

The Adult Faith Formation Library



Formation in our faith tradition is an ongoing endeavor; allowing this learning to inform our minds, to touch our hearts, and to find expression in the way we live is an essential part of this process. *The Adult Faith Formation Library* series offers a valuable collection of titles that are a reliable resource for formation, information, and transformation in the Catholic tradition.

The Series is perfect for

- Adults in a faith community who would like to grow through spiritual reading and reflection
- Parish/pastoral ministers who seek support in their personal and professional development
- Pastoral teams or school faculties who desire to enrich or further explore their mission
- Individuals who want to deepen their own understanding of the faith

Each volume's user-friendly format provides

- An introduction to the topic
- Four chapters, each designed for reading in one sitting/session
- Questions for personal reflection and journaling, or for conversation starters in a team or learning community

Boston College's STM Online: Crossroads (www.bc.edu/crossroads) uses this series in its innovative course-style learning program. Crossroads gathers participants from the English-speaking world and creates learning communities that discuss the book together online. Pacing the conversation by using a chapter a week, a facilitator keeps the conversation going, encourages deeper discussion, and inquires how the reading inspires new or renewed spiritual practice. These popular courses are used as adult faith formation tools and as professional development experiences for ministers.

Whether used in formal educational settings or in less formal learning communities, *The Adult Faith Formation Library Series* offers faith formation in an accessible, flexible format for those who seek to live their faith in vibrant and informed ways in today's world.



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INTRODUCTION

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THE CELEBRATION OF LITURGY, ESPECIALLY THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST. I asked my parish priests and teachers to explain what liturgy is. They responded by sharing how much they, too, loved the liturgy of the church and how important it was to them, but they never seemed to explain what it is. It wasn't until I had a quick course in liturgy basics in high school that I received the explanation I had been looking for. Then, everything in my liturgical experience began to fall into place. All I needed was the basics.

This book is about liturgy basics. In chapter one, we explore the church's vision for liturgy as set forth by the Second Vatican Council. The rest of the book addresses selected elements of the liturgy. Chapter two explores ritual and symbol. Chapter three discusses liturgical ministry, liturgical time, and liturgical space. Chapter four addresses liturgical music and popular devotions.

One of my colleagues frequently tells her students that "Church documents are our friends." I will introduce you to several liturgical documents in this book, and I hope you will consider them to be your friends. Some of the documents are issued by liturgical leadership at the Vatican, such as the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. These documents address Roman Catholic liturgy at a universal level. Other documents are issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. These documents address the liturgical life of the church in the United States.

We will work with two universal documents throughout the book. The first is the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, issued by the Second Vatican Council on December 4, 1963. It represents liturgical teaching at its highest level. It is the “vision statement” for the church’s liturgical life. The second is the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, which provides the theology and standards for celebrating the Eucharist. In chapter four, we utilize two other universal documents. The *Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines* encompasses the church’s vision for popular devotions. *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* provides the theology and liturgical order for devotions to the Holy Eucharist.

We work with three documents from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds* establishes the order for partaking of Holy Communion. It will be used in chapter two. *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* develops both the theology and guidelines for building and renovating churches as well as designing and maintaining sacred space. It will be used in chapter three. *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* sets forth the theology and practice of liturgical music and music ministry. It will be used in chapter four.

These universal and local documents are important because they provide the standards for celebrating liturgy. Knowing about, reflecting upon, and applying the standards contained in the documents assures the people whom we serve that we are providing them with liturgy at its best. These documents are reliable resources for answering questions about liturgy. They provide content for liturgical catechesis, ministerial formation, and direction for liturgy preparation. These documents are friends you can rely upon.

ONE



The CHURCH'S VISION *for* LITURGY

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL ESTABLISHED THE VISION FOR THE CHURCH'S LITURGICAL LIFE IN THE DOCUMENT CALLED THE *CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY* (HENCEFORTH CSL). It is the first document promulgated by the council on December 4, 1963. It is the master plan for all the official liturgical developments that we have been experiencing since 1963. The CSL is at the highest level of church teaching because it was issued by an ecumenical council. Therefore, it provides the criteria against which all subsequent liturgical teachings and liturgical rites are to be measured. For example, the third edition of the Roman Missal, which has been in use at Catholic Masses since 2011, is the most recent application of the vision of CSL to the celebration of the Eucharist.

The document is arranged in two parts. The first part, chapter one, sets forth the church's vision for liturgical life. The second part, chapters 2 through 7, applies the vision to the major liturgical rites and components of the church's liturgical life, including the celebration of the Eucharist, sacraments, sacramentals, Liturgy of the Hours, liturgical year, sacred music and sacred art, and church furnishings.

The Vision for the Church's Liturgical Life: Seven Principles

To unfold the vision for the church's liturgical life set forth in chapter one of the CSL, entitled, "General Principles for Liturgical Reform and Renewal," nos. 5–46, I have organized the vision into seven interconnected principles. In this way, the key components of the vision may stand out more clearly. The seven liturgical principles are listed below, followed by comments on each principle.

1. Liturgy is the summit and font of the church's life.
2. The liturgy is the manifestation of the church.
3. The heart of the liturgy is the paschal mystery of Christ.
4. Every liturgy is the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ.
5. Full, conscious, and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered above all else.
6. Catechesis is fundamental to the liturgical life of the church.
7. Liturgy and life are interconnected.

Principle 1: Liturgy Is the Summit and Font of the Church's Life.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* envisions liturgy as the heart of the church's life, declaring:

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. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat of the Lord's Supper. CSL 10

A TWOFOLD MOVEMENT

The CSL is visualizing the celebration of the Eucharist as the apex of a twofold pattern that is described by two images: *summit* and *font*. The noun *summit* is derived from the Latin noun *culmen*, meaning *top*, *summit*, or *culmination*. *Font* is derived from the Latin noun *fons*, which means *well*, *source*, or *fountain*. Together, the two images describe a twofold movement *toward* the celebration of the Eucharist, and *from* the celebration of the Eucharist.

This twofold movement can be compared to climbing a mountain. At the foot of the mountain the climber holds a clearly established goal, which is to reach the summit of the mountain. Therefore, every activity from the bottom of the mountain toward the summit will be shaped by that goal. While on the journey upward, the climber intentionally calculates every step to avoid injury, wears appropriate clothing to endure extreme temperatures, and maintains stamina with appropriate nourishment. Upon reaching the summit, the climber savors the experience by drinking in the panoramic view, observing and listening to the gifts available only at the summit such as the sounds of wind, the beauty of unique foliage, rock formations, and singing birds. These gifts flow into the climber's consciousness like refreshing waters from a fountain. While moving down from the summit, the climber is again cautious with every step to avoid injury, wears appropriate clothing to endure extreme temperature, and maintains stamina with appropriate nourishment. However, the climber is carrying from the mountaintop something that the climber had not carried up to the mountain. At the summit, the climber received gifts of refreshment from the beauty of creation. The climber's consciousness is changed by these gifts, which means the climber will now change some ways of life.

Our experience of moving to and from the celebration of the Eucharist is similar to that of the mountain climber. As stated in paragraph 10, cited above, the CSL envisions our goal as the celebration of the Eucharist. With that goal fixed in our hearts, we move toward the celebration of the Eucharist by orienting all activities of daily life toward reaching our Eucharistic goal. At the summit, we celebrate the Eucharist, where Christ nourishes and refreshes us at the table of the word of God and at the table of the Eucharist. Christ draws us more deeply into, and transforms us by, his paschal mystery. As we move from the celebration of Eucharist back to daily life, we carry with us a deeper Christ-like vision for living. Our way of living will now be different than it was before we celebrated the Eucharist.

The celebration of the Eucharist establishes a normative pattern of moving toward and moving from the celebration of Eucharist. Daily activity is to be intentionally oriented toward the celebration of the Eucharist and at the same time is shaped by the Eucharist. In my first parish assignment, I remember a family of six, who exemplified this pattern. On Mondays, the parents wrote into the calendar they had hanging in their kitchen the time of the Mass the family was to attend on the following Sunday. The four children were expected to adjust their schedules accordingly. Every evening, before bedtime, the family prayed a decade of the Rosary. On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, in addition to the Rosary, one of the children proclaimed a Scripture for the upcoming Sunday. On Sunday nights, after the Rosary, the parents asked each child to name one point he or she had heard from the Scripture or homily and to share how he or she planned to put it into action during the week.

Principle 2: The Liturgy Is the Manifestation of the Church.

A good starting point for unfolding this principle is to recall what is meant by *sacrament*. A sacrament makes the invisible presence of God visible and efficacious through elements that can be experienced through our senses. With this working definition of sacrament in mind, listen to the words of Saint Augustine, who teaches that Jesus is the sacrament of God:

Our mediator, when he was manifested to us, willed to be a manifest Sacrament of our regeneration...For to bring back those who die in Adam there is no other Mystery of God but Christ. **LETTER 187, 34**

When Christ, the invisible Eternal Word who existed with God for all eternity, became incarnate, he became a divine-human person, whom humans experience through their senses. He mediated God's divine power in an efficacious way throughout his public ministry and the events of his paschal mystery. As sacrament of God, where Jesus was present, God was present through him and with him. When Jesus spoke, it was God speaking through him and with him. When Jesus forgave sinners or healed the sick, it was God, acting through him and with him. When Jesus offered his life on the cross and was raised from the dead on the third day, God offered the gift of reconciliation and new life to humanity through him.

CHURCH AS SACRAMENT

Now that the crucified and risen Christ lives in eternity with God, he continues to be present on earth through the church, which is the sacrament of Christ. The church, which is Christ the head of the church and all its baptized members, is now

the sensible reality that contains, manifests, and mediates Christ's presence and his saving actions in an efficacious way. The Apostle Paul taught that Christ and his church are inseparable, saying:

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. **1 CORINTHIANS 12:12**

The CSL enumerates the sacramental qualities of the church as being similar to Christ's own nature. The church is "human and divine," "visible and invisible," "eager to act yet intent on contemplation" and "present in this world and yet not at home in it" (CSL 2).

THE LITURGY MANIFESTS THE CHURCH'S SACRAMENTALITY

The principal means, but not the only means, by which the church manifests its sacramentality is through the liturgy. Through all liturgical rites, especially the sacraments and most especially the celebration of the Eucharist, the church contains, manifests, and mediates Christ's divine power in an efficacious way. The CSL states:

For the liturgy...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. **CSL 2**

When the church celebrates the sacrament of penance for example, it is Christ united inseparably with the members of his church who is forgiving sinners. When the church celebrates

the Eucharist, Christ unites the members of his church with himself in his perpetual self-offering to God.

Because Christ acts in communion with his church at liturgical rites, the rites have two main effects. The first is to transform the members of the church more deeply into a sacramental people who show forth the holiness of Christ. The second is to empower the church to extend its sacramentality into the world.

This collect, or opening prayer, for Mass prays for these two effects:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that your Church may always remain that holy people, formed as one by the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which manifests to the world the Sacrament of your holiness and unity and leads it to the perfection of your charity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and

EVER. MASSES AND PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS NEEDS AND OCCASIONS:

I. FOR THE CHURCH, C

The collect asks God to affirm the church's sacramentality "that your Church may always remain holy people, formed as one by the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." At the same time, the collect asks God that the church may be faithful to its mission "which manifests to the world the Sacrament of your holiness and unity and leads it to the perfection of your charity."

Principle 3: The Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ Is the Foundation of the Liturgy.

The CSL states that Christ achieved his mission of glorifying God and sanctifying humanity:

principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, whereby “dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life.” CSL 5

The CSL defines the *paschal mystery* as Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. These are the culminating events of the life of Jesus Christ. Through them, Jesus accomplished his mission of reconciling the human family to God. This does not imply that the events of Christ’s life that preceded his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension are not significant. Rather, it is through the lens of the events of the paschal mystery that we come to understand the full meaning of the previous events of Christ’s life, such as his incarnation, his baptism in the Jordan River, and all activities of his public ministry.

JESUS’ TWOFOLD COMMISSION

The CSL further states that Jesus commissioned his apostles to evangelize the world about the paschal mystery, so that:

by preaching the gospel to every creature, they might proclaim that the Son of God, by His death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan and from death, and brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose also was that they might accomplish the work of salvation which they had proclaimed, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. CSL 6

Jesus’ commission is twofold. First, the apostles are to preach about the saving effects of his paschal mystery to everyone,

namely, that by his death and resurrection Jesus liberated humanity from the realm of sin and death and transferred humanity into the realm of God's kingdom. The church, that is, Christ and all its baptized members, is to preach the paschal mystery through worldwide and local evangelization and provide ongoing catechesis for church members. Second, the apostles are to actualize these saving effects of his paschal mystery through liturgy, namely the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. This means that the primary purpose of the church's liturgical rites, especially the sacraments and most especially the celebration of the Eucharist, is to make the paschal mystery of Jesus present and efficacious.

For example, when the Scriptures are proclaimed in a liturgical rite, the paschal mystery is proclaimed. The selected Scripture passages may not explicitly narrate the events of Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. But, as stated above, all Scripture is to be interpreted through the lens of the paschal mystery of Jesus. Another example is the prayers of the liturgical rites, which proclaim the paschal mystery and implore God to fill participants of the liturgical rite with the spiritual benefits of the paschal mystery. The prayer of absolution over the penitent in the sacrament of penance illustrates this prayer form:

*God the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins*

*in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.* RITE OF PENANCE, 46

Addressing the prayer to God, the confessor recalls the paschal mystery, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus and its saving effects of reconciling the world to himself and sending the Holy Spirit upon the world for forgiveness. Then the confessor, praying with Christ and the members of Christ's body, the church, asks God to grant the effects of the paschal mystery to the penitent, namely, pardon, peace, and absolution from sin.

***Principle 4: Every Liturgy Is the Exercise
of the Priestly Office of Jesus Christ.***

The CSL states that:

The liturgy is considered an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ...in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. CSL 7

CHRIST AS ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST

The priestly office of Jesus Christ is described in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. Chapters 7–10 describe Jesus as the Eternal High Priest who has subsumed unto himself and fulfilled the purpose of the Jerusalem temple, priesthood, and sacrifices so that they are no longer necessary. The temple on earth is no longer needed because Jesus ministers in the heavenly temple—not built by human hands or with corruptible materials but established by God and lasting forever. There at God's right hand, he offers perpetual praise and intercession to God. The temple priesthood, which lasts until a priest's death,

is no longer necessary because Jesus is the Eternal Priest. Temple priests were mortal and sinful; Jesus is immortal and sinless. The daily animal sacrifices are no longer required because Jesus himself is the sacrificial lamb who offered his life as a once for all sacrifice that is efficacious forever and need not be repeated. Temple priests sanctified people by the blood of animals, but Jesus sanctifies humanity by his own blood.

CHRIST AS SUBJECT OF THE LITURGY

This means that Christ is the principal celebrant of every liturgical rite, especially the seven sacraments and most especially the celebration of the Eucharist. It is not that we decide to celebrate a liturgical rite and then pray that Christ will be present. Rather, our decision to gather and celebrate a liturgical rite at a designated time and place is a response to Christ's invitation. Every liturgy begins with Christ's initiative, because he is principal celebrant and head of his body the church. He convenes the members of his body and enfold them into his eternal worship of God. One way to state this concept is to say that Christ is the subject of the liturgy, the principal agent of the liturgical action. We, the members of his body, are the secondary subjects of the liturgy, dependent on him to lead us.

THE PRIEST MANIFESTS CHRIST THE TRUE CELEBRANT

The principal role of the priest celebrant is to mediate the presence of Christ, the true celebrant. The presiding priest shows Christ's presence in a manner that can be experienced through the senses, so that the assembly can feel, see, and hear Christ the true celebrant. Therefore, the presiding priest must achieve a delicate balance between being visible enough to show Christ to the assembly, but invisible enough not to obstruct Christ's presence.