

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy as a Document for the 21st Century

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**On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*
December 4, 2013**

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The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (also known by its Latin title, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*) was the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council, and is arguably the most influential. The everyday lives of millions of Catholics around the world have been influenced by what it had to say. The *Constitution* was approved by an overwhelming majority of the Council Fathers (2,147 to 4), and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. It set in motion the most far-reaching liturgical reform in Catholic history.¹

At various times in the past 50 years, Church leaders have considered that “the liturgical renewal is

¹ For a consideration of some reflections on the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, see Francis A. Arinze, “Positive Results of Vatican II’s Liturgy Constitution and Challenges Posed by Them,” *Origins* vol. 33, no. 21 (October 30, 2003) 341-346; John Baldovin, “*Sacrosanctum concilium* and the Reform of the Liturgy: Forty-Five Years Later,” *Studia Liturgica* 39 (2009) 145-157; Andrew Cameron-Mowat, “*Sacrosanctum concilium*: Still a Challenge. The 2003 James Crichton Memorial Lecture,” *Music & Liturgy* Issue 312, vol. 29, no. 4 (Winter 2003) 22-27; Richard R. Gaillardetz, “Vatican II’s Liturgy Constitution: the Beginnings of a Liturgical Ecclesiology,” *Origins* vol. 33, no. 21 (Oct. 30, 2003) 347-352; Wilton Gregory, “The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” *Origins* vol. 43, no. 26 (November 28, 2013) 405-412; Paul Inwood (Interviewer), “Back to the Future – Part 1: An Interview with Joseph Gelineau, SJ,” *Music & Liturgy* 30.2 (Summer 2004) 15-21; Paul Inwood (Interviewer), “Back to the Future – Part 2: An Interview with Joseph Gelineau, SJ,” *Music & Liturgy* 30.3 (Autumn 2004) 11, 15-17; Kevin W. Irwin, “Evaluating *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Context, Text, Unfinished Business,” *Chicago Studies*, 49.2 (Summer 2010) 123-147; Kevin W. Irwin, “Implementing *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Undertaken and Unfinished,” *Chicago Studies* 49.2 (Summer 2010) 148-171; Eliot L. Kapitan, “Weighing Practices Against Principles: Revisiting the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Part 1,” *Rite* 36.1 (Jan-Feb 2005) 4-9; Eliot L. Kapitan, “Weighing Practices Against Principles: Revisiting the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Part II,” *Rite* 36.2 (Mar-Apr 2005) 11-14; Gerard Moore, “Are We There Yet? Vatican 2 and the Renewal of the Liturgy: Reflections on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” *Australasian Catholic Record*, 81.3 (July 2004) 259-271; Aidan Nichols, “A Tale of Two Documents: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Mediator Dei*,” *Antiphon* :1 (2000) 23-31; Keith Pecklers, “Vatican II and the Liturgical Renewal: An Unfinished Agenda,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 42:1-2 (2005) 26-44; *The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration*, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013. For a reflection on the discussion at Vatican II, see John O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) 129-141.

the most visible fruit of the whole conciliar effort.”² At the International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec in June 2008, Pope Benedict XVI challenged participants to study the Council’s text on the liturgy.

The liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council were not a product of the 1960s. They developed gradually and originated especially when French and German Benedictine monasteries in the nineteenth century focused on recovering the original meaning of the liturgy. This developed into a worldwide movement during the first half of the twentieth century and became known as “The Liturgical Movement.” As early as 1903, Pope Pius X called for active participation in the rites of the Church,³ with a real appreciation for the broader role of the assembly. This call for active participation was taken up by scholars and pastors around the world. Gradually, this movement to study and understand the liturgy became a movement of reform that sought to make the liturgy more accessible to everyone. It was eventually endorsed by Pope Pius XII in two encyclicals: his 1943 *Mystici Corporis Christi* and his 1947 *Mediator Dei* as well as in the 1956 International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy. Some of his reforms laid the foundation for Vatican II for he called for a lively engagement of the liturgical year, fruitful interior and exterior participation by the faithful, the renewal of pious devotions, proper liturgical music and the eradication of abuses in the liturgy.⁴ He also sponsored several important liturgical reforms in the 1950s: in 1951 restoring the Easter Vigil to its former place on Holy Saturday night and in 1955 reforming the other liturgies of Holy Week. The success of these efforts raised the expectations of many, and when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, liturgy was the first item on the agenda. Even prior to the Council, the Congregation of Rites issued new rubrics for the Breviary and the Missal (1960), a new Roman Breviary (1961), and a new revised Roman Missal (1962).

To carry out of the Council’s directives in the Constitution, many practical decisions had to be made after the Council. For example, since 1963, there have been five official instructions on its proper implementation giving specific permissions and guidance in carrying out the reform. Three of these instructions appeared in quick succession: *Inter Oecumenici* (1964), *Tres Abhinc Annos* (1967), and *Liturgicae Instaurationes* (1970), while two others appeared much later: *Varietates Legitimae* (1994) and *Liturgiam authenticam* (2001). All these Vatican documents, written for the worldwide Church assisted conferences of bishops and individual bishops in carrying out the mandate of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*.

As we reflect on the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, we realize that it continues to call us to a deeper appreciation of the liturgy. The Constitution made many inspiring statements that might be considered goals for the renewal of the liturgy. In this presentation, I would like to consider several

² Second Extraordinary Synod, “The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World,” The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod (November 24–December 8, 1985), 3.B.1.

³ Pius X, *Motu Proprio, Tra le Sollecitudini*, on Sacred Music, November 22, 1903, ASS 36 (1903) 329-339.

⁴ Joshua R. Brommer, *Imbued with the Spirit of the Liturgy* (Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013) 15.

of these statements and reflect how these “goals” might be met in a more profound way as we continue to implement more deeply the renewal of the liturgy. My presentation of the statements will be placed within the context of the headings used by the Constitution.

Introduction to *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1-4)

1. Renewed Liturgy Contributes to a Renewed Faith

Just as the Council considered the document on the liturgy as its first fruit, it also used this document to express the spirit of the Council and to speak to the life of every person in the Church. Implicitly, it highlights the fact that a renewed liturgy can immensely contribute to the realization of the vision of the Council. The Council Fathers expressed the hope of the Council as a growth in the vigor of living out the Christian life by all, an adaptation of the Church to society, the promotion of Christian unity and strengthening the mission of the Church to invite all people into the Church’s fold (SC 1). The Constitution articulated the fundamental hopes of the Council, so we might ask how the liturgy fulfills this hopes: How might our liturgy foster a new vigor in the living out of the Christian life? How might the liturgy support the adaptation of aspects of our institutions to the needs of our times? How might the liturgy keep alive the ecumenical vision of the Council? How might the liturgy assist in the development of a deeper sense of the Church’s mission? How might the liturgy express the fundamental desire for ongoing renewal in the Church?

Chapter 1. General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy (5-46)

2. Paschal Mystery

Following the contribution of the Liturgical Movement, the Constitution refocused the Church’s attention on the Paschal Mystery as the primary element in liturgical theology and practice. “For the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ [...] is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church”(SC 2).⁵ The Paschal Mystery is the passion, death, resurrection and ascension, which constitute a new act of creation and the liturgy gives every man and woman access to their new destiny.⁶ Anscar Chupungco reflects that the paschal mystery is an object of faith, a statement of love and a source of hope.⁷

The fruits of the Paschal Mystery are shared by the faithful because of Christ’s presence in the

⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963=SC, English translation found on the Vatican website http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

⁶ Joshua R. Brommer, *Imbued with the Spirit of the Liturgy* (Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013) 21.

⁷ Anscar Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010) 71-77.

liturgy. The Constitution describes four ways in which Christ is present: in the Eucharistic species, in the minister, in his word and in the Church as she gathers to pray and sing (SC 7). Jesus' words and actions during his hidden life and public ministry anticipated the power of his Paschal mystery. They announced and prepared what he was going to give the Church when all was accomplished. Thus, the mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of his work in the celebration of the sacraments because he continues to perform his grace filled actions, through the ministers of his Church. St. Leo the Great captures this in a wonderful way: "our Redeemer's visible presence has passed into the sacraments."⁸

The sacred action of the liturgy surpasses all others, for the Constitution states: "no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree" (SC 7). This teaching reminds us that the liturgy holds first place in the life of the Church and the life of every Christian, for the liturgy pours forth upon the faithful the redemptive love of the Paschal Mystery. Thus, the liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows" (SC 10). Moreover, the Constitution highlights the eschatological dimension of the liturgy, the earthly liturgy being a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy (SC 8). This dimension is a healthy corrective to those celebrations which might have an exclusive focus on this life.

3. Liturgy and the Whole Christian Life

While the Constitution did have some references to bringing the good news to all people (SC 9 and 53), it really did not have an emphasis on mission. While it does make some connection between the celebration of the liturgy and the call to accomplish the mission of Christ in the world, this aspect of the liturgy within the Constitution has not been fully developed.⁹ However, this emphasis on the missionary call of the liturgy has been highlighted by other documents of the council and developed throughout the conciliar period, e.g., the rite of sending forth gives the assembly a sense of being sent with a certain responsibility.

After the final blessing at Eucharist, the deacon or the priest dismisses the people with the words: *Ite, missa est*. These words help us to grasp the relationship between the Mass just celebrated and the mission of Christians in the world. In antiquity, *missa* simply meant 'dismissal.' However in Christian usage it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word 'dismissal' has come to imply a 'mission.' These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church. The People of God might be helped to understand more clearly that the dismissal is a charge to live and work in the world redeemed by the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ. We need to recognize the full implications of the liturgy for our daily lives, that we are sent forth from the Sunday Eucharist to be Christ to others and that our faith is to permeate every aspect of our work, leisure and our relationships.

⁸ Leo the Great, *Sermo 2 de Ascensione 2*, PL 54, 398 in *Liturgy of the Hours*, Vol. II (Lenten Season-Easter Season) Friday, Sixth Week of Easter (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1976) 937.

⁹ Joshua Brommer and others, *A Pastoral Commentary on Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013) 20-21; Catherine Vincie, "Liturgy and Justice: Keeping the Connections Alive," in Eleanor Bernstein and Martin F. Connell, *Renewal That Awaits Us* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997) 124-139.

Members of the assembly must become a sign of the presence of Jesus transforming the life of the community. In one sense, our worship prepares us to encounter the risen Lord in daily life, throughout the week and it is in this encounter where liturgy and justice meet.

With the new translation of the *Roman Missal*, the Church hears new charges for the dismissal, such as ‘Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord’ and ‘Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.’ The rite of dismissal, then, provides an outward thrust to the liturgy, clearly indicating that the Christian worship of God continues after the close of the service. Through living out their lives in the practice of justice, following the example of the Lord, Christians continue to respond to Christ and recognize him in their daily existence. Thus, genuine worship is fruitful as it bears fruit in the midst of the larger community, a fruit that is borne through the work of justice.¹⁰ For Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Holiness joins liturgy and justice. In the liturgy we hymn God’s holiness. In lives of justice and mercy we reflect God’s holiness.”¹¹

Pope Benedict XVI, in his apostolic letter *Sacramentum caritatis*, sees the connection between the dismissal at the Eucharist, the life of charity and the growth in holiness. He states: “The eucharistic mystery thus gives rise to a service of charity towards neighbour, which consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, affecting even my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ” (*Sacramentum caritatis* 88). He further notes that “the faithful need to be reminded that there can be no *actuosa participatio* in the sacred mysteries without an accompanying effort to participate actively in the life of the Church as a whole, including a missionary commitment to bring Christ’s love into the life of society” (*Sacramentum caritatis* 55). Cardinal Danneels affirms this point succinctly: “If the Christian mysteries have crossed over into the liturgy, then it is equally true that liturgy must cross over into the moral and spiritual life of Christians.”¹²

A recent book about Mark Searle’s approach to liturgy develops this further. Searle’s approach to liturgy focuses on discovering and being discovered by God again and again through word, gesture, song, and rite. Searle wanted to show the connection between justice and liturgical ministry and believed that our participation in liturgy is a “rehearsal” of God’s Just Kingdom. He considered each part of the liturgy: the rehearsal of *gathering* as Christ’s Body; the necessary participatory skills involved in *listening* to God’s Word; the lived attitude of *sacrificing* is fundamental to true participation at the altar; and the ultimate goal of *communing* in divine life demands a oneness with

¹⁰ Thomas Scirghi, SJ, “Go in Peace: The Relationship of the Liturgy to Justice,” *Pastoral Liturgy* vol. 40, no. 6 (December 2009) <<http://www.pastoralliturgy.org/resources/0911CSL-RelationshipOfLiturgyToJustice.php>> (November 1, 2013).

¹¹ Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Liturgy, Justice, and Holiness,” *The Reformed Journal* 16 (1989) 20.

¹² Godfried Cardinal Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Council: High Point or Recession?” *The Jurist* 69 (2009) 206.

God, others, and all created things.¹³ The liturgy is composed of basic Christian attitudes in which its participants are to be formed.

4. Symbols and Ritual Studies

Another insight from the Constitution involves a renewed look at the importance of liturgical action, symbols and ritual. The Constitution states that “the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs” (SC 7). This focuses on the principle of sacramentality, that is, “every word and action, every visible and tangible dimension of the liturgy, not only points beyond itself to the enduring belief of faith but also carries within itself the grace of God.”¹⁴

Often our first reaction to the word “ritual” seems to be negative: it sometimes carries the negative connotation of meaningless repetition, or of “going through the motions”. These reactions usually emerge in response to ritual that has been badly performed. However, the use of ritual gestures in the liturgy is a natural outgrowth of our Christian faith. One of the central doctrines of our faith is the Incarnation and it is natural that our faith continues to express itself outwardly in physical rites and ceremonies. The Church is able to encounter the living God by means of very human actions employing very physical ‘things’, e.g., bread, wine, oil, water, wood, and stone; these “things” become vehicles for this encounter. Thus, the Church does what Jesus did at the Last Supper. We take the bread, give thanks and praise to God, break the bread, and share it out among the members.

Human beings use very physical ‘things’ sacramentally to encounter, worship, and be sent on mission by the living God. Thinking about our liturgical rituals, we note that our senses are usually engaged: e.g., sight (bright/dark colours, veils, cross/crucifix, banners, greens); sound (music, shouts, silence, prayers, bells); smell (flowers, candles, incense); touch (oil, ashes, water, shaking hands); taste (red/white wine, un/leavened bread).

During the 1960s, there was a renewed interest in ritual studies and this has contemporary implications for liturgy. There were negative reactions to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II due to the loss of a sense of ritual, a broad unfamiliarity among many people regarding what symbols and metaphors are supposed to do and a loss of a sense of the sacred or transcendent. Romano Guardini wondered whether opportunities in liturgical reform would achieve their full realization because we have forgotten how to have a corporate ritual activity and he focused on the importance of the performance of ritual actions.¹⁵ The influence of ritual studies with its starting point on the observation of human behavior and communication began to be applied to the celebration of

¹³ Stephen S. Wilbricht. *Rehearsing God’s Just Kingdom. The Eucharistic Vision of Mark Searle* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013) 11.

¹⁴ Joshua R. Brommer, *Imbued with the Spirit of the Liturgy* (Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013) 26.

¹⁵ Romano Guardini, “A Letter” to the German Liturgical Congress at Mainz in April 1964, *Herder Correspondence*, Special Issue (1964) 24-26. See also Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs* (St. Louis, MO.: Pio Decimo Press, 1956).

liturgy.¹⁶ Thus, the basic components of “ritualization” – such as the expression of movement and gestures in the liturgy, the interaction between priest and people, and the social cohesion achieved (or lack thereof) – are examined in order to arrive at their meaning. Furthermore, Victor Turner’s extensive research in ritual studies had consequences for liturgy, especially in his work on how symbols generate a system of meanings within which people act, think, and feel.¹⁷ He established a method for inquiring into the system of meanings of a particular rite and he listed several areas that might be noted.¹⁸ As well he offered an hypothesis about how rites work, why they do not work at times, and what effects they produce.

In this regard, Ronald Grimes noted that liturgical rituals need diagnosis and not just updating.¹⁹ He says liturgists have too little skill in detecting ritual pathology. Classic liturgists understand heresy and theological illness, but often fail to recognize pathological ritualizing or gestural lying through “body language”.²⁰ The practice of ritual critique presupposes the possibility that rites can exploit, denigrate, or simply not do what people claim they do; it also presupposes the possibility of ritual failure. Gilbert Ostdiek has established some criteria for use in the preparation and evaluation of liturgy and has applied this criteria to eight areas associated with the liturgy: liturgical space, liturgical environment, liturgical time, liturgical feasts and seasons, liturgical action, the use of liturgical objects, liturgical speech and liturgical song.²¹

¹⁶ Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* (New York: Pueblo, 1982); Nathan Mitchell, *Liturgy and the Social Sciences* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999).

¹⁷ For a summary of Turner’s contribution to ritual and liturgy, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mary Collins, *Worship: Renewal to Practice* (Washington, DC.: Pastoral Press, 1987), chapter 5.

¹⁸ 1) the explicit and the implicit reasons the rite is performed; 2) the form or profile of the rite; 3) the details of the site where the rite is celebrated; 4) the identity of the subjects of the rite and the identity of those excluded; 5) what things, natural and cultural, are used and why; 6) how things are used in relationship, that is, what is the structure of the rite, the structural dyads and triads, the opposed values set in distinct planes of space; 7) what is submerged or present only in veiled form and what is the effect of this concealment; 8) what emotions are portrayed or evoked.

¹⁹ Ronald L. Grimes, “Ritual Criticism and Infelicitous Performances,” in Ronald L. Grimes, ed., *Readings in Ritual Studies* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996) 279-293.

²⁰ Using the theory of J. L. Austin on performative utterances, Grimes proposes a number of types of “infelicitous performance” that might be applied to liturgical ritual. Among other things, he speaks of liturgical abuse as an “act professed but hollow” and mentions “insincerity” (lack of requisite feelings, thoughts, or intentions); “breach” (failure to follow through; promises or contract broken); “gloss” (procedures used to cover up problems); “flop” (failure to produce appropriate mood or atmosphere; exaggerated ceremony); “ineffectuality” (act fails to precipitate anticipated empirical change); “violation” (act effective but demeaning); “contagion” (act leaps beyond proper boundaries); “defeat” (act discredits or invalidates others); “omission” (act not performed). See Ronald L. Grimes, “Ritual Criticism and Infelicitous Performances,” in Ronald L. Grimes, ed., *Readings in Ritual Studies* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996) 279-293.

²¹ Gilbert Ostdiek, *Catechesis for Liturgy: A Program for Parish Involvement* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1986); Gilbert Ostdiek, “Ritual and Transformation,” *Liturgical Ministry* 2 (Spring, 1993) 38-48.

5. Role of Presiders

The Constitution speaks directly to priests and those who preside over liturgical celebrations. It reminds pastors of their duty “to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects” (SC 11). It calls presiders to be “become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy” (SC 14), “to understand ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites” (SC18) and to “promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful, and their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally” (SC 19). This call for effective presiding demands a willingness to learn the basic skills of leading prayer and a commitment to grow in the exercise of this ministry.

Presiders are encouraged to manifest a committed and transparent faith, to place a high value on personal communication and respect for others, and to allow members of the assembly to exercise their proper roles of ministry.²² The presider has a significant role in facilitating the prayer of the community; therefore a climate of hospitality needs to be fostered, so that all in the assembly might be involved as participants, not spectators. Kathleen Hughes identified seven different patterns of communication by the presider within a liturgical celebration: non-verbal communication, including silence, gestures and bodily attitudes; formal address to the community; informal address to the community; personal address to God; address to God in the name of the community; the prayers of the presider and community in dialogue and the prayers of the presider and community in unison.²³

The presider needs to see the role of presiding as part of the pastoral care for the assembly, of nurturing the community with Word and Sacrament, and of facilitating the community’s response to those who are in need. In presiding over the public prayer of the Church, the presider needs to be thoroughly familiar with the church’s traditions of liturgical prayer, with a knowledge of the difference between liturgical prayer and devotional prayer as well as a knowledge of the structure of liturgical prayer and its theology. The presider must recognize that community prayer is much more than the gathering of individual prayers. Ultimately, the presider must nurture a spirituality of presiding, developing the attitudes of reverence, hospitality, and authenticity.

6. Popular Devotions

²² For further reflections on the formation of presiders and a formation process for presiders, see Michael J. Begolly, *Leading the Assembly in Prayer*, Revised edition (San Jose: Resource Publications, 2008) 41-68, 127-140. See also Peter E. Fink, “Spirituality for Liturgical Presiders,” in Eleanor Bernstein, ed., *Disciple at the Crossroads* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 49-62. He notes that this spirituality involves the development of the ministry of prayer, the ministry of unity, the ministry of faith spoken to faith and the ministry of being a double icon: of Christ ‘gathering and associating with himself’ and of the Church ‘calling out’ and ‘offering worship’ to Abba (p. 57). The entire contents of *Liturgy*, vol. 22, no. 2 (April 2007) deals with different aspects of being a presider. One particular article describes an online course on presiding that combines readings in pastoral care, liturgy, the arts, and practical liturgical sources (Daniel T. Benedict, “No Cowardly Spirit: Teaching Pastors and Priests to Preside,” *Liturgy*, vol. 22, no. 2 [April 2007] 27-34).

²³ Kathleen Hughes, “Types of Prayer in the Liturgy,” in Peter E. Fink, ed., *The Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990) 959-967.

While the Constitution highly recommends popular devotions and teaches that these have to be harmonized with the liturgical seasons (SC 13), these devotions do not get the attention proportionate to the important role that they played in the life of ordinary Catholics. These devotions were the foundation of everyday spirituality prior to the Council. To continue to implement the Constitution, we need to pay attention to the extra-liturgical prayer of the people, e.g., novenas, holy hours, Marian devotions, and other devotional prayers, that had featured so prominently in their experience of public worship before the Second Vatican Council. Recent papal encouragement of the recitation of the rosary, eucharistic processions and eucharistic adoration has provided some results. In 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a directory and reflected on the relationship of popular piety and the liturgy. It notes that popular piety has to be imbued with four qualities: a biblical spirit, a liturgical spirit, an ecumenical spirit and an anthropological spirit.²⁴ This directory as well as Pope Francis' recent apostolic exhortation²⁵ might be helpful to consider the evangelizing power of popular piety. Moreover, the recognition of popular devotions is an important way to respect the cultural treasures of immigrants, recognizing that their witness of faith can enrich and strengthen the faith of local parishes. Leaders in liturgy need to continue to deepen their theological understanding of the interrelationship between the liturgy and popular piety, and thus help people celebrate their lives in the liturgy and encourage them to take the liturgy into their everyday lives.²⁶

7. Full, Conscious and Active Participation

The Constitution makes many references to full, conscious and active participation (SC 14). This call is the cornerstone of liturgical reform and has been called the refrain of the Constitution, appearing sixteen times in the document.²⁷ In relationship to this goal, the Council calls for a broader use of vernacular language to allow for better interior and exterior participation. This was to ensure that the assembly does not become spectators, with many not able to understand the liturgy. Within the liturgy, Christ is present and at work and the faithful are reminded that “the real action in the liturgy in which we are supposed to participate is the action of God himself.”²⁸ This is the spiritual

²⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines*, December 17, 2001. In spite of the attempt by the Directory to provide some distinctions in relations to popular piety, there is still an unclarity as a particular practice might be considered a pious exercise, a popular devotion, popular piety, popular religiosity or an actual liturgy because it is found in the Book of Blessings (see James Empereur, “Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines,” in Peter C. Phan, ed., *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines. A Commentary* [Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005] 8-17).

²⁵ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, on the Proclamation of the Gospel In Today's World, November 24, 2013, nn. 122-126.

²⁶ Raúl R. Gómez, “Veneration of the Saints and *Beati*,” in Peter C. Phan, ed., *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines. A Commentary* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005) 133.

²⁷ SC 12, 14, 19, 26, 27, 30, 41, 50, 55, 79, 113, 114, 121, 124. See M. Peggy Lovrien, “Before All Else: Full, Conscious, and Active participation,” *Pastoral Music* 32.2 (December-January 2008) 22-26.

²⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000,) 172.

disposition that characterizes our interior participation, which might be assisted and expressed through exterior actions. As a consequence of Baptism, the faithful are called to be fully conscious, that is, knowing, responsive, informed and fully understanding the meaning of the rites and the gestures of each celebration. It is the responsibility of each participant in the liturgy to join to this corporate action, which brings with it an encounter with the Triune God. The singing of hymns, reciting of common prayers chanting the responses, along with the common posture has the possibility of drawing each person into the mystery celebrated. This exterior participation manifests the faith already in one's heart, and it also brings that faith to a deeper level.

Pope Benedict spoke of this participation not in terms of "mere external activity during the celebration [... but] in more substantial terms on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life" (*Sacramentum caritatis* 52). In his recent book *What Happened at Vatican II*, John O'Malley viewed this principle of participation, engagement and active responsibility as having ecclesiological implications, and extending beyond the liturgy to the church as the "People of God."²⁹

8. Lay Ministers

The Constitution teaches that lay ministers exercise a genuine liturgical function, e.g., servers, readers, commentators and members of the choir, and that they are to discharge their office with the sincere piety and all that is expected of them by God's people (SC 29). Through these liturgical ministries, each person assists in the celebration of the Paschal Mystery and contributes to the grace filled encounter with the risen Christ. These lay ministers need to continue to move beyond the function of their ministries and to allow these roles to shape their everyday lives and spirituality.³⁰

This acknowledgment of ministries continued to develop with the establishment of the lay ministries of lector and acolyte in 1972 and extraordinary ministries of holy communion in 1973. With the 2002 Roman Missal, the GIRM uses the precise terminology of "ordinary," "extraordinary," "commissioned," "installed" and "ordained" ministers and outlines the responsibilities of a number of lay liturgical functions: psalmist, cantor, choir, sacristan, commentator, those who take up the collection, greeters and ushers, master of ceremonies (GIRM 100-106).

With the 1972 publication of the *motu proprio Ministeria quaedam*, Pope Paul VI established the lay ministries of lector and acolyte and he saw this step as a response to the Constitution, so that with the ministries in the liturgical assembly, the very arrangement of the celebration itself would make the Church stand out as being formed in a structure of different orders and ministries.³¹ In a

²⁹ John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) 141.

³⁰ Joshua R. Brommer, *Imbued with the Spirit of the Liturgy* (Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013) 45.

³¹ Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ministeria quaedam*, By Which the Discipline of First Tonsure, Minor Orders, and Subdiaconate in the Latin Church is Reformed, August 15, 1972, Introduction, *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (New York: Costello Publishing, 1975) 428.

particular way, the Church needs to give further consideration to the role of women within these ministries. When Pope Paul VI in 1972 abolished the minor orders and established the lay ministries of reader and acolyte, he restricted these ministries to lay men. However, this restriction needs further research, given the development of lay ministry in the Church today and the commitment of the Church to the ministries connected with the Word and the Altar. Opening these ministries to both men and women would further encourage the baptismal role of the laity and highlight the role of the acolyte as seen in the new Missal (GIRM 187-193), especially in relationship to communion and the purification of vessels.

9. Role of Silence

Another goal from the Constitution involves reverential silence during the liturgy (SC 30). The 2002 GIRM repeats this teaching (GIRM 45) and adds a paragraph which highlights the importance of silence “before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily” (GIRM 56; cf. GIRM 66, 128, 130). The purpose of silence at different points in the liturgy depends on the particular part of the celebration: “within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts” (GIRM 45). As well, silence is essential after the priest invites the assembly to join in prayer by means of the words “Let us pray” so that the assembly may have an opportunity for genuine prayer and “may be conscious of the fact that they are in God’s presence and may formulate their petitions mentally” (GIRM 54). Through this emphasis on silence, the new GIRM challenges the faithful to reflect on the inclusion of appropriate moments of reflective silence during all liturgical celebrations, so that silence might become a regular and comfortable dimension of parish worship and that the faithful may pray in their own way during these reflective moments.

10. Inculturation

The Constitution focuses on the principles of inculturation in articles 37-40. These are further developed in the Instruction on Inculturation in 1994.³² The council envisions that adaptations would be made by the conference of bishops, with the assistance of experts and usually following a period of experimentation, and with the approval of the Apostolic See. The 1994 Instruction on Inculturation gives a procedure to be followed by bishops’ conferences in making major adaptations to the liturgical rites (nn. 63-69).

For Chupungco, inculturation is “the process of inserting the texts and rites of the liturgy into the framework of a local culture. As a result, the texts and rites assimilate the people’s thought, language, value, ritual, symbolic and artistic pattern” with the goal being the grafting of the Church’s worship unto the cultural pattern of the local church.³³ The principle underlying the inculturation of the liturgy is the fact that the liturgy is an incarnational reality, which requires that it be

³² Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, instruction, *Varietates legitimæ*, on the Roman liturgy and inculturation, January 25, 1994.

³³ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) 30.

inculturated in various cultures, if it is to be lived with faith and used to foster an encounter with God. At the same time, inculturation occurs after a faithful loyal discernment which takes place only after long and deep immersion in the liturgy accompanied by a desire for Christ and his mysteries.³⁴ Ultimately, Chupungco believes that inculturation remains the least realized of the principles of liturgical renewal.

11. Vernacular Language

The Constitution mentions the use of the vernacular in a rather curious way. It explicitly states that the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites (SC 36, §1). Since it acknowledges that the use of the vernacular “frequently may be of great advantage to the people,” the Constitution also authorizes the wider use of the vernacular, “especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants” (SC 36, §2). While the use of Latin is not done in most places, the use of Latin versions of some of the common responses might be helpful, especially in international gatherings. The pervasive use of the vernacular that followed quickly upon the council, according to Bugnini, is “a classic example of a legitimate postconciliar development; it was a logical consequence of premises laid down by the Council itself. In fact, even if the extension of the vernacular to the entire liturgy can be called broad interpretation (though made by one with the right to make it), it cannot be said to contradict the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.”³⁵

On March 28, 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments issued the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy. The document provides detailed rules, principles, and criteria in the translation of the liturgical books from Latin to the vernacular languages. The guiding principle of *Liturgiam authenticam* may be found in article 20:

[...] it is to be kept in mind from the beginning that the translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.

Chupungco critiques this document noting that not every method of translation falls under the category of inculturation. It appears to him that *Liturgiam authenticam* leans heavily on formal correspondence, as it subtly warns against the dangers of dynamic equivalence. While formal correspondence does not bother about the cultural situation of the recipient, dynamic equivalence aims to transmit the message of the original text to the recipient by using the equivalent linguistic

³⁴ Godfried Cardinal Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Council: High Point or Recession?” *The Jurist* 69 (2009) 206.

³⁵ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, M. J. O’Connell, trans. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990) 110.

components with which he or she is familiar.³⁶

Chapter 2. The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist (47-58)

12. Use of the Sacred Scripture

One of the main teachings of the Constitution had to do with the use of the Sacred Scripture in the liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* instructed that in sacred celebrations a more ample, more varied, and more suitable reading from holy Scripture should be restored (SC 35) and this general norm was applied to the Eucharist as it called for a more representative portion of the Scriptures to be used (SC 51). This norm was certainly fulfilled with the publication of the new Lectionary with a greater portion of the Scriptures used.³⁷ The adoption of a weekday lectionary, arranged on a two year cycle, and an expanded Sunday lectionary, arranged on a three-year cycle, enables a greater portion of the “treasures of the Bible” – which is indeed more ample, varied and suitable – to be proclaimed over the course of a year, and even more so over the course of three years. This is a faithful application of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and more than triples the number of biblical passages contained in the 1962 Roman Missal. In the end, the scriptures are read not only as integral components of the liturgy but also as a form of encounter with Christ.

13. The Homily

In connection with the use of the Scriptures, the Constitution emphasizes the importance of the homily as a means whereby the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life can be expounded from the sacred text (SC 52). Through this teaching, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* attempts to correct the pre-conciliar perception that the homily could be omitted for a just cause and it presented the homily as a “highly esteemed” part of the liturgy itself. Accordingly, it should only be omitted for a grave cause. As a result, the homily is seen as part of the ongoing revelation of God within the liturgy. In his recent apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis reflected on several aspects of preaching: “preaching should guide the assembly, and the preacher, to a life-changing communion with Christ in the Eucharist;” “the preacher has the wonderful but difficult task of joining loving hearts, the hearts of the Lord and his people.”³⁸ Constant work on the preparation of homilies will assist in the implementation of the Council’s teaching.

14. The Prayer of the Faithful

³⁶ Anscar J. Chupungco, “*Liturgiam Authenticam* and Inculturation,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 39 (2002) 96. See also Anscar Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010) 204-209.

³⁷ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction on editions and use of the new Lectionary for Mass *Decreto quo*, 25 July 1969, in *Notitiae* 5 (1969) 238-239, English translation in *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1982) = DOL, n. 233, p. 586-587.

³⁸ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, on the Proclamation of the Gospel In Today’s World, November 24, 2013, nn. 138 and 143.

The Constitution restored the Prayer of the Faithful as a sign of the responsibility of each Christian to pray for the Church and the world, recognizing that this practice had a very long tradition in the celebration of the liturgy (SC 53). To assist in this teaching, the Consilium published a small booklet on the Universal Prayer in 1966, explaining its nature and pastoral value, along with samples for composing such prayers.³⁹ With the 2002 GIRM, the prayer of the faithful is seen as an exercise of the people's baptismal priesthood as they offer prayers to God for the salvation of all (GIRM 69) and express the prayer of the entire community (GIRM 71). In the prayer of the faithful, the presider's introduction to these prayers is not a prayer to God but a statement to the assembly, inviting the faithful to join in prayer for the intentions that will be proposed. The particular structure of the prayer of the faithful requires the presiding priest always to introduce and conclude this part of the liturgy but not to offer the intentions (GIRM 71). All the faithful need to appreciate and be challenged anew by some of the aspects of this rite:⁴⁰ the invitations to prayer are statements addressed to the assembly (not to God or Jesus) inviting them to pray for specific topics of concern; in themselves these invitations are not prayers; the actual prayer is said by the assembly in a response such as "Lord, hear our prayer"; prayers of thanksgiving do not belong in this rite; the intentions should not be overly localized, for this prayer of the faithful provides an opportunity for the local church to reach out to the universal church in prayer and concern. Since the prayer of the faithful is essentially a litany, its singing would accentuate the participation of the whole assembly.⁴¹

Nevertheless, the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal, forestalling any difficulties in the composition of such prayers, adds that "[t]he intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community" (GIRM 71).

15. Reception of the Eucharist

The Constitution calls for the reception of the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice in which it was consecrated (SC 55), a call that is strongly encouraged in the 2002 GIRM. The New Roman Missal never mentions that consecrated hosts already in the tabernacle may be used during the communion rite at Mass;⁴² the GIRM finds this idea so opposed to the spirit of the Mass that it never gives directions concerning such a practice.⁴³ Based on the teachings of the Council of Trent, the Church

³⁹ Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *De oratione communi seu fidelium: natura, momentum ac structura criteria atque specimina coetibus territorialibus episcoporum proposita*, The Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, August 17, 1966 (Vatican City: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1966); DOL, document 239.

⁴⁰ For a summary of the ritual issues associated with this rite, see Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2002) 70-72; Joyce Zimmerman, "The General Intercessions: Yet Another Visit," *Worship* 65 (1991) 306-319.

⁴¹ Joyce A. Zimmerman, "The General Intercessions: Yet Another Visit," *Worship* 65 (1991) 319.

⁴² Smolarski, *How Not to Say Mass* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002) 74-75. See also Dennis C. Smolarski, "What is the best practice for avoiding going to the tabernacle for extra hosts during Mass?" *Rite* vol. 38, no. 3 (May-June 2007) 28.

⁴³ Paul Turner, *Let Us Pray* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006) 130.

has called for the practice of receiving communion from the Eucharist consecrated at each particular Mass in order to emphasize that the Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice. Pope Benedict XIV asserted this in 1742,⁴⁴ and this teaching was repeated by Pius XII in his encyclical *Mediator Dei*,⁴⁵ and since the Second Vatican Council, has been emphasized by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1967,⁴⁶ in the previous editions of the GIRM, and now in the 2002 GIRM where it is strongly encouraged (GIRM 85, 243). Irwin notes that this practice has been encouraged for purely theological reasons: “if the faithful customarily received hosts from the sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, they might separate the enactment of the Mass as a *sacrifice* from the reserved *sacrament* located in the tabernacle.”⁴⁷

Furthermore, the Constitution called for specific instances where communion under both kinds might be received (SC 55). While the issue of the reception of Holy Communion under both kinds was a point emphasized by the reformers in the 17th century, the Council opened this issue and the first ritual after the Council was the Rite of Concelebration and Communion under both kinds.⁴⁸ Pastors need to heed the advice about offering Communion from the chalice whenever permitted: “It is most desirable that the faithful [...] in the instances when it is permitted [...] participate in the chalice” (GIRM 85). The GIRM also reinforces the symbolic value of this way of receiving Communion (GIRM 281). Moreover, the 2002 GIRM gives the diocesan Bishop the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it seems appropriate to the priest to whom a community has been entrusted, under the conditions that appropriate instruction is done, that there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament and that the rite does not become more cumbersome (GIRM 283).

16. Rite for Concelebration

The Constitution called for a new rite for concelebration (SC 58) and this was promulgated in 1965. Since that promulgation, concelebration has been the focus of much discussion from a theological and practical perspective and there has been an ongoing critique of concelebration for the past fifty years.⁴⁹ The diocesan concelebrations need to attend to many of the issues that are necessary for a dignified celebration. Appropriate regulation by the diocesan bishop would certainly provide direction regarding the prayers that the concelebrants should say, clear directions regarding communion, the number of concelebrants, the seating of concelebrants, and the necessary liturgical

⁴⁴ Benedict XIV, encyclical *Certiores effecti*, November 13, 1742, n. 3, online November 2, 2013, <<http://digilander.libero.it/magistero/b14certi.htm>>.

⁴⁵ Pius XII, Encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, On the Sacred Liturgy, November 20, 1947, n. 121.

⁴⁶ Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, on Eucharistic Worship, May 25, 1967, n. 31.

⁴⁷ Kevin W. Irwin, “Overview of GIRM,” *Liturgical Ministry* 12 (Summer 2003) 128.

⁴⁸ Sacred Congregation of Rites, decree *Ecclesiae semper*, *The Rites of Concelebration and Communion under both kinds*, March 7, 1965, DOL, document 223, nn. 1788-1792.

⁴⁹ For a review of these theological and practical issues connected with concelebrations, see Brian Dunn, “The Regulation of Concelebration by the Diocesan Bishop,” *Studia canonica*, 2013 (to be published soon).

vestments. All of these items need to be facilitated by a master of ceremonies. The regulation of concelebration by the diocesan bishop would also be an opportunity to reduce whatever may be divisive in the rite, integrate the role of the concelebrating priests with that of the celebrating assembly, attempt to integrate the concelebrants' actions to highlight their collegial character, and assist the assembly to appreciate the symbolic level involved in an enacted rite. This would contribute to the fact that the assembly would have a greater appreciation for the meaning of concelebration as being a sign of the unity of the whole people of God.

Chapter 3. The Other Sacraments and the Sacramentals (59-82)

17. Renewal of Sacramentals

The Council not only focuses on the celebration of sacraments but also gives a new impetus to the teaching on sacramentals, that resemble the sacraments and dispose people to receive the grace of the sacraments (SC 60). Prior to the Council, sacramentals were seen as things or actions, but the Constitution speaks of the liturgy of sacramentals, sacramentals as rites, a teaching that is found in the Catechism and the Codes of Canon Law.⁵⁰ While sacred things are not sacramentals, they are closely related for they have been dedicated and blessed for use. The dedication and the blessing are the sacramentals, not the things so dedicated or blessed. These sacramentals are the most numerous of the liturgical rites including dedications and blessings of churches, blessings of objects, and places. This teaching on sacramentals calls for an awareness of how the *Book of Blessings* might be used in a more comprehensive way within parishes. Sacramentals are woven into various occasions in human life and they can accompany the faithful as liturgical celebrations rooted in the mosaic of daily struggles, temptations, disappointments, successes and hopes. In the future, greater use of sacramentals can assist people to grow in faith.

Chapter 4. Divine Office (83-101)

18. Liturgy of the Hours

One of the most fascinating stories connected with the renewal of the liturgy concerns the Liturgy of the Hours and how it evolved from the Breviary to the Divine Office to the Liturgy of the Hours.⁵¹ The Constitution envisions the daily, communal celebrations of the Hours and yet parishes are hesitant to introduce this treasure of the Church.

⁵⁰ John Huels, "A Juridical Notion of Sacramentals," *Studia canonica*, 38 (2004) 345-368; Anscar Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010) 83-93.

⁵¹ For further reading on the Liturgy of the Hours, see Paul Bradshaw, *Two Ways of Praying* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); Stanislaus Campbell, *From Breviary to liturgy of the Hours* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995); George Guiver, *Company of Voices* (London: SPCK, 1988); Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, second revised edition (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993); I. Dalmais, P. Jounel, and A. Martimort, *The Church at Prayer. Volume IV. The Liturgy and Time*, M. J. O'Connell, trans. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986); Joyce Ann Zimmerman, "Overview of *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*," *The Liturgy Documents. A Parish Resource*, Volume Two (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999) 260-265.

The very first words of General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours insist categorically that the Liturgy of the Hours is the “public and common prayer by the people of God” and one of “the primary duties of the Church” (GILH 1). This startling statement goes far beyond the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy’s limited attention to the Hours being the prayer of the *whole* church (SC 100). It immediately raises our expectations that something is unfolding that is quite different from the earlier tradition of the Hours (in which the number of those who prayed it was extremely limited). It is the prayer of the church, the Body of Christ, because it is the prayer of Christ, which the church continues in the Holy Spirit (GILH 3-8). The shift from perceiving the Hours as the prayer of part of the Body to the Hours as the prayer of the whole Body is perhaps the most significant innovation of the whole document. Taft believes that this teaching is a return to “what was once the property of the entire People of God [which had] degenerated into a clerical residue” and “what, ideally must be the rhythm of the whole of the Christian life: a prayerful, continuous communion with the living God and one another.”⁵²

The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours provides a rich theology of the prayer: the Hours consecrate time (GILH 10-11), they are an extension of and preparation for the celebration of the eucharist (GILH 12), they are an exercise of the priesthood of Christ (GILH 13), they are a means of sanctification (n. 14), they unite our praise with the heavenly praise (GILH 15-16), and express petition and intercession for all God’s people. Thus, the Liturgy of the Hours is related to pastoral action (GILH 17-18).

In reality, the Liturgy of the Hours can offer a significant contribution to a growth in holiness for the whole church since it involves daily prayer, is comprised of the Psalter and a variety of scripture readings and includes liturgical prayers that accompany the readings.⁵³ A commitment to the daily praying of the Liturgy of the Hours could offer a person a rich education in the liturgical life of the Church and a greater ability to be open to the riches of what is celebrated through the rites of both Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist.

Chapter 5. The Liturgical Year (102-111)

19. Sunday as the Primordial Holy Day

The Constitution focuses on the liturgical year (SC 102-105) and sought to reconnect the liturgical year with each individual’s spiritual life. It highlighted Sunday as the original feast day and called for a revision of the liturgical year in such a way that Sunday would be the foundation and kernel of the entire liturgical year (SC 106). Moreover, the Constitution discourages other celebrations taking precedence over the Sunday (SC 106). Pope Benedict reminds us that

the Christians’ customary practice of gathering on the first day after the Sabbath to celebrate the resurrection of Christ is also what defines the form of a life renewed by

⁵² Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, second revised edition (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993) 362 and 364.

⁵³ For an attempt to revive Sunday Vespers in a parish, see Eric Anderson, “Sunday Vespers in the Parish Church,” *Sacred Music* 136:4 (Winter 2009) 33-41.

an encounter with Christ. [...] this holy day becomes paradigmatic for every other day of the week. Indeed, it is defined by something more than the simple suspension of one's ordinary activities, a sort of parenthesis in one's usual daily rhythm. Christians have always experienced this day as the first day of the week, since it commemorates the radical newness brought by Christ. Sunday is thus the day when Christians rediscover the eucharistic form which their lives are meant to have (*Sacramentum caritatis* 72).

Mark Searle contends that, in light of the scriptural accounts of the resurrection, Sunday is seen as the context and occasion where the Lord's disciples would encounter Him again.⁵⁴ This encounter gives a new perspective to Sunday as the primordial holy day, for we can discover the Christian meaning of life and a new way of experiencing time, relationships, work, life and death. This original holy day can in fact assist Christians to become holy. To facilitate this, "on the Lord's Day, then, it is fitting that Church groups should organize, around Sunday Mass, the activities of the Christian community: social gatherings, programmes for the faith formation of children, young people and adults, pilgrimages, charitable works, and different moments of prayer. For the sake of these important values, we need to remember that Sunday is meant to be kept holy, lest it end up as a day 'empty of God'"(*Sacramentum caritatis* 73). Moreover, the teaching found in Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter, *Dies Domini* could provide an excellent renewal in the role of Sunday in parish and family life.⁵⁵

20. Principle of Simplicity and the Liturgical Calendar

One of the key principles for the renewal of the liturgy was that of noble simplicity. As a result, needless repetitions or explanations were eliminated. This principle led to the reform of the Liturgical Calendar: "Lest the feasts of the saints should take precedence over the feasts which commemorate the very mysteries of salvation, many of them should be left to be celebrated by a particular Church, or nation, or family of religious. Only those should be extended to the universal Church which commemorate saints who are truly of universal importance" (SC 111). In fact, in the revised Roman Calendar of 1969, many canonized saints were dropped and left for local celebration.⁵⁶ Some writers see the institution of the "Divine Mercy Sunday" as calling into question a number of conciliar priorities, e.g., is not every Sunday a "Divine Mercy Sunday"? does the novena for this Sunday interfere with the integrity of the Easter Triduum as well as the whole Easter Season

⁵⁴ Mark Searle, "Sunday: The Heart of the Liturgical Year," in Maxwell Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000) 65.

⁵⁵ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini*, on Keeping the Lord's Day Holy, May 31, 1998.

⁵⁶ Paul VI, *Motu Proprio Mysteriorum paschalis*, February 14, 1969 and Sacred Congregation of Rites, Decree, March 21, 1969, in *Notitiae* 5 (1969) 163-176. In an earlier revision under Pope John XXIII, it was ordered that certain feasts might not be retained in even a local calendar. The dropping of some saints, e.g., St. Philomena, caused some resentment, but the basic reason was that the historicity of these was doubtful. It was not a case of any who had been formally beatified or canonized.

of fifty days?⁵⁷ The Liturgical Year invites the faithful to a deeper awareness of the year of grace that celebrates the events of Christ's life and remembers the witness of the saints. This highlights the formative quality of the liturgy, shaping the minds and lives of the faithful. This insight needs to be further recognized especially as we experience the gradual creeping in of other civic celebrations.

21. Communion of Saints

The Constitution considers the communion of saints and proposes them to the faithful as examples of drawing all to the Father through Christ, and of being intercessors (SC 104). The examples of recently beatified and canonized people as well as countless others, represent both extraordinary and ordinary holy people who often lived their lives counterculturally. As a consequence, they were often misunderstood, and experienced various kinds of suffering. A dimension of their saintliness, however, was shaped by their ability to turn their adverse situations into spiritual attitudes of trust and hope. Karl Rahner describes saints as masterpieces, role models and exemplars of humanity. Their individual lives provide biographies that point beyond themselves as ambassadors of God's "triumphant grace" and they give an authentic witness to a new type of Christian life.⁵⁸

These members of the communion of saints based their lives on God's Word, immersed themselves in the liturgy of the Church, and drew strength from the Eucharist and the Sacraments. They put their devotion into practice through clear teaching, compassionate loving, gentle yet firm shepherding, patient suffering, and generous service to the poor. They allowed God's will to be done in their lives on a daily basis. The Lord worked through their doubts, strengths and human weaknesses to unite the Church.⁵⁹ These saints continue to function as a heroic "cloud of witnesses", whose lives were nourished through the liturgical life of the Church and who inspire us in responding to the call of holiness in our individual lives. The ultimate object of veneration of the saints is the glory of God and the sanctification of humanity by conforming one's life fully to the divine will and by imitating the virtue of those who were preeminent disciples of the Lord. As a result, the Church and her Liturgy continues to propose the saints and those beatified to the faithful because they are "historical witnesses to the universal vocation to holiness."⁶⁰

Chapter 6. Sacred Music (112-121)

⁵⁷ Keith Pecklers, "The Liturgical Year and Popular Piety," in Peter C. Phan, ed., *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines. A Commentary* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005) 94-95.

⁵⁸ Andreas R. Batlogg, SJ, "How Subversive are Saints Allowed to Be? Saints as Trend-Setters in Karl Rahner's Theology," *Proceedings Catholic Theological Society of America* 66 (2011) 159.

⁵⁹ Thomas Rosica, address to the 47th Convention of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, the Midwest Association of Theological Schools, and the Seminary Division of the National Catholic Education Association, "Reflections on Pastoral Leadership and Ministry in the Church of 2010 and Beyond," September 14, 2010 <<http://www.zenit.org/article-30952?l=english>> (November 1, 2013).

⁶⁰ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy. Principles and Guidelines*, December 17, 2001, n. 211.

22. Liturgical Music

The Constitution highlights the ministerial function of sacred music in the service of the Lord and it speaks of music being holy: “Therefore sacred music is to be considered the more holy, the more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether making prayer more pleasing, promoting unity of minds, or conferring greater solemnity on the sacred rites. The Church, indeed, approves of all forms of true art which have the requisite qualities, and admits them into divine worship” (SC 112). It further states that the purpose of sacred music is the “glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful” (SC 112).

Joseph Gelineau describes this ministerial function of music by noting that “wherever there is song, its root meaning comes first and foremost from the ritual action that is taking place, not from the music.”⁶¹ In making this statement, Gelineau is recognizing that the understanding of liturgical music has developed radically. Jan Michael Joncas notes that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy affirms that “genuine worship music is not simply an auxiliary prop to the liturgical action, but the very means by which certain liturgical actions occur.”⁶² Undoubtedly, since Vatican II the understanding of liturgical music has continued to grow and has contributed to significant renewal in the celebrations of our liturgies. Underlying this development is the awareness that music serves a transformative function as it directs a worshiper’s attitude toward God as well as an eschatological function as it makes the celebration a more striking symbol of the celebration in the heavenly Jerusalem. Music, by its very nature, has the capacity to reveal central images of God and to lead the assembly to new experiences. As a result, music can become enacted theology and can constitute a tremendous formative vehicle for belief and for the holiness of the faithful. As the experience of liturgical music continues to develop, it seems that some composers and communities are finding creative ways to integrate the tradition of antiphon singing while maintaining the participation of the assembly. In this regard, the Constitution mentions composers as those who meet the needs of the Christian community in its local expressions (SC 121). The preparation of guidelines for composers will assist composers as they develop their vocation of serving the community.⁶³

One measure of the effectiveness of liturgical music is the extent to which a community is fully, actively and consciously engaged in worship.⁶⁴ Factors which might contribute to a community’s engagement in worship with respect to music include the cultural context (how the larger culture expresses itself in music and praise), the temporal context (the liturgical year or the time of day of a particular liturgy), the pastoral context (the pastoral needs an individual or a community brings to the service), the quality of musical ministries (musical leadership, quality of musical composition,

⁶¹ Joseph Gelineau, *Liturgical Assembly Liturgical Song*, Bernadette Gasslein, trans. (Portland: Pastoral Press, 2002) 85.

⁶² Jan Michael Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997) 20.

⁶³ See CCCB National Council for Liturgical Music, *Guidelines for Composers of Liturgical Music*, (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013).

⁶⁴ These criteria for the evaluation of worship music have been summarized from Edward Foley, *Ritual Music. Studies in Liturgical Musicology* (Beltsville, Maryland: Pastoral Press, 1995) 151-156, 181-189.

or the way music might express the meaning of the rite), and the architectural setting (how the acoustics of the building, including the visual and auditory arrangements, affect the engagement of the assembly). All of these factors will help to address the challenge of “singing the liturgy” as opposed to “singing at the liturgy” and will contribute directly to attaining holy music, assisting us to grow in holiness as we give glory and praise to God.

Chapter 7. Sacred Art and Sacred Furnishings (122-130)

23. Liturgical Objects

The Constitution highlights the dignity and symbolic nature of liturgical objects and calls for appropriate attention to worthy and well planned construction of sacred buildings, the shape and construction of altars, the nobility, placing, and safety of the eucharistic tabernacle, the dignity and suitability of the baptistery, the proper ordering of sacred images, embellishments, and vestments (SC 128). Furthermore, as the concept of the liturgical assembly continues to deepen, the arrangement of liturgical space will move from “priest-centered liturgies with congregations” to “assembly centered liturgies with presiders”.⁶⁵ The new GIRM highlights the ancient tradition of the altar representing Christ, the living stone (GIRM 298), thus recognizing the altar as the architectural symbol of Christ in a church. Therefore, the altar is revered by the priest and deacon at the beginning and the end of a Eucharistic liturgy and only those things necessary for the liturgy should be placed on the altar (GIRM 306). Only the Book of the Gospels should be on the altar before the proclamation of the Gospel, while only the bread and wine and items absolutely necessary during the Liturgy of the Eucharist, e.g., corporal, purificator, Missal (GIRM 306).

Appendix: a Declaration of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the Revision of the Calendar

24. Common Date for the Feast of Easter

In the Appendix, the Council Fathers expressed an openness to continuing to discuss the reform of the calendar regarding assigning the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday. They affirmed a seven-day week with Sunday. Since the Council, this issue has been discussed at different levels in the ecumenical movement. The World Council of Churches in 1970 (Chambésy, Switzerland), 1975 (Nairobi), 1997 (Aleppo) acted as a facilitator to allow the churches to express their position. Several intra-Orthodox consultations in 1977, 1982 and 1994 discussed this topic, but there is great sensitivity to the calendar question, lest the Orthodox become divided over it. While a common date for Easter may present an ecumenical development, some concerns continue to surface in this discussion, e.g., the possibility of losing a connection with the cycle of nature, sensitivity to maintaining a visible link to the Jewish Passover, the need to ground the discussion in a theology of the Lord’s Day and Sunday as the Day of Resurrection and the achievement of a common date does not guarantee unity. The ecumenical discussion will certainly continue to consider this topic.

⁶⁵ Thomas P. Raush, *Catholicism in the Third Millennium*, second edition (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003) 212-213.

25. Achieving the Goals of the Constitution

We have highlighted some of the many goals that have emerged from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and have seen how these can continue to motivate the church toward the ongoing renewal of the liturgy. While these goals move us forward, we also need to acknowledge some obstacles that get in the way of the achievement of these goals.

Rulia Upton considered some personal obstacles to ritual prayer, which might hinder the attaining of the goals of the Constitution.⁶⁶ She mentions the inability to listen which has serious consequences for the Liturgy of the Word. She highlighted the fact that often religion is seen as a quick fix that does not include thoughtful prayer or meditation. In acknowledging the fact that we no longer fast before coming to worship, she notes that there is a failure to hunger both physically and spiritually for the Eucharist as opposed to when we had to fast from midnight. The unrealistic expectations that people have in coming to liturgy, especially as a result of the entertainment industry often lead to the comment “I don’t get anything out of the liturgy.” Moreover, the loss of a collective sense of penance on Fridays during the entire year also has an influence on our spiritual life.

As we reflect on some issues that point to the fact that the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is a document for the 21st century, we need to acknowledge the fact that there have been difficulties and erroneous applications of the liturgical reform.⁶⁷ Critical responses to post-conciliar liturgical reforms range from outright rejection of the Council’s liturgical reforms to a more cautious, acceptance of the new liturgical books. Some have provided an analysis of the various critiques,⁶⁸ e.g., M. Francis Mannion identifies five operative agendas for liturgical reform: (1) advancing the official reform; (2) restoring the pre-conciliar; (3) reforming the reform; (4) inculturating the reform; and (5) recatholicising the reform;⁶⁹ while John Baldovin considers four principal categories: philosophical, historical, theological, and sociological/ anthropological and he provides a comprehensive response to a number of critiques.

The future implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* will inevitably involve much development in the area of inculturation. While the Constitution mentions the use of media and liturgical celebrations (SC 20), this issue will certainly need further reflection as Mass texts are being available for smart phones and tablets with digital editions for iPad, iPhone and Kindle. How will this

⁶⁶ Julia Upton, RSM, “Personal Obstacles to Ritual Prayer,” in Eleanor Bernstein and Martin Connell, *Renewal That Awaits Us* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997) 150-160.

⁶⁷ John Paul II acknowledged this on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution (see, John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Vicesimus quintus annus*, December 4, 1988, n. 11.

⁶⁸ For a consideration of some of these critiques, see Chad J. Glendinning, “Fifty Years after *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Juridical Considerations on the Celebration of the Eucharist,” *CLSA Proceedings* 75 (2013) to be published soon.

⁶⁹ M. Francis Mannion, “The Catholicity of the Liturgy: Shaping a New Agenda,” S. Caldecott, ed., *Beyond the Prosaic: Renewing the Liturgical Movement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 11-27.

influence the use of the Roman Missal or the Lectionary?⁷⁰ Ultimately, we will need to continue to emphasize the corporate and communal dimension of the liturgy.⁷¹

One way to ensure that the Constitution can be a document for the 21st century is to encourage parishioners to nurture a liturgical spirituality.⁷² This could include being attentive to the words we speak and the actions that we perform; realizing that in the readings of the scriptures in liturgy, Christ is speaking to us; and assisting the ministers to adopt the sacramental rites and prayers as their personal prayer. It could also include a greater appreciation of the psalms as the prayer of Christ and the Church; and a greater perception by the worshipping community of being Church, enjoying the presence of Christ and keeping unity with the bishop.

This liturgical spirituality might remind us that the liturgy must be seen as a font of grace poured forth upon us for the human sanctification and the glorification of God in the most efficacious possible way (SC 10). Through the liturgy we are able to create an encounter with God, an encounter with the persons of the Holy Trinity. It involves a personal act of individual worshipers who make up the assembly. The quality of community worship cannot be gauged merely on the surface of active participation. Each individual must be interiorly involved, allowing their hearts to burn within them as they listen to the word of God and recognizing the presence of Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Ultimately, on this fiftieth anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, we can confidently conclude that the Constitution has been and will continue “to sustain the Church along the paths of renewal and of holiness by fostering genuine liturgical life.” With Pope John Paul II, we need to recognize that the “time has come to renew that spirit which inspired the Church at the moment when the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was prepared, discussed, voted upon and promulgated, and when the first steps were taken to apply it. The seed was sown; it has known the rigours of winter, but the seed has sprouted, and become a tree. It is a matter of the organic growth of a tree becoming ever stronger the deeper it sinks its roots into the soil of tradition.”⁷³

⁷⁰ Chupungco offers a short reflection on the topic of the mass media in the liturgy (see Anscar Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir* [Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010] 228-232).

⁷¹ John F. Baldovin, “Is the Liturgy Hitting Its Target,” *The Jurist* 72 (2012) 465.

⁷² Anscar Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010) 233-241.

⁷³ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1988, n. 23.