

How to Dispose of Old Copies of the *Sacramentary*

The Secretariat of Divine Worship has received a number of timely inquiries regarding the disposition of copies of the current *Sacramentary* once the new *Roman Missal, Third Edition* has been implemented.

There is relatively little written about exactly what to do with liturgical books which have been replaced by updated or revised editions, but some related writings, as well as some common sense, can provide some context. The *Book of Blessings*, no. 1343, indicates that the *Sacramentary*, the *Lectionary*, and other liturgical books are counted among those articles used in the Sacred Liturgy which ought to be blessed using the rite provided for that purpose, the Order for the Blessing of Articles for Liturgical Use (nos. 1341-1359). The Latin *De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, however, does not explicitly mention the *Missale* among the articles that are properly blessed.

Whether or not the *Sacramentary* has been blessed by an official rite, it is appropriate to treat it with care as it has been admitted into liturgical use. Its disposal should be handled with respect. The Secretariat recommends burying the *Sacramentary* in an appropriate location on church grounds, or perhaps in a parish cemetery if there is one. Some have even suggested following a custom used in various Eastern Churches whereby liturgical books or Bibles are placed in the coffin of the deceased as a sign of devotion and love for the Liturgy. In lieu of burying old liturgical books, they could be burned, and the ashes placed in the ground in an appropriate location on church grounds. It is advisable to retain a copy of the *Sacramentary* for parish archives or liturgical libraries.

Looking ahead to the reception of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the above-mentioned blessing from the *Book of Blessings* could be used to bless copies of the *Missal* before their first use on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011. The blessing could take place during a Mass on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, at the last weekday Mass prior to the First Sunday of Advent, or outside Mass at a separate gathering of liturgical ministers or other parish leaders.

Many parishes will also replace hymnals and other participation aids (such as hand missals) in light of updated editions corresponding to the new *Roman Missal*. While the Blessing of Articles for Liturgical Use also mentions hymnals, it might be difficult to appropriately dispose of a large number of copies of such books. After setting aside an appropriate number of copies for archives and libraries, other copies could be stored for use by prayer or study groups in the parish, offered to parishioners for their own private devotional use, or donated to other small communities that could effectively make use of them. Due to copyright agreements, annual hymnals and participation aids should be discarded after their prescribed period of use and cannot be retained for other uses in parishes.

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