



## Liturgy and Popular Devotional Practices

Popular devotions have significant merit and should be highly promoted for use in the home, at meetings, in schools and religious education programs and in religious societies in the parish. Some of these devotions include the *Crowning of Mary, Way of the Cross, Indulgences, Hail Mary and the Rosary, Divine Mercy, Litanies and Novena's*.

Insertion of these devotional prayers into the liturgy should be avoided. This is in accord with the Second Vatican Council and the GIRM which states that “the priest must remember that he is the servant of the sacred Liturgy and that he himself is not permitted, on his own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass.” (SC, 22 and GIRM, 24)

### *What do the documents say?*

...every liturgical action, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its effectiveness by the same title and to the same degree. ***Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy***, 7

The objective difference between pious exercises and devotional practices should always be clear in expressions of worship. Hence, the formulae proper to pious exercises should not be commingled with the liturgical actions. Acts of devotion and piety are external to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and of the other sacraments. ***Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy***, 13

Popular religiosity, of course, certainly has its limits. It is often subject to penetration by many distortions of religion and even superstitions. It frequently remains at the level of forms of worship not involving a true acceptance by faith. It can even lead to the creation of sects and endanger the true ecclesial community. ***Evangelii Nuntiandi***, 48



These devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them. While the liturgy always remains the primary reference point, the liturgy and popular piety are two forms of worship which are in mutual and fruitful relationship with each other. ***Ecclesia de Eucharistia***, 61

Lack of consideration for popular piety, or disrespect for it, often betrays an inadequate understanding of certain ecclesial realities and is not infrequently the product not so much of the doctrine of the faith, but of some ideologically inspired prejudice... In the relationship between the Liturgy and popular piety, the opposite phenomenon is also encountered - the importance of popular piety is overestimated practically to the detriment of the Church's Liturgy. ***Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy***, 50-51

The mystery of the Eucharist – sacrifice, presence, banquet – does not allow for reduction or exploitation; it must be experienced and lived in its integrity... ***Ecclesia de Eucharistia***, 61

*For more information on Popular Devotions, contact the Diocese of New Ulm, Office of Worship.*