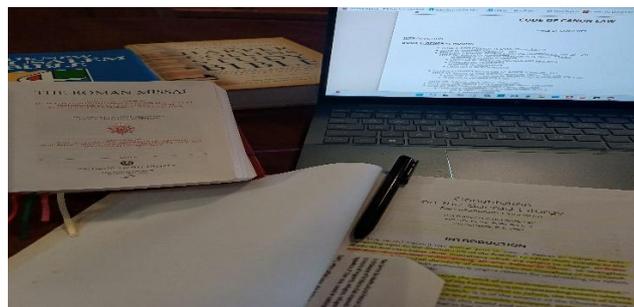
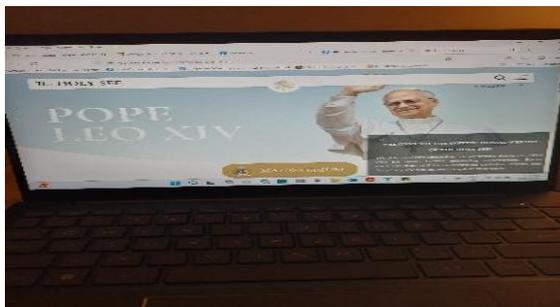


Lay Guardians of the Sacred Liturgy Without Borders *KNOWLEDGE COURAGE ACTION*

LITURGICAL LITERACY



The sources of knowledge of the TRUTH of and in the sacred liturgy are the juridical and magisterial documents coming from the Holy See rooted in the Scriptures and Traditions of the Church.

LITURGICAL LITERACY: WHAT IS

Liturgical literacy is, simply put, knowledge of the truth of and in the sacred liturgy.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, a liturgy properly celebrated is a requirement, a *sine qua non*, of *actuosa participatio*, or the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful.¹

Hence, liturgical literacy has two dimensions: a clerical and a secular dimension.

¹ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, par 38

When the Vatican II embarked on the reform and renewal of the sacred liturgy, it was the aim of the Church that “all the people of God should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy” as this is “their right and duty by reason of their baptism”. The pastors of souls were given the responsibility of providing the necessary instruction to lead the people to participate in the liturgical celebration fully, consciously and actively. But for the pastors or clergy to instruct the lay faithful, it is indispensable that they must first be “thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy”.² It was therefore demanded that the clergy acquire a thorough liturgical literacy to enable them to properly celebrate the sacred liturgy and instruct the lay faithful.

Clerical (Clergy) Liturgical Literacy

To acquire liturgical literacy, it is critical that the clergy receive appropriate and adequate liturgical instruction. To this end, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) dedicated a whole section (II) in Chapter 1 to ensure that the clergy become adept in liturgical literacy. SC 16 requires, among others, that the study of liturgy be considered as a compulsory and major course taught under its “theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects” in seminaries, houses of religious studies and theological faculties. SC 17 requires that in seminaries and houses of religious, the clergy be given a liturgical formation and proper direction in their spiritual life to enable them to fully “understand the sacred rites and take part in them wholeheartedly”. Equally important, they need to be taught “how to observe the liturgical laws”. SC 18 mandates that all the clergy, whether secular or religious, be “helped by every suitable means to understand ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites” and “to live the liturgical life and to share it with the faithful entrusted to their care”.

These mandates of the Council fathers are, by and large, aimed at facilitating the development of liturgical literacy in the clergy whose “principal duty” is to lead the proper celebration of the liturgy.³ It is therefore imperative that the Church be ever more determined

² Vatican II Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (hereafter SC), *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (4 December 1963), art. 14, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2009), 96.

³ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, par. 39; 1983 Code of Canon Law, can 904.

to strictly enforce these mandates by the Council fathers to educate and train the clergy on everything pertaining to the liturgy.

Liturgical literacy enables the clergy to appreciate that the liturgy is not a mere “series of actions put together in harmonious unity” but a “deeply interior communion with Christ ... conforming to Christ, the High Priest, and His sacrificial and salvific action”. Liturgical literacy will teach the clergy that *ars celebrandi* is not about having “the freedom to do as one pleases ... but the freedom to be united to the priestly mission of Christ”. Archbishop Ranjith refers to this disposition as the “three levels” of *ars celebrandi*: interiority, obedience to norms and devoutness.⁴

Liturgical literacy will enable the clergy to intelligibly express the prayer texts of the liturgy especially those said aloud using the “pace, volume, enunciation, rhythm, accent (emphasis), pitch and intent of the presider” appropriate to the content and context of the text being prayed or proclaimed.⁵ These elements of expression by the presider enable the faithful to coherently understand what is being said and heard, and together with the actions and gestures in the celebration, immerse themselves in the proper disposition required in the full, conscious and active participation.

Liturgical literacy, therefore, requires a thorough knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the liturgy in its theological, historical, pastoral, spiritual and juridical aspects. This leads to fidelity and commitment to the proper celebration which in turn empowers the faithful to participate in the celebration actively, fully, and consciously aware of what they are doing.

Secular (Lay People of God) Liturgical Literacy

While the clergy are required to have liturgical literacy as mandated by the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, there is no provision for the lay people of God to acquire liturgical literacy. Apart from the catechesis required when the *Novus Ordo* was first used to teach the lay people the gestures, responses and prayers, to enable them to participate fully, consciously and actively, there is no other expectation for the laity to learn anything more about the liturgy.

⁴ Ranjith, “Toward an *Ars Celebrandi*.”

⁵ Cf: Clare V Johnson, “Liturgical Intelligibility in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” in *Vatican Council II Reforming Liturgy*, (Adelaide SA: ATF Theology, 2013), 56-57.

However, with the current state of liturgical celebrations around the global Catholic world fraught with liturgical abuse, the participation of the lay people of God is now necessary, not just in the pews but beyond the pews, to guard the Eucharist from every and any irreverence or distortion and to stop liturgical abuse. To be able to do this, the lay people of God need to be liturgy literate. They need to acquire liturgical literacy just as the clergy do.

To carry out this mission, it is critical that the Lay Guardians of the Sacred Liturgy Without Borders have the correct and adequate knowledge of the sacred liturgy, that is, that they are liturgy literate. Hence, the Lay Guardians will enable its followers to acquire liturgical literacy through education and formation programs such as the Liturgical Literacy Program.

To this end, the Lay Guardians of the Sacred Liturgy Without Borders through its creator has developed the Liturgical Literacy Program (LLP) to teach the lay people of God the knowledge that they need to enable them to identify liturgical improprieties or liturgical abuse in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. The framework of the Liturgical Literacy Program is based on the mandate of the Council fathers in the document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* for the priestly formation as you will see in the Basic Framework document in the Liturgical Literacy page. Please visit the website to gain more information about the Liturgical Literacy Program (LLP).

Though the Lay Guardians is an initiative of LAY Catholic faithful, our modus operandi will always be a collaborative one, in which we will be working closely with the Church, walking together with God through Jesus Christ in the Church, and for the Church, in the service of its evangelizing mission, accompanied by the Holy Spirit. This walking together of the People of God, the lay and the ordained in the hierarchy of the Church, is the whole idea of Pope Francis' Synodality in the Church. The Lay Guardians' proposed Quadrant Initiative (QI) will be a model of Synodality in the liturgical life of a Synodal Church.

With the right **KNOWLEDGE**, the Lay Guardians will have the **COURAGE** that will lead them to **ACTION** to stop liturgical abuse.