

□ CHAPTER TWO □

*Revision, Reform, Renewal:
The Impact of Sacrosanctum Concilium
on Roman Rite Liturgy and Worship*

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THE FIRST OF the formal documents issued by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), wrought a profound transformation of the ways in which Roman Catholics worship in common. Issued on December 4, 1963, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* both placed official approval on the liturgical movement's aims as they had been developing from the middle of the nineteenth century and promoted new perspectives on church life and practice that would bear fruit in later conciliar documents. It could be argued that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has had more impact upon the "person in the pew" than any of the other conciliar writings, since changes in worship and devotional practices have immediate consequences on church members, for good or ill:

In the following article I will explore three issues: What did *Sacrosanctum Concilium* teach about liturgy and worship? What has happened since its promulgation by way of implementation, reception and development? What is an agenda for the future?

The limits of my treatment should be made clear. I will examine only nine elements of *Sacrosanctum Concilium's* teaching. Other topics (e.g., use of sacramentals, rites of consecration to a life of virginity and religious profession, funerals, the daily, weekly, and yearly cycles of liturgical celebration) could be chosen

and should be treated, but limits of space dictate this selection. Second, I will confine my remarks to liturgy and worship in the Roman Rite. One of the glories of Catholicism is the multiplicity of rites in which its liturgy and worship is expressed: both Western (e.g., Ambrosian, Mozarabic) and Eastern (e.g., Byzantine, Chaldean, Melkite, Coptic, Ethiopic, Malabarese, Malankarese, Maronite). While the principles espoused in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* have also resulted in liturgical reforms in many of the non-Roman Rite traditions, I am only competent to treat those in the Roman Rite. Finally, I will especially concentrate on liturgical reforms and renewal occurring among English-speaking Roman Rite Catholics in the United States, since this represents my own worship heritage.

The overall impact of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* appears in three areas: revision, reform and renewal. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* directly mandated a revision of the liturgical library employed in Roman Catholic worship. It assumed that the revision of these books would lead to a reform of Catholic liturgical and devotional practices. It hoped that this liturgical reform would express and engender a renewal of Catholic Christian life, ecumenical amity and transformation of humanity (cf. SC 1). By the mid-1980s the revision of the liturgical library was by-and-large completed with the official promulgation of the *editiones typicae* (the Latin-language “typical editions” from which the various vernacular adaptations were to arise), although revised editions of these documents continue to be published. In the mid-1990s we are presently engaged in the liturgical reform responding to these revised texts and ceremonies. Whether or not this revision and reform actually engenders ecclesial and social renewal the future alone will reveal.

We will now consider nine aspects of the revision, reform, and renewal that have developed in the three decades since *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated.

Liturgical Theology

While changes in texts and ceremonies are the most perceptible results of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*’s publication, I believe

its greatest long-term impact will be in the area of liturgical theology. The document itself succinctly provides a theological rationale for each mandated revision. Articles in chapter one on the nature of the liturgy (5-13) and the norms for its reform (21-40), as well as the introductory articles in each of the subsequent chapters (47-49, 59-62, 83-87, 102-105, 112, 122), provide a rich deposit of authoritative teaching whose implications are still being worked out.

Core doctrinal themes in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* include the following:

Liturgy, as an “exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ” (7), enshrines and actualizes his paschal mystery (5). Humanity has been redeemed by Jesus’ life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit. The liturgy makes redemption sacramentally accessible to believers (6).

Access to Christ and the redemption wrought by him is sacramentally facilitated by multiple modes of personal presence: in the proclamation of God’s Word, in the persons ministering at the liturgy, in the effective actions of the sacraments themselves, in the assembly gathered in prayer and song, under the appearances of bread and wine in the consecrated eucharistic elements (7). Traditionally, this effective signification of Christ’s redemptive activity in space, time, human life and material objects has been called the sacramental principle and lies at the heart of a distinctively Catholic (and Orthodox) embodiment of Christianity.

The liturgy has a dual purpose: glorifying God (understood as faith-filled acknowledgment of the divine presence and purpose in nature and history) and sanctifying humanity (understood as the transformation in holiness made possible for forgiven sinners by the life of grace) (7).

Enacting the liturgy most clearly establishes and manifests the nature of the church (2, 26, 28, 41). The liturgical prayer of God’s holy people discloses in a differentiation of roles for the sake of a common good the ecclesial mystery of unity in diversity. Liturgical prayer unites those physically present in a given location with other members of Christ’s body throughout the world in addition to those angels and saints who share in his celestial praise of his Father (8).

Liturgy is the fount and summit of the Christian life (10). Evangelization, conversion and catechesis all find fulfillment in the liturgy, while genuine worship deepens individual holiness and impels believers to committed lives of discipleship (9, 12, 13).

How have each of these doctrinal claims been implemented in the last thirty years? The term “paschal mystery” appears frequently in catechetical materials and homilies, but its implications for Christian life remain underdeveloped in practice. If Andrew Greeley’s sociological research is to be believed, Catholic worshipers exhibit an ingrained sense of the sacramental principle, reveling in the beautiful, sensual and narrative qualities of human life as pathways to the transcendent rather than mistrusting the created order as depraved or demonic. Unfortunately some communities drive a wedge between God’s glorification and humanity’s sanctification as the purpose of the liturgy, either so emphasizing the transcendent that only the highest art forms are considered “worthy” of God’s worship or so concentrating on the expressed needs of the worshipers that the transcendent is effectively banished; the dual nature of the liturgy’s purpose sets up surprising tensions in pastoral practice. Since *Sacrosanctum Concilium* claims that in the liturgy the true nature of church is revealed, it is not surprising that different models of church membership and organization will have implications for the forms of common worship; this is probably most intensely exhibited in calls for more public participation of women in roles of presidency and preaching. The connections between liturgy and life are still tenuous for many believers, especially since the liturgy’s interaction with postmodern culture is still in its infancy.

What developments in liturgical theology loom? Perhaps the most important will lie in a reappropriation of patristic thinking on the liturgy as a locus for symbolic-and-therefore-real encounter with God (rather than an allegorical puzzle to be decoded), a new appreciation for the medieval scholastic teaching on the sign character of the liturgy (shorn of an inadequate understanding of its causal character that led to mechanistic and sometimes superstitious celebration), and a genuine engagement with modern understandings of humans as person and agents in history constituted by memory and hope (without reducing the worship

event to self-congratulating therapeutic interchanges or thinly disguised political rallies). In any case the split between liturgical and sacramental theology must be overcome, and the embodied theological insights of the liturgical interchange must inform and be informed by developments in theology proper, christology, pneumatology, moral theology, spirituality, and eschatology.

Full, Conscious, Active Liturgical Participation

The recovery of liturgy as the action of the People of God in Christ is key in understanding the revision, reform and renewal proposed by the Council. Article 14 expressly articulates this central principle:

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” [1 Pt 2:9; see 2:4-5] is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. (emphasis added)

The refrain of “full, conscious, and active” liturgical participation dominates not only the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* but all of the implementation documents issued in its wake.

Sacrosanctum Concilium 19 categorizes “full, conscious and active” liturgical participation under two headings, external and internal:

With zeal and patience pastors must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and

condition, their way of life, and their state of religious development.

While some might question the adequacy of an anthropology that juxtaposes external and internal human activity without integrating them, it should be clear that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* rejected two extremes: 1) that liturgical participation was purely a matter of internal attitude without any embodied engagement in the ritual prayer; and 2) that liturgical participation was simply a matter of bodily activity without contemplative engagement in the ritual prayer. “Full, conscious and active” liturgical participation demands both internal and external activity; it demands embodied contemplative engagement.

Sacrosanctum Concilium 30 specifies some of the elements by which both internal and external “full, conscious and active” liturgical participation occurs:

To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bearing. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.

Note that this taxonomy divides into verbal, non-verbal, and silent participation. These categories in turn can be sub-divided into further categories: spoken and sung verbal activity as well as active listening; postural, gestural, and kinesthetic bodily participation; keeping corporate as well as individual silence. One might also note visual engagement with the objects used in worship and the environment that facilitates worship. Even taste (in sacramental communion) and smell (through the use of incense) may enhance “full, conscious and active” liturgical participation.

Active participation in the liturgy has increased enormously in the last thirty years. The assembly speaks or sings its texts in response to ritual promptings by presider, deacon, lector, or cantor rather than having ritual representatives such as the choir or altar servers make the responses on their behalf. Common

patterns of standing, sitting and kneeling have been established, communal devotional gestures (such as genuflecting to the tabernacle or bowing to the altar before taking one's seat, signing oneself on forehead, lips, and breast before the proclamation of the gospel, or holding hands for the Lord's Prayer) have been begun or restored, while other forms of physical activity (the sign of peace, the collection and presentation of the eucharistic gifts) are still in development.

Concerns are voiced, however, that the quality of recollected worship may have declined among the faithful since Vatican II. Keeping corporate silence is still difficult or non-existent in many worshipping communities, in spite of the encouragement of the official documents. Liturgical leadership is presently occupying itself with the question of how best to engender contemplative participation in the members of the worshipping community. New resources for liturgical catechesis and mystagogy may make the verbal, non-verbal, and silent modes of participation more deeply understood and grounded in the piety of the faithful.

Liturgical Celebration of the Word of God

The liturgical revisions mandated by the Second Vatican Council also transformed the way in which Catholics celebrate the Word of God. From the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation onward, Catholic and Protestant worship was popularly, if stereotypically, distinguished by its treatment of scripture: Catholics worshiped by means of sacraments provided by priests with little reference to the Bible, while Protestants worshiped by means of the Bible proclaimed and preached by ministers with little reference to the sacraments. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 24 and 35.1 provided the impetus for changing this stereotype, emphasizing the foundational role of sacred scripture in contemporary Roman Rite liturgical reform:

Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from Scripture that the readings are given and explained in the homily and that psalms are sung;

the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration; it is from the Scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the reform, progress, and adaption of the liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for Scripture to which the venerable tradition of both Eastern and Western rites gives testimony. . . .

That the intimate connection between words and rites may stand out clearly in the liturgy . . . in sacred celebrations there is to be more reading from holy Scripture and it is to be more varied and apposite.

Over the past three decades, implementation of these articles has taken two major forms. First, every revised liturgical rite has included a selection of scriptural readings intended for proclamation during the liturgy. (Even the ostensibly “private” Form I of the Sacrament of Penance calls for a proclamation and sharing of God’s Word.) The crowning achievement of this biblical restoration in Roman Rite worship is the *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (“Order of Readings for Mass”), which first appeared in 1970 and was slightly revised and issued with an enriched introduction in 1981 in direct response to the mandate of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 51:

The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that a richer share in God’s word may be provided for the faithful. In this way a more representative portion of holy Scripture will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.

The *Ordo Lectionum Missae* not only increased the number of scriptural readings proclaimed at Lord’s Day eucharist from an Epistle/Gospel pattern to a First Testament/Second Testament non-Gospel/Gospel pattern, but also provided a three-year Lord’s Day and a two-year weekday cycle of scriptural proclamations for

eucharist in contrast to the previous Roman Rite one-year cycle. The *Ordo Lectionum Missae* did more than simply change Catholic practice; it bore remarkable ecumenical fruit as three-year Lord's Day lectionaries based on the Roman pattern were adopted by a wide range of Protestant ecclesial bodies right up through the *Revised Common Lectionary* of 1992.

Second, liturgical preaching in the form of homilies became the norm within liturgical celebrations. Some sense of the seriousness accorded the restoration of biblical preaching appears in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 52:

By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year; as part of the liturgy itself, therefore, the homily is strongly recommended; in fact, at Masses celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and holy days of obligation it is not to be omitted except for serious reasons.

A veritable explosion of publishing aimed at assisting liturgical preachers has swept the Catholic world in the last three decades, from one-volume commentaries on the entire Bible, through liturgical commentaries on the sets of readings appointed for various feasts and celebrations, to topical subscription services providing preparation aids, outlines, and even complete texts for preaching.

Nevertheless, questions may be raised about the present Roman Rite patterns of celebrating God's Word, both in proclamation and preaching. Given most Roman Catholics' lack of familiarity with the Bible, some wonder if the Lord's Day pattern of four pericopes (First Testament proclamation, Psalm, Second Testament non-gospel proclamation, Gospel) provides too much scripture for the "average" Catholic to digest at a single celebration. (In this light it is interesting to note that the German bishops have relegated what we call the "Second Reading" to an appendix of their *Lectionary for Mass*, to be used only by those communities who deem themselves capable of handling so much

scripture in a single celebration.) While rejoicing in lectionary cycles that allow participants to hear the particular perspectives of Second Testament writers unfold over time (e.g., the unique emphases of the Gospel of Matthew marking the Sundays of Ordinary Time in Year A), the decision to yoke a First Testament reading with the Gospel by means of some perceived thematic or typological connection means that Catholics never hear the Hebrew Scriptures unfold in their canonical integrity. This is only exacerbated when the Psalm is treated as a musical interlude or meditation song between scriptural proclamations rather than another, albeit sung, proclamation of the First Testament scriptures.

Questions can also be raised about liturgical preaching. Although one can point to improvement in Catholic homilies, poll after poll still reports that worshipers are dissatisfied with both the content and style of liturgical preaching. Many reasons can be given for this: the comparative lack of emphasis on homiletics in many ministerial formation programs, the absence of models and mentors for young preachers, the lack of helpful feedback from the worshiping assembly, no mandated ongoing education and evaluation for those already preaching. Others, alarmed by the apparent failure of contemporary catechetics to inculcate basic Catholic beliefs among the faithful, want to replace the biblical homily with systematic doctrinal instructions, calling for sermon series rather than homilies. Perhaps the strongest debates address the question of who is authorized to preach in a Catholic liturgical setting: does restricting the liturgical homily to ordained Roman Rite clergy deprive the People of God of the insights and witness that may be offered by married men (outside of the diaconate) and married or single women?

Liturgical Language

Another change in Roman Rite worship mandated by the Second Vatican Council concerns the language in which that worship is conducted. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 36 directed: 1) that the Latin language was to remain foundational for the Latin rites; 2) that vernacular languages would be permitted in the Mass,

sacraments and other liturgical acts, primarily for readings and instructions (*monitiones*, homilies), though also for some prayers and chants; 3) that the local territorial authority could determine the extent of the vernacular's use; and 4) that this same territorial authority would approve the translations.

Over the past three decades, each of these prescriptions has been implemented, although in ways that might not have been foreseen by the Council Fathers. First, as noted above, all revisions of the official liturgical books for the Roman Rite have been issued in Latin; in fact, some of the *editiones typicae* (such as the Roman Missal, the ordination rites, and the marriage ritual) have already appeared in second editions. However, in the vast majority of cases, these Latin editions do not serve as scripts for actual liturgical celebration, but as documents for translation into the various vernaculars.

Second, distinguishing between texts addressed to God in a sacred hieratic language (Latin) by clergy and other texts disappeared in pastoral practice. (One notes how quickly the "bilingual" sacramentary used in the late 1960s vanished.) Clearly pastoral practice taught us that there were no publicly proclaimed texts that did not concern the laity at worship. Thus linguistic distinctions between clergy and laity during common worship proved untenable.

Third, in the light of this pastoral insight, all of the territorial authorities of which I am aware eventually approved the extension of the vernacular to all texts of the Roman Rite.

Fourth, the individual territorial authorities in the English-speaking world did not retain the direct process of generating officially approved liturgical translations. Recognizing the chaos that might ensue if each English-speaking territory produced its own liturgical translation, English-speaking bishops' conferences created the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) during the closing days of Vatican II. For the past thirty years ICEL has produced general liturgical translations for the English-speaking world, which have in turn been submitted to the various territorial authorities for their adaptation and approval. These initial translations are presently being critiqued, refined and resubmitted for public use with episcopal approval.

Three major sets of questions present themselves as we consider the future direction of our liturgical language.

First, whose vernacular language are we to employ in our common prayer? Australia, Canada and the United States are all struggling with issues of multicultural and multilingual diversity; these issues impact our liturgical assemblies as well. Recognizing that monolingual liturgical assemblies are increasingly rare, a variety of strategies have been employed. Some have called for the restoration of Latin as a transnational, transcultural worship language. Others have suggested worship in a single vernacular as long as written translations are provided for participants from other language groups. Still others have experimented with bi- or multilingual celebrations, ranging from simple alternation of language by unit to creating entire macro-structures. (I do not believe a Preface Dialogue consisting of “Il Signore sia con voi” / “E con il spirito tuo” / “Sursum corda” / “Habemus ad Dominum” / “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God” / “It is right to give him thanks and praise” works as public prayer, however!)

Second, which register within a vernacular language is appropriate for public liturgical prayer? Does one address God during communal prayer as “Omnipotent and puissant Deity,” “Almighty and everliving God” or “Yo, Big Guy”? How may different language registers distance or trivialize the encounter with God?

Third, there is the challenge of inclusive language for English public prayer. Although some have decried the abandonment of the masculine generic as a capitulation to political correctness, many worshipers are not disturbed by references to “humanity” rather than “mankind,” to “Abraham and Sarah; Moses and Miriam” rather than simply “the patriarchs and prophets,” to “the deaf-mute man” rather than to “the deaf-and-dumb.” More controversial are changes in the titles or pronouns used to refer to the God of biblical religion: “Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier” / “Abba, Jesu, Ruah” for the persons of the Trinity or “Our Father, Our Mother” as the divine address in the Lord’s Prayer.

It seems unlikely that a reversion to exclusively non-vernacular worship will occur in the future, although particular phrases such as “Kyrie eleison” or “Miserere nobis” might be

used more frequently, especially as sung texts. Ongoing revision of official vernacular worship texts will probably become a fact of life, although the rate of change (with the concomitant need to print and buy new liturgical books) will most likely decrease. Discussions between representatives of the United States Catholic Bishops and the Vatican officials responsible for overseeing scriptural and liturgical translations may clarify the principles by which vernacular liturgical language develops, faithful to the biblical and worship heritage while genuinely and evocatively communicative for present-day worshippers.

Eucharist

Sacrosanctum Concilium 50, calling for the revision of the *Order of Mass*, articulated four strategies that have in fact been applied to all of the texts and ceremonies of Roman Rite liturgical worship:

The Order of Mass is to be revised in a way that will bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, and will more readily achieve the devout, active participation of the faithful.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements that, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated or were added with but little advantage are now to be discarded; other elements that have suffered injury through accident of history are now, as may seem useful or necessary, to be restored to the vigor they had in the traditions of the Fathers.

First, the rites were simplified. One has only to consider the process of hand- and object-kissing in the passing of the principal celebrant's biretta from celebrant through deacon and sub-deacon to acolyte, the duplication of Roman and Gallican consecratory

prayers at ordinations, or the elaborate rules to determine how many collects to pray on a given feast to realize how much the Roman Rite has been simplified. Deep structures of Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Sacramental Rites, and Concluding Rites mark all of the revised liturgical books.

Second, ritual duplications were removed. For example, the multiple signs of the cross made over gifts, chalice and paten during the Roman Canon (e.g., “haec + dona, haec + munera, haec sancta + sacrificia illibata” / “bene+dictam, adscrip+tam, ra+tam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris Cor+pus et San+quis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi”) have disappeared.

Third, added elements have been discarded. Usually these are medieval or later accretions added after the Roman Rite achieved its classical form in the fifth-sixth century. For example, both the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar and the Last Gospel have been removed from the Introductory Rites and Concluding Rites of the revised Order of Mass.

Fourth, lost elements have been restored. Usually these are aspects of the classical fifth-sixth century Roman Rite that had not survived the vicissitudes of medieval liturgical history. For example, the Kiss of Peace reappears as part of the communion rite, the General Intercessions (though not in their characteristically Roman format) once again mark every eucharist, and multi-verse Responsorial Psalms replace the single- or few-versed Graduals and Tracts.

While many applaud aspects of this restructuring of Roman Rite worship, other voices have questioned some of its applications. One frequently hears complaints that the “transcendence,” the “mystery,” of pre-Vatican II Roman Rite worship has disappeared. While one could argue that much of what was identified as mystery might have been mystification, I observe that the restructuring of Roman Rite worship according to rationalist principles may conflict with aspects of human ritual activity identified through the help of the social sciences. This is easily exemplified by comparing the ritual behavior during the praying of the Roman Canon at a *missa cantata* (with its multiple modes of ritual engagement: celebrant praying Latin texts *sub voce* while

the choir sang the "Sanctus" and members of the congregation variously followed in their hand missals, read devotional books, prayed the rosary, or simply gave themselves up to silent prayer) with the ritual behavior during the praying of a contemporary Eucharistic Prayer (with its single linear mode of ritual engagement: all expected to follow in lock-step the unfolding of the proclaimed and chanted ritual texts).

What developments will occur in eucharistic celebration in the near future? At the highest official level, an *editio typica tertia* ("third official edition") of the post-Vatican II Roman Missal is in development by the Congregation for Divine Worship. Some have suggested that rather than providing a fundamental Order of Mass which is then modified, simplified, or amplified depending on the feast being celebrated, the character of the worshiping assembly, and the number and quality of ministries available, different Orders of Mass for small-group weekday celebration and large-group Lord's Day celebration be developed. Questions of inter-communion and eucharistic hospitality are intensely debated, especially in "mixed religion" households. Perhaps most pressing is the impact of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* on the eucharistic character of Roman Catholic Church life: how will the Mass remain central in people's liturgical and devotional life when communion services become the most frequent form of celebration in communities without the weekly presence of priests or bishops?

Christian Initiation

In addition to the revision of the Order of Mass, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* mandated a revision of the structures of Christian Initiation. Articles 64-65 decreed the revision of adult initiation into Roman Catholic Christianity, including the restoration of a multi-staged catechumenate. Articles 67-70 declared that the texts and ceremonies of infant baptism were also to be revised, emphasizing ritual authenticity. Article 71 called for the revision of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Although the *editio typica* of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) was promulgated by the Congregation for

Divine Worship in 1972 and appeared in an initial approved translation for the United States in 1974, a much more extensive adaptation for the dioceses of the United States was approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) in 1986, confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1987, and published in 1988. It presents a new community-based model for incorporating adults into the Roman Catholic communion. Rather than an earlier model of adult "instruction" (usually one-on-one with a member of the clergy) followed by a quasi-private baptism and first communion (usually with only selected family members and friends in attendance), the RCIA mandates periods of inquiry, catechumenate, purification and enlightenment, and mystagogy as the normal publicly demarcated stages leading an unbaptized adult from the initial stirrings of faith through full status as a baptized, confirmed, and eucharistized Roman Catholic Christian. Each of these stages is marked by particular rites of transition and reinforcement, although some stages (e.g., the period of purification and enlightenment with its scrutinies and presentations of Creed and Lord's Prayer) are more ritually developed than others. So powerful has been the impact of this liturgical reform that the flourishing North American Forum on the Catechumenate was founded to educate and network those responsible for Christian Initiation in their local communities, to disseminate theoretical and practical reflection on the RCIA's implementation, and to surface issues for further reform and renewal.

Present tensions involving the implementation of the RCIA include: 1) refusing to employ these texts and structures, although mandated by both curial and episcopal authorities, because of lack of pastoral leadership or personnel; 2) using ritual structures intended for unbaptized adults for other populations, e.g., adults baptized in other denominations, adult Catholics baptized in infancy but uncatechized (and possibly unconfirmed and/or uneucharistized), or fully initiated Catholic adults seeking reincorporation after a time without religious practice or desiring personal renewal; 3) conceptualizing the RCIA as a program for schooling rather than a sacramental process for conversion; 4) being unable to sustain the neophytes' spiritual lives once they have been sacramentally initiated; 5) negotiating the varying

expectations and policies for adult, adolescent, child, and infant initiation.

The *editio typica* of the Rite of Baptism for Infants was promulgated by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1969 and remains the foundation for the present vernacular version in use in the United States. In response to *Sacrosanctum Concilium's* mandate, the present rite acknowledges the role of the local assembly in the baptized infant's Christian nurture, so much so that communal celebrations of infant baptism during the Sunday eucharist have grown in number and quality in many communities. The rite emphasizes the role of parents prior to, during, and after the baptismal ceremony, in contrast to earlier practice where the desire to baptize the infant as soon as possible after birth often kept the mother from attending. Also unlike earlier practice, the godparents' roles are less prominent during the rite, although their responsibility to assist parents in the Christian raising of their children remains highlighted. The rite presupposes a full complement of ministries (presider, reader[s], musician[s], acolyte[s]) in the celebration of infant baptism, although in practice many of these roles are taken by the presider. The deep structure of the rite demonstrates its stational character (a reception at the door of the church, a liturgy of the word at the ambo, the central baptismal rites at the font, and concluding prayers and blessings at the altar), although in practice its processional traits may be ignored.

Present issues concerning the baptism of infants include: 1) supporting Christian families as they nurture the faith life of their members in a culture whose values may be opposed to the gospel; 2) determining the minimum levels of faith, commitment, and practice in parents and guardians who present their infants for baptism so that the hope for Christian nurture might be reasonably justified; 3) experiencing the baptism of infants during the Lord's Day eucharist as a community commitment to assist Christian families with prayer and example rather than as an intrusive lengthening of the Mass.

In 1971 the Congregation for Divine Worship promulgated the revised *Rite of Confirmation*, determining the future essential matter and form of the sacrament's celebration for the Latin church:

The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of hands, and through the words: "Accipe Signaculum Doni Spiritus Sancti" [lit., "Receive the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit"].

Although the role of the bishop as originating minister of this sacrament is emphasized, its conferral is extended to presbyters in certain defined cases. Baptized children, adolescents, and adults are considered appropriate recipients of the sacrament. Its intimate connection with the other sacraments of initiation is signified by the candidates' reaffirmation of their baptismal vows, the preference given that the confirmation sponsors be the baptismal godparents, and by celebrating confirmation in the context of a eucharist after the Liturgy of the Word.

In pastoral practice, the celebration of Confirmation today raises many complex questions. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that it is a "sacrament in search of a purpose and a theology." Arguments can be made that infants should be not only baptized, but confirmed and eucharistized as in Orthodox practice; that those baptized in infancy should be confirmed and eucharistized in a single ceremony at the "age of reason"; that those baptized in infancy should receive eucharist for the first time when they can distinguish the sacramental elements from other foodstuffs, but that they should be confirmed in late adolescence or early adulthood when they can make a personal reaffirmation of their baptismal commitment; that adults should be baptized, confirmed and eucharistized in a single ceremony (as emphasized in the RCIA). In spite of the consistent teaching of the general introductions (*praenotanda*) of each of these rites, the 1982 *Code of Canon Law*, and the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that the proper order of the initiation sacraments is Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist, much United States practice still demands not only catechesis concerning but the reception of the sacrament of penance prior to "first communion" or Confirmation, raising the difficult issue of reconciling back into the Church those who have not yet been fully initiated in it.

It is likely that various patterns of Christian Initiation will continue to develop in the near future. Citizenship in the United States may be conferred on infants by the place in which they are born or the citizen status of their parent(s) at the time of their birth, or on adults in a naturalization ceremony after a lengthy process of civic education; there is not much debate about the appropriateness of both systems, although there is great concern about the development of civic virtue in all citizens. Similarly, different patterns of Christian Initiation provide "citizenship" in the church while emphasizing different aspects of divine election; future debates may not be so much on the initiatory texts and ceremonies as on the effectiveness of any initiation structure in inviting, confirming, and strengthening Christian conversion and growth in holiness.

Sacraments of Healing

Sacrosanctum Concilium mandated a revision of the sacraments of healing in articles 72-75. Although the revision of the texts and ceremonies associated with the sacrament of penance is described in quite generic terms (e.g., that "they more clearly express both the nature and effect of the sacrament"), the revision of the texts and ceremonies associated with the anointing of the sick is much more extensive.

In 1973 the Congregation for Divine Worship promulgated a revised *Rite of Penance*, and its official English translation and adaptation for the dioceses of the United States appeared soon after. This document provided three fundamental forms for the celebration of the sacrament: 1) reconciliation of an individual penitent with an individual confessor; 2) reconciliation of several penitents with individual confession and absolution; and 3) reconciliation of several penitents with general confession and absolution. No matter what form of the liturgy of reconciliation is employed, four elements are given ritual form: 1) contrition ("heartfelt sorrow for the sin committed along with the intention of sinning no more") on the part of the penitent; 2) confession of sins (whether individually in number and kind to the confessor or in a group silently to the Lord); 3) satisfaction (a "penance" that

attempts to repair the damage done by sin and/or provide amendment of life); and 4) absolution (the sacramental declaration that the penitent's sins are forgiven, effecting reconciliation both with God and the Church).

A surprising result in the United States of the implementation of the post-Vatican II *Rite of Penance* has been its wholesale abandonment by many and its very infrequent celebration by others. Some commentators have traced this change in practice to a loss of the sense of sin among the faithful, to neglect or laziness on the part of confessors, to unconvincing texts and ceremonies in its ritual celebration. Others point out that the frequency of private confession on the eve of the Council represents an historically aberrant phase in the celebration of this sacrament and observe that much of what was sought in frequent confession is now dealt with in other venues both sacred and secular (therapy, counseling, spiritual direction). It should also be noted that, while Form III reconciliation remains on the books, its use has been increasingly restricted by hierarchical intervention over the last decade.

Two primary issues affect the future celebration of the sacrament of Penance. The first involves catechesis on the nature of human sin and divine forgiveness. Sin is more than rule-breaking or guilt-producing behavior; it is a profound mystery in which human freedom confronts complicity with evil. Similarly, forgiveness is more than forensic acquittal or psychological reassurance; it is a gracious act by which God through Christ in the Holy Spirit restores human beings to communion of life. The second explores the communal dimensions of human sinfulness and reconciliation. Taking their cue from the catechumenal structures of the RCIA, some theorists are suggesting the restoration of an "order of penitents" whose reconversion to the way of Christ would be publicly celebrated and supported by the prayer and witness of the faithful in a series of stages leading to full sacramental reconciliation.

The Congregation for Divine Worship promulgated the *editio typica* of the revised *Rite of Anointing of the Sick* in 1972, including Pope Paul VI's apostolic constitution determining the essential matter and form of this sacrament's celebration in the Latin Church:

The sacrament of anointing of the sick is administered to those who are dangerously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with blessed olive oil or, according to the circumstances, with another plant oil and saying once only these words: “Per istam Sanctam Unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam adiuvet te Dominus gratia Spiritus Sancti, ut a peccatis liberatum te salvet atque propitius allevet” [lit., “Through this holy anointing and his most faithful mercy may the Lord help you by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he might save you, freed from sins, and kindly relieve you”].

The change in title for the sacrament reveals its revised focus: from “Extreme Unction” (a “final anointing,” preparing a dying person to enter union with God by anointing each of the senses while praying that whatever sins had been committed through that sense would be forgiven) to “Anointing of the Sick” (an honorific massage intended to designate the sufferer as a participant in the paschal mystery and to petition God for the restoration of physical health). It is also significant that the rite appears in the context of an entire panoply of texts and ceremonies for prayer with the sick, including visitation and communion, viaticum, and rites of commendation of the dying. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes a parallel between the order of the three sacraments of initiation (Baptism for forgiveness of sins/Confirmational anointing/Eucharist) with the order of three sacraments at the end of physical life (Penance for forgiveness of sins/Anointing of the Sick/Eucharist as viaticum).

Issues in the present and future celebration of the sacrament include: 1) determining whether those suffering mental/emotional illness or psychological addictions are suitable subjects for the sacrament in addition to those who are seriously physically ill; 2) considering whether presidency of this sacrament should continue to be reserved to bishops and presbyters or should be opened to “extraordinary” ministers such as deacons or laity who may serve as chaplains to the sick; 3) expanding the celebration of this

sacrament in communal contexts, possibly including the Lord's Day Eucharist.

Sacraments of Service to Communion

These "sacraments of Christian vocation" were among the earliest *editiones typicae* produced after Vatican II: the Congregation of Rites promulgated the *Rite of Ordination of a Deacon, a Presbyter, and a Bishop* in 1968 and the *Rite of Marriage* in 1969. Officially approved English translations and adaptations of these documents are presently in use in the dioceses of the United States, but the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has promulgated "second editions" of both: the *Rite of Ordination of a Bishop, of Presbyters, and of Deacons* in 1989 and the *Rite of Marriage* in 1990. The NCCB will consider proposed official English translations and adaptations of these documents for use in the dioceses of the United States before the turn of the century; after the NCCB's approval and confirmation by the appropriate Roman officials, they will begin to be used in the United States.

Perhaps the most far-reaching consequence of the 1968 ordination rites is the replacement of the system of major (presbyter, deacon, subdeacon) and minor (acolyte, exorcist, lector, porter) orders begun by admission to the clerical state (tonsure) with a system of ordinations (bishop, presbyter, deacon) whose candidates first go through a ceremony of "admission to candidacy" and instituted ministries (acolyte, lector) whose recipients are laity. Structurally, ordinations now take place during the celebration of the eucharist after the Liturgy of the Word, whose pool of scriptural selections has been greatly expanded. The formal ordination rites are identical in structure: 1) initial rites consisting of the presentation and election of the candidates, the bishop's homily/instruction addressed to worshipping assembly and candidates respectively, and a formal examination; 2) consecratory rites consisting of the laying on of hands followed by the formal ordination prayer, that for a bishop adapted from the prayer appearing in the *Apostolic Tradition* and those for presbyters and deacons modified from prayers appearing in the ancient Roman

sacramentaries; 3) explanatory rites consisting of vesting, the presentation of symbols of office, and a kiss of peace. Major changes in the 1990 rites involve the promises made by diaconal and presbyteral candidates and the texts of their consecratory ordination prayers.

Issues raised in the present celebration of these rites include: 1) the ritual role of the faithful in electing, confirming, and supporting the candidates, since the rites may give the impression that they are joining a particular clerical caste rather than being set apart for ministry in the Church; 2) giving ritual expression to the roles of spouses and children for married candidates for the diaconate; 3) clarifying the relationship between "instituted" and "non-instituted" ministries, since the vast majority of those functioning as acolytes and lectors in the United States are not formally installed in their ministries; 4) considering whether liturgical musicians should be formally installed into the ministry of cantor.

Questions for the future celebration of this sacrament actually take us beyond ritual considerations to the polity of the Roman Catholic Church in reference to its ministerial leadership. Intense discussions on each of the following topics presently abound, with little indication that they will cease in the near future: 1) about the propriety of calling married men not only to the diaconate, but to the presbyterate and episcopate; 2) about dropping the pledge that married deacons will remain celibate if their spouses should die; 3) about calling women as candidates for ordination to any of the three "degrees" of the sacrament; 4) about the "re-activation" of ordained ministers who have ceased to function ministerially after marrying; 5) about how ministers of other denominations are to be welcomed and established as Catholic clergy; and 6) about how ordained and lay leadership work together for the good of the church and the world

The 1969 *Rite of Marriage* provides three fundamental forms for this sacrament's celebration: 1) during Mass for baptized Christians; 2) outside of Mass for baptized Christians; and 3) a special form for the union of a baptized Catholic and an unbaptized person. The 1990 rite adds a fourth fundamental form when the marriage of baptized Christians is witnessed by a layperson rather than a bishop, presbyter, or deacon. The 1969 rite provided a pool

of thirty-five possible scripture readings to be proclaimed during the matrimonial Liturgy of the Word; the 1990 rite adds five more pericopes and indicates that at least one must speak explicitly of marriage. Both rites position most of the matrimonial ceremonies (formal questions, exchange of consent, blessing, and exchange of rings) after the Liturgy of the Word, but the 1990 rite includes texts and songs by which the worshiping assembly signifies its consent and support of the matrimonial covenant. Both rites continue to position the Nuptial Blessing after the Lord's Prayer when marriages are celebrated during Mass.

Issues in the present celebration of matrimony include: 1) determining criteria for negotiating secular and ecclesial expectations in a single celebration; 2) clarifying the roles of bride and groom as "minister/recipients" of the sacrament; the assembly as matrix; parents, godparents, best man, maid/matron of honor, and attendants as formal/legal witnesses; and presider as prayer-leader and official ecclesial/legal witness; 3) developing texts and ceremonies faithful to a Catholic understanding of the sacramentality of marriage as well as cultural expectations for the equality and complementarity of the spouses.

Since the Roman Catholic understanding of the purpose and permanence of the matrimonial covenant is in many ways antithetical to United States' cultural presuppositions about marriage, many commentators have suggested that the journey from engagement to anniversary celebrations be structured after the model of the catechumenal journey of the RCIA. Such initiatives will place high premium on involving married parishoners from the worshiping community as "sponsor-couples," presenting the engaged to the assembly at occasional Lord's Day eucharists for prayer support, developing opportunities for the recently married to reflect on how their sacramental commitment influences their adjustment to married life, and providing material and emotional support in times of stress.

Liturgical Music, Art, and Architecture

Sacrosanctum Concilium devoted two entire chapters to a consideration of the arts in service to the liturgy: chapter six on sacred

music and chapter seven on sacred visual art and environment. At the risk of oversimplification, the mandate of the Second Vatican Council can be summed up in two phrases: *preserve the heritage* and *develop further expressions*. For example, we read in reference to sacred music:

The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently developed, especially in cathedral churches [114]. . . . The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as distinctive of the Roman liturgy; therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services [116]. . . . The people's own religious songs are to be encouraged with care so that in sacred devotions as well as during the services of the liturgy itself . . . the faithful may raise their voices in song [118]. . . . In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument that adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up the spirit to God and to higher things [120].

In other words, preserve the heritage. But we also read:

Bishops and pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that . . . the whole assembly of the faithful is enabled . . . to contribute the active participation that rightly belongs to it [114]. . . . Other kinds of sacred music [in addition to Gregorian chant] . . . are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, provided they accord with the spirit of the liturgical service [116]. . . . Other instruments [in addition to the pipe organ] may be admitted for use in divine worship [120]. . . . Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to develop sacred music and to increase its store of treasures.

In other words, develop further expressions. (Similar exhortations appear in chapter seven applied to the visual arts and architecture.)

Over the past thirty years, the preservation and development of liturgical arts has proven both difficult and controversial. I will limit my remarks to the area of liturgical music where I have the most expertise, but I believe that parallel instances could be adduced for the visual arts and architecture as well.

First, in spite of the Council's exhortation, Gregorian chant and Roman school polyphony have almost completely disappeared from Catholic parochial worship. This may be due to a belief that a vernacular liturgy had no room for traditional chants or that "full, conscious and active" sung participation by the assembly was impossible using the chant. (Admittedly, the melismatic Graduals and Offertories are certainly and the neumatic Introits and Communions are probably beyond the capabilities of most musically untrained worshipers, but some of the Ordinary chants [e.g., the "Orbis Factor" Kyrie, Credo III, or the Agnus Dei from the Requiem] could be sung by the average assembly.)

Second, the new emphasis placed on assembly singing and the new prominence given to the cantor as animator of the assembly's song has led to the decline of the contribution choirs and instrumentalists make in Catholic worship. It is difficult to find a liturgical music program that balances the durable simplicity appropriate for assembly-based liturgical music with the sophistication appealing to musical artists.

Third, with the abandonment of the *Graduale Romanum*, *Kyriale* and/or the *Liber Usualis* as the norm for Roman Rite sung worship, establishing a common Catholic sung repertoire has been daunting. While some remnants of the chant tradition still appear (usually psalm-tones set to "pointed" English texts or vernacular lyrics set to the simpler hymn melodies), much of the English-language music sung in today's Roman Rite celebrations is imported from other worship traditions: Orthodox chants, Anglican anthems, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist hymns, charismatic praise choruses, even camp meeting songs. Some communities also sing compositions taken from secular sources: Broadway musicals, pop recordings, folk traditions. Compositions produced by Roman Catholics for the liturgy may actually be more appropriate for

witness, testimony, meditation, catechetics, consciousness-raising, or entertainment than for the liturgy. Determining commonly agreed upon criteria for choosing Roman Rite worship music is quite controverted at the present.

Fourth, for many worshipers music functions as a decorative addition to the texts of the liturgy rather than serves as the acoustic means by which the liturgical event transpires: music is optional "frosting" on the hard "cake" of liturgy rather than one of the very means by which the liturgy occurs. This is especially obvious when one examines the expressed motives for choosing particular pieces: nostalgia, therapy, consciousness-raising, instruction, or entertainment.

Fifth, when the deep structures of Roman Rite worship are misunderstood, or when liturgical directives are treated as prescriptions, the evocative, artistic dimensions of our worship may be compromised. This is most easily observed when the congregational interventions in the Eucharistic Prayer are provided with musical settings that have no thematic or stylistic relationship to each other; one then experiences a series of musically filled slots in the ritual rather than an artistically shaped ritual unit.

Conclusion

Having considered nine aspects of the liturgical revisions mandated, sketched how liturgical reform appears in the United States some three decades after *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated, and offered some thoughts about the future ecclesial and social renewal promised by these revisions and reforms, I conclude with a quotation from an address given by Pope Paul VI in 1977. As the authority under whom so many of the revised liturgical books and initial reforms appeared, his insights bear special weight as the Church continues on the path of renewal initiated by the Second Vatican Council:

From the day that Vatican Council II issued its Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, great advances have been made that are in line with the state of things prepared by the liturgical

movement of the late 19th century and that fulfill those dearly held objectives for which so many churchmen and scholars had worked and prayed. The new Order of Mass . . . has yielded special fruit: namely, a wider participation in the liturgy, a deeper, more reflective understanding of the sacred rites, a greater and fuller knowledge of the inexhaustible treasures of Scripture, and increased sense of the Church as community.

The passage of these last years has shown that we are on the right path. . . . Now is the time once and for all to cast out the decaying leaven of harmful extremes and to put liturgical reform we have approved, following the will of the Council, into effect integrally, i.e., by respecting the balanced judgments or criteria that inspired it. (from International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* [Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1982], #65, pp. 191-92)