

To All Priests, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Takamatsu

Pastoral Letter Regarding the Liturgical Celebrations **of the Easter Tridium**

This letter is addressed to all of you who I know are making great efforts to deepen your journey of faith by earnest participation in the liturgy. The topic to be dealt with in this letter is "The Liturgy of the Easter Tridium". As you know well, all liturgical celebrations in a Diocese are under the jurisdiction of the Bishop. This responsibility was first explained in the Roman Missal of 1970 and reiterated in the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal which was promulgated in 2002. The responsibility of the Bishop was further explained in Chapter 1 of the instruction "Redemptionis Sacramentum", which was issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament.

- 1.21: "It pertains to the diocesan Bishop, 'within the limits of his competence, to set forth liturgical norms in his Diocese, by which all are bound.'"
- 1.22: "The Bishop governs the particular Church entrusted to him, and it is his task to regulate, to direct, to encourage, and sometimes also to reprove."
- 1.23: "The faithful 'should cling to the Bishop as the Church does to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ does to the Father, so that all may be in harmonious unity, and that they may abound to the Glory of God'. All, including members of Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life as well as those of all ecclesial associations and movements of any kind, are subject to the authority of the diocesan Bishop in all liturgical matters, apart from rights that have been legitimately conceded. To the diocesan Bishop therefore falls the right and duty of overseeing and attending to Churches and oratories in his territory in regard to liturgical matters, and this is true also of those which are founded by members of the above-mentioned institutes or under their direction, provided that the faithful are accustomed to frequent them."
- 1.24: "It is the right of the Christian people themselves that their diocesan Bishop should take care to prevent the occurrence of abuses in ecclesiastical discipline, especially as regards the ministry of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals. the worship of God and devotion of the Saints."

- 1.25: "Commissions as well as councils or committees established by the Bishop to handle 'the promotion of the Liturgy, sacred music and art in his diocese' should act in accordance with the intentions and norms of the Bishop; they must rely on his authority and his approval so that they may carry out their office in a suitable manner and so that the effective governance of the Bishop in his diocese will be preserved."

In the same document there are many regulations regarding liturgical adaptations. In other words, the members of the Conference of Bishops are required to submit any adaptations in the liturgy to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to ask permission for such practices. Taking all the above into consideration, at this time as we prepare for Holy Week, I request that all of you attend the liturgies of Holy Week held once in each parish church, and not to repeat the liturgies of the Easter Triduum, especially the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Easter Vigil held on Holy Saturday.

The reasons for making such a request are as follows. In the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal (2002) the rubrics are clearly stated. I have also spoken personally to the Holy Father regarding this matter.

✧ Statement regarding the Easter Triduum:

"Celebrationes Tridui sacri peragantur in ecclesiis cathedralis et paroecialibus, et in iis tantum in quibus digne persolvi possunt, idest cum fidelium frequentia, cum ministrorum numero congruenti et cum facultate aliquas saltem partes cantu preferandi. Expedit proinde ut parvae communitates, consociationes et peculiare coetus cuiusque generis in his ecclesiis coadunentur, ad sacras celebrationes forma nobiliore peragandas." The liturgy of the Easter Triduum is to be held only in the Cathedral Church, Parish Church or a place deemed to be suitable for said liturgy. There must be a suitable number of ministers and faithful who are able to sing at least parts of the liturgy. For the above reason, in order to celebrate the liturgy of the Easter Triduum in a sacred manner, small communities, and all religious groups including insitutions and special groups must assemble in the churches mentioned above.

✧ Statement regarding the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

"Ubi vero ratio pastoralis id postulet, loci Ordinarius alteram Missam in ecclesiis

et oratoribus permittere poterit, horis vespertinis celebrandum, et, in casu verae necessitatis, etiam horis matutinis, sed tantummodo pro fidelibus qui nullo modo Missam vespertinam participare valent. Caveatur tamen ne huiusmodi celebrationes in bonum privatarum personarum vel parvorum coetuum peculiarium fiant et ne praeiudicio sint Missae vespertinae." For pastoral reasons the local Ordinary may permit another Mass to be celebrated in churches and public and semipublic oratories in the evening or, in case of genuine necessity, even in the morning, but exclusively for those who are in no way able to take part in the evening Mass. Such Masses must not be celebrated for the advantage of private persons and/or special groups or prejudice the principal evening Mass."

(Note: The above is a section that was added to the rubrics.)

✧ Statement regarding the Easter Vigil

"Vigilia huius noctis, quae est summa ac nobilissima omnium sollemnitatem, unica sit pro unaquaque ecclesia. Ita autem ordinatur, ut post lucernarium et praeconium paschale (quod est pars prima huius Vigiliae), sancta Ecclesia meditetur mirabilia, quae fecit Dominus Deus populo suo ab initio, confidens verbo eius et promisso (pars secunda seu liturgia verbi), usque dum, appropinquante die, cum novis membris in Baptismate renatis (pars tertia), vocatur ad mensam, quam Dominus populo suo praeparavit, memoriale mortis et resurrectionis suae, donec veniat (pars quarta)." This vigil, which is the "mother of all vigils" should be held only once in each church. The liturgy of the Easter vigil is divided into four parts. After the the Service of Light and the Easter Proclamation (Part I), through the Liturgy of the Word (Part II), "the Church meditates on all the wonderful things God has done for his people from the beginning. "The Liturgy of Baptism (Part III), when new members of the church are reborn as the day of resurrection approaches; and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Part IV), when the whole church is called to the table which the Lord has prepared for his people through his death and resurrection" complete the liturgy.

When I had a private audience with the Holy Father in December, 2007 I questioned him about the Holy Week Liturgies. His answer was immediate and clear. After the Bishop or the priests appointed by the Bishop to minister to a parish church have celebrated the liturgies of the Easter Triduum, it is not

permissible to repeat such liturgies. From the rubrics I have quoted above, I am sure that you have understood that all four parts of the liturgy for the Easter Vigil form part of the liturgy to be celebrated by those authorized to do so. The same is true for the Washing of the Feet during the liturgy of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. It is not permitted to repeat any or all of these ceremonies.

In the Diocese of Takamatsu, therefore, after the Bishop or the priests appointed by him to minister in a parish have celebrated the liturgies of the Easter Tridium, repetition of such liturgies will not be permitted. As I have explained above, the Service of Light and the Liturgy of the Word are part of the liturgy of the Easter Vigil and the Washing of the Feet is part of the liturgy of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. If anyone should feel the need to deepen the meaning of such ceremonies, I suggest that they meet together on another day to study and prepare for participation in the liturgies of the Easter Tridium. In addition I wish to emphasize that it is important that the liturgies of the Easter Tridium in the Cathedral Church and Parish Churches be held in a meaningful way. The liturgy of the Easter Tridium is a very important part of our life in the Church.

This pastoral letter has been promulgated under the authority that has been confided to me by the Church as Bishop of the Takamatsu Diocese. In the letter I have explained the reasons for using this authority to make such a serious decision.

Yours respectfully in prayer,

Francis Mizobe Osamu
Bishop of Takamatsu Diocese

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