

LITURGY: WHO, WHAT, AND WHY?

“May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.” - *Roman Missal*, Post Communion for 1st Sunday of Advent

- I. Trinity Bound creatures redeemed by Christ:
A. Who made you?

B. Why did God make you?

C. Who is Jesus Christ? Who is he to you?

D. What did/does he do and why?

II. What is Liturgy?

CCC 1068 For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.

Sacrosanctum Concilium [SC] 6 “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.”

- A. Etymology (where does this word come from? (eit [cause/source] +ology [words about])?
1.
2.

B. What work does Christ accomplish?

CCC 1069 “Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church.”

1. What is the paschal mystery?

C. Why should we learn about the liturgy? – Video

1. How can we use our intellects to participate more fully in the Mass?
2. What prayers of the Mass would you like to understand more deeply?
3. What do our minds tell us about our dependence on God?
4. If every heartbeat is a gift from God, if God holds us in existence even at this moment, what should be our response?

D. Best definition of liturgy:

Sacrosanctum Concilium 7: “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.”

1. exercise of the **priestly office** of Jesus Christ
 - a) What does it mean to be a priest?
 - b) How is Christ the high priest?
2. the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

(SC 7) 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**.

- a) What does it mean to participate in the work of Christ?

III. What is the purpose of this work? Ends (purposes, why we do it) of the Liturgy

A. Why is glorifying God the primary purpose?

B. How does this primary purpose relate to the second purpose which is our sanctification?

“For, although you have no need of our praise, yet our thanksgiving is itself your gift, since our praises add nothing to your greatness but profit us for salvation, through Christ our Lord.” *The Roman Missal*: (2011). Common Preface IV

1. What does sanctification mean?

2. How is sanctification effected?

2 Peter 1:4 (NRSVCE) ⁴ Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become **participants of the divine nature**.

Rite of Baptism for Several Children, 68 “Dearly Beloved, these children have been reborn in Baptism. They are now called children of God, **for so indeed they are**...In their [the children’s] name, in **the spirit of our common sonship**, let us pray together in the words our Lord has given us”

Romans 5:5 (NRSVCE) ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

3. How is sanctification signified by signs perceptible to the senses?

C. How is the sanctification ordered to the higher purpose of worshiping God?

1. Bible Study - Story of the Exodus:

Exodus 7:16 (NRSVCE): Say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, “Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness.” But until now you have not listened.

- a) Why do the Israelites leave Egypt? Where do they go?

Exodus 19:2–8 (NRSVCE): ² They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: ⁴ You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶ but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.” ⁷ So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ The people all answered as one: “Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do.” Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

- b) What is the contents of the law given by God?

- c) What is God’s purpose in giving them the law and making the covenant?

Josef Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI): “Israel departs, not in order to be a people like all the others; it departs in order to serve God. The goal of the departure is the still unknown mountain of God, the service of God. The whole history recounted in the books of the Judges and Kings, which is taken up afresh and given a new interpretation in the Chronicles, is intended to show precisely this, that the land, considered just in itself, is an indeterminate good. It only becomes a true good, a real gift, a promise fulfilled, when it is the place where God reigns. Then it will not be just some independent state or other, but the realm of obedience, where God’s will is done and the right kind of human existence developed. ... Israel learns how to worship God in the way he himself desires. Cult, liturgy in the proper sense, is part of this worship, but so too is life according to the will of God; such a life is an indispensable part of true worship. “The glory of God is the living man, but the life of man is the vision of God”, says St. Irenaeus (cf. Adv. Haer. 4, 20, 7), getting to the heart of what happens when man meets God on the mountain in the wilderness. Ultimately, it is the very life of man, man himself as living righteously, that is the true worship of God, but life only becomes real life when it receives its form from looking toward God. Cult exists in order to communicate this vision and to give life in such a way that glory is given to God. [(2000). *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. (J. Saward, Trans.) (pp. 16–18). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.]

2. The order matters. God is glorified through man's sanctification.

St. Irenaeus, Adv. haeres 4, 20, 7: "the glory of God is man fully alive; moreover, man's life is the vision of God: if God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all the beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God."

- D. The sanctification which God accomplishes in the Liturgy is meant spill out into our entire lives. We are not meant to remain in exile forever.

1. How is worship practice for heaven?

2. In and by the liturgy we are being transfigured. What does this mean?

Blessed John Henry Newman: "In the worship and service of Almighty God, which Christ and His Apostles have left to us, we are vouchsafed means, both moral and mystical, of approaching God, and gradually learning to bear the sight of Him. . . . We approach, and in spite of the darkness, our hands, or our head, or our brow, or our lips become, as it were, sensible of the contact of something more than earthly. We know not where we are, but we have been bathing in water, and a voice tells us that it is blood. Or we have a mark signed upon our foreheads, and it spake of Calvary. Or we recollect a hand laid upon our heads, and surely it had the print of nails in it, and resembled His who with a touch gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. Or we have been eating and drinking; and it was not a dream surely, that One fed us from His wounded side, and renewed our nature by the heavenly meat He gave. Thus in many ways He, who is Judge to us, prepares us to be judged,— He, who is to glorify us, prepares us to be glorified, that He may not take us unawares; but that when the voice of the Archangel sounds, and we are called to meet the Bridegroom, we may be ready. [Worship, a Preparation for Christ's Coming," *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Vol. 5, Sermon 1]