

WORLD & NATION

EWTN

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Father Donohoe said Bishop Foley's exchange with the congregation about the eucharistic prayers and the status of which way the priest faces during Mass stemmed from a talk given by a priest last year criticizing the second, third and fourth eucharistic prayers and arguing that the only true perennial tradition of the church was for the priest and people alike to face "ad orientem" — "toward the East" — during the eucharistic sacrifice.

Someone sent the bishop a transcript of the priest's talk and asked him why the Birmingham Diocese did not have its priests following the more correct way of celebrating Mass, Father Donohoe said.

In a letter to Cardinal Medina Bishop Foley posed the two questions and asked for "an authoritative clarification on these most contentious matters."

On the priest's orientation Cardinal Medina answered that "the rubrics of the Roman Missal, and in particular the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (General Instruction of the Roman Missal), foresees that the priest will face the body of people in the nave while leaving open the possibility of his celebrating towards the apse.

"These two options carry with them no theological or disciplinary stigma of any kind," Cardinal Medina continued. "It is therefore incorrect and indeed quite unacceptable that anyone affirm, as Your Excellency sums up this view, that to celebrate towards the apse 'is a theologically preferable or more orthodox choice for a priest who wishes to be true to the church's authentic tradition.'"

Of the four eucharistic prayers provided by the Roman Missal in the reforms following the Second Vatican Council, the first is the Roman Canon. With minor exceptions, it had been the sole eucharistic prayer allowed throughout the Latin Church for centuries before the council.

Father Donohoe said the talk sent to Bishop Foley cast suspicion on the other three eucharistic prayers, suggesting that they were innovations whose development after the council was not in accord with the council's own norms of liturgical reform.

Cardinal Medina answered that Eucharistic Prayer 1 "is a venerable text which deserves all respect," but "the other three eucharistic prayers are also in one way or another ancient and in any case are worthy of the veneration and deep respect of priests and faithful. To suggest otherwise is at the least erroneous and irresponsible."

In his second letter Cardinal Medina thanked Bishop Foley for consulting with the congregation and commented, "The text is sensitive to the essential meaning of the sacred liturgy, to the requirements of correct liturgical celebration as defined by the liturgical books, to the human needs and circumstances of those who benefit spiritually from such celebrations and their televised transmission, and the technical features linked to the medium."

Among the norms was a reaffirmation of Bishop Foley's decree last fall that when the priest is standing at the altar during a televised Mass, he is to face the people. In that decree he said the almost universally adopted custom of celebrating Mass facing the people "is in accord with the desire of the church to promote the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy" and presenting a different model in televised Masses "causes wonderment and dissension."

The new norms also cover such things as church furnishings, music, participation of the assembly and appropriate and inappropriate use of the cameras televising the Mass.

Before last fall's decree, EWTN regularly featured Mass telecasts in which the priest at the altar faced away from the people.

Father Donohoe said those Masses, however, were celebrated in the old chapel of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, where the priest would have his back either to the people in the nave or to the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration behind the cloister grill in the apse. Since then the monastery has completed a new chapel, in which the nuns' cloister is to the right side of the altar and the priest celebrates Mass facing the people.

The norms also call for "only one altar, one ambo and one chair for the priest celebrant." That would mean no change in altar or presidential chair, but Father

Donohoe said it should end the EWTN practice of having one ambo for the first reading and responsorial psalm and a second ambo for the Gospel and homily.

The norms say TV cameras should focus on the liturgical activity, avoiding "extended shots of sacred images" accompanied by a "disembodied voice."

A norm calling for maintaining the unity of the eucharistic prayer by using English throughout, from the introductory dialogue through the doxology, would call for an end to the practice at EWTN Masses of using Latin for the introducto-

ry dialogue, memorial acclamation and doxology, according to Father Donohoe.

He said that elsewhere in the Mass, however, the norms permit EWTN to continue using Latin where it is readily understood, such as in the sung "Gloria," "Sanctus," "Benedictus," "Pater Noster" and "Agnus Dei," or in such Latin dialogues as "Dominus vobiscum/Et cum spiritu tuo" or "Verbum Domini/Deo Gratias."

Father Donohoe said the bishop's norms might serve as a helpful reminder in parishes as well.



John Strange/CNS

Rally inspires prayer

Father Dan Quackenbush prays with altar servers before the start of Mass at St. Julla Church in Siler City, N.C., Feb. 18, the night before former Klan leader David Duke led an anti-immigration rally in the city. Parishioners prayed for unity and peace in their community, in which the Hispanic population has risen with a recent influx of immigrant workers.

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