains that the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council found in the 1970 Missal, with its two subsequent revisions, remain as the *Forma ordinaria* or normal form of celebration of the Mass. The use of the 1962 Missal of Blessed Pope John XXIII is to be used as the *Forma extraordinaria* or extraordinary form of celebration of the Mass. Most notably, the Holy Father states that these two forms are not to be seen as two separate Rites of the Mass, but rather two forms of celebration within the one Roman Rite. The Holy Father clarifies this two-fold reality when he stated, "There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal. In the history of the liturgy, there is growth and progress, but no rupture. What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us, too...."

Therefore, to implement *Summorum Pontificum* in every way possible in the Diocese of Raleigh, it is my intention to maintain the *Forma ordinaria* as normative for celebrations of the Mass, but also to make the *Forma extraordinaria* form of the Mass more available to the faithful. To this end, resources will be provided to those priests who are able and choose to study how to properly celebrate the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass so that both he and the people of God will best be served. There are many resources available to priests to aid them in this pursuit and so I direct those priests seeking formation to consult with the Vicar General, the Very Reverend David D. Brockman, for which formation program will be the most effective.

Our Diocese is blessed that we already have priests exercising an effective apostolate offering the Mass and other sacraments using the *Forma extraordinaria*. I am grateful to these priests for their generosity to assist any priest seeking liturgical formation in the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass. In particular, I wish to recognize the Reverend Paul M. Parkerson, Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Dunn, for his leadership in this regard. I also express my gratitude to those in liturgical leadership at Sacred Heart, Dunn for offering liturgical formation in the ministry of altar server for the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass.

While *Summorum Pontificum* does not impose a minimum number of the faithful who may rightfully request the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass from their pastor, the priests of the Diocese of Raleigh, and I, as Bishop, will do everything possible to respond appropriately and generously to the requests for this form with the resources we have. Our Diocesan website will soon convey more information on parish celebrations of the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass in our Diocese.

In recognition of the effective date of *Summorum Pontificum* on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14, 2007, I invite the faithful of our Diocese to join me at Sacred Heart, Dunn, for a special solemn celebration of the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass. I will be the homilist for the Mass and Fr. Parkerson will offer the Mass as the celebrant.

The richness of the Sacred Liturgy is the heart of our Catholic faith. Both the *Forma ordinaria* and the *Forma extraordinaria* of the Mass have been the source of holiness for countless saints throughout history. May the richness of our Catholic liturgical prayer, now made more available to the entire Church, continue to lead us all to that same goal. In the words of our Holy Father, "Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith, itself, allows."

+ Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Raleigh