

# LITURGICAL RENEWAL

## IN TAIWAN

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Two years ago an international symposium took place in Rome which brought together representatives from the many liturgical commissions of the bishops conferences throughout the world, along with other well-known liturgists, and also scholars with expertise in related fields. The meeting was called by the Congregation for Divine Worship, and its purpose was to evaluate what had taken place during the two decades since the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium). - Vatican II's blue-print for the reform and renewal of the liturgy in our times. The meeting lasted five days and explored five basic areas: liturgical language and translation, adaptation to local cultures, pastoral formation and education, the role of the laity, and specific questions relating to local church conditions. It is this five point outline that we intend to follow here in our discussion of the liturgical renewal in Taiwan.

### Liturgical Language and Translation

What the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy proposed was nothing short of a comprehensive reform of the Church's entire liturgical life. In its opening chapter it laid down the principles and guidelines to be followed, after first demonstrating the need for the revision of the Roman Missal, the Roman Ritual, the Divine Office, THE LITURGICAL YEAR and SACRED MUSIC. It also touched upon the need for the renewal of sacred art, indicating in what direction such a renewal should move. The first step in this comprehensive renewal was to be the revision and re-editing of the Eucharistic Rite, as found in the old Roman Missal.

This was to be followed by a similar revision of the other sacramental rites of the Roman Ritual. Needless to say, this represented a very formidable and time-consuming task indeed. In fact, during these past twenty years, the Congregation for Divine Worship has already published over forty new ritual texts as well as numerous other documents relating to liturgical reform. With Vatican II allowing for the introduction of the vernacular language in all liturgical rites, it became the immediate and prime task of all local liturgical commissions to translate and adapt the revised rites into local languages.

The publication of the Missale Romanum - the new Roman Missal for the Celebrant - by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1970 made a significant departure from its predecessor by omitting all scriptural readings. These were published separately in a three volume Lectionary which not only contained the designated readings for Sundays, weekdays, feast days, ordinary and special Masses, but offered many new optional readings to be used at the discretion of the celebrant. There were good reasons for separating the Lectionary from the Roman Missal. It served to give Christians a clearer understanding of the structure of the Mass as both Word and Sacrament. It also helped to clarify the roles of the various ministers during the Eucharistic celebration. The Lectionary in a separate volume, especially when it is reserved at the podium where the Word of God is proclaimed even outside the celebration of Mass, serves to heighten the respect and reverence of Christians for the Sacred Scriptures. Of course, there was a practical reason for the separation as well. It is no longer practically possible to combine the two into one complete volume.

The Congregation followed the publication of the new Roman Missal with an abbreviated, more compact version which came out during the same year. The Missale Parvum was designed as a shorter, more portable version of the Roman Missal, and it included the texts for the liturgical seasons, the feasts of saints, common prayers, and the ordinary of the Mass. Seven years later, in 1977, the Missale Romanum Cum Lectionibus made its appearance. This was issued in four volumes. It, too, is more compact and smaller in size. It also brings the readings and orations back together again in one book and is designated for use when Mass is celebrated

outside of churches and when traveling. In this list of new missals, we should add here the new Rite for the celebration of Mass with Children which came out in 1974, and the Mass for the new Rite of Reconciliation which appeared at about the same time.

Even before the publication of the new Roman Missal in 1970, the Liturgical Commission of the Taiwan Bishops Conference was keeping pace with the liturgical changes by publishing a variety of liturgical books designed to assist the laity in their participation in the Eucharistic liturgy during those early stages when the vernacular was being introduced. The Commission brought out, during this time, a Celebrant's Missal, a Missal for the Laity, a New Edition of Mass Prayers for the Celebrant and the Laity, and a Lectionary for Sundays and Feast Days, as well as a number of works focusing on liturgical reform and renewal. All of these, of course, were in Chinese. After 1970, the Commission began the major task of translating into Chinese the new Missale Romanum. This was accomplished gradually by releasing monthly booklets that kept pace with the changing cycles of the liturgical year. This was used in parishes and other Christian communities on an experimental basis.

In 1982, the Congregation for Divine Worship gave its stamp of approval to the final Chinese edition of the Sunday Missal for the Use of Celebrants and the Sunday Missal for the Use of the Laity. This was followed by the publication of the Daily Missal in two volumes, a set of two for both celebrant and laity. At the same time, the Commission also completed a revision of the Rite for Marriage, Christian Burial and Confirmation, as well as a special missalette for Celebrating the Eucharist with Children.

### *The New Roman Ritual*

The revision of the new Roman Ritual containing the rites for sacraments and sacramental blessings was very extensive. The original Latin revision of the sacraments came out in the form of a series of booklets, with the new rites for baptism published in separate versions: the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and the Rite of Baptism for Children. The first revised sacramental rite to be translated and published in Chinese was the new Rite of

Marriage in 1970. Over the next ten years, all of the sacraments have been celebrated in Taiwan according to new vernacular versions. The most recent sacramental ritual to be published here has been Encountering God, which is a handbook designed for special ministers of the Eucharist and for those who preside at celebrations of the Word. It also includes guidelines and devotional material for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, offering a choice selection of appropriate prayers, readings and hymns. In 1980, the Commission published the Pocket Ritual which contains all the essential prayers and rites of the sacraments for use by ministers in specific pastoral situations.



The most important of non-sacramental rituals published to date here is the Chinese translation of the Divine Office. This translation of the new Latin Liturgias Horarum is entitled Daily Prayer and came out in a three volume edition in 1981. Daily Prayer first appeared in 1978 as a vernacular version of the Divine Office for use by both religious and laity. It included all the prayers but omitted the Office of the Readings; the latter was added to the final 1981 version. Today in Taiwan many lay people and nearly all the Chinese sisters' communities use Daily Prayer when praying the office in public or private.

Other non-sacramental rituals still await translation or are at present in the process of being translated. The rite for sacred vows has been translated in part and used experimentally, as have the rites for the consecration of virgins, the blessing of abbots, the ceremonial of bishops, the consecration of churches and altars, and many other sacramental blessings. From the above, one can readily understand that a large part of liturgical renewal entails the arduous task of translating and editing the new revised

texts. Our greatest difficulty here is in finding skilled translators. Our older clergy have a good working knowledge of Latin but they lack the professional expertise of the translator, who must not only be faithful to the meaning of the original text but render a translation that is at once comprehensible and tasteful in its use of language. It is hoped that the Church will make every effort to train experts in this field.

### Adaptation to Local Culture

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in articles 37 to 40 encourages the adaptation of the liturgy to indigenous cultures in order that it might take on characteristics of the local church and tailor itself to the needs of its people. Indigenization is never a simple task in itself, but it becomes even more complex when faced with the richness of the Chinese cultural heritage with its manifold rites and ceremonies. Frankly speaking, up to now we have met with little real success in this area in Taiwan. The Bishops Conference, in accordance with article 40 of the Constitution, has established four centres for the study of feasible ways to adapt the liturgy to local conditions and also a liturgical study group to promote and foster indigenization. But many of their schemes are still very much in the planning stages of development. The Commission itself has suggested three areas of focus for the Eucharistic celebration: solemn celebrations with many participants, parish celebrations, and small group celebrations. The basic principle remains the same: to keep the inner structure of the rites while adapting them to local cultural expressions. Examples of this are the substitution of the bow for the kiss as a means of showing reverence, the offering of incense in the Chinese manner, and the celebrant turning his back to the people during the rite of sacrifice. In addition to these minor adaptations, the Commission has also sought to christianize major feasts of the local lunar calendar by providing special Masses for such occasions as the Chinese New Year, the Ching Ming festival, and the Harvest Moon festival. The marriage and burial rites of our people are especially rich in ceremony, and while we have made certain adaptations in these areas, more can still be done. In 1975, the Bishops Conference approved on a temporary basis, the rite for the veneration of ancestors,

and this is now used by most parishes in conjunction with the Chinese New Year celebrations.

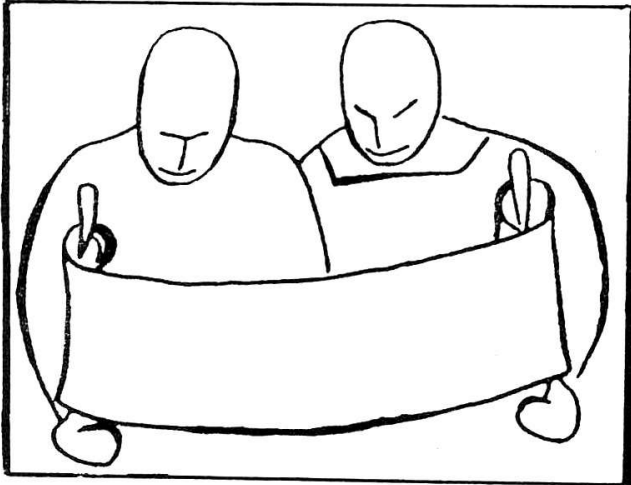
Article 112 of the Constitution states: "Sacred music forms a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy." While Gregorian Chant dominated the pre-Vatican II liturgy, the Church has given its approval to various other musical forms, as long as they are in keeping with the spirit of her liturgy. In Taiwan, the Commission has continued to turn out hymnals for use during Mass and in celebrating the other sacraments. These contain many compositions by local musicians. Much has been done here in adapting Chinese melodic forms to the singing of the psalms and hymns of the Divine Office, as well as the celebrant's parts in solemn Masses. The Commission has established a committee for sacred music that is presently at work on a unified sacred hymnal for liturgical celebrations that will be published shortly.

It is in chapter 7 of the Constitution that we find sacred art and sacred artifacts treated with a view towards adaptation to local artistic styles. The Church has emphasized that it has not consecrated one particular art tradition over all others, and has encouraged local churches to incorporate local architectural forms and artistic expressions into its liturgical services. Taiwan has seen the construction of some churches according to traditional Chinese designs and a modification of some church interiors using Chinese motifs. As for using Chinese styles in the production of sacred vestments and vessels, most people here seem to prefer, at least for the present, the traditional western forms.

#### Liturgical Pastoral Formation and Education

The implementation of the new liturgy is not merely a matter of the translation and editing of liturgical books nor the formal recital of congregational prayers. Authentic liturgical renewal demands an active and intelligent participation on the part of all of the faithful. Only through such participation can the liturgy be a source of personal enrichment and the goal of sanctification in Christ and true worship of God be attained. This is a major teaching of the Constitution, and its implementation is the principal

challenge facing local liturgical commissions.



While the translation of the new rituals for liturgical services in parishes was the first step in forming an active worshiping community, there still remains a gap between the ideal and the reality as far as full participation is concerned. Often liturgies are reduced to the mechanical reading of prayers, scripture texts and general intercessions, without the congregation ever entering

into the spirit of the liturgy itself. While this "reading" style of participation is a step up from the previous, almost totally passive form of merely observing the rites, still we are a long way from the full, conscious and active kind of participation called for by the Constitution. Perhaps the main reason why we find ourselves in such a situation is because of the lack of proper instruction in and promotion of the liturgy on the part of many pastors. (Some pastors do not even seem to understand what the word "participation" really means.) Another reason for the current state of affairs is the inadequate and superficial formation of most of the faithful with regard to their faith-life. Very often they view participation in the liturgy as an obligation to be fulfilled or a means for individual sanctification, showing little concern about the liturgy's communal nature. What this means is that if the pastoral goals of the liturgical renewal are to be met, further efforts must be made for the re-education and formation of both priests and laity.

Since the appearance of the new rituals, the Commission has sought to advance liturgical renewal by means of the printed word, through articles in various journals and its own publications. It has also sought to implement the spirit of the new liturgy through seminars and study groups. However, these methods reach only a limited audience, and most of the faithful, as well as some members of the hierarchy, remain woefully ignorant of what a true renewal of the sacred liturgy entails. This has resulted in the emergence of two general attitudes. One is conservative and very much

a part of the old pre-Vatican II emphasis; the other tends to be progressive to the point of one-sidedness. If the goals of the liturgical renewal are to be achieved, what is called for is a deeper and more properly balanced approach from all concerned.

### *The Role of the Laity*

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, especially in articles 26 and 27, gives special emphasis to the liturgy as a celebration of the whole Church, with each and every member having a role to play. Far from being a private function of the clergy, liturgical celebration is a co-operative task of the whole Christian community. The New Code of Canon Law adds more weight to this view by spelling out in the concrete the various roles of lector, acolyte and commentator, designating them as proper functions of lay people. It also states that where there is a pastoral need lay people may be appointed by the bishop as special ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, to preside over the liturgy of the Word, to confer Baptism, etc. The above ministries of lector, acolyte and commentator have become quite common in the local parishes, but it has led in a small number of churches to a certain amount of role confusion when the congregation is also allowed to read the preface, the canon and other parts reserved for the celebrant. This illustrates even further the need for adequate training and preparation if an orderly functioning of these new ministries is to be maintained. Many parishes remain unaware of this basic necessity, and only a few have made the effort to form liturgical committees for the proper training and preparation of lay people to assume responsibility for liturgical renewal on the parish level.

In Taiwan there are some areas without resident priests. In such places the sisters and catechists are often delegated to take charge of parish activities. However, in only one diocese has the Bishop given formal authorization for them to preside over the celebration of the liturgy of the Word and serve as special ministers of the Eucharist when no priest is available for Sunday worship services. At present, the Bishops Conference is hard at work preparing a handbook for just such liturgical services, and it should be coming out shortly.



## Conclusion

What is obvious from the above summary of the liturgical renewal in Taiwan is that while progress has been made, we still have a long way to go before we reach the ideal as presented by the Second Vatican Council. Whether it be in the area of translations of liturgical materials, adaptation to local conditions, formation and education of clergy and laity, there remains much work that still has to be done.

For the present, personnel trained in liturgy, sacred music and the promotion of sacred art remain our most urgent need.

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