

Welcome Address to the 2006 Annual Conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy

Most Rev. Edward P. Cullen,
Bishop of Allentown

Your Eminence Cardinal Stafford, Abbot Rooney, my brother priests and deacons, dear religious sisters and brothers, and all of my brothers and sisters in Christ:

Allow me to welcome you to Mary Immaculate Center and to the Diocese of Allentown. We are blessed to have the fall conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy here in our diocese. For over a decade your society has advanced scholarly study and practical renewal of the Church's liturgy in a time which so desperately needs sound orthodox liturgical renewal. I am genuinely impressed by the devotion and dedication with which you research, write, and express the tradition of the Church as it influences the liturgy of today.

Through your tri-annual publication, *Antiphon*, you do indeed offer a wide variety of theological and practical thought on sacramental and liturgical matters, which does enrich the thoughtful Catholic who desires to worship the Lord "in spirit and in truth."

Here in the Diocese of Allentown we have recently renovated our cathedral to reflect our conviction, which is also your conviction, that the sacred liturgy's incarnational nature and central role in shaping Catholic culture require fostering fittingness of music, art, and architecture. The decision was made to move the tabernacle to the center of the sanctuary, a proper *cathedra* was constructed, a large crucifix now hangs over the main altar, and statues dear to the hearts and souls of the parishioners of our cathedral parish were set in appropriate and prominent places throughout this sacred edifice.

As the bishop of this diocese, I extend my blessing to each of you and assure you of my prayers for the success of your conference. You honor us by your presence. Hopefully the richness of the Roman Rite will be rediscovered in our contemporary culture. Everyone here recognizes that the theological and the pastoral dimensions of liturgy must always be in communion with each other. It will be through

conferences such as this and through societies such as yours that the Church truly will have the springtime that our late Holy Father, John Paul II, spoke of so frequently during his pontificate.

In light of the theme of your conference, “Sacraments of Healing,” allow me to end this welcome with the words of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, whose care for the sacred liturgy is so evident in his writings and in his reverent celebrations. These words are taken from an interview which our Holy Father gave just prior to his most recent trip to his homeland in Bavaria. “It is the liturgy that leads me to express the basic message of faith which naturally finds its place in everyday reality, where we want to search, above all, for cooperation among peoples and possible ways that can lead us to reconciliation and peace.” May the Holy Spirit fill each of you with the gift of wisdom during these days of your conference. God bless you and again welcome to the diocese.