

ADDRESS OF HIS EMINENCE, ROBERT CARDINAL SARAH
PREFECT OF THE CONGREGATION FOR
DIVINE WORSHIP AND DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS
TO THE CONFERENCE “SACRA LITURGIA UK 2016”
LONDON, ENGLAND, 5 JULY 2016

“TOWARDS AN AUTHENTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM*”

GREETINGS

Your Excellencies, dear Fathers, deacons and dear religious men and women, dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

In the first place I wish to express my thanks to His Eminence, Vincent Cardinal Nichols, for his welcome to the Archdiocese of Westminster and for his kind words of greeting. So too I wish to thank His Excellency, Bishop Dominique Rey, Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, for his invitation to be present with you at this, the third international “Sacra Liturgia” conference, and to present the opening address this evening. Your Excellency, I congratulate you on this international initiative to promote the study of the importance of liturgical formation and celebration in the life and mission of the Church.

I am very happy to be here with you all today. I thank each of you for your presence which reflects your appreciation of the importance of what the then Cardinal Ratzinger once called “the question of the liturgy” today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This is a great sign of hope for the Church.

INTRODUCTION

In his message dated 18th February 2014 to the symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, observed that the marking of fifty years since the promulgation of the Constitution should push us "to revive the commitment to accept and implement [the] teaching [of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*] in an ever fuller way." The Holy Father continued:

It is necessary to unite a renewed willingness to go forward along the path indicated by the Council Fathers, as there remains much to be done for a correct and complete assimilation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy on the part of the baptized and ecclesial communities. I refer, in particular, to the commitment to a solid and organic liturgical initiation and formation, both of lay faithful as well as clergy and consecrated persons.

The Holy Father is correct. We have much to do if we are to realise the vision of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council for the liturgical life of the Church. We have very much to do if today, some fifty years after the Council concluded, we are to achieve "a correct and complete assimilation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy."

In this address I wish to place before you some considerations on how the Western Church might move towards a more faithful implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In doing so I propose to ask "What did the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council intend in the liturgical reform?" Then I would like to consider how their intentions were implemented following the Council. Finally, I would like to put before you some suggestions for the liturgical life of the Church today, so that our liturgical practice might more faithfully reflect the intentions of the Council Fathers.

A. WHAT IS THE SACRED LITURGY?

But first we must consider a preliminary question. That is the question: “What is the Sacred Liturgy?” Because if we do not understand the nature of Catholic liturgy, as distinct from the rites of other Christian communities and of other religions, we cannot hope to understand the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, or to move towards a more faithful implementation of it.

In his *Motu Proprio Tra le sollecitudini* (22 November 1903) Pope Saint Pius X, taught that “the holy mysteries” and “the public and solemn prayer of the Church,” that is, the Sacred Liturgy, are the “foremost and indispensable fount” for acquiring “the true Christian spirit.” St Pius X therefore called for a real and fruitful participation in the Church’s liturgical rites by all. As we know, this teaching and this exhortation would be repeated by article 14 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Pope Pius XI raised his voice to the same end some twenty-five years later in his Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus* (20 December 1928), teaching that “the liturgy is indeed a sacred thing, since by it we are raised to God and united to Him, thereby professing our faith and our deep obligation to Him for the benefits we have received and the help of which we stand in constant need.”

Pope Pius XII devoted an Encyclical letter, *Mediator Dei* (20 November 1947) to the Sacred Liturgy, in which he taught that:

The Sacred Liturgy is...the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members. (n. 20)

The Pope taught that the “nature and the object of the sacred liturgy” is that “it aims at uniting our souls with Christ and sanctifying them through the divine Redeemer in order that Christ be honoured and, through Him and in Him, the most Holy Trinity.” (n. 171)

The Second Vatican Council taught that through the liturgy “the work of our redemption is accomplished” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2), and that the liturgy:

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

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree. (n. 7)

Following on from this, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* taught that 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 the Lord's supper. (n. 10)

It would be possible to continue this exposition of the magisterium's teaching on the nature of the Sacred Liturgy with the teaching of the post-conciliar popes and of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. But for the moment let us stop at the Council. Because it is very clear, I think, that the Church teaches that Catholic liturgy is the singularly privileged locus of Christ's saving action in our world today, by means of real participation in which we receive His grace and strength which is so necessary for our perseverance and growth in the Christian life. It is the divinely instituted place where we come to fulfil our duty of offering sacrifice to God, of offering the One True Sacrifice. It is where we realise our profound need to worship Almighty God. Catholic liturgy is something sacred, something which is holy by its very nature. Catholic liturgy is no ordinary human gathering.

I wish to underline a very important fact here: God, not man is at the centre of Catholic liturgy. We come to worship Him. The liturgy is not about you and I; it is not where we celebrate our own identity or achievements or exalt or promote our own culture and local religious customs. The liturgy is first and foremost about God and what He has done for us. In His Divine Providence Almighty God founded the Church and instituted the Sacred Liturgy by means of which we are able to offer Him true worship in accordance with the New Covenant established by Christ. In doing this, in entering into the demands of the sacred rites developed in the tradition of the Church, we are given our true identity and meaning as sons and daughters of the Father.

It is essential that we understand this specificity of Catholic worship, for in recent decades we have seen many liturgical celebrations where people, personalities and human achievements have been too prominent, almost to the exclusion of God. As Cardinal Ratzinger once wrote: “If the liturgy appears first of all as the workshop for our activity, then what is essential is being forgotten: God. For the liturgy is not about us, but about God. Forgetting about God is the most imminent danger of our age.” (Joseph Ratzinger, *Theology of the Liturgy*, Collected Works vol. 11, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2014, p. 593).

We must be utterly clear about the nature of Catholic worship if we are to read the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy correctly and if we are to implement it faithfully. For the Fathers of the Council were formed in the magisterial teachings of the twentieth century popes that I have cited. St John XXIII did not call an Ecumenical Council to undermine these teachings, which he himself promoted. The Council Fathers did not arrive in Rome in October 1962 with the intention of producing an anthropocentric liturgy. Rather, the Pope and the Council Fathers sought to find ways in which Christ’s faithful could draw ever more deeply from the “foremost and indispensable fount” so as to acquire “the true Christian spirit” for their own salvation and for that of all men and women of their day.

B. WHAT DID THE FATHERS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL INTEND?

We must explore the intentions of the Fathers of the Council in more detail, particularly if we seek to be more faithful to their intentions today. What did they intend to bring about through the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy?

Let us begin with the very first article of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which states:

This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. (n. 1)

Let us remember that when the Council opened liturgical reform had been a feature of the past decade and that the Fathers were very familiar with these reforms. They were not considering these questions theoretically, without any context. They expected to continue the work already begun and to consider the “*altiora principia*,” the higher or fundamental principles of liturgical reform, spoken of by St John XXIII in his Motu Proprio *Rubricarum Instructum* of 25th July 1960.

Hence, article one of the Constitution gives four reasons for undertaking a liturgical reform. The first, “to impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful,” is the constant concern of the Church’s pastors in every age.

The second, “to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change,” may cause us to pause and reflect, particularly given the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s. But in truth, if it is read with that hermeneutic of continuity with which most certainly the Council Fathers intended it, this means that the Council desired liturgical development where possible so as to facilitate an increased vigour to Christian life. The Council Fathers did not want to change things simply for the sake of change!

So too, the third reason, “to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ,” might cause us to pause lest we think that the Fathers wished to instrumentalise the

Sacred Liturgy and make of it an ecumenical tool, to render it simply a means to an end. But can this be the case? Certainly, after the Council, some may have tried to do this. But the Fathers themselves knew that this was not possible. Unity in worship before the altar of sacrifice is the desired *end* of ecumenical endeavour. The liturgy is not a means to promote good will or cooperation in apostolic works. No, here the Council Fathers are saying that they believe that liturgical reform can be part of a momentum which can help people to achieve that Catholic unity without which full communion in worship is not possible.

The same motivation is found in the fourth reason given for liturgical reform: “to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church.” Here, though, we move beyond our separated Christian brothers and sisters and consider “the whole of mankind.” The Church’s mission is to every man and woman! The Fathers of the Council believed this and hoped that more fruitful participation in the liturgy would facilitate a renewal in the Church’s missionary activity.

Let me give one example. For many years before the Council, in missionary countries and also in the more developed ones, there had been much discussion about the possibility of increasing the use of the vernacular languages in the liturgy, principally for the readings from Sacred Scripture, also for some of the other parts of the first part of the Mass (which we now call the “Liturgy of the Word”) and for liturgical singing. The Holy See had already given many permissions for the use of the vernacular in the administration of the sacraments. This is the context in which the Fathers of the Council spoke of the possible positive ecumenical or missionary effects of liturgical reform. It is true that the vernacular has a positive place in the liturgy. The Fathers were seeking this, not authorising the protestantization of the Sacred Liturgy or agreeing to it being subjected to a false inculturation.

I am an African. Let me say clearly: the liturgy is not the place to promote my culture. Rather, it is the place where my culture is baptised, where my culture is taken up into the divine. Through the Church’s liturgy (which missionaries have carried throughout the world) God speaks to us, He changes us and enables us to partake in His divine life. When someone becomes a Christian, when someone enters into full communion with the Catholic Church, they receive something more, something which changes them. Certainly, cultures and other Christians bring gifts with them into the Church—the liturgy of the Ordinariates of Anglicans now in full communion with the Catholic Church is a beautiful example of this. But they

bring these gifts with humility, and the Church in her maternal wisdom makes use of them as she judges appropriate.

Nevertheless, it seems incumbent to be very clear on what we mean by inculturation. If we truly understand the meaning of the term as an insight into the mystery of Jesus Christ, then we have the key to inculturation, which is not a quest nor a claim for the legitimacy of Africanization nor Latin Americanization nor Asianization in substitution of a Westernization of Christianity. Inculturation is neither a canonization of a local culture nor a settling into this culture at the risk of making it absolute. Inculturation is an irruption and an epiphany of the Lord in the depths of our being. And the irruption of the Lord in our life causes a disruption, a detachment opening the way to a path according to new orientations that are creating elements of a new culture, vehicle of the Good News for man and his dignity as a Son of God. When the Gospel enters into our life, it disrupts it, it transforms it. It gives it a new direction, new moral and ethical orientations. It turns the heart of man towards God and neighbour to love and serve them absolutely and without design. When Jesus enters into a life, he transfigures it, he deifies it by the radiant light of His Face, just as St Paul was on the road to Damascus (see: Acts 9:5-6).

Just as by his Incarnation the Word of God became like men in all things, except sin (Heb 4:15), so the gospel assumes all human and cultural values, but refuses to take shape in the structures of sin. This means that the more individual and collective sins abound in a human or ecclesial community, the less room there exists for inculturation. On the contrary, the more a Christian community and shines with holiness and radiates evangelical values, the more it is likely to inculturate the Christian message. The inculturation of the faith is the challenge of sanctity. It verifies the degree of holiness, and the level of the Gospel's penetration, and of the faith in Jesus Christ in a Christian community. Inculturation, therefore, is not religious folklore.

It is not essentially realized in the use of local languages, instruments and Latin American music, African dances or African or Asian rituals and symbols in the liturgy and the sacraments. Inculturation is God who descends into the life, into the moral behaviour, into the cultures and into the customs of men in order to free them from sin and in order to introduce them into the life of the Trinity. Certainly the Faith has in need of a culture so as to be communicated. This is why Saint John Paul II affirmed that a faith that does not become

culture is a faith that is dying: "Properly applied, inculturation must be guided by two principles: "compatibility with the gospel and communion with the universal Church." (Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, 7 December 1990, n. 54).

I have spent some time considering the first article of the Constitution because it is very important that we do read *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in its context, as a document which intended to promote legitimate development (such as the increased use of the vernacular) in continuity with the nature, teaching and mission of the Church in the modern world. We must not read into it things which it does not say. The Fathers did not intend a revolution, but an evolution, a moderate reform.

The intentions of the Council Fathers are very clear from other key passages. Article 14 is one of the most important of the whole Constitution:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless the pastors themselves, in the first place, become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it. A prime need, therefore, is that attention be directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy.

We hear the voice of the pre-conciliar popes here, seeking a real and fruitful participation in the liturgy, and in order to bring that about, the insistence that a thorough instruction or

formation in the liturgy is urgently necessary. The Fathers show a realism here that was perhaps forgotten afterwards. Let us listen again to those words of the Council and ponder their importance: “it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this (active participation) unless the pastors themselves, in the first place, become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it.”

At the beginning of article 21 we also hear the Fathers’ intentions very clearly: “In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the Sacred Liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself.” “Ut populus christianus in sacra Liturgia abundantiam gratiarum securius assequatur...” When we study Latin we learn that the word “ut” signifies a clear purpose that follows in the same clause. What did the Council Fathers intend? —that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the Sacred Liturgy. How did they propose to do this? —by undertaking with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself (“ipsius Liturgiae generalem instaurationem sedulo curare cupit”). Please note that the Fathers speak of a “restoration,” not a revolution!

One of the clearest and most beautiful expressions of the intentions of the Fathers of the Council is found at the beginning of the second chapter of the Constitution, which considers the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist. In article 48 we read:

The Church...earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

My brothers and sisters, this is what the Council Fathers intended. Yes, certainly, they discussed and voted on specific ways of achieving their intentions. But let us be very clear: the ritual reforms proposed in the Constitution such as the restoration of the prayer of the

faithful at Mass (n. 53), the extension of concelebration (n. 57) or some of its policies such as the simplification desired by articles 34 and 50, are all subordinate to the fundamental intentions of the Council Fathers I have just outlined. They are means to an end, and it is the end which we must achieve.

If we are to move towards a more authentic implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, it is these goals, these ends, which we must keep before us first and foremost. It may be that, if we study them with fresh eyes and with the benefit of the experience of the past five decades, we shall see some specific ritual reforms and certain liturgical policies in a different light. If, today, so as to “impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful” and “help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church,” some of these need to be reconsidered, let us ask the Lord to give us the love and the humility and wisdom so to do.

C. WHAT HAS HAPPENED FOLLOWING THE PROMULGATION OF *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM*?

I raise this possibility of looking again at the Constitution and at the reform which followed its promulgation because I do not think that we can honestly read even the first article of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* today and be content that we have achieved its aims. My brothers and sisters, where are the faithful of whom the Council Fathers spoke? Many of the faithful are now unfaithful: they do not come to the liturgy at all. To use the words of St John Paul II: “Forgetfulness of God led to the abandonment of man. It is therefore no wonder that in this context a vast field has opened for the unrestrained development of nihilism in philosophy, of relativism in values and morality, and of pragmatism – and even a cynical hedonism – in daily life. European culture gives the impression of ‘silent apostasy’ on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist” (Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 28 June 2003, 9). Where is the unity the Council hoped to achieve? We have not yet reached it. Have we made real progress in calling the whole of mankind into the household of the Church? I do not think so. And yet we have done very much to the liturgy!

In my 47 years of life as a priest and after more than 36 years of episcopal ministry I can attest that many Catholic communities and individuals live and pray the liturgy as reformed following the Council with fervour and joy, deriving from it many, if not all, of the goods that the Council Fathers desired. This is a great fruit of the Council. But from my experience I also know—now also through my service as Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments—that there are many distortions of the liturgy throughout the Church today, and there are many situations that could be improved so that the aims of the Council can be achieved. Before I reflect on some possible improvements, let us consider what happened following the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

In the sixteenth century the Pope entrusted the liturgical reform desired by the Council of Trent to a special commission which worked to prepare revised editions of the liturgical books which were eventually promulgated by the Pope. This is a perfectly normal procedure and it was the one adopted by Blessed Paul VI in 1964 when he established the *Consilium ad exsequendam constitutionem de sacra liturgia*. We know much about this commission because of the published memoirs of its secretary, Archbishop Annibale Bugnini (*The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948-1975*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville 1990).

The work of this commission to implement the Constitution was certainly subject to influences, ideologies and new proposals that were not present in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. For example, it is true that the Council did not propose the introduction of new Eucharistic prayers, but that this idea came up and was accepted, and that new prayers were authoritatively promulgated by the Pope. It is true, also, as Archbishop Bugnini himself makes clear, that some prayers and rites were constructed or revised according to the spirit of the times, particularly according to ecumenical sensitivities. Whether or not too much was done, or whether what was done truly helped to achieve the aims of the Constitution, or whether they in fact hindered them, are questions we need to study. I am very happy that today scholars are considering these matters in depth. Nevertheless it is an important fact that Blessed Paul VI judged the reforms proposed by the commission to be suitable and that he promulgated them. With his Apostolic authority he established them as normative and ensured their liceity and validity.

But while the official work of reform was taking place some very serious misinterpretations of the liturgy emerged and took root in different places throughout the world. These abuses of the Sacred Liturgy grew up because of an erroneous understanding of the Council, resulting in liturgical celebrations that were subjective and which were more focused on the individual community's desires than on the sacrificial worship of Almighty God. My predecessor as Prefect of the Congregation, Francis Cardinal Arinze, once called this sort of thing "the do-it-yourself Mass." St John Paul even found it necessary to write the following in his Encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (17 April 2003):

The Magisterium's commitment to proclaiming the Eucharistic mystery has been matched by interior growth within the Christian community. Certainly *the liturgical reform inaugurated by the Council* has greatly contributed to a more conscious, active and fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar on the part of the faithful. In many places, *adoration of the Blessed Sacrament* is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness. The devout participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is a grace from the Lord which yearly brings joy to those who take part in it.

Other positive signs of Eucharistic faith and love might also be mentioned.

Unfortunately, alongside these lights, *there are also shadows*. In some places the practice of Eucharistic adoration has been almost completely abandoned. In various parts of the Church abuses have occurred, leading to confusion with regard to sound faith and Catholic doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament. At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet. Furthermore, the necessity of the ministerial priesthood, grounded in apostolic succession, is at times obscured and the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is reduced to its mere effectiveness as a form of proclamation. This has led here and there to ecumenical initiatives which, albeit well-intentioned, indulge in Eucharistic practices contrary to the discipline by which the Church expresses her faith. How can we not express profound grief at all this? The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation.

It is my hope that the present Encyclical Letter will effectively help to banish the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice, so that the Eucharist will continue to shine forth in all its radiant mystery (n. 10).

As well as abusive practices, there was adverse reaction to the officially promulgated reforms. Some people found that they had gone too far too quickly, or even suspected the official reforms of being doctrinally suspect. One remembers the controversy that emerged in 1969 with the letter sent to Paul VI by Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci expressing very serious concerns, after which the Pope judged it appropriate to make certain doctrinal precisions. These questions, too, need to be studied carefully.

But there was also a pastoral reality here: whether for good reasons or not, some people could or would not participate in the reformed rites. They stayed away, or only participated in the unreformed liturgy where they could find it, even when its celebration was not authorised. In this way the liturgy became an expression of divisions within the Church, rather than one of Catholic unity. The Council did not intend that the liturgy divide us one from another! St John Paul II worked to heal this division, aided by Cardinal Ratzinger who, as Pope Benedict XVI, sought to facilitate the necessary internal reconciliation in the Church by establishing in his *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* (7 July 2007) that the more ancient form of the

Roman rite is to be available without restriction to those individuals and groups who wish to draw from its riches. In God's Providence it is now possible to celebrate our Catholic unity whilst respecting, and even rejoicing in, a legitimate diversity of ritual practice.

Finally, I would like to note that amidst the work of reform and translation that took place after the Council (and we know that some of this work was done too quickly, meaning that today we have to revise the translations to render them more faithful to the original Latin), there was perhaps not enough attention paid to what the Council Fathers said was essential if the fruitful participation in the liturgy that they desired would be achieved: that the clergy "become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it." We know that a building with weak foundations is at risk of damage or even of collapse.

We may have built a very new, modern liturgy in the vernacular, but if we have not laid the correct foundations—if our seminarians and clergy are not "thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy" as the Council required—then they themselves cannot form the people entrusted to their care. We need to take the words of the Council itself very seriously: it would be "futile" to hope for a liturgical renewal without a thorough liturgical formation. Without this essential formation clergy could even damage peoples' faith in the Eucharistic mystery.

I do not wish to be thought of as being unduly pessimistic, and I say again: there are many, many faithful lay men and women, many clergy and religious for whom the liturgy as reformed after the Council is a source of much spiritual and apostolic fruit, and for that I thank Almighty God. But, even from my brief analysis just now, I think you will agree that we can do better so that the Sacred Liturgy truly becomes the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the Fathers of the Council so earnestly desired.

Anyway, this is what Pope Francis asks us to do: "It is necessary, he said, to unite a renewed willingness to go forward along the path indicated by the Council Fathers, as there remains much to be done for a correct and complete assimilation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy on the part of the baptised and ecclesial communities. I refer, in particular, to the

commitments to a solid and organic liturgical initiation and formation, both of lay faithful as well as clergy and consecrated persons”.

D. HOW SHOULD WE MOVE TOWARDS A MORE AUTHENTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM* TODAY?

In the light of the fundamental desires of the Council Fathers and of the different situations that we have seen arise following the Council, I would like to present some practical considerations on how we can implement *Sacrosanctum Concilium* more faithfully today. Even though I serve as the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, I do so in all humility as a priest and a bishop in the hope that they will promote mature reflection and scholarship and good liturgical practice throughout the Church.

It will come as no surprise if I say that first of all we must examine the quality and depth of our liturgical formation, of how we imbue our clergy, religious and lay faithful with the spirit and power of the liturgy. Too often we assume that our candidates for ordination to the priesthood or the permanent diaconate “know” enough about the liturgy. But the Council was not insisting on knowledge here, though, of course, the Constitution stressed the importance of liturgical studies (see: nn. 15-17). No, the liturgical formation that is primary and essential is more one of immersion in the liturgy, in the deep mystery of God our loving Father. It is a question of living the liturgy in all its richness, so that having drunk deeply from its fount we always have a thirst for its delights, its order and beauty, its silence and contemplation, its exultation and adoration, its ability to connect us intimately with He who is at work in and through the Church’s sacred rites.

That is why those “in formation” for pastoral ministry should live the liturgy as fully as is possible in their seminaries or houses of formation. Candidates for the permanent diaconate should have an immersion in an intense liturgical life over a prolonged period also. And, I would add, that the full and rich celebration of the more ancient use of the Roman rite, the *usus antiquior*, should be an important part of liturgical formation for clergy, for how can we begin to comprehend or celebrate the reformed rites with a hermeneutic of continuity if we have never experienced the beauty of the liturgical tradition which the Fathers of the Council themselves knew and which has produced so many saints over the centuries? A wise openness to the mystery of the Church and her rich, centuries-old tradition, and a humble docility to what the Holy Spirit says to the Churches today are real signs that we belong to Jesus Christ: And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the

kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” (Mt 13:52).

If we attend to this, if our new priests and deacons truly thirst for the liturgy, they will themselves be able to form those entrusted to their care—even if the liturgical circumstances and possibilities of their ecclesial mission are more modest than those of the seminary or of a cathedral. I am aware of many priests in such circumstances who form their people in the spirit and power of the liturgy, and whose parishes are examples of great liturgical beauty. We should remember that dignified simplicity is not the same as reductive minimalism or a negligent and vulgar style. As our Holy Father, Pope Francis, teaches in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: “The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving.” (n. 24)

Secondly, I think that it is very important that we are clear about the nature of liturgical participation, of the *participatio actuosa* for which the Council called. There has been a lot of confusion here over recent decades. Article 48 of the Constitution states: “The Church...earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.” The Council sees participation as primarily internal, coming about “through a good understanding of the rites and prayers.” The inner life, the life immersed in God and intimately inhabited by God is the indispensable condition for a successful and fruitful participation in the Holy Mysteries that we celebrate in the liturgy. The Eucharistic celebration must be essentially lived internally. It is within us that God wants to meet us. The Fathers called for the faithful to sing, to respond to the priest, to assume liturgical ministries that are rightfully theirs, certainly, but it insists that all should be “conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.”

If we understand the priority of internalising our liturgical participation we will avoid the noisy and dangerous liturgical activism that has been too prominent in recent decades. We do not go to the liturgy so as to perform, to do things for others to see: we go to be connected with Christ's action through an internalisation of the external liturgical rites, prayers, signs

and symbols. It may be that we priests whose vocation is to minister liturgically need to remember this more than others! But we also need to form others, particularly our children and young people, in the true meaning of liturgical participation, in the true way to pray the liturgy.

Thirdly, I have spoken of the fact that some of the reforms introduced following the Council may have been put together according to the spirit of the times and that there has been an increasing amount of critical study by faithful sons and daughters of the Church asking whether what was in fact produced truly implemented the aims of the Constitution, or whether in reality they went beyond them. This discussion sometimes takes place under the title of a “reform of the reform,” and I am aware that Father Thomas Kocik presented a learned study on this question at the Sacra Liturgia conference in New York one year ago.

I do not think that we can dismiss the possibility or the desirability of an official reform of the liturgical reform, because its proponents make some important claims in their attempt to be faithful to the Council’s insistence in article 23 of the Constitution “that sound tradition...be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress.” It must begin with a careful theological, historical, pastoral study and “there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.”

Indeed, I can say that when I was received in audience by the Holy Father last April, Pope Francis asked me to study the question of a reform of a reform and the way in which the two forms of the Roman rite could enrich each other. This will be a long and delicate work and I ask for your patience and prayers. But if we are to implement *Sacrosanctum Concilium* more faithfully, if we are to achieve what the Council desired, this is a serious question which must be carefully studied and acted on with the necessary clarity and prudence in prayer and total submission to God.

We priests, we bishops bear a great responsibility. How our good example builds up good liturgical practice; how our carelessness, our routine or wrongdoing harms the Church and her Sacred Liturgy!

We priests must be worshippers first and foremost. Our people can see the difference between a priest who celebrates with faith and one who celebrates in a hurry, frequently looking at his watch, almost so as to say that he wants to get back to his pastoral work or to other engagements or to go to view his television as quickly as possible! Fathers, we can do no more important thing than celebrate the sacred mysteries: let us beware of the temptation of liturgical sloth or lukewarmness, because it is a temptation of the devil.

We must remember that we are not the authors of the liturgy, we are its humble ministers, subject to its discipline and laws. We are also responsible to form those who assist us in liturgical ministries in both the spirit and power of the liturgy and indeed its regulations. Sometimes I have seen priests step aside to allow extraordinary ministers distribute Holy Communion: this is wrong, it is a denial of the priestly ministry as well as a clericalisation of the laity. When this happens it is a sign that formation has gone very wrong, and that it needs to be corrected. (see: Mt 14:18-21). “Then, taking the five loaves... gave them to his disciples to set before the people... Those who ate of the loaves were five thousand men (Mk 6:30-44; Mt 14:18-21).

I have also seen priests, and bishops, vested to celebrate Holy Mass, take out telephones and cameras and use them in the Sacred Liturgy. This is a terrible indictment of what they believe to be the mission they assume when they put on the liturgical vestments, which clothe and transform us as an *alter Christus*—and much more, as *ipse Christus*, as Christ himself. To do this is a sacrilege. No bishop, priest or deacon vested for liturgical ministry or present in the sanctuary should be taking photographs, even at large-scale concelebrated Masses. That priests sadly often do this at such Masses, or talk with each other and sit casually, is a sign, I think, that we need urgently to rethink the appropriateness of these immense concelebrations, especially if they lead priests into this sort of scandalous behaviour that is so unworthy of the mystery being celebrated, or if the sheer size of these concelebrations leads to a risk of the profanation of the Blessed Eucharist.

It is equally a scandal and profanation for the lay faithful to take photographs during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. They should participate through prayer and not by spending their time taking photos!

I want to make an appeal to all priests. You may have read my article in *L'Osservatore Romano* one year ago (12 June 2015) or my interview with the journal *Famille Chrétienne* in May of this year. On both occasions I said that I believe that it is very important that we return as soon as possible to a common orientation, of priests and the faithful turned together in the same direction—Eastwards or at least towards the apse—to the Lord who comes, in those parts of the liturgical rites when we are addressing God. This practice is permitted by current liturgical legislation. It is perfectly legitimate in the modern rite. Indeed, I think it is a very important step in ensuring that in our celebrations the Lord is truly at the centre.

And so, dear Fathers, I humbly and fraternally ask you to implement this practice wherever possible, with prudence and with the necessary catechesis, certainly, but also with a pastor's confidence that this is something good for the Church, something good for our people. Your own pastoral judgement will determine how and when this is possible, but perhaps beginning this on the first Sunday of Advent this year, when we attend 'the Lord who will come' and 'who will not delay' (see: Introit, Mass of Wednesday of the first week of Advent) may be a very good time to do this. Dear Fathers, we should listen again to the lament of God proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah: "they have turned their backs to me and not their faces" (2:27). Let *us* turn again towards the Lord! Since the day of his Baptism, the Christian knows only one direction: the Orient. "You entered to confront your enemy, for you intended to renounce him to his face. You turned toward the East (*ad Orientem*), for one who renounces the devil turns towards Christ and fixes his gaze directly on Him" (From the beginning of the Treatise on the Mysteries by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan).

I very humbly and fraternally would like to appeal also to my brother bishops: please lead your priests and people towards the Lord in this way, particularly at large celebrations in your dioceses and in your cathedral. Please form your seminarians in the reality that we are not called to the priesthood to be at the centre of liturgical worship ourselves, but to lead Christ's faithful to him as fellow worshippers united in the one same act of adoration. Please facilitate this simple but profound reform in your dioceses, your cathedrals, your parishes and your seminaries.

We bishops have a great responsibility, and one day we shall have to answer to the Lord for our stewardship. We are the owners of nothing! Nothing belongs to us! As St Paul teaches, we are merely "the servants of Christ and the stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of

course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1 Cor. 4:1-2). We are responsible to ensure that the sacred realities of the liturgy are respected in our dioceses and that our priests and deacons not only observe the liturgical laws, but know the spirit and power of the liturgy from which they emerge. I was very encouraged to read the presentation on “The Bishop: Governor, Promoter and Guardian of the Liturgical Life of the Diocese” made to the 2013 Sacra Liturgia conference in Rome by Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland in Oregon in the USA, and I fraternally encourage my brother bishops to study his considerations carefully.

All liturgical ministers should make a examination of conscience periodically. For this I recommend part II of the Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* of Benedict XVI (22 February 2007), “The Eucharist, a Mystery to be Celebrated.” It is almost ten years since this Exhortation was published as the collegial fruit of the 2005 Synod of Bishops. How much progress have we made in that time? What more do we need to do? We must ask ourselves these questions before the Lord, each of us according to our responsibility, and then do what we can and what we must to achieve the vision outlined by Pope Benedict.

At this point I repeat what I have said elsewhere, that Pope Francis has asked me to continue the extraordinary liturgical work Pope Benedict began (see: Message to Sacra Liturgia USA 2015, New York City). Just because we have a new pope does not mean that his predecessor’s vision is now invalid. On the contrary, as we know, our Holy Father Pope Francis has the greatest respect for the liturgical vision and measures Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI implemented in utter fidelity to the intentions and aims of the Council Fathers.

Before I conclude, please permit me to mention some other small ways which can also contribute to a more faithful implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. One is that we must sing the liturgy, we must sing the liturgical texts, respecting the liturgical traditions of the Church and rejoicing in the treasury of sacred music that is ours, most especially that music proper to the Roman rite, Gregorian chant. We must sing sacred liturgical music not merely religious music, or worse, profane songs.

We must get the right balance between the vernacular languages and the use of Latin in the liturgy. The Council never intended to insinuate that the Roman rite be exclusively celebrated in the vernacular. But it did intend to allow its increased use, particularly for the readings.

Today it should be possible, especially with modern means of printing, to facilitate comprehension by all when Latin is used, perhaps for the liturgy of the Eucharist, and of course this is particularly appropriate at international gatherings where the local vernacular is not understood by many. And naturally, when the vernacular is used, it must be a faithful translation of the original Latin, as Pope Francis recently affirmed to me.

We must ensure that adoration is at the heart of our liturgical celebrations. The heart of our liturgy is the adoration of God. Too often we do not move from celebration to adoration, but if we do not do that I worry that we may not have always participated in the liturgy fully, internally. Two bodily dispositions are helpful, indeed indispensable here. The first is silence. If I am never silent, if the liturgy gives me no space for silent prayer and contemplation, how can I adore Christ, how can I connect with him in my heart and soul? Silence is very important, and not only before and after the liturgy. It is the foundation of any deep spiritual life.

So too kneeling at the consecration (unless I am sick) is essential. In the West this is an act of bodily adoration that humbles us before our Lord and God. It is itself an act of prayer. Where kneeling and genuflection have disappeared from the liturgy, they need to be restored, in particular for our reception of our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion. Dear Fathers, where possible and with the pastoral prudence of which I spoke earlier, form your people in this beautiful act of worship and love. Let us kneel in adoration and love before the Eucharistic Lord once again! “Man is not fully man unless he falls on his knees before God to adore Him, to contemplate his dazzling sanctity and let himself be remodelled in his image and likeness” (R. Sarah, *On the Road to Ninive*, Paulines Publications Africa 2012, p.199).

In speaking of the reception of Holy Communion kneeling I would like to recall the 2002 letter of the Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments which clarifies that “any refusal of Holy Communion to a member of the faithful on the basis of his or her kneeling posture [is] a grave violation of one of the most basic rights of the Christian faithful” (Letter, 1 July 2002, *Notitiae*, n. 436, Nov-Dec 2002, p. 583).

Correctly vesting all the liturgical ministers in the sanctuary, including lectors, is also very important if such ministries are to be considered authentic and if they are to be exercised with

the decorum due to the Sacred Liturgy—also if the ministers themselves are to show the correct reverence for God and for the mysteries they minister.

These are some suggestions: I am sure that many others could be made. I put them before you as possible ways of moving towards “the right way of celebrating the liturgy inwardly and outwardly,” which was of course the desire expressed by Cardinal Ratzinger at the beginning of his great work, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. (Joseph Ratzinger, *Theology of the Liturgy*, Collected Works vol. 11, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2014, p. 4). I encourage you to do all that you can to realise this goal, which is utterly consistent with that of the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

CONCLUSION

I began this address with a consideration of the teachings of the twentieth century popes on the Sacred Liturgy. The first of them, St Pius X, had the personal motto: *instaurare omnia in Christo*—to restore all things in Christ. I suggest that we take these words and make them our own standard as we seek to work towards a more faithful implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, for if when we come to the Sacred Liturgy we enter into the mentality of Christ, if we put on Christ as we put on our baptismal robe or the vestments proper to our liturgical ministry, we cannot go far astray.

It is sadly true that in the decades since the Second Vatican Council, “alongside [the] lights, *there are also shadows*” in the Church’s liturgical life, as Saint John Paul II said in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (n.10). And it is our duty to address the causes of this. But it is a source of great hope and joy that today, as the twenty-first century proceeds, many faithful Catholics are convinced of the importance of the liturgy in the life of the Church and dedicate themselves to the liturgical apostolate, to what may be broadly called a new liturgical movement.

My brothers and sisters, I thank you for your commitment to the Sacred Liturgy. I encourage you and bless you in all your endeavours, great or small, to bring about “the right way of celebrating the liturgy inwardly and outwardly.” Persevere in this apostolate: the Church and the world needs you!

I ask you for your prayers for my particular ministry.

Thank you. May God bless you.

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