

## **The Nordic Bishops' Conference in Turku 6 to 11 March 2009**

**The Roman Catholic bishops from Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden finish their spring-session in Turku (Åbo) in Finland on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March. Their administrative, theological and spiritual agenda was, as always, comprehensive. The final approval of the Swedish translation of the Roman Missal, the sanctification of the Sunday and the religious instruction of adults were among the most important matters discussed.**

The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig was present for parts of the Conference, as was the apostolic administrator of Estonia, Bishop Philip Jourdan.

The translation of the liturgy into any language is a labour-intensive undertaking. The original text is Latin, and a translation thereof must be true to the original and of indisputable quality in the vernacular. The Swedish translators and liturgical and other consultants have been at their task for almost 30 years. The Bishops accepted the quality of their work unanimously, and the missal will now go to the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome for the final recognition. The Icelandic Missal will be ready for the Bishops' Conference meeting in Tallinn in September (Estonia).

The situation of the Church in Iceland was of particular concern. Many of its Catholics are foreign, and it is yet too early to say how the recession influences their stability. Some have already returned to their native countries, but the impression is that the majority hope for a return of economic normality. The Icelandic Church has grown rapidly the last decade, and is an exceptionally young community.

At the end of the Conference, the Bishops received Pope Benedict's letter of 10 March about the revocation of the excommunication of archbishop Lefebvre and the bishops ordained by him. In accordance with the Pope's wish, the Nordic Bishops invite the Faithful "with new hope to look in the direction of the Feast of the Resurrection".

The Bishops had already discussed the possible reconciliation with the Fraternity of St. Pius X. in the Nordic countries. The Fraternity has been secretive about its activity and support, but is not supposed to have more than a handful of members in each country. The hope is that the moderates will return to the fold and, in the end that the extremists will convert.

28 March Mgr. Berislav Grgic will be ordained Bishop-Prelate of Tromsø (Norway). Only one catholic Bishop has been ordained in Tromsø before. Prior to the Reformation, the North of Norway was under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Nidaros (Trondheim), and got its first catholic Bishop in 1955. Mgr. Grgic (49) is an experienced and respected pastor who has served as chaplain to the Croatians and Vicar General for a number of years in the Diocese of Oslo. A large number of Bishops and priests are expected for his consecration. Mgr. Torbjörn Olsen was elected Diocesan Administrator when Bishop Gerhard Goebel died in November 2006, and has been in charge of the Church District since.