

The Liturgy in the Life of the Church

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Abstract

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After laying a more general theological foundation by noting how in one sense true liturgy *is* the Church's life, and that the New Testament proclaims an inextricable link between worship and daily living, the author summarizes the Vatican II Liturgy Constitution's vision of good liturgy (which "glorifies God and sanctifies those glorifying Him", and fosters "full, conscious, and active participation"). He then turns to the question of ecclesial identity, noting how diversity belongs to the "nature of things" and that this nature should not be violated. Examples are provided to illustrate how Eastern Catholic identity has been violated, and that in some instances Rome itself, especially most recently, has intervened to remind Eastern Catholics of the need to restore *zeon*, infant communion, the iconostasis, public celebration of Vespers, Matins and the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts, hierarchical services, reverence in celebration, baptism by immersion, real *prosphorae* as opposed to pre-cut breads, and sung, as opposed to read, Liturgies.

Throughout he insists on the need for Eastern Catholic bishops to be obedient to Vatican instructions concerning authentic Eastern worship.



What is Liturgy?

Liturgy, in the mystery-theology of the Fathers of the Church, is nothing less than the ongoing saving work of God's Only-begotten Son. That is why Pope St. Leo the Great could dare to say: "Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit – What was visible in our Redeemer

has passed into the sacraments.”¹ What Jesus did in historical form during His earthly life, He continues to do sacramentally through the liturgical mysteries He celebrates in and with His Church.

The Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Sacrosanctum Concilium* (§2) says the same thing in different words: “... it is the liturgy through which... the work of our redemption is accomplished. And it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.”² This is why liturgy has always been considered the very heart of every Church’s life: it is the language in which a Church says what it is. Indeed, in a very real sense liturgy is not only at the heart of the Church’s life; liturgy *is* the Church’s life.

Liturgy and Life

How so? The mystery that is Christ is the centre of Christian life, and it is this mystery and nothing else that the Church renews in the liturgy so that we might be drawn into it. Liturgy, then, is much more than an individual expression of faith and devotion. It is first and foremost an activity of God in Christ. Far from being extrinsic to our liturgy, Christ is its chief protagonist. This is what renders possible the extraordinary claims the Church has made about the nature of Christian worship. Our prayers are worthless, but in the liturgy Christ himself prays in us. For the liturgy is the efficacious sign of Christ’s saving presence in his Church. His saving offering is eternally active and present before the throne of the Father. By our celebration of the divine mysteries, we are drawn into the saving action of Christ and our personal self-offering is transformed into an act of the Body of Christ through the worship of the body with its head.

¹*Sermo 74 (De ascens. 2)*, 2, PL 54:398.

²Unless otherwise indicated, Vatican II documents and associated texts are cited from A. Flannery, O.P. (ed.), *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport NY: Costello, 1975) (hereafter CPCD).

The Scriptures reveal that God sent his Only-begotten Son to reconcile us to Himself and to one another in Him. Since Christian liturgy is a principal means of entering and celebrating this movement of salvation, any theology of Christian liturgical prayer must be rooted in the developing tradition evolving out of Christian reflection on that divine message. Now a fundamental principle of this kerygma is that everything in sacred history – every sacred event, object, place, theophany, cult – has been recapitulated and “personalized” and assumed into the person of the Incarnate Christ. He is God’s eternal Word,³ his new creation,⁴ the new Adam,⁵ and the Messianic Age that was to come.⁶ All that went before is fulfilled in him, Saint Paul tells us, including cultic realities.⁷ For Jesus is also the new Pasch and its Lamb,⁸ the new covenant,⁹ the new circumcision,¹⁰ the new heavenly manna,¹¹ the new temple not made with hands,¹² the new sacrifice and its priest,¹³ and the new Sabbath rest of the final age.¹⁴ The Old Testament temple and altar with their rituals and sacrifices are replaced not by a new set of rituals and shrines, but by the self-giving of the very Son of God. Henceforth, true worship pleasing to the Father is nothing less than the saving life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

But since through baptism we too are Christ, our worship is this same sacrificial existence in us. “To live is Christ,” Paul tells us in Phil 1:21, and to be saved is to be conformed to Christ by dying to self and rising to new life in Him.¹⁵ So the New Testament presents Jesus’ victory over sin and death and

³Jn 1:1, 14.

⁴2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Rom 8:19ff; Rev 21–22.

⁵1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:14.

⁶Lk 4:16–21; Acts 2:14–36.

⁷Col 2:16–17; cf. Heb 10:1.

⁸1 Cor 5:7; Jn 1:29, 36; 19:36; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5ff.

⁹Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Luke 22:20; Heb 8–13.

¹⁰Col 2:11–12.

¹¹Jn 6:30–58; Rev 2:17.

¹²Jn 2: 19–27.

¹³Eph 5:2; Heb 2:17–3:2; 4:14–10:14.

¹⁴Col 2:16–17; Mt 11:28–12:8; Heb 3:7–4:11.

¹⁵2 Cor 4:10ff, 13:4; Rom 6:3ff; Col 2:12–13, 20, 3:1–3; Gal 2:20; Eph 2:1ff; Phil 2:5ff, 3:10–11, 18, 21.

His cult of the Father as ours too: just as we have died and risen with Christ, Paul tells us,¹⁶ we too have become a new creation,¹⁷ a new circumcision,¹⁸ a new temple,¹⁹ a new sacrifice,²⁰ and a new priesthood.²¹ This is why we meditate on the pattern of Christ's life, proclaim it, preach it, celebrate it: to make it ever more deeply our own.

It is towards this *communion of reconciled life* that Christian worship is always directed. We see this in Mt 5:23–24, where offerings are deemed acceptable to God only from those reconciled with their brethren. We see it in the *Didache* 14: 1–2: “And on the Lord's day of the Lord, after you have gathered, break bread and offer the Eucharist... But let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbour join you until he is reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled.” In short, the touchstone of our liturgy is whether or not it is being lived out in the communion of our lives. Does the symbolic moment symbolize what we really are? Is our shared celebration of life a sign that we truly live in this way? In 1 Cor 11, Paul tells the Corinthian community that its Eucharist is no true Eucharist at all, for in their lack of charity they fail to attend to the needs of the body – i.e., the community as the Body of Christ: “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement unto himself” (1 Cor 11:29). Liturgy, therefore, is also a prophetic voice of judgement on the quality of our Christian lives, and we can celebrate liturgy not only unto salvation but also unto condemnation.

¹⁶Rom 6:3–11; 2 Cor 4:10ff; Gal 2:20; Col 2:12–13, 20, 3:1–3; Eph 2:5–6.

¹⁷2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22–24.

¹⁸Phil 3:3.

¹⁹1 Cor 3:16–17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19–22.

²⁰Eph 5:2.

²¹1 Pet 2:5–9; Rev 1:6, 5:10, 20:6.

Good Liturgy

So there can be bad liturgy as well as good liturgy. But who determines what is good liturgy? The Church, of course. What does the Catholic Church consider good liturgy today, in the light of the most recent documents of the Supreme Conciliar and Papal Magisterium concerning the liturgy and its renewal?²² According to the Vatican II Liturgy Constitution, good liturgy is, first of all, liturgy that glorifies God and sanctifies those glorifying Him. Theologically, this is not two things but one, since our glorification of God is His gift to us, not ours to Him, and God is glorified by us only insofar as we accept the free gift of sanctification He gives us at all times, but in a special way in the liturgy.

But if this has always been true of the liturgy, reformed or unreformed, by the time the Church had entered this outgoing century it was widely felt that this glorification and sanctification, which the liturgy has always done, could be done better. And that would happen with greater surety only if the faithful could drink more fully from the saving waters offered to them in the liturgy by a participation that would be *more active, more conscious, more communal*. The Vatican II Liturgy Constitution and the decrees and documents that flowed from it repeat time and again that the people participate in the liturgy not just as passive communicants.

So Christian liturgy is no “spectator sport,” but one in which everyone is a player on the first team. In the Liturgy Constitution, paragraph after paragraph, the Council teaches that the liturgy should actively engage everyone (§14), both

²²The contemporary Magisterium has been by no means reticent in expressing what it considers good liturgy: the magnificent ICEL anthology, DOL, comprises over 1400 pages with 4543 separate documents – enough material for several doctoral theses about contemporary Catholic teaching on the liturgy. In such a plethora of material, pride of place must be given to the authoritative Vatican II *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Sacrosanctum Concilium*, approved and promulgated on December 4, 1963 by a vote of 2147 in favour and four against – a resounding affirmation by the combined papal and conciliar Supreme Magisterium of the Church. See Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990) 37.

externally and internally (§19), and not just individually but as a community (§§21, 26–27), via a participation made more fully active (§§14, 21, 30), more fully aware (§11), more conscious (§14), more actively engaged (§§11, 14, 19). “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebration which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people...have a right and an obligation by reason of their baptism” (§14). This key affirmation, reiterated and paraphrased time and again in the following paragraphs of the Constitution (esp. §§14–30), is not just a question of esthetics: the Council boldly asserts that full lay participation in the worship of the Church *is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy and of the assembly of the baptized which is the Church*.

With this magisterial teaching in mind, let us return to our question, What does the Catholic Church consider “good liturgy” today? First of all, Catholic liturgy can be deemed “good” only when celebrated validly according to the approved rites and discipline of each particular Church, whereby God is *ex opere operato* glorified and His people given His saving grace. The Council explicitly states, however, that this is by no means enough (§11). *Ut lex orandi legem statuat credendi* is the age-old adage expressing the fact that the official liturgy of the Church also exerts magisterial authority, reflecting and embodying and proclaiming and celebrating what the Church believes and wishes to proclaim about itself today. Consequently, to be qualified as “good,” a liturgical celebration must also be a true reflection, a living icon for itself and others of what the Church is and believes itself to be. This demands a liturgy that is communitarian, and actively participated in by all not only externally but also interiorly, through a union of minds and hearts, that shows us to be what we claim to be.

Furthermore, this also demands a liturgy that is *externally, ritually* good according to the norms of the Church. The command of *Inter Ecumenici*, the September 26, 1964, *Instruction on the Proper Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, is peremptory: “Liturgical ceremonies

should be celebrated with the utmost perfection” (§13).²³ Later documents on Sacred Music, and on church art and architecture and the liturgical Disposition of the Church, show that these issues are not mere questions of esthetics, important as that can be. The issue is the very iconic nature of liturgy, which is one holistic integral epiphanic revelation of what the Church is and does.

From these same qualities of the liturgy flows another dimension placed in relief by the Council and consequent documents. Good liturgy must be *ecumenical*. The call of the *Decree on Ecumenism – Unitatis redintegratio* (November 21, 1964) that reform begins at home, applies equally to the liturgy: how can the liturgy be said to show to others the true nature of the Christ’s Church if its texts contain expressions that could be construed as anti-Semitic, if its sanctoral calendar gives the impression that the Church’s sanctifying grace never got north of the Mediterranean basin, if its secondary symbols arise only from the Semitic and Greco-Roman worlds, or if – in the case of the Eastern Catholic rites – it is the direct contradiction of everything the Supreme Magisterium has proclaimed for over a century about the Catholic Church’s reverence for the Eastern heritage, and her intention to preserve it intact as part of the heritage not just of the East, but of the whole universal Church? In short, the Magisterium commands us to preserve our Eastern heritage intact, and to restore it where it has eroded, because, like our lives, *it belongs to God and His people, and is not ours to do with as we please*.

This last point remains *the* historical problem of our Eastern Catholic liturgical life, a problem that the Holy See has expended enormous energy in resolving since the turn of the century, beginning with the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) and the 1893 Eucharistic Congress of Jerusalem. Leo XIII would soon become known as “the pope of the Christian East,” and his pontificate marked the beginnings of the emancipation of the Eastern Catholic Churches.²⁴ The story

²³CPCD, 48.

²⁴C. Soetens, *Le Congrès Eucharistique international de Jérusalem (1893) dans le cadre de la politique orientale du pape Léon XIII*, Recueil de travaux d’histoire et de philologie, série 6, fasc. 12 (Louvain, 1977); Rosario

has been told and retold many times, and does not need repeating here.²⁵

The problem I am talking about is of course what usually goes under the name “latinization.” Eastern Catholicism is often criticized for its “Westernization,” an accusation that, every honest person must admit, contains some truth. This Westernization has brought with it obvious disadvantages, specifically a certain erosion of the Eastern heritage. This does not mean that a dose of the West has not been good medicine for the East.²⁶ The problem is to make sure one is taking the right medicine, and that has not always been the case. For although we can and must always learn from one another, we cannot abandon our very identity for anyone else’s and expect the integrity of our cultural heritage to remain intact.

F. Esposito, *Leone XIII e l’Oriente cristiano: Studio storico-sistematico* (Rome, 1960) 367–84; J. Hajjar, *Les chrétiens uniates du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Seuil, 1962) 309–11; further bibliography on Leo’s policies regarding the East in G. Croce, *La Badia Greca di Grottaferrata e la rivista “Roma e l’Oriente.” Cattolicesimo e ortodossia fra unionismo e ecumenismo (1799–1923)*, 2 vols. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990) 1:126–26, n. 48.

²⁵See R.F. Taft, “Eastern Catholic Theology – Is There Any Such Thing? Reflections of a Practitioner,” *Logos A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 39 (1998): 13–58.

²⁶Every coin has two sides, and contact with the “West” has also had decided advantages. It is “Western” Christianity that has taught us good clergy education and canonical discipline and frequentation of the sacraments, and effective preaching, pastoral care, and religious education. And it is “Western” culture that invented “modernity” with its traditional values of pluralism, civility, respect for individuals and their rights, and an intellectual, artistic and cultural life that strives to be free of outside restraint or manipulation, and seeks to be objective, even-handed, and fair. These ideals of intellectual honesty, coherence, consistency, self-criticism, objectivity, fairness, dialogue; moderation and courtesy of tone and language even when in disagreement; and a reciprocity which, eschewing all “double-standard” criticism, applies the same criteria and standards of judgment to one’s interlocutor’s thought and actions that one applies to one’s own; lead to cultural openness, and the desire to know the other.

A Distinct Liturgy Expresses a Distinct and Integral Identity

For even if the basic religious belief is the same for all Catholic Christians, that common faith receives specific colouration from the particular lived experience of that faith within distinct historico-cultural settings. Liturgy is the most perfect and “official” expression of the soul that animates each tradition. It is by no means the only component of a particular tradition, however. For a cultural expression is meaningless unless prior to it there is something cultural to express! And so the Church’s Eastern and Western rites also include all the other elements we would expect to find in a Catholic culture: schools of theology with their Fathers and Doctors, canonical discipline, schools of spirituality, devotions, monasticism, art, architecture, hymns, music and – and this must be stressed – the peculiar spirit that created this tradition, that in turn is fed by this tradition and that is essential to the identity of this tradition.²⁷

The Expression of An Ecclesial Identity is Integral and Indivisible

This reality, a particular Church’s “rite” or liturgical tradition, comprises the essential expression of that Church’s identity, and as such must be preserved in its integrity. Any liturgical tradition, like a language, comprises an integral whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. It is the *totality*, the complete synthesis that is the reality, in the face of which

²⁷In his April 9, 1954 encyclical *Orientalis Ecclesiae*, par. 5–26, Pius XII indicated clearly that our Eastern Catholic traditions include much more than liturgy: “It is... important to hold in due esteem all that constitutes for the Oriental peoples their own special patrimony, as it were, handed down to them by their forefathers; and this whether it regards the sacred liturgy and the hierarchical orders, or the other essentials of Christian life, provided only that all is in full conformity with genuine religious faith and with the right rules of moral conduct. For a lawful freedom must be allowed to each and every people of Oriental Rite in all their own peculiar genius and temperament, so long as they are not in contrast with the true and integral doctrine of Jesus Christ.”

comparison with what is done or not done, what is or is not the custom in another tradition, has no more validity than it does in spoken and written languages.

To try to imagine the Byzantine Rite without Saint Basil the Great's theology of the Holy Spirit and the definitions of the First Council of Constantinople (381), without the victory over iconoclasm, without Saint Theodore Studites; to think of the Armenian Rite without Saint Nerses Shnorhali or the Chaldean rite without the poetry of Saint Ephrem; is like trying to understand Italian without Dante or English without Shakespeare, the King James's Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer. As with language, so with liturgy, individuals do not create them: peoples and their cultures do. Individuals just learn them. One can no more "invent" a living liturgy than one can invent one's mother-tongue: one learns it as an essential part of one's cultural heritage, which exists prior to and independent of our will or desires, whether we like it or not.

Why should this identity remain intact? Because that is the nature of things. For the English language to be English, it must remain English, and for the Byzantine liturgy to be the Byzantine liturgy, it has to remain just that. Not all languages have articles, but English does: it has a definite and an indefinite article. And one cannot speak and write literate English without using them. The fact that Latin and Russian do *not* have articles cannot be used to argue that English can do without them!

The same is true of liturgy. One cannot just introduce into a particular liturgy whatever one sees in another tradition that looks good without taking into account the integral structure and genius of each rite. And vice-versa, the fact that one rite does not have this or that ritual or devotion or prayer or vestment or piece of furniture does not mean another rite can drop it, any more than modern Bulgarian can drop its enclitic definite article just because Russian doesn't have one! Of course one cannot maintain the integrity of one's cultural heritage unless one knows and understands the nature of one's ecclesial tradition, and this is the real problem: ignorance, which of course is why the Holy See and the Oriental Congregation's

1996 *Instruction* on liturgy insist so much on proper liturgical formation.

Maintaining the Integral Tradition: Some Examples

Permit me to give a few examples of what I mean by the integrity of a tradition, and how it must be respected. I will take my examples from a completely neutral area, the Church Year. It is well-known that the Latin Church has developed devotion to Mary during the month of May, considered the month of Mary *par excellence*. And so, inevitably, some Eastern Catholic Churches have imitated this practice, as if they did not already have their own and far more liturgically suitable “month of Mary,” thereby manifesting complete ignorance of the dynamics of the liturgical Year as celebrated in their own traditions. Because of Mary’s inseparable link with the mystery of the Incarnation, in the most ancient theological and liturgical traditions of the East the cult of the Mother of God is an integral part of the Nativity-Epiphany cycle. The roots of Advent in the oldest festive celebration in preparation for Christmas was a commemoration of the Annunciation, originally just before Christmas. Still today in the Syrian traditions, “*Subbara* – Annunciation,” is the name for Advent.²⁸

This forms the backdrop for the latest new Catholic liturgical dispositions regarding the liturgical cult of Mary in the Roman rite. The January 1 feast of “the solemnity of Mary the Mother of God (*Sollemnitatis sanctae Dei Genetricis Mariae*)” was re-instituted in the new “General Roman Calendar” by the reform decree *Anni liturgici ordinatione* of March 21, 1969 (§35). This reform not only restored ancient Roman-rite usage but also brought Western liturgy into line with the most ancient theological and liturgical traditions of the East. The restoration of this most ancient of Marian mysteries, the divine maternity, to the Western Nativity cycle, can only be wel-

²⁸See J. Moolan, *The Period of Annunciation-Nativity in the East Syrian Calendar. Its Background and Place in the Liturgical Year*, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies 90 (Vadavathoor, Kottayam, India: Paurastyia Vidyapitham – Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1985) 12–14 and *passim*.

came as a recovery of a traditional and organic liturgical sensibility common to East and West.

Does this mean we should seek to “orientalize” the Latin rite? Let me answer that by a second example. The Roman-rite January 6 feast of the Epiphany, centered on the visit of the Magi recounted in Mt 2:1–12, is a feast *infinitely* poorer in theology and symbolism than the extraordinarily rich Theophany feast in the East. So why not “juice up” Western Epiphany by orientalizing it, one occasionally hears suggested? Because that would constitute an attack on the liturgical identity of the Latin Church, and would be the same mistake as the latinization of the Eastern rites. Such a suggestion shows a complete ignorance not only of both traditions, but also of the very nature and original purpose of liturgical feasts.

Contrary to what is always said, liturgical feasts are *not* celebrations of events in salvation history. They are celebrations of the mysteries of salvation revealed to us in the biblical narrative of those events. In the East, the original feast of the Nativity cycle was January 6. In the West, it was December 25. What both feasts celebrated was not the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, nor His baptism in the Jordan, but the mystery of the *manifestation*, originally known as “*epiphania* (manifestation)” or “*theophania* (divine manifestation),” i.e., the *appearance* of God’s salvation in the Incarnation of His Only-begotten Son. So originally, each feast included *all* the scenarios at the beginning of the Gospels that concern Jesus’ first manifesting this salvation, in some cases even including the Marriage Feast of Cana in Jn 2:1–11. Only later did the several biblical scenarios get distributed between the two days, as a result of an exchange of feasts between East and West. This is why the same richness of Scripture readings and theological themes found in the East on January 6, are found in the West on December 25.

So if both traditions wish to preserve their identity, the answer is not for them to imitate each other blindly, but for each to return to the roots of its own heritage. In this case the West needs to stop thinking that Christmas is centred on a medieval Italian invention, Baby Jesus in the *presepio*. For there is no Baby Jesus; there is only the risen glorified Lord seated at the

right hand of the Father, and *He* and His saving mysteries is what Christmas and Easter and *everything* is about. The Western January 6 feast is not a feast of the Magi, but of the manifestation of salvation to the Gentiles, a theme which the East celebrates on February 2, the feast the West calls the “Presentation of Jesus in the Temple” as recounted in Lk 2:22–38 – but which in Greek is the *Hypapante*, or “encounter,” the meeting of the Saviour with those He has come to save.

The Recovery of Authenticity

These are not personal opinions I am expressing. That our liturgical traditions must be preserved in their integrity and restored when that integrity has been diminished or diluted or lost, has been repeated time after time in the authoritative magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church by all the popes over the past century and a half; by the new Roman editions of the Eastern Catholic liturgical books and the accompanying *Ordo Celebrationis Vesperarum, Matutini et Divinae Liturgiae iuxta Recensionem Ruthenorum* (1944); by Vatican II;²⁹ by the new *Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches* (= CCEO, canons. 28, 199, 350 §3, 621, etc.); by the latest pronouncements of our present Holy Father John Paul II (the discourses of the Marian Year, *Oriente Lumen*; etc); and by the Oriental Congregation’s 1996 *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (*passim*, esp. §§11–12, 23).

The Vatican II decree *On the Eastern Churches* reaffirms this unambiguously:

6. All members of the Eastern Churches should be firmly convinced that they can and ought always preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and ways of life, and that changes are to be introduced only to forward their own organic development. They them-

²⁹E.g., *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, *passim*, esp. par. 1, 2, 6; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, par. 10; *Lumen gentium*, par. 23; *Unitatis redintegratio*, par. 17, 23.

selves are to carry out all these prescriptions with the greatest fidelity. They are to aim always at a more perfect knowledge and practice of their rites, *and if they have fallen away due to circumstances of time or persons, they are to strive to return to their ancestral tradition.*

12. The holy ecumenical council confirms and approves the ancient discipline concerning the sacraments which exist in the Eastern Churches, and also the ritual observed in their celebration and administration, *and wishes this to be restored* where such a case arises.

Let us be perfectly clear: the only reason for the existence of Eastern Catholic Churches as “*Ecclesiae particulares*” is their distinct ecclesial patrimony – i.e., their “rite” in the full sense of that term. Our rite is not just an *essential part* of our identity; *it is* our identity.³⁰ And without it there is no reason whatever for us to exist apart from the Latin rite. If the only thing that distinguishes our rite from that of our Orthodox Sister Churches is our communion with and obedience to the Holy See of Rome, then one can legitimately ask what kind of Eastern Catholic ecclesiology could ignore such clear and repeated instructions of the Holy See in this regard? The answer is of course perfectly obvious to anyone capable of thought.

Opposition to Renewal

Ironically, however, the Eastern Catholic liturgical renewal so strenuously fostered by the Holy See since Pope Leo XIII has been opposed every step of the way by those who should have welcomed it on bended knee as a great grace of God: I mean, of course, by the Eastern Catholic hierarchy, with a few notable exceptions like Andrey Sheptytsky (1865–

³⁰Antonio Bassolino, mayor of Naples, was recently quoted as saying, apropos of the restoration of cultural monument in his city: “Through culture, we have rediscovered our identity, because culture is identity.” *International Herald Tribune*, (27 May 1997) 2.

1944), Archbishop of Lviv, Metropolitan of Halych, and primate of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church.

Various reasons are given for this opposition, but as usual in such matters, the real roots go much deeper. The real issue is not ritual practice at all. Many of the rubrical niceties that divide the clergy – the size and shape of a veil or diskos, the cut of a vestment, the amplitude of one's sleeves, where to put the antimention – are of little or no significance in themselves. But these divergent ritual uses have become symbols of religious identity, much as was true of the Ritualist Movement in late 19th-century Anglicanism. At issue were not mere differences of rubric, but symbolic affirmations of the conviction that Anglicanism was not "Protestant" but "Catholic."

At bottom, then, what we face is two different interpretations of a community's past, two different historical visions. This is possible because history, of course, is not just a shared past, but one's *view* of that past seen through the lens of present concerns. This vision is not a passive view of the past as an objective reality, but a pattern formed through a process of selection determined by one's present outlook.

Some Eastern Catholic clergy see their history as a progress from schism and spiritual stagnation to a life of discipline, renewal, and restored religious practice in the Catholic communion. For this group, the adoption of certain Latin – they would say "Catholic" – devotions and liturgical uses is a sign of this new identity. Such attitudes reflect an interior erosion of the Eastern Christian consciousness, a "latinization of the heart" resulting from a formation insensitive to the true nature of the variety of traditions within the Catholic Church.

Others, while not at all denying their commitment to the Catholic communion nor underestimating the obvious spiritual benefits it has brought their Churches, see themselves as Orthodox in communion with Rome, distinguished from their Orthodox Sister Churches in nothing but the fact of that communion and its doctrinal and ecclesial consequences. They see the latinisms that have crept into their tradition as a loss of identity, an erosion of their heritage in favour of foreign customs with which they can in no wise identify themselves. So for some, latinization is a *sign* of their identity, for others its

negation, and *both* are right because they perceive themselves differently.

Underlying these issues, of course, is the more serious question of Rome's credibility: is the Holy See to be believed in what it says about restoring the Eastern Catholic heritage? The morale of some of the younger Eastern Catholic clergy has of late been deeply affected by this cul-de-sac: they feel mandated to do one thing by the Holy See – and then are criticized or even disciplined by their bishop if they try to obey.

The problem, as usual, is one of leadership, without which the hesitant or reluctant have no one to follow. What is needed is not just discipline and obedience, but also a clergy education loyal to the clear policy of the Church on this question, and prudent pastoral preparation. This is the only way out of the vicious circle that has been created: the proposed reforms are resisted because the clergy and people are not prepared to accept them – yet some church leaders do little or nothing to prepare the clergy and people for a renewal that the leaders themselves do not understand or accept.

Although I cannot pretend to read minds, I think there are two main reasons behind this deep-rooted reluctance to welcome the clear and unambiguous policy of Rome in its program of liturgical restoration of the Eastern traditions: [1] its opponents consider the restoration a pointless archaism; [2] and they are convinced in their hearts that some of the practices proposed are not really "Catholic," and hence not "right." That this directly contradicts the explicit teaching of the Holy See is an irony that does not seem to dawn on them.

The first objection is easily dispensed with. The orientation of Catholic liturgical renewal is never toward the past but toward present pastoral needs. Of course the liturgical scholar studies the past, but the purpose of such historical research is not to discover the *past*, much less to imitate it, but to recover the integrity of the pristine *tradition* which the *past* may well have obscured. The aim is not to *restore* the past but to *overcome* it. For history is not the past, but a genetic vision of the present, a present seen in continuity with its roots. It is precisely those who do not know their past that are incapable of true, organic change. They remain victims of the latest cliché,

prisoners of present usage because they have no objective standard against which to measure it.

The proposed restoration then, is not a blind imitation of a dead past, but an attempt, precisely, to free Eastern Catholics from a past in which, severed from the roots of their own tradition, they were deprived of any organic development and could conceive of growth only as sterile servility to their Latin confrères. Can one seriously propose this as a programme to be preserved in our day?

Hence the irony of those critics of the Eastern Catholic liturgical restoration who accuse its promoters of fostering a return to the Middle Ages. As we shall see in the next section, it is precisely in the Middle Ages that the practices like infant communion in the Roman rite are first called into question for typically medieval motives that no one with any sense would heed today. So it is not the proponents of restoration but its opponents that are behind the times, stuck in a medieval rut out of which the major Catholic scholarly voices in this field have been leading the Church in this century.

A short list of the issues where renewal of the Eastern heritage has met most resistance would include dropping the *Filioque* from the Creed, the consecratory Epiclesis after the Words of Institution, the unmixed chalice of the Armenian tradition, the Byzantine *zeon* or *teplota* rite in which boiling water is added to the chalice just before communion, infant communion, and, in the Syro-Malabar tradition, proleptic language, eucharist facing East, and the restoration of the *bema* and the so-called Anaphoras of Nestorius and Theodore. On each of these points, the Holy See's efforts at restoration have met with massive resistance, either active or passive, from some circles.

Let me review a couple of these issues in the light of recent developments.

The Epiclesis Question

First, the epiclesis question. Eastern anaphoras generally follow the Words of Institution (“this is my body, this is my blood”) with an explicitly consecratory petition to the Holy Spirit. As early as the 3–4th century, this Holy-Spirit epiclesis, in its most explicitly consecratory sense as a petition to change the gifts, had evolved peacefully in the eucharistic theology and prayers of the Christian East during the classic patristic period, long before any East-West dispute over the question.³¹

What do these texts mean? They mean what they say. It is axiomatic in contemporary liturgical theology to distinguish between *theologia prima* and *theologia secunda*. *Theologia prima*, first-level theology, is the faith in the life of the Church antecedent to speculative questioning of its theoretical implications, prior to its systematization in the dogmatic propositions of *theologia secunda* or systematic reflection on the lived mystery of the Church. Liturgical language, the language of *theologia prima*, is typological, metaphorical, more redolent of Bible and prayer than of school and thesis, more patristic than scholastic, more impressionistic than systematic, more suggestive than probative. In a word, it is symbolic and evocative, not philosophical and ontological. Now although it is perfectly obvious, indeed necessary, that doctrine will acquire theological refinements, especially in the heat of dogmatic controversy, it should be equally obvious that such refinements cannot be read back into texts composed long before the problems arose which led to those clarifications. And since one must reject any attempt to press texts beyond what they can bear, the most one can say is that of themselves, the anaphoral texts surrounding the institution and epiclesis in the Eastern anaphoras or in the Roman Canon neither confirm nor exclude any par-

³¹The earliest 3–4th century witnesses to the explicitly consecratory Spirit epiclesis are Cyril/John II of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 5, 7, cf. 1, 7; 3, 3, SC 126bis:94, 124, 154; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Homily 16*, 12, R. Tonneau, R. Devreesse, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste*, Studi e testi 145 (Vatican, 1949), 553; the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VIII, 12:39), *Les Constitutions apostoliques*, ed. M. Metzger, tome 3: livres V–VIII, SC 336 (Paris, 1987), 198–200 = PE 92; and the oldest Eastern anaphoras still in use today.

ticular theological thesis about when or by what particular part of the anaphoral prayer the consecration is effected.

If we look to Orthodox *theologia secunda* on the eucharistic consecration as reflected in the writings of the most representative Eastern Fathers and theologians, we see what one would expect: a theology, which in unbroken continuity from the fourth century, is perfectly consistent with the obvious meaning of the Eastern eucharistic prayers. From Chrysostom on, saints venerated in East and West have held the doctrine most clearly formulated in the 8th century by Saint John Damascene, “last of the Greek Fathers” (ca. 675–753/4), in his *De fide orthodoxa*: “God said ‘This is my body’ and ‘This is my blood,’ and ‘do this in memory of me.’ And by his all-powerful command it is done until he comes. For that is what he said, until he should come, and the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit becomes, through the invocation [i.e., epiclesis], the rain to this new tillage.”³²

This is the classic Orthodox teaching: the power of consecration comes from the words of Christ, the divine mandate which guarantees the eucharistic conversion for all time. But the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit is the decisive liturgical moment, for the Damascene continues: “... the bread of the Prothesis, the wine, and the water, are through the invocation and intervention of the Holy Spirit (*διὰ τῆς ἐπικλήσεως καὶ ἐπιφοιτήσεως τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος*) converted supernaturally into the body of Christ and the blood.”³³

The pristine Latin *theologia prima* as expressed in the ancient Roman *Canon Missae* has a different but not totally dissimilar movement. The Roman Canon does not first recite the Institution Narrative, then formulate its meaning in an epiclesis. Rather, it imbeds the *Verba Domini* in a series of discrete prayers for the sanctification and acceptance of the oblation

³² 86 (IV, 13) B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 5 vols., Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (Berlin and New York, 1969–1988) 2:194^{71–76}; cf. the excellent study of N. Armitage, “The Eucharistic Theology of the *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith (De Fide Orthodoxa)* of St. John Damascene,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 44 (1995): 292–308, here 293.

³³ Kotter 2:195; trans. Armitage, 294.

(which, theologically, are of course the same thing). Now some of these prayers even before the Words of Institution speak of the bread and wine in terms that can only refer to the Body and Blood of Christ; and, conversely, after the Words of Institution refer to them in a way that could seem to imply the gifts are not yet consecrated.

Only the wooden-headed literalist totally innocent of the proleptic and reflexive nature of liturgical discourse could find anything surprising about this. Such seeming contradictions – and similar apparent contradictions can be found in the Fathers of the Church who comment on the eucharistic prayer – result from the fact that before the Middle Ages no one tried to identify a “moment of consecration” apart from the anaphoral prayer over the gifts in its entirety.³⁴ No less an authority on the Roman eucharist than Joseph-Andreas Jungmann, S.J., sums up the original common tradition of the undivided Church as follows: “In general Christian antiquity, even until way into the Middle Ages, manifested no particular interest regarding the determination of the precise moment of the consecration. Often reference was made merely to the entire eucharistic prayer.”³⁵

This is the true, ancient tradition of the Latin Fathers and theologians. In his *De officiis ecclesiae*, Isidore (ca. 560–†636), bishop of Seville from 600/601–636, says that the consecration occurs in the canon by the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

³⁴See Jungmann cited in the following note.

³⁵J.A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite. Missarum sollemnia*, 2 vols. (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1951, 1955) 2:203–204, n. 9. He goes on to say, “It is Florus Diaconus [of Lyons, †860], *De actione miss.*, c. 60 (PL 119:52f.), in the Carolingian period, who with particular stress brought out the significance of the words of consecration; *ille in suis sacerdotibus quotidie loquitur*.”

³⁶I, 15.1, PL 83:752: he calls the canon the “sixth prayer” of the “ordo of the mass and prayers by which the sacrifices offered to God are consecrated (Ordo... missae et orationum quibus oblata Deo sacrificia consecrantur).” From the context it is clear that he is referring to the entire section of the anaphora following the Preface, extending from the Sanctus to the Our Father inclusive. See I, 15.2, PL 83:753: “Then [comes] *the sixth prayer* [of the eucharist], from which results the formation of the sacrament as an oblation that is offered to God, sanctified through the Holy Spirit, formed into the body and blood of Christ. The last of these is the prayer by which our

Isidore is commonly considered the “last of the Latin Fathers,” so right through to the end of the patristic period the view was current in Latin as well as Greek theology, [1] that the eucharistic consecration was the work of the Holy Spirit, [2] and that it was effected in the canon or anaphora without further specifying one of its component parts as the “form” of the sacrament or the “moment of consecration.” Fulgentius of Ruspe (†533)³⁷ and numerous other other early Latin authors teach the same doctrine.³⁸ Nor is this view different from that of the medieval Latin commentators, as we see in Peter Lombard (ca. 1095–†1160),³⁹ John Teutonicus (after 1215), and the *Glossa ordinaria ad Decretum Gratiani*, which includes the latter text in its anthology,⁴⁰ showing how commonly accepted this teaching was.

Note, please, that all these authoritative medieval Latin commentators explain the *Supplices* prayer, which is said *after the Words of Institution* in the Roman Canon, *as a petition to consecrate*. In modern times a Catholic classic on the eucharist, Maurice de la Taille’s *Mysterium fidei*, also recognizes the *Supplices* prayer as “a Roman epiclesis that corresponds both

Lord instructed his disciples to pray, saying: *Our Father who art in heaven* (Porro *sexta [oratio]* exhinc succedit conformatio sacramenti, ut oblatio, quae Deo offertur, sanctificata per Spiritum sanctum, Christi corpori et sanguini conformetur. Harum ultima est oratio, qua Dominus noster discipulos suos orare instituit, dicens: *Pater noster, qui es in coelis*.)”

³⁷*Ad Monimum* II, 6 and 9–10, PL 65:184–85, 187–88.

³⁸J.R. Geiselmann, *Die Abendmahlslehre an der Wende der christlichen Spätantike zum Frühmittelalter*. Isidor von Sevilla und das Sakrament der Eucharistie (Munich, 1930) 198–224; Congar, *L’Esprit saint* III, 320–330.

³⁹Speaking of the *Supplices*, the Lombard says in his *Sentences* IV, 13, PL 192:868: “It is called ‘Missa’ that the heavenly messenger might come to consecrate the lifegiving body, according to the expression of the priest: ‘Almighty God, bid that this be borne by the hand of your holy angel to your altar on high...’ (*Missa enim dicitur eo quod caelestis nuntius ad consecrandum vivificum corpus adveniat, juxta dictum sacerdotis: Omnipotens Deus, jube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum...*)”

⁴⁰Commenting on the same *Suscipe* prayer, John says: “‘Bid,’ that is: *make*. ‘Be borne,’ that is: *be transubstantiated*. Or: ‘be borne,’ that is, be assumed, that is: *be changed*... (Jube, id est: *fac*. Perferri, id est: *transsubstantiari*. Vel: perferri, id est sursum efferri, id est *converti*...)”: *Decretum de consecratione* 2, 72, in *Glossa ordinaria* (Rome, 1582) II, 1813, cited by S. Salaville, SC 4bis:322.

in the place it occupies and in its meaning – though not in its external form – to the Eastern epicleses.⁴¹ This is precisely what the 14th-century classic Orthodox eucharistic commentator Nicholas Cabasilas himself recognized in ch. 30 of his *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, when he cites the *Supplices* prayer following the Institution Narrative in the Roman Canon as saying basically the same thing as the Byzantine epiclesis.⁴²

The later Western narrowing of the perspective, ultimately doctrinalized in the scholastic hylomorphic matter-and-form (*materia/forma*) theory of the eucharistic consecration, contrasts sharply with the *theologia prima* of the Roman Canon and its earlier Latin interpreters, which views, in turn, were fully consonant with traditional Orthodox doctrine.

Can the two traditions be reconciled? Much has been made of the fact that long before the dispute began, John Chrysostom attributes consecratory efficacy both to the Words of Institution and to the epiclesis. Chrysostom states in at least seven different homilies that what happens in the eucharist happens by the power of the Holy Spirit,⁴³ a teaching common to both the Greek and Latin Churches. In at least one instance it is clear Chrysostom is talking about the epiclesis. But in his *Homily on the Betrayal of Judas (De proditiōne Judae hom. 1/2, 6)*, he attributes the consecration to Christ in the Words of Institution.⁴⁴

⁴¹M. de la Taille, *Mysterium fidei*, 3rd ed. (Paris 1931) 276; Salaville, SC 4bis:319–20, cites this and other similar modern Latin views.

⁴²SC 4bis:190–99.

⁴³*De sacerdotio* III, 4:40–50; VI, 4:34–44, Jean Chrysostome, *Sur le sacerdoce (Dialogue et Homélie)*, ed. A.-M. Malingrey (SC 272, Paris 1980) 142–46, 316 = PG 48:642–45, 681 (= CPG 4316); *Oratio de beato Philogonio* 3, PG 48:753 (= CPG 4319); *De resurr. mortuorum* 8, PG 50:432 (= CPG 4340); *In pentec. hom. 1, 4*, PG 50:458–59 (= CPG 4343); *In Ioh. hom. 45, 2*, PG 59:253 (= CPG 4425); *In 1 Cor hom. 24, 5*, PG 61:204 (= CPG 4428); *In De coemet. et de cruce* 3, PG 49:397–98 (= CPG 4337), where Chrysostom is clearly speaking of the epiclesis.

⁴⁴PG 49:380, 389–90 (= CPG 4336): “It is not man who causes what is present to become the body and blood of Christ, but Christ himself, who was crucified for us. The priest is the representative when he pronounces those words, but the power and the grace are those of the Lord. ‘This is my body,’ he says. This word changes the things that lie before us; and just as that sen-

Nicholas Cabasilas (ca. 1350) and numerous Orthodox theologians after him have argued, rightly, that Chrysostom assigns consecratory power *not to the priest's present liturgical repetition* of Jesus' words, but *to the historical institution itself*, i.e., *to the original utterance of Jesus* whose force extends to all subsequent eucharistic celebrations.⁴⁵ But this is no different from the position of the Latins, who obviously attribute the efficacy of Jesus' words not to the prayer of the priest, as Cabasilas accuses them,⁴⁶ but to the indefectible effectiveness of the Word of God. This is perfectly clear in Ambrose, *De sacramentis* IV, 4.14–17:

14. ... to produce the venerable sacrament, the priest does not use his own words but the words of Christ. So it is the word of Christ which produces this sacrament. 15. Which word of Christ? The one by which all things were made. The Lord commanded and the heavens were made, the Lord commanded and the earth was made, the Lord commanded and the seas were made, the Lord commanded and all creatures were brought into being. You see, then, how effective the word of Christ is. If then there is such power in the word of the Lord Jesus that things which were not began to be, how much more effective must they be in changing what already exists into something else!... 17. Hear, then, how the word of Christ is accustomed to change all creatures and to change, when it will, the laws of nature...⁴⁷

tence, 'increase and multiply,' once spoken, extends through all time and gives to our nature the power to reproduce itself; likewise that saying, 'This is my body,' once uttered, from that time to the present day, and even until Christ's coming, makes the sacrifice complete at every table in the churches."

⁴⁵Ch. 29, SC 4bis:178–90; cf. the remarks of Catholic commentator S. Salaville, A.A., *ibid.* 314–15, and J.H. McKenna, *Eucharist and Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Epiclesis in 20th Century Theology*, Alcuin Club Collections 57 (Great Wakering, Essex, 1975) 59.

⁴⁶Ch. 29.10, SC 4bis:184–86.

⁴⁷14. ...ut conficiatur uenerabile sacramentum, iam non suis sermonibus utitur sacerdos, sed utitur sermonibus Christi. Ergo sermo Christi hoc conficit sacramentum. 15. Quis est sermo Christi? Nempe is quo facta sunt

This is exactly what Chrysostom says in his his *Homily 2 on II Timothy*: the same Jesus accomplishes the same eucharist, the same marvels, in the liturgy as at the Last Supper.

The gifts which God bestows are not such as to be the effects of the virtue of the priest. All is from grace. His part is but to open his mouth, while God works all. He [the priest] only completes the sign (σύμβολον πληροῦ). The offering is the same whoever offers it, Paul or Peter. It is the same one Christ gave to his disciples, and which priests now accomplish. The latter is in no way inferior to the former, because the same one who sanctified the one, sanctifies the other too. For just as the words which God spoke are the same as the ones the priest pronounces now, so is the offering the same, just like the baptism which he gave.⁴⁸

So the classic Eastern Orthodox theology of consecration does not attribute the sanctification of the gifts to the Holy Spirit epiclesis *alone*, i.e., *sensu negante*, in deliberate exclusion of Jesus and his words. Nicholas Cabasilas, for instance, says of the Words of Institution:

Repeating those words, he [the priest] prostrates himself and prays and beseeches, while applying to the offered gifts these divine words of his Only-Begotten Son, the Savior, that they may, after having received

omnia. Iussit dominus factum est caelum, iussit dominus facta est terra, iussit dominus facta sunt maria, iussit dominus omnis creatura generatus est. Vides ergo quam operatorius sermo sit Christi. Si ergo tanta uis est in sermone domini Iesu ut inciperent esse quae non erant, quanto magis operatorius est ut sint quae erant et in aliud commutentur... 17. Accipe ergo quemadmodum sermo Christi creaturam omnem mutare consueuerit et mutet quando uult instituta naturae..." Ambroise de Milan, *Des Sacrements, Des mystères*, ed. B. Botte, 2nd ed., SC 25bis (Paris 1961) 110 = CSEL 73:52–53; English trans. adapted in part from E. Mazza, *Mystagogy* (New York, 1989) 183; Cf. Ambrose, *De mysteriis* IX, 52: "The sacrament you receive is produced by the word of Christ," SC 25bis, 186 = CSEL 73:112.

⁴⁸PG 62:612 (= CPG 4437). See also the same teaching in *In Mt hom.* 50 (51), 3 and *hom.* 82 (83), 5, PG 58:507, 744 (= CPG 4424). On this point see Congar, *L'Esprit saint* III, 303–4.

his most holy and all-powerful Spirit, be transformed (*μεταβληθῆναι*) – the bread into his precious and sacred Body, the wine into his immaculate and sacred blood (ch. 27). ... Here [in the liturgy] we believe that the Lord’s words do indeed accomplish the mystery, but through the medium of the priest, his invocation, and his prayer (ch. 29.4).⁴⁹

For St. Nicholas Cabasilas as for Saints John Chrysostom and John Damascene, therefore, neither epiclesis nor Institution Narrative stands alone: they are interdependent in the context of the anaphora, as we would say today.

Catholic theologians with a modicum of historical knowledge and common sense have long since adopted the same balanced, non-polemical, irenical view. As early as the 17th century, the famous Bossuet (1627–1704) raised his voice in favor of sanity. He says: “without inquiring about precise moments” in this issue,

The intent of liturgies, and, in general, of consecratory prayers, is not to focus our attention on precise moments, but to have us attend to the action in its entirety and to its complete effect... It is to render more vivid what is being done that the Church speaks at each moment as though it were accomplishing the entire action then and there, without asking whether the action has already been accomplished or is perhaps still to be accomplished.⁵⁰

Dom Charles Chardon, O.S.B., in his *Histoire des sacrements* (Paris 1745), expressed a similarly balanced view of the situation:

⁴⁹SC 4bis:174, 182; English trans. Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. by J.M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty (London, 1960) 70, 72 (hereafter Hussey-McNulty).

⁵⁰J.-B. Bossuet, *Explication de quelques difficultés sur les prières de la messe à un nouveau catholique*, ed. F. Lachat, *Oeuvres* 17 (Paris: L. Vives, 1864) 74–75, trans. in R. Cabié, *The Eucharist*, Vol. 2 of *The Church at Prayer. An Introduction to the Liturgy. New Edition*, ed. A.G. Martimort (Collegeville, 1986) 147.

Despite this diversity [over the form or moment of consecration] there was formerly no dispute over this subject. The Greeks and Latins were convinced that the species [of bread and wine] were changed into the body and blood of our Savior in virtue of the words of the Canon of the Mass, without examining the precise moment at which this change occurred, nor just which of the words [of the anaphora] effected it as over against other [words]. One side said the change was effected by the prayer and invocation of the priest; the others said that it was the result of the words of Our Lord when he instituted this august sacrament. And they in no way believed that these different ways of expressing themselves were opposed to each other (and indeed they are not, as would be easy to show). But we shall leave that to the theologians to treat...⁵¹

Since that time a steady stream of Catholic theologians have moved toward the view that the formula of eucharistic consecration comprises the prayer over the gifts in its entirety.⁵² I do not have space to list these theologians here – those interested can find their teaching in Vincentian Father John McKenna’s thorough review of the question.⁵³ The most recent study by Dom Burkhard Neunheuser, O.S.B., monk of Maria Laach and professor emeritus of the Pontificio Istituto Liturgico Sant’Anselmo in Rome, furnishes not only the most explicit and emphatic justification of this return to the original tradition of the undivided Church, but does so with full respect for traditional Catholic teaching on the centrality of the Words of Institution within the anaphoral context.⁵⁴

⁵¹I translate it from the re-edition of J.-P. Migne, *Theologiae cursus completus*, 28 vols. (Paris, 1839–1843) 20:249.

⁵²See esp. Congar, *L’Esprit saint* III, 309ff.

⁵³McKenna, *Eucharist and Holy Spirit*; also id., “Eucharistic Prayer: Epiclesis,” in A. Heinz, H. Rennings (eds.), *Gratias agamus. Studien zum eucharistischen Hochgebet*. Für Balthasar Fischer, Pastoralliturgische Reihe in Verbindung mit der Zeitschrift “Gottesdienst,” (Freiburg, Basel and Vienna, 1992) 283–291 (hereafter Heinz-Rennings).

⁵⁴“Das Eucharistische Hochgebet als Konsekrationsgebet,” in Heinz-

As Neunheuser is careful to point out, this renewal is already found reflected in official Catholic magisterial texts in the aftermath of Vatican II. Paragraph 54 of the November 18, 1969 *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, the reformed Roman Missal, says of the eucharistic prayer: “Now begins the summit and center of the whole celebration, namely the Eucharistic Prayer itself, *that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification...*”⁵⁵ “Sanctification,” of course, means in this context “eucharistic consecration.” The May 25, 1967 *Instruction Eucharisticum mysterium* reflects the same return to tradition. And Pope Paul VI in his June 18, 1968 Apostolic Constitution *Pontificalis Romani recognitio*, does so too, when he affirms that the “form” of the sacrament is the entire ordination prayer and not some isolated formula within it: “the form... consists in the words of the very prayer of consecration.”⁵⁶

This renewal found ecumenical agreement in Part I, §6 of the July 1982 Munich Statement of the Orthodox-Catholic Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue: “... the eucharistic mystery is accomplished in the prayer which joins together the words by which the word made flesh instituted the sacrament and the epiclesis in which the church, moved by faith, entreats the Father, through the Son, to send the Spirit...”⁵⁷ This is reflected most recently in the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§1352), which refers to the entire anaphora or eucharistic prayer as “... the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration (eucharistica prex... prex nempe actionis gratiae et consecrationis),” and says that the consecration is effected “by the force of the words and action of Christ and the power of

Rennings, 315–326.

⁵⁵“Prex eucharistica. Nunc centrum et culmen totius celebrationis habet, ipsa nempe Prex Eucharistica, *prex scilicet gratiarum actionis et sanctificationis...*”: EDIL 1449 (emphasis added), cf. 1450; DOL 1444, cf. 1445; Neunheuser 321.

⁵⁶EDIL 1085–6 = DOL 2609–11: “forma...constat verbis eiusdem precationis consecratoriae.”

⁵⁷*The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity Information Service* no. 49 (1982/II–III) 108; *Origins* 12:10 (April 12, 1982): 158; French text in *La documentation catholique* 79 (1982 = No. 1838, 17 oct.) 942; *Episkepsis* 13: 277 (juillet-août 1982): 13.

the Holy Spirit (vis verborum et actionis Christi, et Spiritus Sancti potentia).”

So the whole undivided Church of East and West once held that the eucharistic gifts were consecrated in the eucharistic prayer,⁵⁸ even if the *theologia prima* in the eucharistic prayers of East and West expressed this differently from as early as the 4th century. The *theologia secunda* or theological reflection on these prayers in East and West was different too. The West stressed the *Verba Domini*. The East stressed the

⁵⁸Among the earliest 2nd century witnesses to the eucharist in the period following the New Testament, Justin's, *Apology* I, 65–67, written ca. 150 AD, testifies to a prayer over the gifts that included the institution narrative. After that prayer, the gifts were no longer “ordinary food or ordinary drink but... flesh and blood of that same Jesus who was made flesh” (I, 66) PE 68–72. From the same period (ca. 185), Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* IV, 18.5, calls this consecration prayer “the invocation (τὴν ἐπίκλησιν) of God”: Irenée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, ed. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, Livre I, tomes 1–2 (SC 263–264, Paris 1979) SC 264:611; cf. also *Adv. haer.* I, 13.2, SC 264:190–91. Indeed, “epiclesis” is commonly used for the entire prayer over the gifts even in sources as late as the 4th century: Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium (Philosophoumena)* VI, 39:2, PG 16.3:3258 (= CPG 1899; on its disputed authenticity cf. CPG 1870); Firmilian of Caesarea, cited in Cyprian, *Ep.* 75, 10, CSEL 3.2:818 – trans. and discussion of this text with relevant literature in A. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula. The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts*, Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 21 (Washington, DC, 1981) 143–45; and G. A. Michell, “Firmilian and Eucharistic Consecration,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 215–220; *Didaskalia* VI, 22:2: *Didaskalia apostolorum*. The Syriac Version translated and accompanied by the Verona fragments, with an introduction and notes, by R.H. Connolly (Oxford 1929) 252–53. Cf. J.W. Tyrer, “The Meaning of ἐπίκλησις,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1923–1924): 139–50; esp. 142–45, 148; O. Casel, “Neuere Beiträge zur Epiklesenfrage,” *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 4 (1924): 169–178, esp. 170–71. Some authors would also include in this list Basil, *De Spiritu sancto* 27: Basile de Césarée, *Sur le Saint-Esprit*, ed. B. Pruche, SC 17bis (Paris, 1968) 480 = PG 32:188 (= CPG 2839). But I agree with A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford 1992) 15–17, that Basil is probably referring to the epiclesis in the narrow sense of the term. And although Cyril/John II of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 3, 3 and 5, 7, also uses the term epiclesis in its present, restricted sense, SC 126bis:124, 154, in another passage, (*Cat.* 1, 7), the word is usually interpreted as referring to the entire anaphora: “Before the holy epiclesis of the adorable Trinity the bread and wine of the eucharist was ordinary bread and wine, whereas after the epiclesis the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ”: SC 126bis:94.

epiclesis, while not denying the necessity of the Words of Institution. Problems arose only in the Late Middle Ages when the Latin West *unilaterally* shifted the perspective by dogmatizing its hylomorphic theology. These points are not theory but demonstrable historical facts.

It is now recognized that this Western innovation narrows the earlier teaching of the undivided Church, and Catholic teaching has for over a century been moving towards recovery of the view that what an earlier theology was pleased to call the “form” of a sacrament is the central prayer of the ritual, and not some single isolated formula. This prayer can be understood and interpreted only within its liturgical context. The Words of Institution are not some magical formula but part of a prayer of the Church operative only within its worship context. In East and West this context was and is and will remain diverse within the parameters of our common faith that Jesus, through the ministers of his Church, nourishes us with the mystery of his Body and Blood.

The zeon (thermon, teplota)

Another usage, typically Byzantine, which has caused endless discomfort to the latinizers, is the custom of adding boiling water to the Precious Blood just before communion. This problem, too, has its history. When the presence of the Italo-Greeks in S. Italy gave rise to debates among Catholics concerning the legitimacy of this usage, Nikolaos-Nektarios, abbot (1219–†1235) of the monastery of San Nicola di Casole near Otranto, strongly defended it in his short but trenchant *Epistula vel Apologia pro illo Græcorum ritu quo utuntur in sacra missa adhibentes aquam calidam in sacro calice post commixtionem Dominici corporis et sanguinis*.⁵⁹ At a much later date, the scruples from scholastic quantitative sacramental materialism will lead the Ruthenian Catholic Synod of Zamość

⁵⁹J.M. Hoeck, R.J. Loenertz (eds.), *Nikolaos-Nektarios von Otranto, Abt von Casole. Beiträge zur Geschichte der ost-westlichen Beziehungen unter Innozenz III. und Friedrich II.*, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 11, (Ettal, 1965) 136–38; on the abbot and his dates, 9ff. I owe this reference to S. Parenti.

in 1720 to suppress the zeon rite,⁶⁰ despite the fact that as early as March 6, 1254, Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) had approved its use in the eucharist for the Greeks of Cyprus, at that time under Latin domination.⁶¹

Further, regarding the putting of water, either cold or hot or warm in the sacrifice of the altar, let the Greeks follow their own custom, as long as they believe and assert that if the form of the canon is observed, the eucharist is equally consecrated from both.⁶²

Though these papal approvals have been repeated time and again, most notably by Pope Benedict XIV in *Etsi pastoralis* (§6 no. 2) of January 26, 1742, and *Allatae sunt* (§26) of July 26, 1755,⁶³ and incorporated into the official Roman editions of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy,⁶⁴ some Greek Catholics, more Catholic than the pope, will still appeal to the outdated suppression of the zeon at Zamość. The author himself has experienced personally the scruples of latinized Eastern Catholic priests, fearful that if too much zeon is added to the consecrated wine it would induce the Lord to take his leave! The general theory among Catholic adherents to this “quantitative” rather than symbolic sacramental theology is that the

⁶⁰L.D. Huculak, *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the Kievan Metropolitan Province during the Period of Union with Rome (1596–1839)*, *Analecta Ordinis Sancti Basilii Magni*, Series II, Section 1, vol. 47 (Rome, 1990) 333–35; M.M. Solovey, *The Byzantine Divine Liturgy. History and Commentary* (Washington, DC, 1970) 318.

⁶¹See J. Gill, “The Tribulations of the Greek Church in Cyprus, 1196–c. 1280,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 5 (1977) 73–93, esp. 86.

⁶²*Act Innocentii PP. IV*, ed. T.T. Haluščynskyj and M.M. Wojnar, *Fonti codificazione canonica orientale*, ser. III, vol. IV.1 (Rome, 1962) §105, p. 173: “Porro in appositione aquae sive frigidae sive calidae vel tepidae in altaris sacrificio, suam se velint consuetudinem Graeci sequantur, dummodo credant et asserant, quod, servata canonis forma conficiatur pariter de utraque.”

⁶³*The Vatican and the Eastern Churches. Papal Encyclicals and Documents concerning the Eastern Churches*, vol. 1 (Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications 1996) 23–24, 79.

⁶⁴*Euchologion* (1754) 58; *Εὐχολόγιον τὸ μέγα* (1873) 71–72; *Hieratikon* (1950) 144, 208, 253; *Служебник* (1956) 277, 393, 458–59.

chalice mixture must contain two-thirds wine for “validity.” As the evidence adduced by J.-M. Hanssens, S.J., shows, however, one would be hard put to demonstrate that there was only one-third water in the cups the early Christians consecrated.⁶⁵ And the first authoritative insistence on adding to the chalice *only a small amount of water* is found in canon 814 of the pre-Vatican II Latin rite *Codex iuris canonici*,⁶⁶ a disciplinary decree that does not concern Eastern usage in any way.

Infant communion

A final example is the question of giving Holy Communion to infants who have not yet reached the “age of reason.” Here again, it is a question of the constantly reiterated will of the Holy See, resumed in the Vatican II decree *On the Eastern Churches* §6 and §12, that Eastern Catholics: [1] avoid Latinization, [2] preserve their own tradition *in its purity*, [3] and return to their tradition where they have departed from it.

In harmony with this unambiguous will of the Church, the commission preparing the new Code of Eastern Canon Law prepared in 1976 new legislation restoring the ancient discipline of infant communion:

The traditional discipline of the Eastern Churches prescribes the communion of newly baptized infants as the completion of initiation... The commission has not ignored a problem so important as the communion of neophytes, for which reason it was obliged to reestablish the ancient common discipline by composing a new canon in the following terms: “Sacramental initiation into the Mystery of Salvation is perfected through the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist. Therefore let it be administered as soon as possible after Baptism and Chrismation with the Sacred Myron, according to the discipline proper to each Church.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵J.-M. Hanssens, *Institutiones liturgicae de ritibus orientalibus* II–III (Rome 1930, 1932) II, §§424–40.

⁶⁶*Ibid.* §440; Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia* 2:40–41.

⁶⁷My translation from the report of Bishop Miroslav Marusyn, *Nuntia* 2

This has become Canon 697 of the new *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*. It has also warmed the hearts of Western Catholic experts on Christian Initiation, who for some time now have been arguing for the restoration of the integrity of the threefold Rite of Christian Initiation in the Roman Rite.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, it has met with less than enthusiastic acceptance in some Eastern Catholic communities that long ago abandoned, in favor of the Latin discipline, their ancient common tradition of infant communion immediately after baptism and chrismation.

Now in the case of Christian Initiation, modern historical research and theological reflection have shown that the universal primitive tradition of both East and West viewed the liturgical completion of Christian Initiation as one integral rite comprising three moments of baptism, chrismation, and eucharist, and without all three the process is incomplete.⁶⁹ In Christian antiquity, to celebrate initiation without eucharist would have made about as much sense as celebrating half a wedding would. For this reason, contemporary Western Catholic experts on the liturgy and theology of Christian Initiation have insisted on the necessity of restoring the integrity of this process which broke down in the Middle Ages.⁷⁰

(1976) 20: "La disciplina tradizionale nelle Chiese orientali prescrive la comunione dei fanciulli neobattezzati come completamento dell'iniziazione... Il coetus non ha trascurato un problema così importante come la comunione dei neofiti, per la quale era obbligato a ripristinare la disciplina antica unica, componendo un canone nuovo del seguente tenore: *Initiatio sacramentalis in Mysterium Salutis receptione SS. Eucharistiae perficitur; ideoque ea post Baptismum et Chrismationem Sancti Myri administretur quamprimum iuxta disciplinam unicuique Ecclesiae propriam.*"

⁶⁸See for example such representative studies as those by two major Catholic experts in the field, professors of liturgy respectively at Yale and Notre Dame Universities: Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B., *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation*, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church, vol. 1 (N.Y.: Pueblo 1978); Mark Searle, *Christening. The Making of Christians* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1980).

⁶⁹See the works referred to in the previous note.

⁷⁰The major study in English of this disintegration is J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation. Baptism in the Medieval West, A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*, Alcuin Club Collections 47 (London, 1965).

I suspect that some of the Eastern Catholic clergy, educated in Latin seminaries or at least in Latin categories of a previous epoch, are convinced that the practice of infant communion is not “Catholic” – or at least not as Catholic as the Latin practice of delaying first communion until children have attained the use of reason. Why they might think this is no mystery. The prevailing Latin thesis was that the use of reason was necessary to receive the eucharist fruitfully. If this is so, then what could be the point of infant communion?

This problem, too, can be dissipated by a knowledge of the facts. From the beginning of the primitive Church in East and West the process of Christian Initiation for both children and adults was one inseparable sequence comprising catechuminate, baptism, chrismation (confirmation), and eucharist. History is unmistakably clear in this matter: every candidate, child or adult, was baptized, confirmed, and given communion as part of a single initiation rite. This is the universal ancient Catholic tradition. Anything else is less ancient and has no claim to universality.

For centuries, this was also the tradition of the Church of Rome. In 417 Pope Innocent I in *Ep. 30, 5*, a doctrinal letter to the Fathers of the Synod of Milevis, teaches that infant initiation necessarily includes communion:

... to preach that infants can be given the rewards of eternal life without the grace of baptism is completely idiotic. For unless they eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, they will not have life in them.⁷¹

As is obvious from the text, Innocent I is teaching principally that without baptism infants cannot be saved. But the argument he uses from Jn 6:53, which refers to *the necessity of eucharist* for salvation, shows he simply took it for granted that communion was an integral part of Christian Initiation even for infants.

⁷¹PL 20, 592: “...praedicare parvulos aeternae vitae praemiis etiam sine baptismatis gratia posse donari, perfatuum est. Nisi enim manducaverint carnem Filii hominis et biberint sanguinem eius, non habebunt vitam in semet ipsis.”

That infant communion during the Rites of Christian Initiation was the actual liturgical practice of Rome can be seen, for example, in the 7th-century *Ordo romanus XI*⁷² and in the 12th-century Roman pontifical, which repeats almost verbatim the same rule (I cite the later text):

Concerning infants, care should be taken lest they receive food or be nursed (except in case of urgent need) before receiving the sacrament of Christ's Body. And afterwards, during the whole of Easter week, let them come to mass, offer, and receive communion every day.⁷³

Until the 12th century this was the sacramental practice of the Roman Church and the doctrinal teaching of the Latin theologians. Christ Himself said in Jn 6:53 that it was necessary for eternal life to receive His Body and Blood – “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you” – and the medieval Latin theologians applied this to everyone without exception, infants included.⁷⁴

The practice began to be called into question in the 12th century not because of any doctrinal argument about the need to have attained the “age of reason” (*aetas discretionis*) to communicate. Rather, the fear of profanation of the host if the child could not swallow it led to giving the precious blood only. And then the forbidding of the chalice to the laity in the West led automatically to the disappearance of infant communion too. This was not the result of any pastoral or theo-

⁷²M. Andrieu (ed.), *Le pontifical romain au moyen âge*, vol. 2: *Les textes*, *Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, études et documents* 23, (Louvain, 1948) 446–47.

⁷³M. Andrieu (ed.), *Le pontifical romain au moyen âge*, vol. I (Studi e testi 86, Vatican 1938) 248:37. “Illud autem de parvulis providendum est, ne postquam baptizati fuerint, ullum cibum accipiant nec ablactentur, sine summa necessitate, antequam communicent sacramento corporis Christi. Et postea per totam hebdomadam paschae omnibus diebus ad missam procedant, offerant, et communicent.”

⁷⁴See for example Regino of Prüm (PL 132:205); Radulphus of Ardens (PL 155:1850); William of Champeaux (PL 163:1039).

logical reasoning. When the Fourth Lateran Council (AD 1215) ordered yearly confession and communion for those who have reached the “age of reason” (*annos discretionis*) it was not affirming this age as a *requirement* for reception of the eucharist.⁷⁵ Even the 1910 decree *Quam singulari* issued under Pius X mentions the age of reason not as required before communion *can* be received, but as the age when the *obligation* of satisfying the *precept* of annual confession and communion begins.⁷⁶

Nevertheless the notion eventually took hold that communion could not be received until the age of reason, even though infant communion in the Latin rite continued in some parts of the West until the 16th century. Though the Fathers of Trent (Session XXI, 4)⁷⁷ denied the *necessity* of infant communion, they refused to agree with those who said it was useless and inefficacious – realizing undoubtedly that the same arguments used against infant communion could also be advanced against infant baptism, because for over ten centuries the West had employed the exact same theology to justify both! For the Byzantine rite, on December 23, 1534, Paul III explicitly confirmed the Italo-Albanian custom of administering the eucharist to infants.⁷⁸

So the plain facts of history show that for 1200 years the universal practice of the entire Church of East and West was to communicate infants. Hence to advance *doctrinal* arguments against infant communion would be to assert that the sacramental teaching and practice of the Roman Church was in error for 1200 years. Infant communion was not only permitted in the Latin Church; at one time the Supreme Magisterium taught that it was *necessary for salvation*.⁷⁹ In the Latin

⁷⁵Dz §437.

⁷⁶*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 2 (1910): 582 = Dz §§3530–36. However Dz §§3531–32 could be interpreted as implying that the age of reason is required for First Communion. But constantly repeated papal approval of Eastern usage, and ancient Latin practice itself, show that this can only be a disciplinary decree restricted to the Latin rite.

⁷⁷Dz §1730.

⁷⁸Cfr. M. Petta, “Italo-Albanian Rite”, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 7:748.

⁷⁹See Innocent I cited above at note 71.

Church the practice was not suppressed by any doctrinal or pastoral decision, but simply died out. Only later, in the 13th century, was the “age of reason” theory advanced to support the *innovation* of baptizing infants *without* also giving them communion. The “age of reason” requirement for communion is a medieval Western *pastoral* innovation, not a *doctrinal* argument. And the *true* ancient tradition of the whole Catholic Church is to give communion to infants. *Present Latin usage is a medieval innovation.*

The real issue, of course, is not infant communion but the universal ancient tradition of the *integrity* of Christian Initiation, which the West abandoned only in the 12th century. The traditional *order* of initiation (baptism, chrismation, communion) was maintained until *Quam singulari* in 1910, when in some countries first communion began to be given before confirmation. But the Holy See has in the official *praenotanda* to the new Roman *Rite of Christian Initiation* promulgated May 15, 1969, reaffirmed the traditional order and interrelationship of these rites:

1. Through the sacraments of Christian initiation men and women are freed from the power or darkness. With Christ they die, are buried and rise again. They receive the Spirit of adoption which makes them God’s sons and daughters, *and with the entire people of God, they celebrate the memorial of the Lord’s death and resurrection.*

2. Through baptism men and women are incorporated into Christ. They are formed into God’s people, and they obtain forgiveness of all their sins. They are raised from their natural human condition to the dignity of adopted children. They become a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence they are called, and are indeed, the children of God.

Signed with the gift of the Spirit in confirmation, Christians more perfectly become the image of their Lord and are filled with the Holy Spirit. They bear

witness to him before all the world and eagerly work for the building up of the body of Christ.

Finally they come to the table of the eucharist, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that they may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering themselves with Christ, they share in his universal sacrifice: the entire community of the redeemed is offered to God by their high priest. They pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family.

*Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring the faithful to the full stature of Christ and to enable them to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.*⁸⁰

In this document the Catholic Church has reaffirmed the normative value of the ancient tradition of initiation preserved from time immemorial in the East – a renewal received with enthusiasm by all experts in the field. So both universal early tradition and the present teaching of even the Latin Church show Eastern practice to be not a strange exception that should be abandoned, but the traditional ideal that should be preserved or restored.

Conclusion

Of course no one can expect every Eastern Catholic church leader to know all this history. What one can expect of them, however, is that they trust the leadership and teaching of the Supreme Universal Magisterium of the Catholic Church in its indications for this renewal, and do what they are told. The

⁸⁰*The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI.* English translation prepared by ICEL, 2 vol. (New York: Pueblo, 1976–1980) 1:3–4; official Latin text in EDIL par. 1777–78 (emphasis added).

Supreme Magisterium's policies for our liturgical renewal may not always meet with understanding and agreement. But they should at least meet with obedience. Otherwise what can it possibly mean when we claim to be Eastern *Catholic*? But unless the liturgical restoration is accompanied by an interior renewal of the Eastern Christian ethos and spirit, it will remain little more than ritualism. And the key to that inner renewal is clergy and catechetical formation. As the late Archbishop Joseph Tawil wrote in his Christmas message of 1970, we must have "the courage to be ourselves."⁸¹

⁸¹Republished in *Diakonia* 32 (1999): 170–174.

APPENDIX: Liturgical Problems in North America

All of the above are of course purely clerical problems, despite the routine clerical pretense that one cannot do this or that “because of the people.” That is true only when the clergy have brainwashed the people into rejecting what the clergy themselves refuse to do.

But apart from such theological and liturgical issues as those outlined above, what are some of the concrete problems of Eastern Liturgy in North America? I restrict my horizon to North America because I have never set foot in Latin America or Oceania, and am not in the habit of discussing what I know nothing about. That excellent document, the 1966 *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, provides a full anthology of the Holy See’s teaching and discipline on the concrete problems of Eastern Catholic liturgy today. A short list of some of the specific problems faced in North America would, in my view, include the following:

1. The rule forbidding the ordination of married men to the priesthood and the drastic decline in vocations to the celibate priesthood and religious life has reduced some Churches to a precarious state in providing pastoral-liturgical care for their people, with resulting losses to the Church of large numbers of faithful.
2. The problem of translations of liturgical texts into English. Some of the English translations presently in use or under review for approval are excellent; others are semi-literate at best.⁸² There is a crying need for a complete English version of ALL the liturgical texts, including ALL the propers. And of course ideally that work should be done in common by all the jurisdictions or eparchies using the same rite.

⁸²On this issue, see R.F. Taft, “Translating Liturgy,” in *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 39 (1998): 155–184.

3. Intimately linked to the problem of translation is, of course, the problem of liturgical music. To translate a text into another language may destroy the language rhythms and cadences for which the music was composed. In some parishes in North America the active participation of the congregation in singing the liturgy is admirable; in others less so.

4. In discussing the problem of translations I adverted to a more fundamental issue: the lack of collaboration and unity among the various jurisdictions of the Byzantine traditions – in some cases even among the eparchies of the same Church – not only in the preparation of liturgical texts but in other areas affecting the liturgy, such as clergy formation and catechesis. This is not only impractical; it is a scandal.

5. Church design is another basic liturgical issue. A church must be built according to the demands of the rite to be celebrated therein. There are still Byzantine churches in the US and Canada without an iconostasis – some of them built quite recently. How is that possible fifty-five years since the official publication of the Oriental Congregation, the *Ordo celebrationis Vesperarum, Matutini et Divinae Liturgiae iuxta Recensioem Ruthenorum*, appeared in May 1944? Ordo §§1–6 deal explicitly with the proper arrangement of the sanctuary and altar; §6 states that an altar without an iconostasis – even a side-altar – is not considered suitable for liturgical celebrations. The same teaching is resumed in *Instruction* §104.

6. Of course it does not do much good to have a properly arranged church building if the services are not celebrated, and a major liturgical problem is the decline, and in some cases disappearance, of the public celebration of Vespers, Matins, Presanctified, and other offices, an issue also addressed in *Instruction* §§97–98.

7. In that context, the *Instruction* rightly draws attention to the urgent need for a renewal and fostering of the liturgy of the bishop's cathedral (§56), and of monasticism (§98) as the cradle where the liturgical cycle of offices can be celebrated with completeness and full solemnity. It has always been the tradition of at least certain forms of Eastern monasticism to be open to the active participation of others in its services, and Eastern monasteries near urban centers have always been places of pilgrimage, especially for participation in the offices of the great feasts and for spiritual direction.

8. Even when the services *are* celebrated, especially the Eucharist, they have to be celebrated *properly*. Some priests celebrate magnificently, with due reverence, devotion, and respect for the tradition, in obedience to the explicit command of *Inter Ecumenici*, the September 26, 1964, *Instruction on the proper Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, that "Liturgical ceremonies should be celebrated with the utmost perfection" (§13).⁸³ Others celebrate at breakneck speed their own private selective version of what they have decided the liturgy should be, convinced that the laity do not want to spend any more time in church than they do.

9. Preaching is another area that needs attention. Of course preparing a homily requires study and work. But proclaiming and preaching God's Word is an essential part of any Sunday or festive liturgy, as is perfectly obvious in the theology and pastoral activity of the Fathers of the Church in both East and West.

10. Also pastorally serious is the decline, even collapse, of the Church's Lenten and penitential discipline, including in some cases even the sacrament of reconciliation, and fasting during the Church's

⁸³CPCD 48.

“Lents.” Of course if the clergy themselves do not celebrate the Lenten services or observe any personal ascetical discipline, it is hard to see how one can convince the laity that they should.

11. Numerous abuses stigmatized, reprovved, and forbidden explicitly or implicitly in the 1996 *Instruction* or the earlier 1944 *Ordo Celebrationis* can still be seen in North America: the use of precut prosphoras and particles in the Byzantine Prothesis or Rite of Preparation of the Gifts (*Ordo* §§98ff; *Instruction* §68); communion from the tabernacle during the Divine Liturgy (*Instruction* §61); Baptism of infants by aspersion instead of immersion (*Instruction* §48); failing to complete the Rites of Christian initiation by communicating infants (CCO canons 697, 710; *Instruction* §51); mob concelebrations with concelebrants participating outside the sanctuary enclosure (*Instruction* §57); priests serving as deacons (*Instruction* §75); etc.

12. As for latinizations like “low mass,” for one who knows something about the authentic liturgical traditions of the Christian East, they are not even worth discussing.

This short list reflects deficiencies in what are, of course, the basic issues underlying almost all problems of pastoral liturgy: religious education, clergy formation, and leadership. With respect to the latter, there pops into mind again the old and still unanswered question, “Quis custodit custodes?”



Резюме

Видатний професор літургіології в Папському Орієнтальному Інституті в Римі о. Роберт Тафт представляє основні поняття про центральність і незаступимість богочинання в житті Церкви та про нерозривне відношення богослужень до щоденного життя. Він підсумовує вчення II-го Ватиканського Собору про правильний підхід до богослужень (які мають „прославляти Бога і освячувати тих, які Його прославляють” та сприяти „повній, свідомій та діяльній участі”). Опісля автор підкреслює важливість автентичної літургійної ідентичности, бо збереження суцільности даного Обряду є виявом пошани до „природи речей,” значить, до законної відмінности того ж Обряду. Сам Рим, зокрема в останньому часі, пригадував східнім католикам про потребу зберігати, наприклад, теплоту, причастя немовлят, іконостаси, всенародне відправлення Вечірні, Утрені та Літургії Передосвячених Дарів, архiereйські Літургії, пошану (брак поспіху) під час богослужень, хрещення зануренням, вживання просфор (а не наперед покряних частиць) та співані, а не читані, Служби Божі.

Автор настоює, що Східні Католицькі єпископи повинні бути послухними ватиканським напрямним стосовно автентичного підходу до літургійних питань.

