

Unit One: Introduction and Foundations

1. Introduction:

Vatican II and the Renewal of the Liturgy

The Liturgy Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) was promulgated in December 1963; the most significant liturgical document of any church to be produced this century, and the one that affected our catholic lives more than any other. We should ask four questions of the document:

1. Why was reform of the liturgy necessary?

- The Liturgical movement:
 - *revealed the authentic spirit of the Roman liturgy in liturgical sources, teachings of the fathers, the study of scripture*
- Changing pastoral needs:
 - *the liturgy has always adapted to changing cultural and social conditions - Vatican II completed the efforts of Trent and the last 400 years to put people more in touch with the liturgy*

2. What did it seek to achieve?

The function of liturgy (stated in SC§2:)

- *To build the members of the church into the Lord's holy temple, into a spiritual dwelling for God*
- *To strengthen us in preaching Christ*

The purpose of the reform

- *to make this Christian ideal more capable of realisation.*
- *to recover and strengthen the link between LITURGY, LIFE and MISSION*

3. What were the principles by which the reform was to be carried out?

Participation, the primary aim (14)

- *Revision of texts and rites (21)*
- *Recovery of scripture (24)*
- *Communal nature of liturgy (26-27)*
- *Ministry of all (29)*
- *Liturgy as formation (33)*
- *Use of vernacular languages (36)*
- *Adaptation (27)*
- *Liturgical formation (41)*

4. What is the Council's understanding and vision?

The mystery of our salvation is the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Liturgy makes this sacred mystery present to us.

It reveals the Church as the body of Christ.

It renews the world as we carry out into the world the mystery that we celebrate.

- Thus it is the source and summit of the Christian life, though not its totality; in the Council's vision Life, Liturgy and Mission hold together.

II. Foundations of Christian Worship

All worship is a human phenomenon using ritual and symbol:

Why *do* people worship? Because of their experience of the transcendent; which leads to *Celebration* of that experience in *Ritual*.

1. Ritual Celebration

Features of ritual celebration:

- *Group activity*
- *Structured activity showing stylisation, repetition, rules*
- *Its purpose: establishing group and personal identity; the renewal of values, handing on of tradition, contact with the 'myth'*
 - *Ritual is vital in healthy personal development*
 - *Ritual is at the root of what it is to be human*

2. Symbol

At the heart of all ritual is Symbol:

water, oil, bread and wine, light, dark, touch and smell.

Ritual and symbol are not secondary features; without them there is no human existence and therefore no worship. Recovery of the power of symbol is vital.

Christian worship has its own specific content:

3. The Paschal Mystery

The central mystery of our faith

into which we are inserted through our Christian initiation and which we celebrate in the eucharist and every act of Christian worship and prayer. The primary time for its celebration is The Lord's Day, Sunday. (SC §106)

4. The Liturgical Assembly

The paschal mystery is celebrated by Christians gathering together. The assembly is the most fundamental liturgical reality.

Its evolution:

- *The assembly in the Hebrew scriptures: Qahal (ekklesia)*
- *The New Testament*
- *Vatican II: Lumen Gentium §2*
- *SC §41 - the church is most clearly church when gathered for worship*
- *The presences of Christ: SC7, GIRM7*

Participation

An ancient notion: modern revival by Pius X (1903): active participation in the church's worship is 'primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.' (SC passim, esp. § 14)

6. Service and Ministries

Ministries are required by the Assembly.

Each ministry has its particular task (SC28); which is determined by

- *the needs of the assembly*
- *capacity of the individual*
- *sign value of the person*

Some types of ministry:

- *president*
- *service to the word*

- *service to the altar*
- *service to the people*

7. Authority, Law, Adaptation

How far should liturgical assembly be organised

- *old style of rubric*
- *new style of guidelines, norms and rubrics.*

Celebrating 'correctly' is not the same as celebrating 'well'; and vice versa.

Documentation and Bibliography

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