



GUARDIANS OF THE SACRED LITURGY - WITHOUT BORDERS

LITURGICAL LITERACY PROGRAM (LLP)

MODULE II



THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE LITURGY

Introduction

The aim of this Module is to impart some basic and practical knowledge of the theological foundation of the sacred liturgy, the Holy Eucharist, the Mass. It is not the intention of this Module to present a detailed account of God's instructions on how to celebrate the worship of God in the ancient times, rather, to demonstrate that celebrating the act of worship properly was of immense importance to the Father that he laid down some rules in the rituals for worship. This validates the foundation on why the rules and norms of celebrating the act of worship, the liturgy, were developed through the movement of the Spirit of God in His "chosen people", the Israelites, and through the centuries, in the *Consilium*, the bishops of Vatican II who were specially called to complete the task of reforming the liturgy. The theology explains why in the modern times, these rules and norms must be observed. Details of God's instructions on worship rites and rituals, and appurtenances are cited in biblical references below.

In any discussion about the liturgy, it is imperative to understand its theological foundation. Understanding the theology of the sacred liturgy would lead to a better appreciation of the *raison d'être* for conforming to liturgical rules and norms for its proper celebration.

This module is not about a fairly new approach in the study of liturgy called Liturgical Theology which is anchored on the Christian tradition where liturgy is considered by liturgical theologians as “the primary source of theology,” *lex orandi, lex credendi*.¹ Rather, this part explores the beginning of the sacred liturgy with theology as the primary source of the liturgy; Theology in this sense being the study of God, his nature and his relationship to the world.² This discussion of the theology of liturgy is discovering the etymology of liturgy not merely linguistically as a word but tracing the roots of liturgical celebrations in the Scripture and Tradition.

What is Liturgy?

The word “liturgy” has various meanings. Liturgy comes from two Greek words, “people” and “works” or combined, “public works”, a term used to refer to civil authority or public office. In the context of religion, liturgy is a public worship. Hence, the term liturgy is used by different denominations of faith and religion. Different Protestant denominations use the word liturgy. Recently, I came across the term Liturgical Literacy used by the Reformed Church of America to promote their liturgical celebration. Sounds familiar?

The liturgy that we will learn about in this Liturgical Literacy Program (LLP) is the sacred liturgy of the Catholic faith, the liturgy of the Latin Rite, the Roman Missal, the New Order or as popularly known, the *Novus Ordo*, as reformed by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council or Vatican II for short. In the Catholic faith, the term “liturgy” includes the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and the Liturgy of the Hours aka Divine Office.

How this secular word came into ecclesiastical vocabulary is uncertain but the first time the word *liturgia* appeared in official Latin documents in the context of the Mass was during the pontificate of Gregory XVI (+1846).³ Hence, liturgy has become synonymous with worship. The *Sacrosanctum Concilium* or Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) describes the sacred

¹ Joris Geldhof, “Liturgical Theology,” Oxford University Press, Christianity, Theology and Philosophy of Religion. Accessed October 30, 2017, <http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-14>.

² Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Accessed October 30, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/theology>.

³ Anscar J Chupungco, OSB, “Introduction to the Liturgy: A Definition of Liturgy,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol 1, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 3

liturgy as “above all things the worship of the divine Majesty” which “contains many instructions for the faithful”.⁴ In this sense, liturgy refers broadly to the texts and rites used in the worship of God⁵ or to the Church’s rituals, prayers and worship practices⁶.

We will learn more about the true nature and essence of the sacred liturgy in later modules, Modules IV and V, moving forward.

Old Testament

Discussions of the theological foundation of liturgy almost always start with the Christian tradition from the early centuries after the events of Pentecost. But liturgy, its celebration and the rites, rituals and its trappings, started before the Christian era in Jewish worship.⁷

During the time of Moses, God instituted the Passover, the foundation of Christ’s Eucharistic celebration, and gave instructions, which Moses referred to as the “rite” (Ex 12:24), on how the Passover is to be celebrated. But first, let us go back to the time of Moses and learn the relationship between Moses and the Passover, the precursor of the sacred liturgy in the contemporary time.

Moses

Moses was born of a Hebrew (Israelite) slave and raised as an Egyptian royalty by the daughter of the Pharaoh. Moses was born at a time when the Pharaoh was overcome with fear that the Israelites could one day take over the Egyptians as the Israelites were rapidly growing in number. The Pharaoh decreed that every newborn male Israelite be thrown into the river but the female babies were allowed to live. So, when Moses was born, his Hebrew mother put him in a papyrus basket and left him amid the reeds in the river. When the daughter of the Pharaoh went to bathe in the river, she saw the basket with a baby crying and decided to take him. The maid of the Pharaoh’s daughter who happened to be the sister of Moses offered to get a Hebrew nurse to help look after the baby Moses. The Hebrew nurse was the biological mother of Moses who nursed him for the Pharaoh’s daughter. (Ex 1-2:10)

⁴ Vatican II Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (hereafter SC), *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (4 December 1963), par. 33, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2009), 99

⁵ SC, 21

⁶ Geldhof, “Liturgical Theology.”

⁷ Adolf Adam, “Chapter Two: History of the Liturgy,” in *Foundations of Liturgy: An Introduction to its History and Practice*, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 12.

When Moses grew up, the nurse who was his biological mother brought him back to the Pharaoh's daughter who raised him as her son. Moses was raised as an Egyptian and he saw the cruelty of the Egyptians toward the Israelites treating the Israelites with contempt and abuse. He killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand as he thought no one was looking. But when he later learned that a Hebrew saw him and threatened to expose him, he fled Egypt and went to Midian where he met one of the daughters of the priest who became his wife. One day, as he was tending the flock of his father-in-law, he came to Mt Horeb, the mountain of God, and saw the burning bush. Out of curiosity, he went closer to check but he heard the voice of God. This was his first encounter with God who gave him instructions to go back to Egypt as He heard about the oppressive treatment of the Israelites by the Egyptians. God gave Moses and his brother, Aaron, instructions to go to the Pharaoh and deliver God's messages and warnings. Moses with his new family, and Aaron returned to Egypt and began his negotiations with the Pharaoh under the guidance of God. As the Pharaoh was so stubborn and refused to free the Israelites from the bondage of slavery, God sent nine plagues but the Pharaoh was unrelentless. The tenth and final plague was the death of all first-born male Egyptians, human and beast alike. (Ex 2:11-3:12, 4:18-20; 7:14-11:10; 12:29-32)

The First Passover

Before God delivered this final plague of death to first-born male Egyptians, He instituted the Passover to spare the Israelites from the plague of death. This is how the instruction of how to celebrate the Passover was given to Moses and Aaron in the book of Exodus.

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb^l for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to

eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

¹² *“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. ¹⁴ “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance. ¹⁵ For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.*

¹⁷ *“Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. ¹⁸ In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. ¹⁹ For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel. ²⁰ Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”*

God specified a lamb “without defect (blemish) ” as the “Passover sacrifice to the Lord” to be eaten with unleavened (no yeast) bread. God instructed Moses to command the Israelites to celebrate the Passover as a “day of remembrance,” as a “festival to the Lord” that must be observed in a particular way throughout the generations as a “lasting (perpetual) ordinance”. (Ex 12:1-16)

God also specified some restrictions on who can celebrate the Passover. Only the circumcised in the household can celebrate the Passover. Those who wish to participate in the Passover must first be initiated into the family or household by circumcision. By the same token, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, only those who have been initiated into the Catholic Church through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are eligible to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

Passover Restrictions

⁴³ *The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover meal: “No foreigner may eat it. ⁴⁴ Any slave you have bought may eat it after you have circumcised him, ⁴⁵ but a temporary resident or a hired worker may not eat it.*

⁴⁶ *“It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. ⁴⁷ The whole community of Israel must celebrate it. ⁴⁸ “A foreigner residing among you who wants to celebrate the Lord’s Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it. ⁴⁹ The same law applies both to the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you.”*

⁵⁰ *All the Israelites did just what the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.*

God also gave directions for other matters in the worship of God such as the furnishings: altar (Ex 20:22-26; 27:1-20; 30:1-10), tabernacle (Ex 25:1-9; 26:1-36), table for the bread of the Presence (Ex 25:23-30), vestments for the priesthood (Ex 28:1-43), rites for the ordination of priests (Ex 29:1-46). The rituals for worship were also given by God and recorded in the Book of Leviticus called the “Priests’ Manual” while the Book of Numbers prescribed the religious rituals for worship when the camp was in motion.⁸

God affirmed the importance of following his ordinances to Solomon after the completion of the house of God in Jerusalem. (1 Kgs 6:11-13) During this time, the Passover had not been observed from the reign of the Judges even to the reign of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. During the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah after Solomon’s death, he ordered the celebration of the Passover to be restored in accordance with the Book of the Covenant. The Passover was then celebrated in Jerusalem in accordance with the “words of the law that were written in the book” by the Israelites (2 Kgs 23:21-25) until the time of Jesus and beyond.

⁸ The Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV, Student edition, San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2006), 150, 194.

Third Commandment: Thou Shalt Keep Holy the Lord's Day

After Moses and the Israelites left Egypt, they embarked on the long journey to the promised land. It was on this long journey that God gave the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, to Moses at Mt Sinai. It was on this occasion that God institutionalized the celebration of the Lord's Day as the third Commandment: "**Thou shalt keep holy the Lord's Day.**" This was after the celebration of the First Passover as they continued their journey to the promised land.

Ordering the Lord's Day as the third Commandment, God was highlighting the importance of the worship practice of God passed on to Moses in accordance with His instructions during the Passover celebrations as I mentioned above.

"Keep HOLY the Lord's Day." What did God mean by HOLY? Simply put, it means keeping the celebration in accordance with all his specific instructions given to Moses and written in the Book of Laws.

This strict obedience to what is written in the Book of Laws in the Old Testament remains in place to be faithfully observed in the contemporary times, in the current liturgical laws, rules and norms as written in the Vatican II documents (e.g. *Sacramentum Concilium*), Code of Canon Law 1983, and the liturgical documents issued by the Holy See from time to time.

New Testament

Passover Observance

Fast forward to the time of Jesus, two major events in his life highlighted the significance of the Passover commanded by God to Moses to be celebrated as a "perpetual ordinance", carrying the tradition of the Israelites throughout the generations some 2,000 years prior. (Ex 12:1-28; 43-49) There were many instances in the New Testament where the Passover was mentioned and celebrated but two events were noteworthy to mention.

When Jesus was twelve years old, his family went to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of the Passover, as they do every year, as commanded by God to Moses and Aaron. On the way back, Mary and Joseph noticed that Jesus was missing from the returning pilgrims. Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem to find Jesus in the temple "sitting among the teachers and asking questions". When Mary asked Jesus why he stayed and did not tell them, he said that

he needed to be in his Father's house. Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus meant but Mary took everything that Jesus said in her heart. (Luke 2:41-52)

The second time the Passover was highlighted was at the beginning of the celebration of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

The Last Supper: The Institution of the Holy Eucharist (Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; Lk 22:7-20)

¹² *On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"*

¹³ *So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'* ¹⁵ *He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."*

¹⁶ *The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.*

¹⁷ *When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."*

¹⁹ *They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"*

²⁰ *"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me.*

²¹ *The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."*

²² *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body. Do this in remembrance of me. "*

²³ *Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.*

²⁴ *“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins,” he said to them.* ²⁵ *“Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”*

At the Last Supper before his suffering and death on the cross, while he was celebrating the Passover with his disciples, he instituted the Eucharist. This is to be the beginning of the celebration of the Passover of the new covenant except that instead of the Passover lamb as the sacrifice, Jesus was to be the sacrificial lamb, a lamb without blemish. At this Passover celebration, Jesus instituted the rituals – taking of the bread and cup, prayer/blessing/thanksgiving, breaking of the bread, giving the bread and sharing the cup with his disciples --- to be observed by his disciples and the generations to come which were to be the foundation of the liturgy of the Eucharist. “Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus said. (Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20)

In the Passover of the Old Testament, the sacrificial lamb which was the offering to God was consumed (eaten) by the chosen people of God, the Israelites, to save their firstborn from the final plague of death. God specified the rituals and rites that must be observed to celebrate the Passover properly. It was a sacrament of redemption ---- the firstborn males of the Israelites were redeemed by the sacrificial lamb offered to God and they lived. (Ex 12:1-20)

The Last Supper, the last Passover celebrated by Jesus, prefigured the ultimate sacrifice of the lamb without blemish whence instead of the proverbial “sacrificial lamb” in the Old Testament, the “sacrificial lamb” in the New Testament, the new covenant, was no other than the Son of God himself. At the Last Passover celebrated by Jesus and his twelve apostles, the “lamb without blemish” has not yet been sacrificed. The ultimate sacrifice was consummated the following day with the passion, crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

Hence, the words of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper:

“Take it; this is my body. Do this in remembrance of me. ” ²³ *Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”*

was accomplished when his physical body was offered on the cross.

The words and gestures of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, the last celebration of the Passover of the old covenant between God and the Israelites, the “chosen people”, are repeated in the liturgical rites and rituals of the New Order of the Mass, the *Novus Ordo*. Before the Presider utters the words of Anamnesis (remembrance or memory),

he first says the prayer of Epiclesis, that is invoking the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to transubstantiate it to the Body and Blood of Christ. This is how the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ:

101. He joins his hands and, holding them extended over the offerings, says: Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, He joins his hands and makes the Sign of the Cross once over the bread and the chalice together, saying: so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He joins his hands.

102. In the formulas that follow, the words of the Lord should be pronounced clearly and distinctly, as the nature of these words requires. At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion, He takes the bread and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues: he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: He bows slightly.

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

He shows the consecrated host to the people, places it again on the paten, and genuflects in adoration. (EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER II 27) 103. After this, he continues: In a similar way, when supper was ended, He takes the chalice and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues: he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying: He bows slightly.

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

He shows the chalice to the people, places it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration. (The words in red are called rubrics or instructions for the priest.)

It is evident that the Liturgy of the Mass that we celebrate today has its origin directly from God the Father in ancient times of the Old Testament with the “chosen people”, the Israelites through to Christ in the New Testament with the broader community of, not only the Israelites or Jews, but to the rest of the people of God.

After the resurrection of Jesus and before he ascended into heaven, Jesus commissioned his eleven apostles to continue the work that he had started, to spread the Good News of salvation to the world, to make disciples of all nations instructing the people everything that Jesus has taught them, and to administer the sacraments. (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:47-48) Jesus also instructed the apostles to ensure that everything that was said about the messiah in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms is fulfilled. (Luke 24:44)

After Pentecost, the apostles set out to do what they were commanded to do by Jesus. Thousands of people were baptized and became part of the new community of believers in Christ. They continued to worship God in the temple according to traditional Jewish customs. However, they added distinctive rituals they learned from their experience with Jesus: faithfully listening to the apostle's teachings and stories about their experience with Jesus (liturgy of the Word), sharing in the fellowship of the breaking of the bread and immersing themselves in prayers praising God (liturgy of the Eucharist). They looked after each other by selling their assets and shared the proceeds with those who are in need. (Acts 2:42-47) These rituals which were initially held in private homes⁹ became the precursor of what we now call the liturgy of the Mass.

The *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, aptly and unambiguously explains the theology of the sacred liturgy in the following terms.

"The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life". For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth "the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church",¹⁰ "through which the work of our redemption is accomplished"¹¹.

"Just as Christ was sent by the Father, so also He sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This He did that, by preaching the gospel to every creature, they might proclaim that the Son of God, by His death and resurrection, had freed us from the

⁹ Adam, "Chapter Two: History of the Liturgy," 13.

¹⁰ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in *The Documents of Vatican II* (St Pauls Publication) 2009, 93

¹¹ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 91

*power of Satan and from death, and brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose also was that they might accomplish the work of salvation which they had proclaimed, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. Thus by baptism men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him; they receive the spirit of adoption as sons "in which we cry: Abba, Father" (Rom. 8 :15), and thus become true adorers whom the Father seeks. In like manner, as often as they eat the supper of the Lord they proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes. For that reason, on the very day of Pentecost, when the Church appeared before the world, "those who received the word" of Peter "were baptized." And "they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of bread and in prayers . . . praising God and being in favor with all the people" (Acts 2:41-47). From that time onwards the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery: reading those things "which were in all the scriptures concerning him" (Luke 24:27), celebrating the eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present", and at the same time giving thanks "to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "in praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit."*¹²

*"To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross", but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20) ."*¹³

*"Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father."*¹⁴

¹² Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 93

¹³ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 93-94

¹⁴ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 94

“Rightly, then, 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.”¹⁵

“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.”¹⁶

“In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory.”¹⁷

In the next module, we will trace the evolution of the sacred liturgy from Tradition after the Apostolic Period to what it is now today.

¹⁵ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 94

¹⁶ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 94

¹⁷ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 94

Guardians of the Sacred Liturgy Without Borders © Copyright 2023

<https://guardiansofthesacredliturgy.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/theological-foundation-v4.pdf>