

# **LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS MODULE (A)**

## **Sacrosanctum Concilium (S.C)**

### **Chapter 1... Introduction to Liturgy (CCC 1066 – 1075)**

#### **Aim of Lecture**

To introduce the basic ideas and function of the Church's liturgy.

Liturgy refers to the official public worship of the Church.

'Official' means that it is authorised to take place in communion with the local Bishop in accordance with the norms laid down by the Holy See.

Worship means an act of prayer.

There are four main areas of the Liturgy:-

- a) **SACRAMENTS – 7** – Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick (Extreme Unction)
- b) **THE LITURGICAL YEAR** – The cycle of the seasons and the various feasts
- c) **THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS** – The Divine Office or breviary
- d) **OTHER ACTIONS** – Funerals, dedication of a Church, Profession of a religious or priest.

Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity (**CCC 1074**)

It is 'Mystagogy' – that is leading from the visible to the invisible (**CCC 1075**)

#### **THE LITURGICAL YEAR (CCC 1163 – 1173)**

As the solar year marks the passage of time for all creatures, so the 'Liturgical Year' marks the passage of the supernatural life through the worship of the Church.

#### **Sunday**

Although all days are made holy by the celebration of God's people, Sunday is a day when the Church keeps the memory of the Lord's Resurrection.

It is the cornerstone of the Church's Liturgy.

It is the original feast – it is the Catholic form of obeying the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment – 'keep holy the Sabbath day'

Other celebrations, unless they have great importance, should not take precedence over Sunday worship.

#### **Advent**

Is the beginning of the Liturgical Year, which lasts for four weeks and is a preparation for the celebration of Christmas and the Epiphany.

It looks forward to the Second Coming of Christ.

#### **Christmas**

Is second only in importance to the Easter Triduum.

It celebrates the birth of Jesus, His childhood in the Holy Family and His Epiphany (showing) to the pagans in the persons of the Magi.

Finally showing His messianic epiphany in the baptism in the Jordan.

#### **Lent and the Triduum**

Lent stretches from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday (40 days).

It prepares us for the celebration of Easter by recalling our baptism and a commitment to prayer, fasting and works of charity.

It is also the time in the church's year when the rites of RCIA (Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults) are undertaken.

It leads us to the 'pearl' of the liturgical year – The Easter Triduum

- 1) The Lord's Supper – celebrated on Maundy Thursday
- 2) The Lord's Passion – celebrated on Good Friday
- 3) The Easter Vigil – celebrated on the evening of Holy Saturday

The Triduum concludes with 'evening prayer' on Easter Sunday.

### **Eastertide**

Is celebrated for 50 days from Easter Sunday until Pentecost.

It is the major festival of the liturgical calendar, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus.

The 1<sup>st</sup> 8 days constitute 'The Octave'.

On the 40<sup>th</sup> day The Ascension of Our Lord is celebrated

The 9 days between Ascension and Pentecost form the ( original) Novena of Prayer and preparation for the coming of The Holy Spirit.

To mark this celebration of Eastertide the 'ALLELUIA' is constantly used in the Church's prayers.

### **Ordinary time**

Constitutes the rest of the liturgical year not covered by the above seasons.

It celebrates the ministry of Christ over a 3 year cycle for weekdays and a 2 year cycle for Sundays.

It represents 33/34 weeks of the liturgical cycle.

### **Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials**

Solemnities are the most important –remembrances of Our Lord, Our Lady and certain Saints of significance.

Feasts are commemorations of importance including the Apostles.

Memorials are other commemorations and include most Saint's days.

Most of the above are not linked to the Liturgical Seasons, but occur on fixed dates according to the civil calendar.

**NB:-** The Liturgy is not just a 'looking back' but a -

'Recalling the mysteries of the redemption, the Church opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and mercies, so that these are in some way made present for all time' the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace' (S.C.102)

### **THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS (CCC 1174 – 1178)**

Also known as the Divine Office or Breviary.

It is the prayer of the Church offered for the Church and the whole world.

Prayer being offered at the main parts of the day (Morning, Midday, Evening and Night) sanctifies time.

The Liturgy of The Hours closely parallels the course of the natural day. It is prayer used by Religious and Priests with which the faithful are encouraged to participate.

There is a close link between the Liturgy of the Hours (Sacrifice of Praise) and the Eucharist (Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross) and it includes many of the formal prayers of the Church.

### **LITURGY AND FAITH (CCC 1083, 1122 – 1126)**

Liturgy cannot be understood without faith – as liturgy is the worship of the Divine Majesty – God.

Liturgy instructs and nourishes faith.

There are many ways of nourishing faith – private prayer, spiritual reading, Catechesis, works of mercy and works of penance etc.

Liturgy is the best expression of faith as it places faith within the living context of praise and worship within the community of the Church. It builds up those who are members of the Church.

### **LITURGY AND ACTION (CCC 1071 – 1072)**

Liturgy must be practised – requires action – we cannot THINK Mass! Liturgy must be 'carried out' it is a CELEBRATION. Jesus said 'do this in memory of Me'.

## **LITURGY AND THE MYSTERY (CCC 1110 – 1111)**

The 'mystery' is God's hidden plan which He has had from the beginning and which is now revealed in His Son – that is to unite all things under Christ as Head.

Christ's work in the liturgy is sacramental being made present by the power of His Holy Spirit in the Body of His Church (sign or sacramental)

The mystery is still alive – God is still bringing His plan to fulfilment – the Incarnation did not bring that plan to an end.

It is now made present and active in the Liturgy and the Sacraments.

The mystery is made present in the liturgy so that we may all grow into one holy temple in the Lord through our participation in liturgical action.

## **LITURGY AND PARTICIPATION (CCC 1074, 1075, 1136 – 1144)**

Participation is given great emphasis in **S.C. 14** 'full and active participation of all the people is the aim to be considered above all else'

The faithful have a **RIGHT** and an **OBLIGATION** to their full and active participation

**S.C. 11** states that it is the duty of Pastors 'to ensure that the faithful take part (in the liturgy) knowingly, actively and fruitfully.

### **Knowingly**

We must know and understand in what we are participating – education and Catechesis are the means to understanding the 'signs and symbols' used – otherwise we become strangers and spectators. Catechesis becomes alive in sacramental practice.

### **Actively**

Mere presence is not enough. This does not mean 'doing something' all the time. There is 'internal' and 'external' participation

Internal:- attitude and disposition

External:- joining in the acclamations and responses, Psalms, antiphons and hymns as well as by gestures and bodily attitude – also silence when appropriate.

### **Fruitful**

Demands an openness on our part to the 'mystery' but fruitful participation depends upon God's Grace and not on man's work.

## **LITURGY AND PRIESTHOOD (CCC 1140 – 1144)**

Christ is always present in His Church (**S.C. 7**) – it is a priestly presence. He is our one and only High Priest.

As members of His Body, the Church, we participate in that priesthood.

The liturgy is an exercise in the priestly office of Jesus Christ (**S.C. 7**) It follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and His Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others.

There is a distinction however between the 'common priesthood' of the faithful and the 'Ministerial priesthood' of the Bishops and Priests. (**Lumen Gentium (L.G.) 10**)

No one is a spectator – all are called to participation in accordance with their role.

## **THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH AND THE HEAVENLY LITURGY (CCC 1090)**

There is a fundamental unity between the liturgy of the Church on earth and the 'Heavenly Liturgy' of praise and worship celebrated in heaven

The one is a foretaste of the other.

The Church on earth unites with the Church in heaven and with 'all the warriors of the heavenly army'.

The Church, is the 'Communion of Saints'.

We are reminded of this in the prayers of the Mass 'Now with the Apostles and all the saints....'

## **THE LITURGY IN CONTEXT (CCC 1071 – 1072)**

The Church has more to do than celebrate the Liturgy (**S.C. 9 –13**)

She must preach the Gospel and call all people to conversion (**S.C. 9**)

The Church must engage in charitable and apostolic works

The liturgy however is the fount from which all the Church's power flows and which fosters its fruitfulness (**S.C. 10**)

**NB:-** The liturgy and private prayer are not to be seen as rivals, but as complementary.

We all need to be people of 'public' and 'private' prayer.

A point worth noting is that devotions such as 'The Rosary' and 'Stations of The Cross' are not part of the 'official' Church liturgy.

# **LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS MODULE (A)**

## **Chapter 2...Sacramentality**

### **Aim of Lecture**

To promote a deeper understanding of the nature of sacramentality and the relationship between Christ, the Church and Sacraments.

**NB:-** Sacramentals are sacred signs and institutions by the Church, helping the faithful to receive the full fruits of the Sacraments and to sanctify differing circumstances in life e.g.: blessing of people, meals, objects and places.

### **Sacramentality of Christ (CCC 456 – 460, 512 – 521, 1076, 1084 – 1085)**

The previous chapter referred to the 'mystery' and its realisation and actualisation in the Liturgy. The fact that Christianity is not just a religion involving Sacraments: its very nature is 'sacramental' being founded on Jesus Christ.

St. Paul talks of 'the image of God made visible' (**Col 1:15**) and 'the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ Our Lord' (**Rom 8:9**)

When we speak of Christ as Sacrament we refer to His function as a revealing sign (symbol) of God. God can reveal Himself in many ways but in Jesus He is the actual 'embodiment' (the Incarnation) of God Himself.

Jesus is the Son of God who 'became flesh and dwelt among us' (**John 1:14**) and so the invisible and incomprehensible God is revealed to us in a tangible way. 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (**John 14:9**)

We can see therefore in Jesus' life and work the 'translation' into human terms, God's general attitude towards the human race: - the love and mercy and compassion of God Himself.

All this means that personal entry of the eternal Creator into His creation - God becomes human and His relationships are as one of us.

In Jesus, God not only 'reveals' something but actually achieves something – Jesus is an 'efficacious sign'.

This is the essence of Jesus' Sacramentality.

### **The Sacrament of Unity between God and Humanity**

In Jesus God actually unites humanity with Himself.

In Jesus we have the perfect union of God with man, not a hope, but reality.

We therefore have a relationship with Jesus as we do with other human beings.

This results from Jesus being born of the Virgin Mary as a human being by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We as humans have to grow and develop and have a life to live before we can achieve the fullness of our humanity.

So it was with Jesus – He had to live and develop as we do and to suffer as we do.

The whole earthly life of Jesus is therefore 'sacramental'.

In sharing our joys, sadness, friendships, rejections and all human experiences Jesus enters fully into union with the human race.

The union led, as with us, to the experience of death.

It is in His death on the Cross-, that Jesus enters fully into unity with us human beings – sharing our frailty and weakness.

It is in His Resurrection and Ascension that this frail humanity, which He shared with us, is raised and transformed into a new and glorious existence.

In His Crucifixion Jesus is the Sacrament of God's participation in our human weakness

In His Resurrection, He is the Sacrament of humanity's participation in the Glory of God.

St. Irenaeus wrote 'He became what we are, in order to perfect us to become what He is'

### **Jesus – The Sacrament of Eternal Life (CCC 624 – 628)**

All of this indicates the victory over death ascribed to Jesus in the NT>

Jesus enters into death with us.

His Resurrection demonstrates that death is the entry to a new and glorious eternal life.

It is the event that brings this about and which we are invited to share.

Only because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the eternal life He offers available to us.

### **Jesus – The Sacrament of Redemption (CCC 6564)**

Our redemption in Christ is a great 'mystery'.

In the Crucifixion we have the embodiment of what sin really is : the rejection of God who is love and truth – and to put ourselves in His place.

It might seem that this is the ultimate triumph of sin: the opposite is the truth

In the Crucifixion Jesus most perfectly identifies Himself with humanity – in spite of our rejection of God. He wants to enter into perfect union with us.

The Crucifixion is the sign in which the mercy of God is not only revealed, but put into effect.

The Crucifixion achieves a restoration of the order and harmony of God's creation. A self-offering of Christ in enduring and experiencing the whole sin of the world, overcomes and cancels it out.

The power of sin does its worst but finds that it has been turned into the supreme expression of love by the One who is a Man 'the love of God made visible'

In all this Jesus acts as one of us – in His humanity.  
And so redemption comes to us from within humanity itself.

The Resurrection is the complement of the Crucifixion.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time puts it like this 'Man refused your friendship, but Man Himself was to restore it, through Jesus Christ Our Lord'

The whole of Christ's death and Resurrection is a truly redemptive sacramental reality.  
St. Paul says "God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself" (2Cor 5:19)

Redemption comes from God in The Trinity but only through Jesus Christ.

In fact Jesus is our redemption – offering us a new way to God and offering us the gift of The Holy Spirit. He is the Sacrament of our redemption.

We are free to accept or reject the offer!

### **The Church as the Sacrament of Christ (CCC 748, 763 – 765, 770 – 776)**

The Church itself does not achieve salvation.

That was done once and for all by Christ.

However the Church is the visible sign of His saving presence in the world.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council spoke of the Church as "the universal sacrament of salvation" (L.G. 48 and G.S. 45)

It is in and through the Church that individuals are brought together as a community united in Christ.

In this way the communion between God and humanity, which is God's purpose, becomes a living present reality among the people of the world.

The Church on earth is therefore 'the visible sacrament.....saving unity' **L.G. 9 and S.C. 26**) and it is in the Church that this saving union is both manifested and realised (sacramentalised) for the people of every age.

St. Paul spoke of the Church as "the Body of Christ" **1Cor 12:12,27; Col 1:18; Eph 1:22; 4:4; 5:23,29**)

The Ascension does not mark the end of the Incarnation, but its perfection.

The image of 'the Body' points to the intimacy of the union between Christ and His Church (**L.G. 7**)

In this body/union we become sharers in His reconciling self-offering, self dedication of Christ to the Father and sharers in His rising to new life.

His sacrifice made "for our sake" becomes our sacrifice, His Resurrection our resurrection.

### **The Sacraments**

Since the Church is sacramental, everything that truly belongs to it (its teaching, worship, hierarchical constitution and ministry, the life and witness of its members) has sacramental quality.

The seven Sacraments are 'embodiments' of this basic sacramentality.

It is in them that the nature of the Church is fully encountered together with the saving presence of Jesus Christ.

**N.B.** The Sacraments are not religious rituals added onto the basic reality but rather they represent the realisation of that basic reality.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (A)**

## **Chapter 3...The Sacraments in general**

### **Aim**

To explain the nature and function of the Sacraments

### **Introduction (CCC 1131 – 1134)**

An attempt to review the most important considerations of the Sacraments and their place in the life of the Church.

Vatican 2 tells us "the purpose of the Sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and finally to give worship to God (S.C. 59)

Our sanctification comes through Jesus Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Only if we understand the Sacraments in terms of the abiding and active presence of Christ and the communication of His Holy Spirit, can we truly appreciate their place and importance for us as individuals and for the Church as a whole.

### **Outward Signs**

A Sacrament is "an outward sign of inward grace" (Old Penny Catechism). This definition still stands. There can be no such thing as invisible, inaudible, intangible Sacraments because it is of their nature to be perceptible to the senses.

### **Symbolism**

Symbols are important in our lives in many ways e.g. flags. We respond to symbols.

Symbols are an exterior sign of an inward reality e.g. Patriotism

Tears of sorrow for instance indicate an inner unhappiness.

A sympathetic hand on the shoulder imparts comfort.

A mother cuddles her baby to express love.

Often symbolic objects accompany this bodily symbolism in order to convey its meaning more clearly and forcefully e.g. bread and salt indicate 'welcome' – the giving of a ring at marriage.

Symbolic acts are often accompanied by words.

Hence, gestures, symbolic objects and words all combine to form the totality of the symbolic act.

When we consider the Sacraments as symbolic acts we see the embodiment, not of our attitudes, wishes and intentions but those of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

They are exterior, symbolic expressions of His healing and life giving love, mediated to us through His Body – The Church.

It is in the Sacraments that the Church realises its role of giving 'visible' expression to the active presence of Christ and His Redemption.

In the Sacraments we can encounter Christ in a way suited to the needs of our nature.

In the Sacraments Christ speaks to us through human gestures and symbols in a way which calls for involvement.

Sacraments promote a real interaction between us and Christ – we are not merely recipients but participants.



## **Ordained by Jesus Christ**

The Church has many rituals and ceremonies yet not all of them are Sacraments.

Sacraments are ordained by Jesus Christ Himself as essential elements of the Church and with which the Church cannot dispense with or materially change – they are not the Church's invention.

The Council of Trent declared as an article of faith that Christ directly instituted each of the Sacraments – this excludes the idea that the Church can create or institute Sacraments but it does not exclude the Church determining the precise form of the sacramental rite.

A foundation for each of the 7 Sacraments can be found in Scripture (sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit) in what Jesus said and did and between these words and actions and the subsequent practice of the Apostolic Church as recorded in the NT.

## **The Role of the Early Church (CCC 1117 – 1120)**

The Church cannot invent or abolish Sacraments – they are gifts from Jesus Christ. Scriptural evidence is dealt with under individual Sacraments.

The role of the Church is to recognise these gifts for what they are, to discern their significance and to regulate the form of their celebration. This is in line with the Church's general relationship with Christ.

The Church transmits what has been revealed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## **Efficacious signs of Grace (CCC 1127 – 1129)**

Sacraments are not merely signs, they are efficacious signs – signs which produce results. “Sacraments effect what they signify and signify what they effect”

The Sacraments are symbolic acts through which the redemption won by Jesus Christ is not merely recalled and celebrated but is communicated to us here and now by the power of the Holy Spirit.

All of them are the means by which we receive that transforming ‘sanctifying grace’.

Every valid celebration of a Sacrament is always the embodiment of a freely offered grace irrespective of the worthiness of the minister or otherwise.

Obstacles to the receipt of this ‘sanctifying grace’ would be grave and unrepented sin – something totally incompatible with grace – it would be unfruitful.

Prayerful preparation is of great importance for the reception of the Sacraments.

## **The Sacramental Character (CCC1121)**

Three Sacraments confer a ‘character’ – an irremovable spiritual mark or ‘seal’ which singles out the recipient in one way or another for participation in the work and mission of Christ's Body – the Church.

These three are Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

The most basic ‘character’ is conferred by Baptism when we are marked as members of God's people and called to participation in Christ's priestly office.

Baptism is a kind of ‘ordination’ into the common priesthood of the faithful.

Once baptised one is always baptised.

Confirmation confers an additional status whereby we are bound to the priestly mission of the Church and called to actively witness to the Faith.

Once a confirmed Christian, one is always a confirmed Christian.

Those who receive Holy Orders are in addition consecrated for ministerial service in the Church and are called to participate in special ways in Christ's priesthood according to their role as Deacons, Priests or Bishops.

Once a priest one is always a priest.

Human dedication may fail but God's act of consecration does not.

The 'character' of these Sacraments is conferred even if the recipients are in an unworthy state (sin).

Marriage is similar although it does not confer a permanent 'Character' – the consecration only last until the death of one of the partners.

If Sacraments are received in an unworthy state, the graces associated with them are not conferred, but they can be reinstated (come to life) upon reconciliation with God.

### **The nature of the Sacramental Sign (CCC 1145 – 1152)**

In the celebration of the Sacraments a variety of symbolic objects or substances, together with words, combine to form the symbolic action.

This is known as the 'matter' of the Sacrament.

In every Sacrament there is a 'core' element which must always be enacted for the Sacrament to be valid. Other actions, symbols and preparation rites may be dispensed with in cases of emergency e.g. imminent death of a baby.

However few things are more detrimental to spiritual life than 'minimalism' which impoverishes worship and denudes liturgical celebrations of their emotive and inspirational powers.

The symbolic actions of the sacramental rites, whether essential or ancillary, can be and are used by God to make us more open to the grace He offers in the Sacraments.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the faithful should be able to easily understand the sacramental signs and should regularly frequent those Sacraments, which were constituted to nourish Christian Life. (S.C. 5)

It is the Church's role to regulate the celebration of the Sacraments. The Church has considerable freedom to specify and vary the details of sacramental rites just as long as the 'core' element is maintained and the rites are appropriate to the nature of the Sacrament and its meaning .

It is the Catechist's role to draw out the meaning and the full significance of such symbolism and to relate it to its origin in the Scriptures:-

e.g. The use of oil (Chrism) in the commissioning of priests, prophets and kings in Israel.

The imposition of hands and the immersing/pouring of water etc.

### **Sacraments and Ministry (CCC 1136 – 1144)**

Every Sacrament is an act of Jesus Christ, by which through the ministry of His Church, He communicates to us the fruits of His redemption.

The earthly minister is therefore an essential of the sacramental sign – it is he who represents the priestly activity of Christ.

The ministers specially consecrated to perform these functions, acting as visible representatives of Christ to the Church, are those in Holy Orders.

Only Bishops can confer Holy Orders, and are the normal ministers in the case of Confirmation, but this role can be delegated to a priest.

In case of an emergency anyone can baptise.

One great exception to the above is in the Sacrament of Marriage, where the couple are the ministers – sharing their mutual consent ‘by which they signify and share **(Eph 5:32)** the mystery of the faithful love between Christ and His Church.

The Priest is present as an official witness of the Church.

### **Word and Sacrament (CCC 1153 – 1155)**

The Church follows its mission by the proclamation of the Word of God and the celebration of the Sacraments. The two are intrinsically connected

All sacramental rites make provision for the proclamation of the Word.

### **Sacraments and Communal celebration (CCC 1136 – 1140)**

All the Sacraments are directed at individuals but they are not merely private ceremonies.

Their expression should be as an expression of the corporate worship, which serves to bind the community together in harmony.

Sacraments are not merely ‘performed’ but ‘celebrated’.

It is highly desirable therefore that the involvement of the whole Church should be reflected in the communal nature of sacramental celebration.

However there are a number of practical obstacles to this but it should be the ideal to be aimed at.

Sacramental celebrations should not be seen as merely ‘social occasions’ – the religious equivalent of a Barn Dance or Cheese and Wine Party.

They should be an occasion when we are united with Christ in His priestly work.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (A)**

## **Chapter 4...Theology of the Eucharist**

### **Aim**

To clarify the main points of Catholic Doctrine on the Eucharist

### **The Last Supper (CCC 1337 – 1340)**

Every year the Jews celebrate the Passover to remember their liberation from slavery and the establishment of the Covenant.

The Passover meal began with the blessing of bread which was then passed around – and the meal would finish with the passing around of the ‘cup of blessing’ – a cup of wine.

At the Last Supper Jesus added to the normal blessings, words identifying the bread as His ‘Body’ and the wine as His ‘Blood’.

He then gave instructions to “Do this in memory of me”.

Jesus established a new celebration, with a new meaning, which His disciples were to perpetuate.

### **The link with the Crucifixion (CCC 1322 – 1323, 1365 – 1367)**

There is a clear connection with Jesus’ words and actions at the Last Supper and His Crucifixion – particularly as they are linked so close in time.

St. Paul notes (**1 Cor 11:23**) ‘and the night before He was betrayed’.

Each Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass also use phrases that link the two events together.

The phrase ‘His Body given for us’ and ‘His Blood poured out for us’ assert the identity between the ritual and the sacrifice of the Cross.

All four accounts in the NT refer to the new ‘Covenant’ in My Blood (**Mt 26:28, Mk 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor 11:25**)

The pouring out of blood links with the OT covenant where Moses in a sacrifice on Mt. Sinai sprinkled the people with blood as a sign of their participation (**Ex 24:5 – 8**).

Now Jesus is inaugurating a New Covenant established by a more perfect sacrifice –the sacrifice of Himself on Calvary.

The Eucharist no less than the Crucifixion, is presented as a sacrificial event, connected to the establishment of a covenant.

### **Anamnesis (Memorial) (CCC1341 – 1344, 1362 – 1364)**

One of the keys to understanding the Eucharist is the concept of it being a ‘memorial’ – “Do this in memory of me” (**1 Cor 11:24 – 25**)

This is the Church’s justification for continuing to celebrate the Eucharist – and in so doing participate in Christ’s sacrifice for our salvation.

### **Eucharist and the Sacrifice of Christ (CCC 1365 – 1367)**

The Church believes that in the death on the Cross, Jesus Christ offered the perfect sacrifice in which He was both priest and victim.

The sacrifice took place once and cannot be repeated.

The Church also asserts that the Eucharist is a true and perfect sacrifice – that what is offered in the Eucharist is what was offered on Calvary.

Jesus Christ’s one and perfect sacrifice is just not a fact of history. Christ remains our eternal High Priest and the perfect oblation, bringing reconciliation with God (**Heb 9:14, 10:14, and 12:24**)

This is surely the significance in the Apocalypse of “ a lamb that seemed to have been sacrificed” (**Rev 5:6**)

Christ’s sacrifice can never be wholly in the past because Christ eternally is the sacrifice, though He dies no more.

The gift of the Eucharist is Christ’s own way of enabling us to participate in the great act of love by which He won our salvation.

In participating in the Eucharist therefore we are able to offer God the perfect sacrifice of praise. (**S.C. 47**)

The Eucharist is Christ’s gift to the Church in which the ‘victory and triumph of His death are again made present’.

By way of sacramental signs and symbols we are able to join with head in His eternal offering of Himself – so that His sacrifice becomes ours also.

### **The Celebration of the Sacrifice**

In the Eucharistic celebration Christ’s role as victim is principally signified by the consecrated species of bread and wine and the words spoken over them by the priest.

In the Eucharist Christ dies no more and the sacrifice is offered without the shedding of blood which took place on Calvary.

The oblation offered through the hands of the earthly minister, is the same victim who died on Calvary – the lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

All those present are called to join with the priest and hence with Christ whom he represents.

As members of Christ’s Body – the Church – all the faithful grow into ever greater union with Him and all He represents.

It is by His sacrifice on Calvary which was ratified in the Resurrection, that Christ wins for us reconciliation and union with God, and it is in the Eucharist that this is most powerfully and continually put into effect.

### **The Bread of Life (CCC 1396 – 1401)**

Communion should not be thought of as just spiritual food for us, but rather as the common food of the whole community and by which we are all bound together in union with Christ.

St. Paul says (**1 Cor 10:17**) “Because there is one Bread, we who are many are one Body, for we partake of one Bread”

The Eucharist is the Sacrament of unity.

The process started with Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation is completed with the Eucharist.

This is not the end however, we need continual ‘nourishment’ by regular reception of the Eucharist/Communion.

### **Pledge of Future Glory (CCC 1402 – 1405)**

In the union it effects between Christ and us, the Eucharist is a foretaste of the perfection of the world to come.

In its character as the common meal of the People of God, it is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to come

### **The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (CCC 1373 – 1374)**

St. Paul in (**1 Cor 11:27**) rebukes the Corinthians for their bad behaviour at the celebration of the Eucharist and warns them ‘ anyone who eats the Bread and drinks the Cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of profaning the Body and Blood of the Lord’.

In John's Gospel **John 6:53 – 56**) those listening to Jesus protested when they heard Him say "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you will not have life in you"

On hearing this some of the disciples left, unable to accept what Jesus said – Jesus makes no attempt to call them back to explain.

Here is a mystery requiring faith – many have tried to rationalise Jesus' words, but the Church has always maintained its faith in the 'real presence' of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

If Christ's presence were only 'symbolic', the whole teaching of the Eucharist as a sacrifice would be severely diminished – the profound identity between the Eucharist and Calvary would be fatally undermined.

### **The Teaching of the Church (CCC1375 – 1377)**

The teaching of the Church is – that in the Eucharist, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the priest, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ Himself – really and substantially present – 'the real presence'.

**-Transubstantiation accepted in faith.**

In the Eucharist/Communion we receive the risen and glorified Christ who is not limited in the ways that we are.

### **Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass (CCC 1378 – 1381)**

The consecration of the bread and wine is a lasting one.

Hence the reservation of 'The Blessed Sacrament' after Mass in the Tabernacle of the Altar.

There are a number of reasons for this:-

- 1) The Sacrament if not totally consumed is always present.
- 2) Its reservation allows for it to be taken to the sick.
- 3) The Sacrament can be the object of worship and devotion e.g. Benediction, Holy Hour and processions such as at Corpus Christi.

These occasions can never rival the celebration of the Mass..

God's presence in the Tabernacle is why we genuflect before it and why due reverence should always be shown in church.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (A)**

## **Chapter 5... The Celebration of the Mass**

### **Aim**

To study the Mass in all its aspects – now that we have a grasp of Sacramentality and the theory of the Eucharist.

### **The Roman Mass (CCC1345 – 1346)**

General structure:-

- 1) The Introductory Rites
- 2) The Liturgy of The Word
- 3) The Liturgy of The Eucharist
- 4) The Concluding Rites

The ‘core’ of the Mass being sections (2) and (3) (**S.C. 56**)

A ministerial greeting “The Lord be with you” highlights these four parts of the Mass

This greeting is given four times during the Mass:-

- 1) At the beginning of the Introductory Rites
- 2) Before the Proclamation of the Gospel
- 3) At the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer
- 4) Before the final blessing and dismissal

This greeting should not be used at other points in the Mass.

The Mass is not a priest’s ‘one man show’ but should include a variety of ministries during the celebration e.g. reading, singing, serving

The purpose being ‘to make the people a unified community’ as the celebration of the Mass is for a collection of the faithful – the Church -and not for a gathering of individuals. The Rites should heighten the awareness of those present to their being ‘The Church’ and that Christ is present – “where two or more are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (**Matt 18:20**)

These rites also have the purpose of preparing the unified community to properly listen to God’s Word and to celebrate the Eucharist.

**N.B. The word and the Sacraments always celebrated together.**

### **The Liturgy of The Word (CCC 1349)**

In the past this part of the Mass often tended to take second place to the celebration of the Eucharist **S.C.** holds that Christ is present in the Liturgy of The Word since it is He Himself who speaks through the Scriptures.

**(S.C. 56)** stresses the unity of The Word and the Eucharist such they form one single act of worship. The faithful are instructed to take part in the entire Mass, highlighting the role of reader (**S.C. 29**) This is not a ministry to be exercised off-handedly!

**N.B.**

- think of the jewelled Gospel Books of the past.
- is there a Gospel procession – holding the Gospel Book high?
- what about the practice of reading from missalettes or bits of paper?

The elements of The Liturgy of The Word are:-

- a) Scripture readings - OT and NT
- b) Responsorial Psalm – prayer
- c) Acclamation and reading of the Gospel
- d) The Homily – explanation and elucidation
- e) The Creed – expression of belief
- f) The Prayers of the Faithful – peoples’ response in prayer
- g) SILENCE – reflection and meditation

The readings and prayers should be exercised slowly and with meaning.

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist (CCC 1350 – 1355)**

This comprises three elements:-

- a) **The preparation of the Gifts**
- b) **The Eucharistic Prayer**
- c) **The Communion Rite**

The purpose is to ‘do this in memory of me’ (**Luke 22:19**) –the greatest response to the Liturgy of The Word.

The structure is similar to the one used by Christ at the Last Supper:-  
**(1Cor 11:23 – 25, Luke 22:19- 20)**

Christ took bread  
Blessed it  
Broke it  
Distributed it

A celebration meal then ensued

Then He took the cup  
Blessed it  
Distributed it

The intervening meal of the NT was dropped from the celebration early in the Church’s history.

The above format is now contracted to the ‘Four Action shape’

- 1) Taking of bread and wine – preparation of the gifts
- 2) Blessing of bread and wine – Eucharistic Prayer
- 3) Breaking of bread – fractionating of host
- 4) Distribution of consecrated bread and wine – Communion

#### **1) Preparation of the Gifts**

The Church offers not mere bread and wine but the sacrifice of ‘His only Son’ - ‘the acceptable sacrifice that brings salvation of the whole world’ (**Eucharistic Prayer 4**)

**N.B.** The altar should remain bare (other than perhaps the Gospel Book) up to this point when the Chalice, Corporal and Purificator are placed on the altar – this is because the altar is a symbol of Christ, the cornerstone.

A procession of the gifts is recommended – whatever is brought to the altar should be able to be shared.

It is also recommended that the faithful should receive the Body of Christ with hosts consecrated at the same Mass. It is also strongly recommended that Communion be received under both kinds whenever possible.

The bread and wine are signs of ‘man’s labour’ and ‘the work of human hands’ – and signify also the transformation of man’s labour and life.



## 2) The Eucharistic Prayer

The central point of the Mass, having 8 main elements:-

a) Thanksgiving

This is expressed in the Preface – there are special Prefaces for seasons and feasts (in total there over 80!) many taken from ancient rites.

b) The Acclamation (The Sanctus)

Here we join all the heavenly army in praising God – a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy (**S.C. 8**)

The Sanctus is based upon **Isaiah 6:3 and Psalm 117:25 – 26**)

c) The Epiclesis

The calling down of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts:- 2 Parts

- 1) So that the bread and wine maybe transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.
- 2) That by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, the people may themselves be filled with the Holy Spirit and united with the One Body of Christ.

During part (a) the priest extends his hands over the gifts

d) The Narrative of Institution

These are the words of the Consecration.

The acclamation after the Consecration follows an Eastern Rite practice – there are 4 options.

**N.B.** One of the acclamations addresses ‘The Son’ and not ‘The Father’ who is addressed in all 4 Eucharistic Prayers, and only one refers directly to the celebration of the Eucharist!!

e) The Anamnesis (Memorial)

This means the memorial and remembrance of Christ’s work – especially His Death, resurrection and Ascension.

Each of the four Eucharistic Prayers refer to this and His coming in Glory.

This is the Sacrifice of the now risen Christ made present on the altar, whilst we await His second coming and see Him face to face.

f) The Offering

We now offer the Father the Sacrifice of His Son – together and with whom we should offer ourselves (**S.C. 7**) thus associating the Church with Himself in glorifying God.

g) The Intercessions

The Church prays for the Pope and local Bishop and Clergy, showing her unity and catholicity. She prays for the whole Church and its members who have died – in union with all the Saints.

h) The Doxology

This is the summation of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The ‘Amen’ at the end is our assent to the whole of the Eucharistic Prayer

i) The Communion Rite

Consists of the following elements:-

- a) The Lord’s Prayer
- b) The prayer for peace and the sign of peace
- c) The Breaking of Bread
- d) The commingling (bread added to wine – Body to Blood)
- e) The private preparation of the priest
- f) The invitation to communion (This is the Lamb of God....)
- g) The prayer after Communion

(N.B. See notes on the above in the Course Handbook)

j) The Concluding Rite

Consists of the Blessing and the Dismissal – the purpose being to send each member of the congregation out to do good works and to spread the Good News.

In other words the Eucharistic Celebration must have an effect upon our daily lives.

There are nine Official Eucharistic Prayers:-

Prayers 1 to 4 – the four in common usage.

Two prayers for reconciliation

And Three for Masses with children

History of Eucharistic Prayers 1 – 4

The origins of the 1<sup>st</sup> EP (The Roman Canon) are hazy. It is known to have existed in the fourth century. Unique distinctions are phrases such as :

and                           ‘In union with the whole Church’  
                                  ‘Father accept this offering’

It is recommended for use on those days for which there is a special form of prayers (additions to the EP acknowledging a certain feast).

The phrase ‘Through Christ Our Lord you give us all these gifts....’ Is a little odd but is a hangover from the time when it was customary to offer gifts other than bread and wine.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> EP is based upon a model by St. Hippolytus (AD215) – there were no fixed texts at that time. The original contained no Sanctus or Intercessions.

Pope Paul VI decided that the Institution Narrative and the Doxology should be the same for all four EPs

This prayer is recommended for weekdays.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> EP is a modern composition first proposed by Dom Cyprian Vagaggini in 1966.

Two points:

- 1) There is a specific mention of Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming
- 2) There is a special text provided for Masses for the dead.

This prayer is recommended for Sundays and Feast Days.

The 4<sup>th</sup> EP is also based upon a scheme by Dom Vagaggini. It is based upon the Eastern Rite Eucharistic Prayer – each having its own Preface.

This EP should never be used with any preface other than its own – and hence should never be used for Feast Days or during Liturgical Seasons having their own Preface.

This EP also mentions Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and also ‘His descent amongst the dead..’

This prayer is recommended for a congregation that has a good grasp of Scripture.