

LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

In the Light of Conciliar and Post Conciliar Liturgical
Documents

Lit 005

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Contents

INTRODUCTION 5

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS 8

THE BLAME OF THE MISSIONARY LACK OF ATTENTION TO LOCAL CULTURE 8

EFFECTS OF THAT FORM OF EVANGELISATION 9

VATICAN II SOUGHT TO REMEDY THE SITUATION 9

BUT ACTUALLY INCULTURATION IS NOT AN INNOVATION OF VATICAN II 10

DEFINITION OF TERMS RELATED TO INCULTURATION 15

REVISION 15

ADAPTATION 16

INCULTURATION 16

ACCULTURATION 17

INCARNATION 18

INDIGENISATION 19

ACCOMMODATION 19

FALSE FORMS OF INCULTURATION 21

AREAS COMMONLY AFFECTED 22

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE INCULTURATION? 33

WHY PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES IN SPITE OF GOOD INTENTIONS? 35

DANGERS OF INAPPROPRIATE INCULTURATION MEASURES 39

PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS FOR INCULTURATION OF THE LITURGY 46

WHEN SHOULD INNOVATIONS BE MADE? 46

HOW SHOULD INNOVATIONS BE MADE? 47

JUDGEMENT OF THE SITUATION 48

AVAILABILITY OF COMPETENT EXPERTS 48

APPROPRIATE LITURGICAL FORMATION SHOULD BE PRIOR TO ANY
INCULTURATION 49

PRINCIPLES OF INCULTURATION 50

PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE ORIGIN 50

ECCLESIAL PRINCIPLES 55

AGENTS OF INCULTURATION 59

- THE HOLY SEE 59
- BY EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES 62
- LOCAL ORDINARIES 66
- INDIVIDUAL PRIESTS 67
- THE LAY FAITHFUL 70

AREAS OF ADAPTATION IN THE ROMAN RITE 72

- ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL 72
- ADAPTATIONS THAT ARE FORESEEN IN THE LITURGICAL BOOKS 81
- ADAPTATIONS NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE LITURGICAL BOOKS 90

METHODS OF INCULTURATION 91

PROCESS OF INCULTURATION 93

- OBSERVATION 93
- SURVEY OF THE SITUATION 93
- PRAYER 94
- INVOLVE OTHERS 95
- STUDY OF THE SIDE OF THE CHURCH ON THE MATTER 95
- FORMULATION THE PROPOSED RITE 96
- CRITIQUE 96
- SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL FOR APPROVAL 97
- SUMMARY OF STEPS 98

PROCEDURE OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES IN PROPOSING ADAPTATIONS 99

- EXAMINATION AND PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS 100
- EXPERIMENTATION 100
- PUTTING INCULTURATION PROPOSALS INTO PRACTICE 101

SAMPLE CASES OF INCULTURATION 102

- BETROTHAL CEREMONY 102
- LAST FUNERAL RITES 104

CONCLUSION 105

APPENDIX: SECTION OF THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION TO THE ROMAN MISSAL ON ADAPTATIONS 106

BIBLIOGRAPHY 113

INTRODUCTION

The work of a priest is in some way comparable to that of a general advocate. In order to be able to defend cases of politicians, business people, doctors or clergy, the lawyer needs to some extent, besides acquiring the requisite knowledge in law, to be familiar with the world of these different areas. Similarly a priest in the modern world is prepared to serve the needs of men and women in different fields, peasants as well as politicians, traders as well as teachers. Now, while lawyers may specialise so that one finds legal representatives specifically for copyright law or computer technology, priests do not generally do so, with the exception perhaps of a few areas such as prison and military chaplains or those trained to form other priests. Adequate seminary training therefore, aims at producing priests who are “all rounded”, and who can feel comfortable in the different sectors of the ever-changing society. In working towards this end, seminary authorities have introduced, among other things affiliation to universities, local or foreign. This has in turn led to overloading of the seminary syllabus, to the bewilderment of students who have to cover so much more, as well as traditional seminary staff who must compress so much academic material within the given time, while at the same time giving enough room to the necessary spiritual and moral formation of the seminarians. The result is that in spite of the seven years of post-college training – a period which is longer than most university degrees – the time in the major seminary is hardly enough to produce an academically “well-baked” priest, not mentioning the other aspects of a priest’s training which are in no way less important.

This booklet is one in a series that emerged in the course of liturgy lectures in St. Paul's National Seminary, at the time of affiliation to external universities. The writer realised like other fellow lecturers, that it was almost impossible to cover the material taught before the affiliation, while at the same time giving due time to the new university program. On the other hand reducing the areas covered in liturgy would have meant sending out priests who were ill-prepared for their ministry in that all-important aspect of a pastor's life. The alternative course of action would then be to cover less in class, while giving a future priest a package of ready reference in his pastoral activity.

The series therefore is a form of liturgical companion, written particularly with a pastoral orientation. It is written with the realisation that in the modern world of fast-moving technology the most important thing is not to know all that is necessary in one's area of work, for that is absolutely impossible. Rather, it is to know where to look for the answers in case of questions. For that reason, a lot of effort has been put in referring to the basic liturgical sources that are available to pastors.

Because it is a form of "liturgical companion" it renders itself beneficial also to those priests and other pastoral workers who are already in the field. The book is not a substitution for the actual rituals. That would be both unnecessary since such rituals are available and impossible since it would imply reproducing a great bulk of material. Rather, it is a parallel to the corresponding ritual. It helps the pastor to see the rationale behind the rubrics. It brings in focus the importance of the General Introduction, Instructions or Norms, relating them to other relevant liturgical sources as well as adapting them to the present situation.

WHAT IS INCULTURATION?

There is so much said about inculturation today that almost everyone has some idea what it is about. People will readily tell you that inculturation aims at making the liturgy meaningful in a cultural context, that it makes cultural values appreciated for what they are. We can understand that authentic inculturation requires both knowledge of culture as well as of Christian values. It is also understood that inculturation is a priority in the African context.¹

¹ Regarding the importance of Inculturation see EACW 18, 101; PS 106; IRL 1-2, 30-32; PGR 40-42.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS²

THE BLAME OF THE MISSIONARY LACK OF ATTENTION TO LOCAL CULTURE

Another common tendency when the question of inculturation is raised is that of blaming the missionaries who brought the faith to Africa, for having ignored the cultural values of the Africans. This blame is unfair because it tends to generalise and to ignore some of the genuine effort made by missionaries towards inculturation. Again it shows a lack of appreciation that missionaries were children of their time, who followed in the wake of Trent and its defence of Church doctrine against adulteration by Protestantism. Pope Pius V who promulgated the Tridentine Missal in 1570 had this in view: “In a difficult period when the Catholic faith on the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the ministerial priesthood, and the real and permanent presence of Christ under the Eucharistic species were placed at risk, Saint Pius V was especially concerned with preserving the more recent tradition then unjustly being assailed, introducing only very slight changes into the sacred rite.”³ These were also times of colonisation, and the missionaries could not at times evade the influence of the colonial mentality of their nations of origin. Apart from that they had the great problem of having to learn new languages without any literature to go by. Again the time between the original evangelisation and now is long enough for us to have matured and made corrections on the mistakes of the original evangelisers.

² IRL 9-20; PGR 13-23, 34-70.

³ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 4.

EFFECTS OF THAT FORM OF EVANGELISATION

Still from a historical point of view we cannot ignore the cultural mistakes made by missionaries, if only the better to understand how best to deal with these mistakes. As a result of the missionaries condemning the traditional way of worship of the indigenous people, the latter learnt to worship in a manner not totally comprehensible to them. Often in the face of serious challenges and problems they resorted to their cultural practices that, they felt, met their deep spiritual needs. In times of illness for instance, they would consult with soothsayers would always have an “explanation”. Quite often these practices were also tainted with magic and superstitions.

VATICAN II SOUGHT TO REMEDY THE SITUATION ⁴

The second Vatican Council acknowledges the value of variety in the Church’s liturgy and affirms that this liturgy must not be foreign to any people and their culture. At the same time the liturgy should transcend the particularity of any culture.⁵ It points to the traditional variety inherent in the different liturgical families. It then sets out the principles of inculturation in nos. 37-40 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.⁶

⁴ SC 21.

⁵ The Church "fosters and assumes the ability, resources and customs of each people. In assuming them, the Church purifies, strengthens and ennobles them... whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, it is not only saved from destruction but it is also cleansed, raised up and made perfect unto the glory of God, the confounding of the devil, and the happiness of mankind" (LG 17, also 13).

⁶ A study of Inculturation in the light of Vatican Council II requires the student to know very well the numbers 37-40 of the document on Sacred Liturgy, in as much as these numbers are basic. Subsequent documents on the subject are based on them.

BUT ACTUALLY INCULTURATION IS NOT AN INNOVATION OF VATICAN II

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Israel borrowed cultural elements from the surrounding nations. Scripture scholars are generally agreed that the accounts of creation are reminiscent of the parallel accounts of the peoples of Mesopotamia. What Israel borrowed however, she incorporated in the faith and interpreted in the light of that faith. While the parallel accounts give the impression that creation was attributed to many gods, the Israel account depicts the presence of only one all-powerful God. Now and then Israel also made mistakes in an attempt to borrow from other cultures. This resulted in syncretism. For that reason prophets emphasised over and over again the importance of keeping the faith of Israel pure and uncontaminated, for Yahweh their God was a “jealous God”.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The life and culture of Israel is also the history of salvation. It is the prelude to the incarnation. Christ identified with the social and cultural condition of Israel. In this way he also somehow identified with the whole of the human race: “He who is the ‘image of the invisible God’ is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness of God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin... For by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin”⁷.

Christ instituted the Eucharist in a cultural form of the paschal meal, a form that was available to him under those circumstances. However, he intended that it be for the whole of

⁷ GS 22.

humanity, for his blood is the blood of the new and *everlasting covenant*, shed for those present and for *all* for the forgiveness of sins. Similarly the message of salvation which he commanded his disciples to preach was meant to be proclaimed to all nations⁸. And indeed its universality is made evident already at Pentecost, for the different people from all sorts of nations could hear the message of salvation and comprehend it under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The apostles had gradually to come to terms with the fact that their proclamation of the good news of salvation to other nations was not meant to saddle these people with the traditions and customs of the Jews, like circumcision or even the observance of the Jewish law. The essential was the acceptance of Christ who was the fulfilment of the Mosaic Law. His fulfilment rendered certain practices of the Jewish Law no longer necessary. There was no need to sacrifices for sins, for Christ's sacrifice took away sin once and for all. There was no need to make the annual pilgrimage to the Jerusalem temple,⁹ for Christ was the new temple. He had told the Jewish leaders to destroy the temple, which was his own body, and he would rebuild it in three days. Now where two or three gathered in his name there he would be. The old priesthood was no longer necessary for Christ was the single high priest of the new covenant.

While the encounter between Christianity and the pagan peoples did not require that these people be burdened by Jewish traditional practices, it did not accept all these people's forms of worship wholesale either. True, there was to be respect for those

⁸ Matthew 28:15, Mark 16: 15; Acts 1:8.

⁹ John 4: 19-23: The woman said to him, "...Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

values that were good. That is why Paul referred to the unknown god as the God whom he was preaching, who had sent his Son for the salvation of the world. But those practices of the evangelised peoples that did not agree with the Christian faith had to give way. The converts had to abandon the worship of idols, of myths and superstitions.¹⁰

In the same way the perennial challenge of inculturation is one of discernment of which elements to promote, which are of relatively less value and which are incompatible with the Christian faith and must therefore be discarded. This discarding will sometimes bring friction with the culture of the people, in the same way, as Christianity became a scandal to Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles.¹¹

THE EARLY CHURCH

The apostolic era was one of beginnings, of formation of a Christian culture. The apostles borrowed forms of worship from the Jewish liturgy. For instance they adapted the liturgy of the Jewish Pasch to the Christian Mass. The Scriptures of the New Testament had not been written, so all they had were the Jewish Scriptures. These they interpreted in the light of the Christ event. This process required discernment of what was to be taken and what to be left.

The college of apostles soon realised that it was wrong and counter-productive to the message of the gospel to demand from converts anything beyond the essentials.¹² Thus the faith in

¹⁰ Acts 19:18-19: “Also many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices. A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins.”

¹¹ 1Corinthians 1:23.

¹² Acts 15: 28-29, “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled

Christ was offered to all without demanding renunciation of their culture, or imposition of another culture on them.

AFTER THE PEACE OF CONSTANTINE

The peace granted to the Church by the Emperor Constantine brought with it religious liberty. Worship moved from the private home and from the catacombs to churches and even to basilicas. Things used in Roman civil life as insignia of authority such as thrones, mitres, rings, became adapted into the liturgy. Latin became the official language of the Church. Liturgical books began to be written. The liturgy itself took on the legal and austere Roman style of precision. With the passing of centuries, as the faith further spread into the different cultural centres of the time liturgical families were also created. Apart from the Roman Rite there are those of the Western non-Roman: the Ambrosian rite of Northern Italy, the Spanish Mosarabic and the French Gallican. There are a great number of rites that eventually get to be grouped as the Eastern Rite. Each of these traditions or rites borrowed from each other in the course of the epochs. At the same time they reflected their respective cultural setting.

REFORMATION PERIOD

One of the greatest contentions of the Reformers was a return to Scripture, or *sola scriptura*, a purging of the liturgy and of the faith as they saw it, of all human accretions. In the process of this 'purging' a lot of bad elements were removed; but as well much of the fruits of inculturation acquired through the centuries were thrown away. The Counter-Reformers made rigid rules with regard to Mass in particular and to the whole liturgy as a whole, as a safe-guard against further 'abuses'. This rigidity, justified as it may be in the context of its time, does little to promote the cause of inculturation. The missionary thrust of the 16th century, following in the wake of colonisation, carried with it the

and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

conservative mentality of the Counter-Reformation. A judgement on missionary evangelisation (and for our purposes, of their liturgical practice) must bear in mind this fact.

THE EARLY CHURCH IN AFRICA

The Ethiopian and the Coptic Churches have survived only because from the outset inculturation was part of their being. In fact, “in Egypt and in Ethiopia from very early times the Christian faith was presented (the bible, liturgy, etc.) in the Coptic and Ethiopian languages, even if they were the spoken tongue of only a minority of people.”¹³

“In our day Christianity lives on in the north of Ethiopia, with its proper liturgy (Ethiopian Rite) and its theological heritage. The Church in Egypt wanted from the beginning to inculturate the gospel message into what was at first a pagan and later a Muslim milieu. The same effort is still asked of her today as she strives to make contact with Arabic culture which is also called to be influenced by gospel values.”¹⁴

¹³ Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta*, 4.

¹⁴ Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 63.

DEFINITION OF TERMS RELATED TO INCULTURATION

Before proceeding further it is opportune to define the different terms related to the subject of inculturation, for the sake of clarity.

REVISION

The term 'Revision' designates the work of the supreme authority, (in this case, the Second Vatican Council, and its subordinate bodies such as the Congregation for Divine Worship), in the renewal of the official liturgical books. In the case of this study we shall have occasion to meet most of these revised books and to study their general introductions, that include the principles by which they were revised.

To mention a few of the features of the revised liturgy: there is the Roman Missal with three new Eucharistic prayers in addition to the ancient Roman Canon. The Order of Readings for Mass, or lectionary has a three-year Sunday cycle instead of one. The Roman Ritual and Roman Pontifical both have a wider selection of readings to be used in the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals. The liturgical calendar has a reduced list of saints. The Liturgy of the Hours has a four-week cycle for psalms replacing the one-week cycle. All the revised liturgical books contain the principles of adaptation to be implemented at lower levels in order to make the liturgy more meaningful to the people.¹⁵

¹⁵ With the exception of the Sacrament of Ordination.

ADAPTATION

This was the term by the Council fathers, in the basic document on the sacred liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, to describe the process of making the liturgy meaningful to local situations.¹⁶ Subsequent documents prefer the use of the term ‘inculturation’ to adaptation.¹⁷ Subsequent documents use the term ‘inculturation’ more explicitly. One of the reasons for this shift is that the term ‘adaptation’ was taken from missionary terminology as descriptive their attempts to make the liturgy meaningful to the people, without going far enough to understand the cultures of the people. Such modifications were transitory and external in nature. To use the same term therefore might mean a kind of adaptation of the liturgy which does not go far enough, and which inculturation proper seeks to overcome.

The term ‘adaptation’, however, has its advantages over ‘inculturation’, in as far as it describes the making the liturgy meaningful to different life situation of which culture is only one aspect. ‘Adaptation’ may be used to refer to the effort to make liturgy meaningful to children, to young people, to the illiterate, or even in countries with a long liturgical tradition in which however, the liturgy is becoming alienated from the people due to modernisation.¹⁸ In these cases one would more meaningfully talk of liturgical ‘adaptation’ rather than ‘inculturation’.

INCULTURATION

Inculturation may be described as the presentation of the supra-cultural elements of the liturgy in new cultural forms. The result

¹⁶ IRL 4; *General Instruction 2002*, no. 23.

¹⁷ For instance in the statement: “Provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved, provision shall be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and *adaptations* to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries”. (SC, 38).

¹⁸ In this last aspect one may prefer to use the term ‘liturgical formation’ rather than adaptation.

is the mutual assimilation of culture and Christianity, such that Christianity transforms and purifies the culture on the one hand, while on the other it becomes in turn enrooted within that culture. To use a formula coined by professor Chupungco the new reality that is the result of authentic inculturation is $A+B=C$.

"By inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community" (RM, 52). On the one hand the penetration of the gospel into a given socio-cultural milieu "gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people..., strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores them in Christ" (GS 58). On the other hand, the Church assimilates these values, when they are compatible to the Gospel, "to deepen understanding of Christ's message and give it more effective expression in the liturgy and in the many different aspects of the life of the community of believers." (GS, 58)¹⁹

ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is the juxtaposition of two cultures, without one having much influence on the other. When one culture borrows from another without assimilating the elements borrowed, that is acculturation. The term is descriptive of the situation referred to above in the case of much of missionary evangelisation. Many people would go through the Mass without fully understanding what took place. They would turn to their own religions albeit secretly, in times of acute need, because the adapted 'Christian culture', not having been assimilated, did not fully answer to their religious needs. To revert to the same formula used above this situation is described as $A+B=AB$.

¹⁹ IRL 4-5.

INCARNATION

This term is taken from the Incarnation of Christ. As he became human in a specific culture so should the liturgy. He became a Jew, assuming a Jewish name, speaking the Jewish language, having a Jewish genealogy, adapting Jewish customs, and praying in the Jewish way. He was circumcised like all Jewish males. He made the annual Jewish pilgrimages to the temple, even though his body was the temple of God. He prayed every Sabbath like all Jews. But he also fulfilled and transcended Judaism: purifying, correcting, replacing the old covenant with the new and everlasting one. He condemned the adherence to Jewish customs that ignored God's law. He taught that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. He taught that the greatest commandment was that of love. This surpassed all observations. He came not just for the Jews, but for the salvation of the whole world.

An incarnate liturgy must also bear elements similar to those of the incarnation of Christ.²⁰ It should be part of the culture in the same way that Christ was part of his culture. All those cultural elements that are good it should endorse. All those that are harmless it should not be in a hurry to antagonise. But it should not be submerged by the culture. Rather it should purify, correct and replace those elements that are obsolete or contrary to the Christian faith, even when this means serious opposition. It is wrong to assume that Christianity should be put on the same footing with culture. Nor is it correct to assume that the respect

²⁰ "If the necessity that the evangelical message be inculturated is drawn from the very mystery of the incarnation, the Church must set out to follow the path traced by her master, who came not to abolish but to complete (cf. Mt. 5:17). The Word being God himself took on a real human nature in his own person and lived every aspect of human existence - except sin - in a definite place and time." Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, p. 45. "Through her work, whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also healed, ennobled, and perfected unto the glory of God." LG, 17.

of culture means never giving offence to that culture. Christianity, like the incarnate Christ, is always at one stage or other a sign of contradiction, of radical decision.

INDIGENISATION

As the term sounds, this is the effort to make Christianity indigenous to a particular culture. The context in which this term was coined (in India) tends to assume incorrectly that culture is static; that there are those elements that can perennially be considered indigenous. But in fact culture is a dynamic reality. Any liturgy that seeks to carry out inculturation by reverting to what is indigenous risks to be irrelevant to the people who are ever on the move with the times. To give an example, traditionally many of Ugandan cultures dressed in backcloth. With time that has become to be used only at burial, as shrouds to wrap the dead in. In some areas even that is no longer required. For anyone to use vestments of backcloth for funerals may be acceptable. To use them, however, for ordinary Mass may be an attempt to be indigenous, which however, is behind times, for none among the congregation may have ever worn backcloth as ordinary dress.

ACCOMMODATION

In some books ‘accommodation’ is used interchangeably with ‘adaptation’ to refer to the process of making liturgy meaningful to different situations. But generally this term is restricted to the options a minister may take during the celebration of liturgy in order to make it meaningful for that situation. These accommodations do not alter the written and established rite as the process of adaptation would. An example of accommodation is the detailed instruction on the Choice of Mass and Its Parts given in the General Instruction to the Roman Missal, and which begins with the exhortation: “The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be greatly increased if the texts of the readings,

the prayers, and the liturgical songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, spiritual preparation, and culture of those taking part. This is achieved by appropriate use of the wide options described below.”²¹

²¹ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 352.

FALSE FORMS OF INCULTURATION

A parish priest once asked me about a matter regarding inculturation which one of his parishioners had raised in genuine faith and desire for inculturation. It was about the fire of the Easter vigil. The parishioner observed that in this particular culture, as in many other African cultures, during a funeral vigil in the home of the deceased people gathered around a fire to keep the night watch. In the same way, to make the Triduum more meaningful, why can't we, he proposed, stay around a fire on Good Friday as we keep watch in memory of the death and burial of Our Lord? Then during the Vigil night, instead of kindling the fire we would extinguish it marking the end of his death and his rising from the dead. In other words we no longer mourn the dead. We now celebrate the living.

The idea sounded interesting apart from some obvious questions it raised: how could one reconcile the fact that the fire in both the Christian "culture" and the local culture stood for opposite things? In the former it symbolised resurrection and presence, in the latter it symbolised death. Or did it? It may even have developed as a practical measure for people gathered without shelter during the night cold. Would one have to do away with the Easter Candle that normally is kindled from the Easter fire? Would such a form of inculturation not lead to great variance with the rest of the Church's liturgy of the Easter Vigil?

I pointed out a similar custom within the same culture that sounded more plausible for association with the Easter fire. There was a custom of keeping a "royal fire" burning for the reigning monarch from the day of his coronation to the day of his death. That fire had a similarity with the one of the

resurrection in the sense that both symbolised life, even if life of a different kind. Moreover it was not a fire kindled for anyone as in the case of the fire of the funeral vigil. It was specifically for a king, just as in the Easter Vigil we celebrate a unique personage: Christ our King.

This example is given here to show that an idea of inculturation should be welcomed but not rashly adopted without careful study.

Inculturation is not simple a search for novelty. As Mark Searle rightly observes: “the faithful have a right to a true Liturgy, which means the Liturgy desired and laid down by the Church, which has in fact indicated where adaptations may be made as called for by pastoral requirements in different places, or by different groups of people. Undue experimentation, changes and creativity bewilder the faithful...”²² Unfortunately, because in the recent past much has been said and done in the name of inculturation, it has become fashionable for pastors to “inculturate the liturgy”. Without appropriate preparation and caution many mistakes can result from misguided, even if well-meaning, efforts to inculturate. In order to appreciate what authentic inculturation of the liturgy is therefore, it is necessary first to examine some of the false forms of inculturation, the reasons and motives why people take these measures, as well as the likely dangers to ensue from such false measures.

AREAS COMMONLY AFFECTED

TRANSLATIONS

The revised liturgical books give a lot of room to Episcopal conferences both with regard to translation from the Latin typical editions to the different vernaculars and the making of

²² See Mark Searle, *Liturgy Made Simple*, 30. See also Forward to SCSDW, *Inaestimabile Donum*, (Instruction on Certain Norms Concerning the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, 3 April, 1980):

appropriate adaptations, subject to approval by the Apostolic See. For many African Episcopal conferences the work of translation from the original languages is beset by many problems. The first is a multiplicity of languages.²³ Within the same Episcopal conference, and in fact within the same diocese one finds many different languages. This multiplicity makes the work of translation most difficult and expensive. It means that the minimal liturgical specialists in the country cannot work together at the work of translation of liturgical books. It also means that the funds that are already so little must be spread out thinly in order to cater for the different local needs. Nor can one use a language commonly used such as English, for so many of the faithful are illiterate and do not understand it. The lack of enough experts in the liturgy and in Latin means that many of the translations made are done, not on the original typical texts, but on English translations. Quite often because of lack of manpower and funds a full translation is not made of a liturgical book. Rather, only portions of it are made to meet the bear essentials in celebration. This obviously impoverishes the rites and restricts the ministers from using the abundant options availed in the revised books.

As a result of the lack of full translations quite often ministers make their personal translations from the English editions in

²³ To take the example of Uganda there are some thirty-three different languages and dialects in a country of just over twenty million people. It is true that some languages are close to each other and that people can understand each other with little difficulty to the extent of sharing liturgical books. Such is the case for instance with regard to Runyankore and Rukiga in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, and Runyoro / Rutoro in the diocese of Fort Portal. Although the Basoga understand fairly well what is said in Luganda, and vice versa; and although for a long time the diocese of Jinja (Busoga) has used liturgical books written in Luganda; the two languages are not as similar as those mentioned above. This has finally lead Jinja diocese to begin the translation of its own liturgical books. Some other dioceses are much worse off with regard to a common liturgical language. The Archdiocese of Tororo is one of these. At many occasions one must communicate in as many as three languages during the liturgy in order to make oneself understood by the congregation.

order to meet their pastoral needs. Some do this with much success and in fact succeed in enriching the liturgy. Others may be less gifted. Even catechists some of whom may not be well trained may take on themselves the task of translation, with all the dangers of misrepresenting. There are even cases in which people make instantaneous translations: reading a text in English for instance and speaking it out in vernacular. It does not require much imagination to see the dangers connected with this manner of conducting the liturgy. One cannot in that case have enough time to choose the right words. Nor can one avoid sometimes using a language that is not suited liturgically. Liturgical texts require a certain amount of constancy and stability.

The Vatican Congregation for Worship and Sacraments has noted the errors connected with translation of liturgical texts into vernacular and states the following:

“Ever since the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the work of translation of the liturgical texts into vernacular languages, as promoted by the Apostolic See, has involved the publication of norms and the communication to the bishops of advice on the matter. Nevertheless, it has been noted that translations of liturgical texts in various localities stand in need of improvement through correction or through a new draft. The omissions or errors which affect certain existing vernacular translations... have impeded the progress of the inculturation that actually should have taken place. Consequently, the church has been prevented from laying the foundation for a fuller, healthier and more authentic renewal. For these reasons it now seems necessary to set forth anew, and in light of maturing of experience, the principles of translation to be followed in future translations - whether they be entirely new undertakings or emendations of texts already in use...”²⁴

²⁴ Vatican Worship and Sacraments Congregation, “Instruction: Liturgiam Authenticam”, in *Origins CNS Documentary Service*, vol. 31: no. 2, May 24, 2001. Nos. 6-7.

SINGING

Another area that one might think of when it comes to inculturation is singing. There was a time when singing using local instruments was despised. The proper instrument was the organ. Drums which are used in so many profane matters, to gather people for work, at beer parties, for second funeral rites, in times of trouble, etc. were not considered good for sacred use. But the organ is very expensive. It is also so alien to people's cultural forms of music. Not many people would know how to play it anyway. Now there is no objection about what instruments to use in the Church. However, the purpose of liturgical music should never be forgotten. It should help us to pray better. In the liturgy we should lift our thoughts to the Lord. Anything that promotes that purpose is good, anything that hinders it is detrimental. It is true that rhythmic music and dance are so common to the African. It is also true that liturgy should not be like a mourning dirge. Happiness and the expression of it in worship is quite authentic and there is abundant evidence to prove that. However, reflection and meditation have a very important place in the liturgy as well. Without recollection, communion with the spiritual becomes very difficult. Music should help and not hinder that. There should be as much a place for happiness as for meditative music.

Secondly, not every rhythm is good for worship. It is possible to have a form of music that cheapens the liturgy, that is too simplistic like children's songs in lower primary, or one which is indeed profane. What is used in the liturgy must be of the highest quality not that any thing goes. Too many people may presume to have the gift of composition.

Obviously in anything that is artistic there is always the difficulty of difference in tastes. What one person may consider cheap another will consider a masterpiece. There is also the difficulty of telling someone who has spent so much in the composition of a piece that his work is sub-standard. Many people will take it personal, that you have a grudge against them or something.

Most important there is the question of theological content of the hymn. People need to hear and understand the words and not just go for the beauty of the music. Does the hymn composed teach us something that nourishes our souls? Is it in accordance with our faith? Some of the composers play it safe by taking a biblical text and composing a hymn out of it.

Pay particular attention to the hymns that make up the Ordinary of the Mass: the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria*, the *Creed*, the *Sanctus*, the *Our Father*, the *Agnus Dei*. Composers should make a concerted effort to stick to the text of these hymns as much as possible. Many who used to sing the Gregorian chant remember the texts for the creed or Gloria for instance. However much it twisted it retained the words as they stood in the prayer itself. But some of our compositions for these hymns re-arrange the texts of these hymns to suite the music in such a way that the prayer is no longer recognisable. It is not uncommon to sing the creed in a manner that is very far removed from the profession of faith. The words of the Our Father, the perfect and divine prayer should be sang in such a way that at the end of the singing we feel that we have prayed the Our Father. If our compositions fail in this basic purpose it becomes preferable to recite these prayers than to sing them.

Another factor in the singing of these hymns that make up the Ordinary of the Mass is their length. The Kyrie for instance belongs to the introductory Part of the Mass and should not be so long as to make the introduction assume the dimension of the major parts of the Mass: the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. There must be a sense of proportion, so that the beauty of the whole is considered and not of individual parts.

LITURGICAL ART

What has been said of liturgical music also applies to liturgical art. Traditional statues are expensive because they are imported. Then also they depict Western art. Many, although not all, have a problem with that. They feel inculturation of religious art should

use artefacts made in the African style. That of course is a matter of opinion and taste. There is nothing wrong with an African having a preference to an art form that is different from one of his respective culture; just as even within the same culture one can have a preference for one art form to another. One person will prefer landscapes, another still life, one will prefer sculpture to mosaics. Many people in the Catholic Church have a great liking for icons that come from a particular part of the Eastern Churches. To have these icons is not considered betrayal of one's cultural art of which iconography does not form a part.

In any case there is a lot of sub-standard works of art that go in our liturgy in the name of inculturation. You find statues that are deformed with huge heads and rickety legs or with a face that looks so mean like that of a bandit meant to represent our Lord. One finds combination of colours being used that break every law of harmony. Worse still is the case when the art in a church is painted on the wall. People need to know in the first place that it is expert work to paint on walls and particularly on the roof. It is not easy to get the proportions correctly, since the artist's posture is under strain. Pastors need to be careful not to invite any self-styled artist to do a painting on the wall or the renovation of statues. Better a clean whitewashed wall than one with art that is simply a distraction and offensive not only to art but also to religious sentiments. A bad statue may be got rid of more easily than a wall painting. Whatever artefact used in the liturgy should be of a quality that gives honour to God. "...in commissioning artists and choosing works of art to be admitted into a church, what should be required is that true excellence in art which nourishes faith and devotion and accords authentically with both the meaning and the purpose for which it is intended."²⁵ Quality costs and to have it a parish may have to be prepared to do some spending.

²⁵ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 289.

Still in connection with liturgical art, it happens sometimes that when a need arises to have a new parish someone with the means is commissioned to build it. Now having the financial means is one thing and having the technical no-how is another. It is not easy to tell people what to do with their money. Nor is it correct if what they do with it is their own business and is doing no one harm. But if they are constructing something for the Church, then they must also accept direction from the Church on what is appropriate. In such a case the norm given in the General Instruction must be heeded: “For the proper construction, restoration, and remodelling of sacred buildings, all who are involved in the work are to consult the diocesan commission on the Sacred Liturgy and sacred art. The Diocesan Bishop, moreover, should use the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important issues.”²⁶

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The liturgy of the Word includes the readings, the responsorial psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the gospel reading, the homily, the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful. We have already mentioned the importance of singing the creed using a form that retains the profession of faith. We have also mentioned the importance of not making a hasty translation of the texts of the readings before the official translations are made. What we need to talk about are the responsorial psalm, the *Alleluia* and the homily.

The responsorial psalm is chosen in such a way that it forms a biblical response to the first reading just read. Our people unfortunately are very little instructed in the use of psalms. In that respect Anglicans are far ahead of Catholics (in parts of Uganda). However, as a remedy there are places where the

²⁶ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 291.

responsorial psalm is almost never used. Instead it is replaced with a meditational hymn. That is quite alright if it is not turned into a rule, and if the hymn used is pertinent to the message of the reading. But it is not wise to completely exclude and ignore the responsorial psalm.

In many places people do sing the responsorial psalm. People need not use written music since many cannot read music anyway, and publications of written music in our language are not available. But there are good composers who should also be encouraged to compose a simple tune for the responsorial psalm. That is done very often with the prayers of the faithful; it could be done for the responsorial psalm in such a way that the actual words of the psalm are used.²⁷ There need not be a new responsorial tune every week. People can use a few established tunes for a long time.

The Gospel Acclamation is more dispensable than the responsorial psalm. In fact it is even permissible to exclude it. For that reason people can use a different *Alleluia* song instead of using the words actually suggested in the lectionary. But the length of the song used should also be proportionate to the role of the Gospel Acclamation in the liturgy.

The homily is the most challenging part of the Mass for any pastor. If someone asks you to say Mass for him the first thing you think of is the homily, because you need to say something meaningful. The homily is particularly challenging if you are to base it on the readings (as normally you should) and to make them meaningful to the people. The easy escape is to abandon them altogether and tell a story. In the name of inculturation one may deal too much on life situations as to deprive the people of the possibility of understanding the word of God. One can use the excuse that the people know very little of the scriptures and scriptural explanations are for scholars and are like talking above

²⁷ E.g. in Luganda, the common tune for “Tukikusaba ayi Mukama” dmssdtls. s:fmrd.

the heads of the people. But that is the more reason why the Scriptures should be explained to them since without an explanation they are incomprehensible to the people. That requires the pastor himself to get to understand the scriptural message. Relevance is not saying what is amusing or what people want to hear. It is not filling the homily with proverbs, although these are a great help.

PROCESSION DANCES

The procession dance is one of the great achievements of inculturation. When well prepared it is an excellent expression of the people's joy in worship. It is the moment at which everyone croons their necks to see the dancers. Even non-Africans feel moved. I remember on one occasion during an ordination at the Urban university the seminarians prepared a procession dance. When the music warmed up, as usual many people, mostly women, made the usual *mizira*. One white man close by where we were felt inspired to do the same. Then a priest next to me cracked a joke on the hoarseness of the voice, so far removed from a *muzira*. He said that that was the alarm made when people chase a thief, not when they make *omuzira!*

But like all things that go in the liturgy, the procession dance should be very well prepared. It is better to have one procession dance that is well prepared on very rare occasions than too many that are of poor quality. While it is an expression of joy before the Lord, it must retain the soberness of worship.

Care should be taken that the participants, particularly when they are young ladies, are not a distraction to worship, particularly in the manner in which they dress. In the Leadership magazine there was an article of a disturbed Christian questioning whether religious leaders condoned mini skirts in worship. Next to the article there was a picture of a procession dance. The use of very young girls in procession dances is particularly attractive because of their beautiful innocence. The Lord who so often wanted that little children come to him would surely be pleased when these

little ones are made to precede the presentation of gifts at his altar. Their dance may not be as elaborate as that of adults, but when well prepared they are willing to learn. A choir dress, if affordable would add to the beauty of the procession. The procession dance should also not take a time that is disproportionately longer than what is normal for the offertory of gifts.

Another problem the procession dance may create is distraction. It distracts those that have to perform it, so that before they will be busy somewhere dressing and that is usually during the readings or the homily. Then after they will be putting off the costumes while the congregation moves on to the liturgy of the Eucharist. During that time they will discuss how they have performed. Some may want to make themselves more presentable before appearing again in the congregation, to clean themselves of the perspiration, to add a little more powder. By the time they come back to the liturgy it is well advanced. However, that cannot be helped. Just as on a party not all can sit down to eat, someone has to do the serving, so also in the liturgy.

But even the congregation itself may take time to settle down and recollect themselves for the celebration of the liturgy of the Eucharist. The prayer that begins the preface is an invitation of the congregation to recollect themselves, to “lift up their hearts to the Lord” before the holy moment when Christ descends on the altar. People need to be catechised on the importance of that invitation.

In general procession dances, like all other components of the liturgy, should help people to pray. The directive given in the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy applies also here: “among some peoples, song is instinctively linked with handclapping, rhythmic corporeal movements and even dance. Such are external forms of interior sentiment and are part of popular traditions, especially on occasions such as patronal feasts. Clearly, such should be genuine expressions of communal prayer and not merely theatrical spectacles. The fact of their

prevalence in one area, however, should not be regarded as a reason for their promotion in other areas, especially where they would not be spontaneous.”²⁸

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

There is the constant practice among many of adding intercessions in the Eucharistic prayer where these are not prescribed. It is true that the words of the Eucharistic prayer are some of the more invariable parts of the liturgy and in many cases the faithful go through it without paying attention to these words that they have heard so often. And so the presider seeks to make it more relevant by making all sorts of additions.²⁹

The Eucharistic prayer is the high point among the presidential prayers and should be accorded the dignity due to it. There is a place for intercession that should be utilised. There is also a possibility of finding other Eucharistic prayers to break the monotony of using the same words heard over and over again.

OTHER POSSIBLE AND ACTUAL ERRORS

“Certain initiatives in inculturation have been considered deviations or abuses because they were not accompanied by anthropological and theological reflection of adequate depth. There are rites or customs that cannot without discernment be adapted for use. Again, there have been attempts on too limited a cultural basis. It must be admitted that some of the things attempted in inculturation lend themselves to equivocal

²⁸ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, Catholic Truth Society, 2002, no. 17.

²⁹ I remember concelebrating at a silver jubilee Mass at which one of the concelebrants who took the second part for the Eucharistic prayer said: “remember our brothers and sisters...” then he posed to insert a petition for the jubilarian: “...especially our brother here who is celebrating his 25 years in the priesthood” then he went on: “who have gone on before us marked with the sign of faith...!” it is obvious that although well-intentioned the intercession was misplaced, placing the living among the dead.

interpretation. Tactless initiatives put valid ones at risk and are to be avoided: abuses in the use made of holy water, incense, candles and the laying on of hands; prayer groups tending towards sects, and not attending Sunday Mass; danger that the liturgy evolve into a non-sacred folk ritual. The danger of syncretism has to be noted.”³⁰ “Finally, it is strictly to be considered an abuse to introduce into the celebration of Holy Mass elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books and taken from the rites of other religions.”³¹

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE INCULTURATION?

WISHING TO MAKE LITURGY MEANINGFUL

Very often the celebrant has a genuine desire to make the Mass more meaningful to the congregation. We all feel the challenge to make liturgy more meaningful to the people. We often feel challenged when other pastors within our Church or of other Christian denominations attract more members than we do. Any pastor is genuinely worried by the dwindling number of the faithful within the Church, not only for the economical consequences to the Church but also for their spiritual good. Any effort to make the liturgy meaningful therefore is not out of place.

MEETING THE NEED TO BE APPRECIATED

There is also the natural desire of being appreciated. We all feel good when someone comes up and says: Father I was touched by your homily, or I like the way you say Mass. Sometimes this praise is more subtle and more gratifying such as where there are more than one priest each celebrating a Mass on Sunday or some important occasion. Someone comes up and asks you which of

³⁰ Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 66.

³¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 79.

the Masses you are celebrating and having been told which, makes sure that he or she comes for just that Mass. On the other hand people are too polite to tell a priest when his manner of conducting liturgy is boring, but then somehow one may come to realise it. It is mortifying to know that your liturgy sends people to sleep. You know the feeling when half way your homily you see people yawning or dozing or looking at their watches. And so a pastor takes pains in making the liturgy as interesting as possible. Unless this effort is well informed he then also make the mistakes.

MAKING THINGS EASIER FOR SELF

Mistakes are also made when a priest tries to make things easier for himself or even for the people. He does not want to suffer the heat so he does away with the vestments. He thinks kneeling is old-fashioned and so he says the entire Mass seated. He thinks taking the long version of the reading is too tiring so he takes the shorter as a rule. It is too cumbersome to use the unfamiliar Eucharistic prayers so he sticks to one as a rule. These are all options that can be taken. There is nothing wrong with saying the Mass seated or taking the shorter version of a reading. We are under no obligation to keep changing Eucharistic prayers. Vestments do not determine the validity of the Mass, circumstances may demand that it be said without vestments. But the genuine motive for making changes should not be for the comfort of the people, much less for that of the pastor, but for pastoral good. If comfort is considered as a means to better worship, then it can be a genuine motive. Surely we need to build a shade for the people when Mass is going to be celebrated in the open. One needs to provide seats for them if possible. Then they can concentrate easier. But comfort is not to be sought for its own sake.

Sometimes we under-estimate the capacity of people to endure even in matters liturgical. You carry out the rite of sprinkling with holy water at the beginning of Mass and you do so timidly

that only very few people actually receive the drops. All because you are afraid to wet the people. Certainly you do not need to use buckets of water to make sure that each of them is thoroughly soaked. But a little wetting with water does no one any harm as long as the water you use is clean and does not stain people's clothes. It is more meaningful when as many people as possible actually receive the water. While you sprinkle the water there are many people there in the congregation who are anxiously waiting to receive some drop. They will make the sign of the cross all the same but a bit disappointedly. Truly the rite is valid for them but make an effort to fully apply the symbolism.

WHY PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES IN SPITE OF GOOD INTENTIONS?

IGNORANCE OF ONE'S LIMITS

Sometimes we make mistakes because we do not know in the process of adaptation what properly belongs to the Holy See, what appertains to Episcopal Conferences, to Diocesan bishops and to individual celebrants. Or if we know we do not think that such insistence is necessary. Rather we consider it the fixation on clericalism, over-emphasis of Church authority that is out of touch with the actual pastoral situations. "Not infrequently, abuses are rooted in a false understanding of liberty. Yet God has not granted us in Christ an illusory liberty by which we may do what we wish, but a liberty by which we may do that which is fitting and right. This is true not only of precepts coming directly from God, but also of laws promulgated by the Church, with appropriate regard for the nature of each norm."³²

Many of the pastoral principles are laid down after extensive reports from pastoral experience and after long years of

³² Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction: *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, Rome, 25 March 2004, no. 7.

experimentation. Many of the mistakes we make have already been made in the course of the history of the Church and their negative repercussions have wounded the Church. Again “abuses are often based on ignorance, in that they involve a rejection of those elements whose deeper meaning is not understood and whose antiquity is not recognised. For ‘the liturgical prayers, orations and songs are pervaded by the inspiration and impulse’ of the Sacred Scriptures themselves, and it is from these that the actions and signs receive their meaning”.³³ And so as a measure of safeguarding against further degeneration the Church has laid down the limits with regard to changes in the liturgy.

It is important to know that many of the heretics and schismatics were people of exceptional talents and they had so many good points with which they could persuade many others. They did not go in error all at once but by degrees through overconfidence in their own capabilities and disdaining Church discipline.

LACK OF REVERENCE AND DEVOTION

Sometimes erroneous changes in the liturgy may be inspired by a loss or lack of reverence for the sacred. By degrees a decline in our own spiritual life also affects our liturgical life. The liturgy loses its importance. Its preparation becomes a burden that consumes time that we would rather use for “more important” matters. But we have to do it anyway because people expect it of us. We carry the Blessed Sacrament and forget it in the pyx for weeks. We talk and shout in the sacristy regardless of whether the faithful are praying in the nave. We introduce cultural elements in the liturgy without first weighing how much they help the people to worship better, or whether they are actually a hindrance to their relation with God. We are not prepared to spend money on the renovation of things used in the church

³³ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 9. Cf. SC, 24.

because we do not consider that so important. There is no established time for confessions because we ourselves have taken so long without receiving that sacrament and we do not feel any need for it. And indeed it is very difficult to insist on the sacrament of penance for the people if I as pastor never go for confession. I fear the judgement of the people that says “we know he too is a sinner, and where does he confess himself?”

Holiness is an indispensable factor to an effective ministry. In liturgy much has been said about inculturation as the means to a liturgy that is relevant. But even that is bound to fail if holiness is lacking. God cuts across racial barriers. People sense Him where he is, regardless of the cultural expression. We have only to remember Pentecost. Inculturation is important, but only in second place after holiness, and not before it.

UNRESTRAINED ZEAL

Another reason for liturgical mistakes is unrestrained zeal and a clamour for novelty, the fallacy that whatever is new is good, whatever is old is outdated and old-fashioned.³⁴ Catechisms that encouraged cramming seem out of place. Songs in the hymnbook of the early missionary that had tunes which are almost universal seem outdated by the more elaborate and cultural-oriented compositions. Every celebration must have something novel. Once a song is common we feel it should be replaced. The breviary is made up of prayers and psalms of the Old Testament “and why should I use them as if I cannot formulate my own prayers to God which are more meaningful to my situation?” we question. Of course we should pray using our own formulations. The Divine Office is not meant to replace personal prayer, but neither is personal prayer meant to replace the prayer in which the intentions of the Church, present and past; militant, suffering and triumphant are expressed.

³⁴ See Mark Searle, *Liturgy Made Simple*, 25.

Liturgy has its pace that is not exactly like that of the world of fashion. It requires some amount of stability. Its history indicates entire centuries of unmodified practices. Innovation must not override this stability and vice-versa.

LACK OF EFFORT TO BE INFORMED

Pastoral work takes one's time and attention in such a way that continuous study requires much more effort than for a person in the academic field. And yet even the busy pastor must find time to be informed, if his liturgy is to remain edifying. "All priests should go to the trouble of properly cultivating their liturgical knowledge and ability, so that through their liturgical ministry, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be praised in an ever more excellent manner by the Christian communities entrusted to them."³⁵ The revision of the liturgical books of the Vatican Council II has insisted that each rite should have an elaborate introduction, which does not merely give rubrics but offers a basic understanding of the meaning of the respective rite. It is a useful practice in the first place to equip oneself with some of the full rites complete with their introduction, and in the second, to make a habit of familiarising with the basic content of these introductions.

To make matters still easier, many of the rubrics make references to the General Instruction or even to other accessible documents like the code of canon Law, the Vatican Council II documents, etc.

As regards inculturation, all these rites indicate the areas open to adaptation, indicating what appertains to the Holy See, to the Episcopal Conferences, to local ordinaries and to individual pastors. A study of the General Instructions provides answers to many pastoral-liturgical questions.

³⁵ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 31. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 5.

DANGERS OF INAPPROPRIATE INCULTURATION MEASURES

Mistakes made in the liturgy in the short or long run do harm to the liturgy itself and to people's attitude to it. In the words of Pope John Paul II, writing in reference to the Eucharist, abuses "contribute to the obscuring of the Catholic faith and doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament." Thus they also hinder the faithful from "re-living in a certain way the experience of the two disciples of Emmaus: 'and their eyes were opened, and they recognised him'".³⁶ What is said of the Eucharist can be applied to other liturgical components where abuses crop in. We now examine some of these dangers.

UNDERMINING THE UNITY OF THE LITURGY

One of the beauties of the Catholic Church that many other Christian churches lack and envy (or criticise) is its unity. That unity is found not only in its teaching, its central authority, its organisation, but also in its liturgy. It is possible for a priest to go to many parts of the world and to celebrate Mass without much difficulty of knowing the different way of doing things in that place. The only impediment probably would be the language. It is true there is likely to be some variations of usage, but these are minor and can easily be learned.

The insistence on the unity of worship was much stronger after the Council of Trent as a measure to prevent the ever-growing fragmentation rampant among Protestant Churches at the time due to their liberty in worship. For that reason the Council insisted on the use of the Latin language in the liturgy, on strictly sticking to the rubrics in saying of Mass and on little participation of the lay faithful. With the change of times and the establishment of the rift between the Catholic Church and Protestant Churches the insistence on rigidity as a measure

³⁶ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 10: AAS 95 (2003), p. 439. Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 6.

against fragmentation of worship was no longer necessary. On the contrary there was another need that called for a new approach: the spread of Christianity in missionary lands in the wake of colonisation was such that many peoples of different cultures embraced without fully comprehending it. Thus Vatican Council II has opened the way to greater variety, to the use of vernacular, to the encouragement of full and active participation of the faithful.

But with every good thing comes a negative and a danger of swinging to the extreme. The need for variety and for inculturation should not make us lose the value of unity. What has become a common term to describe the ideal is “unity in variety”. Changes made in the liturgy for the sake of greater comprehension of the local community should not transform the liturgy beyond recognition by those who do not belong to that community or culture. Authentic inculturation should not undermine the unity of Catholic liturgy.

COMPLICATING THE SIMPLE

Anyone who has read the gospels and compared them to the commentaries that explain them might be struck with how simple and easy to comprehend the teaching of Christ is. The difficulty might be more in practising it than in comprehending it. On the other hand those millions of books that are intended to make it more comprehensible often do the contrary; they make it seem even much more complicated than it is.

Liturgical scholars often determine the relative ages of two similar liturgical texts by their simplicity or complexity. Older texts were often simpler. As time went on Liturgists would seek to explain, to elaborate, to clarify, to improve, thus making them more and more complicated.

It is a common pitfall to draw from African culture some elaborate symbol and to propose it for the liturgy in the name of inculturation. But since so many of the young people today are

out of touch with their traditional customs, he who introduces such imagery has to do a lot of explaining to make the imagery comprehensible. But an effective symbolism should require as little explanation as possible. A certain student at St. Paul national seminary asked me whether it would not be a good idea during the reading of the gospel, for the congregation to squat instead of standing. The reasoning was that in his culture it is impolite to stand. The polite thing is to squat. I did not ask him what his culture was for fear that he might think I was despising it. But such a gesture would certainly require the churches to have another set of pews especially designed to accommodate the squatters! It might require ladies to exclude particular fashion from their Sunday dress. It would be particularly difficult for other people who do not belong to that culture to attend Mass there. Half way the gospel reading they might need to change position. And in any case some of our cultures consider squatting, especially of a lady, as particularly indecent.

This example might be an extreme, but the idea is that inculturation should not create unnecessary complication of the liturgy.

CHEAPENING THE NOBLE

To make the next point clear I would like us first of all to read the text of Genesis 4:3ff.

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

In our effort to inculturate the liturgy we often run the danger of cheapening the liturgy. Africa is poor. Things used in the liturgy

are expensive. Chalice, altars, tabernacles, vestments, churches... all cost money a lot of money. Pastors rightly become tired of having to ask for money of which there is never enough, from people who have so little to live on themselves. It is correct to question why we should strive to live beyond our income. God is not honoured by pomp for he chose a manger as his birthplace. In particular improving the liturgy should not be used as an excuse to milk money from the people which money they need for their livelihood.

On the other hand our poverty should not be used as an excuse to offer God what is sub-standard. There are sub-parish churches from under whose roofs one can sit and bask in the sun or count the stars at night without having to get out or to look through the window, so gaping are the holes in the roof. But often you will find that not so many of the parishioners live in similar houses. Even if they did as individuals, they could still put up something better as a group if they desired. God prefers a generous giver. He deserves our best. That is why he appreciated the gift of Abel and rejected that of Cain.

I went to buy a sprinkler for the seminary from St. Paul Book centre. I could not find it. Some liturgical expert met me and said he was glad I had not found it. Sprinklers in the African setting should be made out of natural material. Grass or twigs which are even more meaningful as a symbol of life.

We are likely to agree with him. What is important is not the sprinkler but the water. We do not need things made in metal. The imported sprinkler is not African. That is all true. The other side of the coin is that even what is made from natural African material should be characterised by quality. You can enjoy a meal as much on a plastic or paper plate as on that made of china clay. The quality of the food does not change. But when you receive a rare visitor you get out the very best, and that is what you offer them. God deserves the best, not just spiritually, which is the more important part. But we are not pure spirits and our worship must be expressed also in material terms.

Liturgy is governed by the principle of *Noble Simplicity*. *Simplicity* in the sense of avoiding the extravagant, of being ostentatious and pompous, of spending beyond the means of the community served. Things that are closer to nature have a natural and simple beauty. You find that in Altars made in solid wood retaining its natural shape, or solid stone, in asymmetrical decoration of flowers, etc. *Noble* is the other side of the coin: things that are dignified, not frivolous, not cheap in terms of being of low quality. That principle of *Noble Simplicity* must pervade also our efforts towards inculturation.

What is said of the Holy Eucharist by the Congregation for Divine Worship applies to all liturgy:

The Mystery of the Eucharist is too great for anyone to permit himself to treat it according to his own whim, so that its sacredness and its universal ordering would be obscured. On the contrary, anyone who acts thus by giving free reign to his own inclinations, even if he is a Priest... becomes responsible for actions that are in no way consistent with the hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people today. Nor do such actions serve authentic pastoral care or proper liturgical renewal; instead, they deprive Christ's faithful of their patrimony and their heritage. For arbitrary actions are not conducive to true renewal, but are detrimental to the right of Christ's faithful to a liturgical celebration that is an expression of the Church's life in accordance with her tradition and discipline. In the end, they introduce elements of distortion and disharmony into the very celebration of the Eucharist...³⁷

SCANDALISING THE FAITHFUL

There is a rubric in the rite of adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament outside Mass which says that it is no longer

³⁷ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 11.

required for one to genuflect with both knees when the blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration. The same genuflection with one knee is sufficient. However, where people are used to the old way it is important not to disturb their faith. The reasoning is that the Lord is present in the Blessed Sacrament as much when he is enclosed in the tabernacle as when he is exposed. Doors and enclosures mean nothing to his risen state. But the people may not understand that readily and may regard the conduct of their pastor as disrespectful of the Blessed Sacrament.

The same principle applies in measures that we undertake in the name of inculturation. Care is to be taken that the people understand them and that these do not appear to them as a watering down of the old faith. Many people wonder whatever happened to the Eucharistic fast.³⁸ Others were shocked when they first saw a procession dance in church, or girls serving Mass. New changes should be preceded by proper catechesis. Their aim is to strengthen people's faith and not to weaken it. And if that aim cannot be achieved due to people's backwardness it is better not to disturb that faith. It is true that the rosary is a devotional prayer and not strictly liturgical. However, if you have to explain that to people, particularly to devotees of our Lady, you must do so in a manner that does not indicate that the Rosary is by that fact inferior to other liturgical prayers.

³⁸ In fact the Eucharistic fast still stands: "communicants are not to receive the sacrament unless they have fasted for one hour from solid food and beverages, with exception of water. The period of Eucharistic fast, that is, abstinence from food or alcoholic drink, is reduced to about a quarter of an hour for: 1) the sick who are living in hospitals or at home, even if they are not confined to bed; 2) the faithful of advanced age, even if not bedridden, whether they are confined to their homes because of old age or live in a nursing home; 3) sick priests, even if not bedridden, or elderly priests, whether they are to celebrate Mass or to receive communion; 4) persons who care for the sick or aged, and the family of the sick or aged, who wish to receive communion with them, when they cannot conveniently observe the fast of one hour." See *Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, 24.

LOSING SIGHT OF THE ESSENTIAL

Another pitfall in the effort to make liturgy meaningful is that of losing the essential and of exaggerating the non-essential. The essential is the communion with God of the worshipping community *as a community*. Anything that impedes that is to be avoided. A choir that sings so well but which only does so to display its skills and not to help the worshipers pray better fails in its mission. A homily that keeps people laughing throughout but that does nothing else to nourish their faith fails to achieve its purpose. A Christian who offers a big gift in the offertory basket, but who does so to show how much he has and not out of religious purposes wastes his money. A sumptuous wedding in which the couples neither pay attention to what they promise nor keep those promises later on is a tragedy. Whatever we do in the liturgy we should not lose sight of the essential.

PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS FOR INCULTURATION OF THE LITURGY³⁹

WHEN SHOULD INNOVATIONS BE MADE⁴⁰?

It is good in the first place to appreciate how the liturgical reform went a long way to make the liturgy understandable to the people. With regard to the Roman Missal for instance the General Instruction (2002) states: “The renewal of the Roman Missal, carried out in our time in accordance with the decrees of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, has taken great care that all the faithful may engage in the celebration of the Eucharist with that full, conscious, and active participation that is required by the nature of the Liturgy itself and to which the faithful, in virtue of their status as such, have a right and duty.”⁴¹ This observation is not to mean that therefore there is no need for inculturation and adaptation. On the contrary. In the same paragraph of the General Instruction it is further said: “in order, however, to enable such a celebration to correspond all the more fully to the norms and the spirit of the Sacred Liturgy, certain further adaptations are set forth in this Instruction in the Order of Mass and entrusted to the judgement either of the Diocesan Bishop or the Bishop’s Conference.”

The first question to ask before undertaking inculturation, therefore, is whether or not inculturation is called for. There is no point in making innovation to explain a liturgy that is already meaningful and appreciated by the people. And so inculturation

³⁹ IRL 28-30.

⁴⁰ IRL 46-51.

⁴¹ *General Instruction 2002*, 386.

should be undertaken when the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires it. The same norm was given by the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy as a basis for the restoration of the liturgy.

The norm established by the Second Vatican Council – that in the liturgical reform there should be no innovations unless required in order to bring a genuine and certain benefit to the Church, and taking care that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing – must also be applied to efforts at the inculturation of the same Roman Rite.⁴²

The same norm applies in due measure to inculturation. Quite often all that is required is that the people are given a proper liturgical catechesis.

HOW SHOULD INNOVATIONS BE MADE?

Changes should be made gradually. “Inculturation requires a necessary length of time, lest the authentic liturgical tradition suffer contamination due to haste and lack of caution.”⁴³ Liturgy requires a certain amount of stability, for people are creatures of habit. When new changes are introduced they should be adequately explained so that the people understand them. Inculturation should be made in such a way that one avoids the danger of rejection due to an artificial grafting onto previous forms. In particular it is necessary to ensure that liturgical inculturation does not appear like syncretism. Such might be the case for instance when the honour given to ancestors in traditional religion is equated to that given to saints in the Christian tradition. For saints are not just Christians who have lived and died before us: they are people who have proved victorious in the battle of faith, and that cannot be applied wholesale on all our ancestors. Rites should not appear to have

⁴² *General Instruction 2002*, 398.

⁴³ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 398.

the same meaning as the one they had before evangelisation. Nor should chants and prayers of local religions replace biblical readings.⁴⁴

JUDGEMENT OF THE SITUATION

The different situations in which the Church finds itself are an important factor in judging the degree of liturgical inculturation that is necessary. There is the situation of countries that were evangelised centuries ago and where the Christian faith continues to influence the culture. In this situation one may need liturgical formation more than inculturation. This is different from countries which were evangelised more recently or where the Gospel has not penetrated deeply into the cultural values. Different again is the situation of a Church where Christians are a minority of the population. A more complex situation is found when the population has different languages and cultures. A precise evaluation of the situation is necessary in order to achieve satisfactory solutions.

AVAILABILITY OF COMPETENT EXPERTS

To prepare an inculturation of the liturgy, Episcopal conferences need to call upon people who are competent both in the liturgical tradition of the Roman rite and in the appreciation of local cultural values.⁴⁵ Preliminary studies of a historical,

⁴⁴ Not even when these texts contain an undeniable religious and moral teaching. These texts can be used profitably in the homily since it is one of the tasks of the homily to "show the point of convergence between revealed divine wisdom and noble human thought, seeking the truth by various paths" (John Paul II, apostolic letter *Dominicae Cenae*, 24 February, 1980, no. 10 AAS 72 (1980), 137.

⁴⁵ Pastors need not wait until they are summoned by Episcopal Conferences in order to take on the work of inculturation. quite often bishops have enough on their hands to take on such initiative. Those who are in the field and actually see the need for inculturation of a particular aspect of the liturgy should take the initiative and present it through the appropriate channels towards its

anthropological, exegetical and theological character are necessary. But these need to be examined in the light of the pastoral experience of the local clergy, especially those born in the country. The advice of “wise people” of the country, whose human wisdom is enriched by the light of the Gospel, would also be valuable. Liturgical inculturation should try to satisfy the needs of traditional culture and at the same time take account of the needs of those affected by an urban and industrial culture.

APPROPRIATE LITURGICAL FORMATION SHOULD BE PRIOR TO ANY INCULTURATION⁴⁶

Prior to any inculturation it is necessary to have a proper understanding of the liturgy. Often one discovers that with proper catechesis many elements need not be changed. Young Churches in particular need to understand the liturgical heritage received.

inculturation. This is different from private and unguided initiative and experimentation that may actually damage the liturgy and the unity of the Church.

⁴⁶ Cf. C. Dooley, “Liturgical Catechesis”, in Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, vol. II, 2003, Gale, p. 544-645.

PRINCIPLES OF INCULTURATION⁴⁷

Basically there are two main principles of inculturation: compatibility with the gospel and union with the universal Church.⁴⁸ These principles, when elaborated may be categorised as divine and ecclesial. What follows below is an elaboration of these two principles.

PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE ORIGIN⁴⁹

LITURGY IS AT ONCE THE ACTION OF CHRIST THE PRIEST AND THE CHURCH HIS BODY

Before any research on inculturation begins, it is necessary to keep in mind the nature of the liturgy. It is, in fact the privileged place where Christians meet God and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ. (cf. John 17:3). It is at once the action of Christ the priest and the action of the Church which is his body, because in order to accomplish his work of glorifying God and sanctifying mankind, achieved through visible signs, he always associates with himself the church, which, through him and in the Holy Spirit, gives the Father the worship which is pleasing to him.

The nature of liturgy is intimately linked up with the nature of the Church. Indeed, it is above all in the liturgy that the nature of the Church is manifested. Now the Church has specific

⁴⁷ General principles of Inculturation: SC 37-40, 65, 68, 1119; EACW 16, 35, 85-87; IRL 24-29.

⁴⁸ Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 68.

⁴⁹ These principles can be found in IRL 21-27. There they are designated as Requirements of Adaptation that emerge from the nature of the liturgy.

characteristics which distinguish it from other assembly and community.

It is not gathered together by a human decision, but is called by God in the Holy Spirit and responds in faith to his gratuitous call. This singular characteristic of the Church is revealed by its coming together as a priestly people, especially on the Lord's day, by the word which God addresses to his people and by the ministry of the priest, who through the sacrament of orders acts in the person of Christ the head.

Because liturgy is the action of Christ in union with the Father and the Spirit; because it is also the action of his Church; because in it God takes the initiative and humanity responds as a body; this imposes great responsibility on one who makes innovations, even when these innovations are made for the good of the Church. Such initiative must be inspired by God and approved by the Church as a body.

Again the Church is Catholic and overcomes the barriers which divide humanity. By baptism all become children of God and form in Christ Jesus one people where "there is neither Jew or Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Galatians 3: 28). For inculturation this means that whatever measure is taken, while it helps Christianity to penetrate in a particular culture, it should not on the other hand alienate others, thus dividing that unity which is essential to the Church.

Finally, the Church is a pilgrim on the earth far from the Lord.⁵⁰ It bears the marks of the present time in the sacraments and in its institutions, but is waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus

⁵⁰ For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5: 4-6). See also SC, 8.

Christ.⁵¹ We are citizens of heaven,⁵² at the same time attentive to the needs of mankind and of society.⁵³ An inculturation that would downgrade the pilgrim nature of the Church would be inauthentic.

THE CHURCH IS NOURISHED ON THE WORD OF GOD

The Church is nourished on the word of God written in the Old and New Testaments. When the Church proclaims the word in the liturgy, it welcomes it as a way in which Christ is present: It is he who speaks when the sacred Scriptures are read in the Church.⁵⁴ For this reason the word of God is so important in the celebration of the liturgy⁵⁵ that holy Scripture must not be replaced by any other text, no matter how venerable it may be.⁵⁶

⁵¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Titus 2: 11-13).

⁵² "...But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3: 20).

⁵³ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2: 1-4).

⁵⁴ "[Christ] is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church." (SC, 7).

⁵⁵ "Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. for it is from it that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung. It is from the scriptures that the prayers, collects, and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning..." SC, 24.

⁵⁶ GILM, 12: "It is not allowed to suppress or reduce either the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass or the chants that are drawn from sacred Scripture. It is absolutely forbidden to replace these readings by other non-biblical readings. It is through the word of God in the Scriptures that 'God continues to speak to his people (SC, 33), and it is through familiarity with the Holy Scripture that the

Likewise the Bible is the indispensable source of the liturgy's language, of its signs and of its prayer, especially in the psalms.⁵⁷

Many of our cultures had a great collection of wisdom in form of proverbs and stories. Such literature is a store of wisdom set in a cultural context that people understand very well. The proverbs of the people are more familiar to them than the book of Proverbs in the Bible. But from what we have seen above, such literature, full of wisdom, is not to be used as a substitute for the inspired word of God in the liturgy, in the name of inculturation. Certainly one can use it to explain the word of God, for instance in the homily. One may also use it outside the liturgy to instruct the people. But the liturgy of the word within the context of liturgical celebration is irreplaceable.

THE CHURCH IS THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

Since the Church is the fruit of Christ's sacrifice, the liturgy is always the celebration of the paschal mystery of Christ, the glorification of God the Father and the sanctification of mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸ Christian worship finds in this its most fundamental expression when every Sunday throughout the whole world Christians gather around the altar under the leadership of the priest, celebrate the Eucharist, listen to the word of God, and recall the death and resurrection of Christ,

people of God, made docile by the Holy Spirit in the light of faith, can by their life and way of living witness to Christ before the whole world."

⁵⁷ "The Psalter is the book in which the Word of God becomes man's prayer. In other books of the Old Testament, the words proclaim God's works and bring to light the mystery they contain. The words of the Psalmist, sung for God, both express and acclaim the Lord's saving works; the same Spirit inspires both God's work and man's response. Christ will unite the two. In him, the psalms continue to teach us how to pray." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2587.

⁵⁸ "Christ, indeed, always associates the Church with himself in this great work in which 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." SC, 7.

while awaiting his coming in glory. Around this focal point, the paschal mystery is made present in different ways in the celebration of the sacraments. In fact the paschal mystery is the source of power of all sacraments and sacramentals.⁵⁹

The whole life of the liturgy gravitates in the first place around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the other sacraments given by Christ to his Church.⁶⁰ The Church has the duty to transmit them carefully and faithfully to every generation. In virtue of its pastoral authority, the Church can make dispositions to provide for the good of the faithful, according to circumstances, times and places. But it has no power over the things which are directly related to the will of Christ and which constitute the unchangeable part of the liturgy.⁶¹ To break the link that the sacraments have with Christ, who instituted them, and with the very beginnings of the Church, would no longer be to inculturate them, but to empty them of their substance.

To give a rather far-fetched example, there was once an observation that in African tradition before people partook of an important meal they poured libation to the ancestors. Basing on this observation it was suggested that it would be appropriate to pour libation of the consecrated wine before the Eucharistic meal. Such a suggestion would be a total misunderstanding of the centrality of the Paschal Mystery, reducing Christ's presence in the consecrated species to mere drink. This is not to mention the misconception of the departed as in need of material nourishment.

⁵⁹ SC 5, 6, 61.

⁶⁰ SC, 6.

⁶¹ "...the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable." SC, 21. In revising the liturgy the Council laid down this principle of first isolating the unchangeable elements from the changeable. The same principle should be at work in inculturation. Care should be taken not to tamper with the unchangeable elements of the liturgy.

ECCLESIAL PRINCIPLES

THE CHURCH IS MADE PRESENT IN A GIVEN PLACE AND TIME BY THE LOCAL CHURCH

It is a well-known fact that in reference to the local Church Catholics do not say the Church *of*, but the Church *in*. The significance of that is that it is the one Church that finds realisation in the different localities. That means that even in the process of inculturation the local Church must remain united to the universal Church of which it is a part. Any form of inculturation that would isolate the local Church from the Universal Church is inauthentic.

The Church of Christ is made present and signified in a given place and in a given time by the local or particular Churches, which through the liturgy reveal the Church in its true nature.⁶² That is why every particular Church must be united with the universal Church not only in belief and sacramentals, but also in those practices received through the Church as part of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition. This includes, for example, daily prayer,⁶³ sanctification of Sunday and the rhythm of the week, the celebration of Easter and the unfolding of the mystery of Christ throughout the liturgical year,⁶⁴ the practice of penance

⁶² “Those who, under the authority of the bishop, sanctify and govern that portion of the Lord’s flock assigned to them render the universal Church in their locality and contribute efficaciously towards building up the whole body of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:12).” LG, 28. “[The] Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organised local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament. (cf. Acts 8:1; 14: 22-23, 20:17)”. LG, 26.

⁶³ SC, 83. [Jesus] continues his priestly work through his Church. The Church, by celebrating the Eucharist and by other means, especially the celebration of the divine office, is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the entire world”.

⁶⁴ SC, 102 Holy Mother Church believes that it is for her to celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in the sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord’s Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord’s resurrection. She

and fasting,⁶⁵ the sacraments of Christian initiation, the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic liturgy, the forgiveness of sins, the ordained ministry, marriage and the anointing of the sick.

In the liturgy the faith of the Church is expressed in a symbolic and communitarian form. This explains the need for a legislative framework for the organisation of worship, the preparation of texts and the celebration of rites.⁶⁶ The reason for the perceptive character of this legislation is to ensure the orthodoxy of worship. That is to say, not only to avoid errors, but also to pass on the faith in its integrity. However, deep inculturation may go therefore, the liturgy cannot do without legislation and vigilance on the part of those who have received this responsibility in the Church: the apostolic See and, according to the prescriptions of the law, the Episcopal Conference for its territory and the bishop for his diocese.⁶⁷

In planning and implementing and execution of inculturation the three points need to be borne in mind: the goal of inculturation, the substantial unity of the Roman rite and the competent authority.

THE GOAL OF THE LITURGICAL RENEWAL SHOULD BE UPHELD

This is the goal laid down by the Second Vatican Council as the basis of the general restoration of the liturgy. In the first place

also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts. In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.”

⁶⁵ Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on Penance, (*Paenitemini*), 17th February 1966.

⁶⁶ SC, 22, 26, 28, 40, 43 and 128. CIC canon 2.

⁶⁷ Cf. SC, 22; 36; 40; 44-46; CIC canons 47ff and 838.

inculturation should promote greater clarity of the liturgical signs used. "Both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."⁶⁸ There should be as little need for explanation of the rites as possible.⁶⁹ Secondly it should promote full and active participation.⁷⁰

However, this active participation must properly be understood: "...from the fact that the liturgical celebration obviously entails activity, it does not follow that everyone must necessarily have something concrete to do beyond the actions and gestures, as if a certain specific liturgical ministry must necessarily be given to the individuals to be carried out by them. Instead, catechetical instruction should strive diligently to correct those widespread superficial notions and practices often seen in recent years in this regard, and ever to instil anew in all of Christ's faithful that sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the mystery of faith..."⁷¹

THE SUBSTANTIAL UNITY OF THE ROMAN RITE SHOULD BE RETAINED⁷²

This unity is currently expressed in the typical editions of liturgical books, published by authority of the supreme pontiff and in the liturgical books approved by the Episcopal conferences for their areas and confirmed by the Apostolic See.⁷³ The work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new

⁶⁸ SC, 21.

⁶⁹ Rites also need "to be adapted to the capacity of the faithful and that there should not be a need for numerous explanations for them to be understood" (SC 34).

⁷⁰ This overriding principle is stated and elaborated in SC, 14-20. It is again reiterated in the different sacraments and sacramentals. For instance with regard to sacramentals: SC, 79.

⁷¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 40.

⁷² SC 37-40.

⁷³ VQA 16.

families of rites; inculturation responds to the needs of a particular culture and leads to adaptations that still remain part of the Roman rite.⁷⁴

INCULTURATION SHOULD BE GUIDED BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Adaptations of the liturgy, even with regard to inculturation, depend completely on the authority of the Church. This authority belongs to the Apostolic See. It is exercised through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments.⁷⁵ It also belongs, within limits fixed by law, to Episcopal Conferences⁷⁶ and to diocesan bishops.⁷⁷ No other person, not even a priest, may exercise inculturation on their own.⁷⁸ In matters regarding adaptation of the liturgy, concessions granted to one region do not automatically apply to other regions. Permission has to be sought with reason for extending them to other areas. This statement seems to stifle all endeavours, particularly in the young Churches, towards inculturation. But the next topic shows how Church authority is meant to direct and not to suppress inculturation.

⁷⁴ Cf. John Paul II, discourse to the plenary assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, January 26, 1991, no. 3: AAS 83 (1991), 940: “This is not to suggest to the particular churches that they have a new task to undertake following the application of liturgical reform, that is to say, adaptation or inculturation. Nor is it intended to mean inculturation as the creation of alternative rites...it is a [way] of collaborating so that the Roman rite, maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations.”

⁷⁵ SC 22; CIC cc. 838 §§1,2; John Paul II, apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus* 62, 64.3: AAS 80 (1988), 876-877; VQA, 19.

⁷⁶ SC 22, cans. 447ff, 838 §1, 3; VQA 20.

⁷⁷ SC 22, CIC cc. 838 §1, 4; VQA 21.

⁷⁸ SC 22.

AGENTS OF INCULTURATION

THE HOLY SEE

RETAINS THE RIGHT TO REGULATE LITURGY⁷⁹

The Holy See retains the right to revise the liturgical books and the rites they contain. To this effect the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states: “Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See, and, as laws may determine, on the bishop”⁸⁰

Many of us who never had a first hand experience of the liturgy before the second Vatican Council find it difficult to fully appreciate the tremendous work of revision which that Council did in the liturgy. But I am sure the senior members among us do appreciate that. So many felt a great disappointment soon after the changes thinking that the Church’s liturgy had degenerated. But today equally many hardly think of the old liturgical form as tolerable. Such major revisions are the prerogative of the Holy See and such bodies as it chooses and delegates. At that level it is possible to have as many experts as necessary in the different relevant fields, to gather as much experience from different parts of the world as possible, to put new rites to pastoral testing giving them the so as to yield time-tested results. At that level the experience of history is thoroughly studied, past mistakes are

⁷⁹ “Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church; that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.” SC, 22. Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can 331 and can. 838 § 2 ; *Lumen Gentium*, n. 22.

⁸⁰ SC, 22 §1.

avoided. Only at that level can one retain the unity of the liturgy while permitting wholesome variety at the same time. This is not possible on the lower levels.

Nor are these works of revision and reform of the liturgy frequent. Many of the rites that were revised had been in use for centuries. Occasionally one may have some updating of a particular aspect but not a total revision of the entire liturgy. It is a common tendency for us to think in short terms and to expect some change every after a few years. But as we have seen liturgy requires a certain amount of stability.

ENCOURAGES & PROMOTES NECESSARY VARIETY IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES

It might appear to some that the Church retains the power to regulate the liturgy in order to keep a conservative control over it. But this in fact is not the case. It advocates unity as much as it does variety and adaptation. Regarding the Church's attitude to inculturation Vatican Council II states:

“Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonise with its true and authentic spirit.”⁸¹

The things to note here are that the liberty for variety in worship is not unlimited. It is granted in matters that 1) do not implicate the faith, and 2) do not jeopardise the good of the whole community. Uniformity is still maintained in those matters. One may not introduce something that is contrary to the Catholic faith. For instance if tradition required a king to meet a virgin

⁸¹ SC 37

(Nakku)⁸² before his actual wedding day, if that meeting involved treating her in the manner he would ordinarily treat his wife, the Catholic Church would not endorse such a custom in as far as it contradicts the monogamous nature of marriage, and it is against the rights of the girl presented as well as the future wife. The king is not above divine law. Again inculturation should not contradict the good of the whole community. Karamajong believe to be the owners of all cattle and claim such a right to be of divine origin. Respect to their culture could never endorse such a claim in as far as it is uncharitable and goes against the rights of other people.

Another factor that may lead to the total rejection of a custom as unfit for inculturation is its being “indissolubly bound up with superstition and error”. The practice of polygamy or the inheritance of widows even by people who are already married may have so many arguments to support it. But it is indissolubly bound up with error, contradicting the monogamy of a Christian marriage. Certain cultures in West Africa used to throw away twins in a forest because such babies were believed to be evil. Such a custom is indissolubly bound up with superstition and has to be totally abandoned without dialogue.

Anything else in our culture should be subjected with careful study “with sympathy” or understanding. This requirement indicates the need for a good understanding of the culture before introducing its elements in the liturgy. Once studied certain elements may be left untouched. You may permit the payment of bride-wealth as part of the marriage preparation without incorporating it into the liturgy if you consider it a useful custom. But if an element is actually good, it may be incorporated in the liturgy. Many local dioceses in East Africa have a rite of funerals that includes the rite of installation of an heir.⁸³

⁸² See New Vision, Issue... in connection with the impending wedding of king Mutebi of Buganda.

⁸³ E.g. Diocese of Jinja, *Emikolo Egy'okuziika Omukristu*, 1972. P. 17ff.

SPECIFIES AND DELIMITS POWER OF LOWER BODIES IN LITURGICAL MATTERS

Further the Holy See specifies and delimits the different roles the lower bodies in the hierarchy in the adaptations.⁸⁴ But the fathers of the Council further commissioned other bodies or congregations for the actual revision of the books.⁸⁵ We now take a closer look at the roles of the Episcopal Conferences in the work of adaptation and regulation of the liturgy. One thing to note is that with regard to Episcopal conferences these may be groups of bishops of the same country as the Uganda Episcopal Conference, or of an amalgamation of several countries as is the case with the AMECEA bishops. The greater the territory the wider the experience and the more experts there are; but on the other hand, the more generalised decisions are likely to be.

BY EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES⁸⁶

PREPARE TRANSLATIONS ACCORDING TO NATIONAL GENIUS⁸⁷

The first role of these authorised bodies of bishops in the work of adaptation of the liturgy was that of translation of the typical

⁸⁴ “In virtue of power conceded by law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of bishops’ conferences, legitimately established, with competence in given territories.” SC, 22 §2.

⁸⁵ In the appointment of these Congregations the Council also gave them the mandate to indicate the areas of adaptation in the rites which they would revise: “Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; and this should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and devising rubrics.” SC, 38.

⁸⁶ In general: *General Instruction 2002*, no. 25-26, and corresponding references; Regarding Church environment GIRM 263, 288, 304, 308; regarding language and music SC 36, 120, GIRM 26, regarding liturgical celebrations: SC 39, 77; GIRM 6, 21, 56, 318, 325, 331, LM 20, GLNY 46, DMC 5. In General see IRL 31-32.

⁸⁷ SC 25, 31, 38; DE 187; IRL 34-39, 53-70; CP 1-43; CEILT 1-35.

editions into the local language from Latin. Such work obviously requires many experts with a thorough knowledge of the Latin language, the art of translation, the liturgy itself and laws that regulate it, the culture of the people as well as the procedures in publication. Nobody can possess all this expertise alone, rather it is the co-operation of several experts. It is also a task that requires huge amounts of money to accomplish. Such translations and adaptations require the approval of the Holy See before their final use in the liturgy.

MAKE FURTHER ADAPTATIONS WITHIN THEIR LIMITS

In those translations the Episcopal Conferences were also allowed to make adaptations to their territory as prescribed in the individual rites: “Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books, it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music, and the arts, but according to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution.”⁸⁸ For that reason while one region of the world may borrow a translation of a rite from another region that uses the same language, the borrowing region may often find itself at a disadvantage because some of the adaptations made by the lending region do not correspond to the local needs of the recipient region. At the same time some adaptations that the poorer region might have wanted to make may not have been considered necessary by the lending territory. The American Episcopal Conference, some of whose translated rites we often use,⁸⁹ has for instance extensively addressed the problem of inclusive language that is relevant to its society. On

⁸⁸ SC, 39

⁸⁹ Most of the rites in English we use are either translation under the authority of the American Episcopal Conference or that of England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Australia. E.g. the Divine Office, the English Missal and Lectionary, and the various volumes of the Rites.

the other hand the problem of inculturation is not as pressing in their context as it is in Africa.

Within the General Instruction to the Roman Missal (2002) the areas of adaptations by Episcopal Conferences with regard to Mass are spelled out in number 390 as follows:

It is up to the Conferences of Bishops to decide on the adaptations indicated in this General Instruction and in the Order of Mass and, once their decisions have been accorded the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, to introduce them into the Missal itself. These adaptations include

- The gestures and posture of the faithful (cf. no. 43 above);
- The gestures of veneration toward the altar and the Book of the Gospels (cf. no. 273 above);
- The texts of the chants at the entrance, at the presentation of the gifts, and at Communion (cf. nos. 48, 74, 87 above);
- The readings from Sacred Scripture to be used in special circumstances (cf. no. 362 above);
- The form of the gesture of peace (cf. no. 82 above);
- The manner of receiving Holy Communion (cf. nos. 160, 283 above);
- The materials for the altar and sacred furnishings, especially the sacred vessels, and also the materials, form, and color of the liturgical vestments (cf. nos. 301, 326, 329, 339, 342-346 above).

COMPOSE NEW RITES IF PERMITTED

The Holy See has given more liberty in the field of adaptation to Episcopal Conferences than many people actually think. It has given them the possibility of incorporating new elements from local culture into the liturgy, and, in some cases where necessary, even to make entirely new compositions for the liturgy. This obviously is to be done with maximum prudence in order to

preserve the substantial unity of the Church's liturgy.⁹⁰ For that purpose the Holy See also puts down certain conditions to be followed when such new rites or components of them are to be introduced.

The first condition is that the Episcopal Conferences in question make a careful study of the cultural elements. "The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, must, in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and culture of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship. Adaptations which are judged to be useful or necessary should be submitted to the Apostolic See, by whose consent they may be introduced."⁹¹

Secondly, such new introductions must be given an experimental period in specified groups at the end of which their effect is evaluated. The permission for such experimentation is given by the Holy See: "To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection necessary, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and to direct, as the case requires, the necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suitable for the purpose."⁹²

Thirdly, knowing that Bishops have so many other duties which do not permit them to pay the kind of intensive attention necessary for such work even if they had the expertise, the Holy See advises the employment of experts, mainly priests to assist in the work of adoption of new elements. "Because liturgical laws often involve special difficulties with respect to adaptation, particularly in mission lands, men who are experts in these

⁹⁰ "In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties..." SC, 40.

⁹¹ SC, 40 § 1.

⁹² SC, 40 § 2.

matters must be employed to formulate them.”⁹³ In order to coordinate and foster the work of these experts it is necessary for the Episcopal Conferences to establish a Liturgical Commission at the level of their Secretariat.

LOCAL ORDINARIES

The Liturgy celebrated by the local Ordinary has particular significance for he has the full representative of Christ and high priest of his people. There were times in the Church when the bishop led the liturgy and all his flock surrounded him. Obviously that is no longer always possible due to the extension of the diocese. However, even then the annual visitation of the bishop to the different parishes has particular significance especially in the liturgy. There are dioceses where even this cannot be done in one year. For instance in the diocese of Milan the bishop goes around all the parishes once in fifteen years! Because of that material impossibility for the bishops to conduct the liturgy for his people he delegates the priests and other people who must work in close collaboration with him.

As to specific areas of the bishop’s role in the regulation of the liturgy in his diocese, this we shall see as we consider specific rites. Suffice here to quote the *General Instructions (2002)* referring to different paragraphs within the same document where a diocesan bishop directs the adaptations and inculturation:

The Diocesan Bishop, who is to be regarded as the high priest of his flock, and from whom the life in Christ of the faithful under his care in a certain sense derives and upon whom it depends, must promote, regulate, and be vigilant over the liturgical life in his diocese. It is to him that in this Instruction is entrusted the regulating of the discipline of concelebration (cf. above, nos. 202, 374) and the establishing of norms regarding the function of

⁹³ SC, 40 § 3.

serving the priest at the altar (cf. above, no. 107), the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds (cf. above, no. 283), and the construction and ordering of churches (cf. above, no. 291). With him lies responsibility above all for fostering the spirit of the Sacred Liturgy in the priests, deacons, and faithful.⁹⁴

As on the level of the Episcopal Conference so too the diocesan bishop establishes a liturgical commission to co-ordinate and promote the liturgical work of the diocese.⁹⁵ “It pertains to the diocesan Bishop, within the limits of his competence, to set forth liturgical norms in his Diocese, by which all are bound. Still, the Bishop must take care not to allow the removal of that liberty foreseen by the norms of the liturgical books so that the celebration may be adapted in an intelligent manner to the Church building, or to the group of the faithful who are present, or to particular pastoral circumstances in such a way that the universal sacred rite is truly accommodated to human understanding.”⁹⁶

INDIVIDUAL PRIESTS

DEVOUT CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED MYSTERIES

Since the basic purpose of inculturation is to make the liturgy meaningful and inspiring to the people, the primary role of the priest, even before attempting to make any changes is the worthy and reverent celebration of the sacred mysteries. That alone can, coupled with a life that is consistent with what is celebrate can go a long way to make the liturgy meaningful to the people and to

⁹⁴ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 387.

⁹⁵ “...the diocese is to have a commission on the sacred liturgy, under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate.” SC, 45.

⁹⁶ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 21. Cf. Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Liturgy, Dubium: *Notitiae* 1 (1965) p. 254.

render any innovations unnecessary. “In keeping with the solemn promises that they have made in the rite of Sacred Ordination and renewed each year in the Mass of the Chrism, let Priests celebrate devoutly and faithfully the mysteries of Christ for the praise of God and the sanctification of the Christian people...”⁹⁷

NO AUTHORITY TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE LITURGY

The role of the individual priest in the process of inculturation is the immediate concern for priests and seminarians who are neither members an the Episcopal Conference nor diocesan bishops. The basic question for every pastor is how to celebrate the liturgy in a manner that is more in agreement to his parishioners. It might therefore be a disappointment to read that the area of making adaptations or lasting changes in the liturgy by an individual priest on his own authority is zero! In this regard the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states: “...no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.”⁹⁸ Moreover [priests] ought not to detract from the profound meaning of their own ministry by corrupting the liturgical celebration either through alteration or omission, or through arbitrary additions.⁹⁹

Where does that leave the country pastor with regard to adaptation and inculturation? Must he always wait until adaptations are dictated to him from above? What about the situations where the authority above does not move fast enough to meet the liturgical needs of the parishes? Must the priest always run to the bishop every time he must make some change? Are all the innovations and changes proposed and carried out in the different pastoral situations contrary to the teaching of the Church? These are some of the questions that may trouble many on reading this ruling.

⁹⁷ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 31.

⁹⁸ SC, 22 §3.

⁹⁹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 31.

MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF OPTIONS PROVIDED IN THE RITES

However, the local celebrant has wide latitude in which to contribute to the adaptation of the liturgy. “These adaptations consist for the most part in the choice of certain rites or texts, that is, of the chants, readings, prayers, explanations, and gestures that may respond better to the needs, preparation, and culture of the participants and that are entrusted to the priest celebrant...”¹⁰⁰

The first measure to take is to study the options provided in the rite and to choose the best under the circumstances. Too often many people including those that are champions of liturgical adaptation pay too little attention to the alternatives provided within the liturgy. These are indicated both in the rubrics and in the General Instructions of those rites. One would go a long way to make the liturgy more interesting by making maximum use of these available options. For instance the variation of Eucharistic prayers; not only the four traditional ones, but also making use of the others; the choice of hymns, the possibility to sing the Preface and other parts of the minister, the instruction on the Masses of children, the various forms of celebrating sacraments: penance, matrimony, funerals; the variety of readings and Mass formulas provided in ritual Masses; the numerous indications in the rubrics that the minister may use these or similar words; etc.

Apart from the options in the official books there those also provided by the local ecclesiastical authority be it the Episcopal conferences or diocesan.

MAKE PROPOSALS OF CHANGES TO THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES

Besides the use of all the available options individual pastors may also contribute to liturgical adaptation by making their own proposals to the local ordinary or even through him to the

¹⁰⁰ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 24.

Episcopal Conferences. While these higher levels have the authority to sanction new changes it is often individuals or groups that make the proposals. Therefore no one needs to feel stifled by ecclesiastical authority in the work of adaptation.

We now should turn to some concrete areas in the liturgy and see what possibilities of adaptation have been indicated.

THE LAY FAITHFUL

With what has been said about the limits made on priests in undertaking inculturation measures on their own it might sound as if the rest of the faithful have absolutely no role to play. And yet this is far from the truth. “The work of inculturation involves the entire Church community because it is the whole Church that must be missionary. Therefore it must never be thought that inculturation falls under the responsibility of... a handful of experts. It is the responsibility of the whole believing community. In fact, if pastors and theologians, for the most part, organise pastoral work and theological reflection, the gestures, attitudes, expressions, prayers and songs, along with musical instruments and rhythms will spring from the spiritual depths of the faithful people. The drive for inculturation is therefore a movement with which everyone is associated. In cases where there is conflict, it is the duty of the bishop to take a decision.”¹⁰¹

The area in which the faithful can participate to make the liturgy more meaningful are further specified thus: “...in addition, ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity aimed at allowing each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to established liturgical norms... in the songs, the melodies, the choice of prayers and readings, the... the preparation of the prayer of the faithful, the occasional explanatory remarks, and the decoration for the Church building

¹⁰¹ Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 61.

according to the various seasons...¹⁰² But a pertinent warning is immediately added: “Still, it should be remembered that the power of the liturgical celebrations does not consist in frequently altering the rites, but in probing more deeply the word of God and the mysteries being celebrated.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 39.

¹⁰³ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 39. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction Liturgicae instaurationis, n. 1: AAS 62 (1970) p. 695.

AREAS OF ADAPTATION IN THE ROMAN RITE¹⁰⁴

ADAPTATIONS IN GENERAL

TRANSLATION OF THE LITURGICAL BOOKS

Many people who have lived or worked in cultures other than their own know that the ability to speak the language of the people is a primary instrument in the effort to understand and to be understood by that people. Often people are drawn by a person's effort to speak their language, even when one speaks the language imperfectly. It is the custom of the Pope for instance to learn a few words of the language in the countries he visits. Even this gesture has the magic effect of welcome and acceptance by the people, reflected in their reaction of cheers.

The missionary tradition of the Church has always sought to evangelise people in their own language. Often indeed, it was the first apostles of a country who wrote down languages that up till then had only been oral. And this is right as it is by the mother language, which conveys the mentality and the culture of a people, that one can reach the soul, mould it in the Christian spirit and allow sharing more deeply in the prayer of the Church.

After the first evangelisation, the proclamation of the word of God in the language of a country remains very useful for the people in their liturgical celebrations. Translation of the bible, or

¹⁰⁴ IRL 38-45.

at least of the biblical texts used in the liturgy, is the first necessary step in the process of inculturation of the liturgy.¹⁰⁵

In the translation of liturgical books certain things have to be observed. The norms provided by the Holy See on translation ought to be applied. This puts an obligation on those who do the work of translation to be acquainted with the guidelines that are set down for it. Such guidelines normally also give them the possibility of flexibility.

These norms are presently laid out in the document “*Liturgiam Authenticam*”.¹⁰⁶ By way of example this document states as first step the question of choice of “vernacular languages to be introduced into liturgical use.” It states that “to be considered first of all is the choice of the languages that it will be permissible to put into use in liturgical celebrations. It is appropriate that there be elaborated in each territory a pastoral plan that takes account of the spoken languages there in use, with a distinction being made between languages which the people spontaneously speak and those which, not being used for natural communication in pastoral activity, merely remain the object of cultural interest. In considering and drafting such a plan, due caution should be exercised lest the faithful be fragmented into small groups by means of the selection of vernacular languages to be introduced into liturgical use, with the consequent danger of fomenting civil discord to the detriment of the unity of peoples as well as of the unity of particular churches and the church universal.

“...in drawing the plan it will be necessary to take account also of the question of the resources necessary for supporting the use of a given language such as the number of priests, deacons and lay collaborators capable of using the language in addition to the number of experts and those trained for and capable of preparing

¹⁰⁵ SC, 35 and 36; CIC, c. 825 §1.

¹⁰⁶ Vatican Worship and Sacraments Congregation, “Instruction: *Liturgiam Authenticam*”, in *Origins CNS Documentary Service*, vol. 31: no. 2, May 24, 2001.

translations of all of the liturgical books of the Roman rite in accord with the principles enunciated here. Also to be considered are the financial and technical resources necessary for preparing translations and printing books truly worthy of liturgical use... It will be the responsibility of the conference of bishops to determine which of the prevailing languages are to be introduced into full or partial liturgical use in its territory. Their decisions require the *recognitio* of the apostolic See before the work of translation is undertaken in any way. Before giving its decision on this matter, the conference of bishops should not omit to seek the written opinion of experts and other collaborators in the work; these opinions, together with the other acts, are to be sent in written form to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments..."¹⁰⁷

Translation of liturgical texts presupposes the translation of the scriptures, for "it is out of the Sacred Scripture that the readings are read and explained in the homily and that psalms are sung, and it is drawing upon the inspiration and spirit of Sacred Scripture that prayers, orations, and liturgical songs are fashioned in such a way that from them actions and signs derive their meaning."¹⁰⁸

Quite often in the process of translation one encounters words and expressions that cannot easily be rendered in the vernacular. Equally often such expressions have gained a kind of universal understanding even when rendered in the original language. Examples of such expressions include, "*memoria*", "*sacramentum*", "*ecclesia*", "*evangelium*", "*baptisma*", "*eucharistia*", "*pneuma*", "Amen", "Alleluia". People may pronounce such expressions slightly differently from the original, but generally their meaning is understood even when they lack an exact equivalent in the language into which the translation is made. Regarding such expression the General Instruction says: "...there will always

¹⁰⁷ *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 10, 11, 15.

¹⁰⁸ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 391. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 24.

remain the need for some catechesis on the biblical and Christian meaning of certain words and expressions."¹⁰⁹

As far as possible translations should avoid the tendency of abbreviating rites for this impoverishes them. It is true that quite often there are financial constraints. Still abbreviation should be the exception rather than the norm. They should be as full as possible and not just of the bare essentials. To translate only the essential may be economical in terms of money but it does not do justice to the rite nor meet the different pastoral situations envisaged. With regard to the Missal the General Instruction specifically directs that "The Roman Missal, whether in Latin or in lawfully approved vernacular translations, is to be published in its entirety."¹¹⁰

An example may be with regard to the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. There was a time when this sacrament was referred to as "Extreme Unction" and, as the title suggested, was associated with the dying only. The Second Vatican Council changed not just the name to become Anointing of the Sick, but also ruled that: "...the prayers which belong to the rite of Anointing are to be revised so as to correspond to the varying conditions of the sick who receive the sacrament." (SC, 75). A translation that gives only a few forms, sometimes those that stress the element of departure from this world would retain the pre-Vatican fear attached to the sacrament. Again Vatican II ruled that where there are alternatives Episcopal Conferences may provide more alternatives. It would be a pity that instead of the alternatives being increased they are decreased.

Authentic translation of liturgical texts requires a thorough knowledge of the liturgy, the language in which the texts are written as well as the language into which they are translated. In addition it requires the art of translation. The language into which the texts are translated must faithfully transmit the truths

¹⁰⁹ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 392.

¹¹⁰ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 389.

of faith. It must also express the grandeur and holiness of the mysteries celebrated. Careful consideration should be made of which elements of the language are adapted. There are several ways of expressing an idea. Expression can be colloquial or banal, it can be legal or humorous, wordy or concise. Liturgical language should convey the truths of the faith in a simple way.

Prudence should be exercised in adapting expressions from non-Christian religions. Certain expressions borrowed in good faith can give the people the impression that syncretism is acceptable. Attention also ought to be paid to the different literary genres within the liturgy. These include biblical texts, presidential prayers, psalmody, acclamations, refrains, responsories, hymns and litanies. The translation of a hymn for instance should retain its musical character, while a responsory ought to remain short.

MUSIC AND SINGING

Most if not all English Missals set out in liturgical format have music settings for such texts as Prefaces, Memorial Acclamations, the Our Father and the Doxology. These may be tunes that are somewhat foreign to many African cultures. Because of that, as well as the lack of knowledge of how to read music, many liturgical ministers never use this music as a rule. On the other hand one notes a remarkable lack of music texts in the vernacular translations of missals. And yet there are local musical tones that people sing from memory. In keeping with the requirements of the General Instruction to the Roman Missal, translation of the liturgical books should include music setting for those who are able to use it. Some of the more popular tones can be used to replace those in the Latin typical edition or the English Missal.

Apart from the liturgical texts people's music tradition should find expression in the liturgy. This is because music plays a great part in their socio-religious life. Those who compose should bear in mind the fact that sung texts remain deeply engraved in the memory. In order that music serves the purpose of worship it

should be characterised by biblical inspiration, liturgical suitability and literary quality.

Music forms, melodies and music instruments can be used if 1) they are suitable or can be made suitable for divine use, 2) they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship, and 3) they truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful.¹¹¹

GESTURES AND POSTURES

In the scriptures one reads about the worshippers giving each other a kiss of peace. There are many parts of the world where actually the sign of peace is given with a kiss. In some areas it is acceptable for couples to give each other the kiss of peace on the lips. In General for Africans kissing, and kissing on the lips in particular are not gestures to be performed in public and certainly not at worship. Even the kissing of the book of the gospels and of the altar can prove awkward for some ministers. A hug is more frequent among close acquaintances. A bow can substitute a kiss in the case of inanimate things. Gestures should be appropriate to the people's mentality.

The gestures used in worship must convey the appropriate meaning. The gestures of the presider express his presiding in the name of Christ,¹¹² while the gestures of the assembly express their unity as a worshipping congregation. They are a means towards their active participation.¹¹³

¹¹¹ SC, 116.

¹¹² "...for in the liturgy God speaks to his people and Christ is still proclaiming his gospel... Moreover the prayers addressed to God by the priest whom, in the person of Christ, presides over the assembly, are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present. And the visible signs which the sacred liturgy uses to signify invisible divine things have been chosen by Christ or by the Church". SC, 33. See also canon 899 §2.

¹¹³ "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes..." SC, 30.

Africans are people particularly known for celebrating life with music and dance. Almost every important event can be celebrated with music and dance. Some examples of gestures that could be incorporated into the liturgy include clapping accompanying singing, rhythmic swaying with music and dancing. Such gestures should find a place in the liturgy on condition that they express true communal prayer of adoration, praise and offering of supplication; and that they are not simply performance.

LITURGICAL ART

A peculiar and essential element of genuine art is freedom and creativity. Authentic art does conform to some standard principles, but it should also transcend them. Liturgical art too conforms to the fundamentals of good quality. But it should not be prescribed. No one can dictate that this is the particular art for this particular people. Art has an element of universality, of transcending culture. One person may have a particular test for the art of another people, and have little taste for that of his own people.

All one can say is that the artefacts used in the liturgy should enhance the beauty of the place of worship and of the rites celebrated. It should be significant to the life of the people. This of course is in general, for not all of them will have the same taste for art.

Some of the areas to be considered in the inculturation of Liturgical Art are: the location and decoration of the altar, the place for the proclamation of the Word, or the Ambo¹¹⁴, the baptistery or any other place set apart for baptism, liturgical vessels, vestments and colours, sacred images of Jesus, Mary, angels and saints. The preference in the materials used in liturgical art should be for those which are native to the land and therefore more meaningful for the people. However, this does

¹¹⁴ GIRM 272.

not exclude the possibility of borrowing from other cultures and thus enriching one's one. To some extent it can be said of art that it is supra-cultural or cross cultural. And even looking back into the history of the Church, one notices that one area borrowed from another, and this is quite accepted. One has only to think of the Western Church borrowing of iconography from the Eastern Church, or the widespread influence of baroque and gothic styles. Many extraordinarily gifted artists in history continue to exert their influence far away from their cultures. Prominent among these is the art of Michelangelo.

POPULAR DEVOTIONS

Devotional practices may not be introduced in the liturgy under the pretext of inculturation. The reason is that the liturgy is superior to them. However, devotions should be guided and fostered, for they lead or should lead to a greater appreciation of the liturgy. One who has a devotion to the Blessed Eucharist and constantly makes private visits to it or participates at Benediction is more likely to have a greater appreciation of the celebration of the Eucharist itself

. It belongs to the local Ordinary to organise and direct devotions.¹¹⁵ Measures should be made in such a way that devotions are constantly permeated by the spirit of the Gospel.¹¹⁶ The bishop should also ensure that devotional exercises do not replace or even be put at the same level as liturgical celebrations.¹¹⁷ For instance in a rural African parish it often happens that on Good Friday the faithful who come in the morning to celebrate the Way of the Cross would be too much strained to return to their homes and then return at 3.00 p.m. for the evening Good Friday liturgy. At the same time not many would be willing or even able to stay and wait for the Evening celebrations. In such a case, the Way of the Cross which is a

¹¹⁵ CIC, can 839 §2.

¹¹⁶ VQA 18.

¹¹⁷ VQA 18.

devotion, even though one that has been endorsed by the universal Church, should not be made to replace the evening liturgy. Nor should it be made to appear like another alternative, so that one can choose either to come in the morning or in the afternoon. The solution to such a conflict of activity is more a pastoral than a liturgical one. By way of suggestion one could say that if the Way of the Cross is not said on another day during Holy Week by the entire parish community it could be arranged in such a way that it is celebrated on parish or sub-parish levels. After all it does not require an ordained minister to conduct it.

PRAYER

There are certain qualities that characterised African prayer.

- Genuine, coming from the heart.
- Specific: usually asking for a particular need
- Expressive: involving the whole body, with singing, dancing, drumming, clapping, etc.
- Creative and spontaneous: there were hardly any written prayers. The one who led the prayers formulated them from the heart.

These qualities which resonate also in Christian prayer should be reflected in liturgical prayer.

ADAPTATIONS THAT ARE FORESEEN IN THE LITURGICAL BOOKS¹¹⁸

THE ROMAN MISSAL

Symbol of Unity

The most important component of the liturgy is the Eucharist. It is therefore logical to start the discussion on the areas of adaptation with Mass, and more specifically, with the book that governs its celebration, that is: the Roman Missal. Now the first thing to note about the Missal is that it is a symbol as well as a safeguard of the unity of the Roman Catholic Church. For the celebration of the Eucharist, the Roman Missal, “while allowing... for legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council,” must remain “a sign and instrument of unity.”¹¹⁹ This means that the areas of adaptation given in the Missal are given in such a way that, when implemented correctly, they would still retain the unity of the Catholic Church. At the same time they are given so that people of different regions and cultures may celebrate the liturgy in a manner that is more understandable to them in the context of their culture. To this end the General Instruction on the Roman Missal foresees that “in accordance with the constitution on the liturgy, each conference of bishops has the power to lay down norms for its own territory that are suited to the traditions and character of peoples, regions and different communities.”¹²⁰

The following are the specific areas of adaptation given in the Roman Missal:

¹¹⁸ IRL 53-61.

¹¹⁹ Paul VI, Apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*, April 3, 1969: AAS 61 (1969), 221.

¹²⁰ GIRM, 6; Cf. Also *Ordo Lectionum Missae, editio typical altera, Praenotanda*, 111-118.

Liturgical Art in General

...the Church constantly seeks the noble assistance of the arts and admits the artistic expressions of all peoples and regions. In fact, just as she is intent on preserving the works of art and the artistic treasures handed down from past centuries and, insofar as necessary, on adapting them to new needs, so also she strives to promote new works of art that are in harmony with the character of each successive age.¹²¹

The Altar

Number 273 of the *General Instruction* (2002) states: “According to traditional practice, the altar and the Book of the Gospels are venerated by means of a kiss. Where, however, a sign of this kind is not in harmony with the traditions or the culture of some region, it is for the Conference of Bishops to establish some other sign in its place, with the consent of the Apostolic See.” A bow might be a suitable substitute for a kiss.

Other liturgical furniture

Number 263 of the *General Instruction* (1975) states that: “According to the Church’s traditional practice and the altar’s symbolism, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone and indeed of natural stone. But at the discretion of the conference of bishops some other solid, becoming, and well-crafted material may be used.” Following the concession to episcopal conferences to use alternative material the bishops of the United States have decided that “In the dioceses of the United States of America, however, wood which is worthy, solid, and well-crafted may be used, provided that the altar is structurally immobile. The supports or base for upholding the table, however, may be made of any sort of material, provided it is worthy and solid.” (*General Instruction* 2002, ICEL translation 2003, no. 301)

¹²¹ *General Instruction* 2002, no. 289.

GIRM 288: “In the choice of materials for sacred furnishings, others besides the traditional are acceptable that by contemporary standards are considered to be of high quality, are durable, and well suited to sacred uses. The conference of bishops is to make the decisions for each region.”

Choice of Mass

“In cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the direction of the diocesan Bishop or with his permission, an appropriate Mass may be celebrated on any day except solemnities, the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, days within the Octave of Easter, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week.”¹²²

The Book of the Gospels

The Sign of Peace

GIRM 56b: “before they share in the same bread, the faithful implore peace and unity for the Church and for the whole human family and offer some sign of their love for one another. The form the sign of peace should take is left to the conference of bishops to determine, in accord with the culture and customs of the people.”

Eucharistic Prayers

Only those Eucharistic Prayers are to be used which are found in the Roman Missal or are legitimately approved by the Apostolic See and according to the manner and the terms set forth by it. It is not to be tolerated that some priests take upon themselves the right to compose their own Eucharistic Prayers, or to change the same texts approved by the Church, or to introduce others composed by private individuals.¹²³ However, the General

¹²² *General Instruction 2002*, no. 374.

¹²³ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 51.

Instruction permits the composition of other acclamations by the people besides those provided in the Eucharistic Prayer, as a means of increasing their active participation in it, and to use these acclamations with the approval of the Episcopal Conferences and with the recognition of the Holy See.¹²⁴

Communion under both kinds

GIRM 242: having enlisted in numbers 1-14 the various categories of the faithful to whom the chalice may be given, the instruction goes on to add:

The Diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups. The Diocesan Bishop is also given the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the priest to whom, as its own shepherd, a community has been entrusted, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or of the rite's becoming difficult because of the large number of participants or some other reason.¹²⁵

Sacred Vestments

“In addition to the traditional material, natural fabrics proper to each region may be used for making sacred vestments; artificial fabrics that are in keeping with the dignity of the sacred action and the person wearing them may also be used. The conference of bishops will be the judge in this matter.”¹²⁶

Sacred vessels

GIRM 290: “vessels should be made from materials that are solid and that in the particular region are regarded as noble. The

¹²⁴ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 147.

¹²⁵ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 283.

¹²⁶ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 343.

conference of bishops will be the judge in this matter. But preference is to be given to materials that do not break easily or become unusable.”

“As to the form of the sacred vessels, the artist may fashion them in a manner that is more in keeping with the customs of each region, provided each vessel is suited to the intended liturgical use and is clearly distinguishable from those intended for everyday use.”¹²⁷

Liturgical vestments

GIRM 305: “In addition to the traditional materials, natural fabrics proper to the region may be used for making vestments; artificial fabrics that are in keeping with the dignity of the liturgy and the person wearing them may also be used. The conference of bishops will be the judge in this matter.” With regard to the colour of vestments, having listed in number 308: a-f, the traditional usage which should be retained, the instruction adds: “the conference of bishops may choose and propose to the Apostolic See adaptations suited to the needs and culture of peoples.”

For the other sacraments and for sacramentals, the Latin typical edition of each ritual indicates the adaptations which pertain to the Episcopal conferences or to individual bishops in particular circumstances. In this book towards the end of the study of rite a consideration is made of these adaptations.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

For the rites of Christian initiation, Episcopal conferences are “to examine with care and prudence what can properly be admitted from the traditions and character of each people”¹²⁸ and “in mission countries to judge whether initiation ceremonies practised among the people can be adapted into the rite of

¹²⁷ *General Instruction 2002*, no. 332.

¹²⁸ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, no. 30, 2.

Christian initiation and to decide whether they should be used.¹²⁹ It is necessary to remember, however, that the term *initiation* does not have the same meaning or designate the same reality when it is used of social rites of initiation among certain people or when it is contrary to the process of Christian initiation, which leads through the rites of the catechumenate to incorporation into Christ in the Church by means of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

One of the areas that most urgently need to be addressed by inculturation in Africa is marriage. “There is a great number of Catholics excluded from the sacraments, the source of unity and strength, by reason of their irregular marital situation. Still others are barred from coming into the Church by reason of already existing relationships. It is good that all of these problems should be treated so as to find out what pastoral solutions are possible.

In any case, it is opportune in this matter of marriage to go back to the two principles that should direct every effort of inculturation, namely, ‘compatibility with the gospel and communion with the universal Church.’¹³⁰

In many places it is the marriage rite that calls for the greatest degree of adaptation so as not to be foreign to social customs. To adapt it to the customs of different regions and peoples, each Episcopal conference has the “faculty to prepare its own proper marriage rite, which must always conform to the law which requires that the ordained minister or the assisting layperson,¹³¹ according to the case, must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties and give the nuptial blessing.” This proper rite must obviously bring out clearly the Christian meaning of

¹²⁹ Ibid. 31. Cf. SC 65:

¹³⁰ Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 68.

¹³¹ Canons 1108, 1124.

marriage, emphasise the grace of the sacrament¹³² and underline the duties of the spouses.¹³³

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Among all peoples, funerals are always surrounded with special rites, often of great expressive value. To answer to the needs of different countries, the Roman Ritual offers several forms of funerals.¹³⁴ Episcopal conferences must choose those which correspond best to local customs.¹³⁵ They will wish to preserve all that is good in family traditions and local customs, and ensure that funeral rites manifest the Christian faith in the resurrection and bear witness to the true value of the Gospel.¹³⁶ It is in this perspective that funeral rituals can incorporate the customs of different cultures and respond as best they can to the needs and traditions of each region.¹³⁷

BLESSINGS

The blessing of persons, places or things touches the everyday life of the faithful and answers their immediate needs. They offer many possibilities for adaptation, for maintaining local customs and admitting popular usage.¹³⁸ Episcopal conferences will be able to employ the foreseen dispositions and be attentive to the needs of the country.

¹³² SC, 77; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 42.

¹³³ SC, 77.

¹³⁴ *Ordo Exsequiarum* Praenotanda, 4.

¹³⁵ *Ordo Exsequiarum* Praenotanda, 9, 21.1-3.

¹³⁶ *Ordo Exsequiarum* Praenotanda, 2.

¹³⁷ SC, 81: "Funeral rites should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian death, and should correspond more closely to the circumstances and traditions found in various regions. This also applies to the liturgical colour to be used.

¹³⁸ SC, 79; *De Benedictionibus*, Praenotanda Generalia, 39; *Ordo Professione Religiosae*, Praenotanda, 12-15.

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

As regards the liturgical year, each particular church and religious family adds its own celebrations to those of the universal Church, after approval by the Apostolic See.¹³⁹ Episcopal conferences can also, with the prior approval of the Apostolic See, suppress the obligation of certain feasts or transfer them to a Sunday.¹⁴⁰ They also decide the time and manner of celebrating rogation and ember days.¹⁴¹

THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The Liturgy of the Hours has as its goal the praise of God and the sanctification by prayer of the day and all human activity. Episcopal conferences can make adaptations in the second reading of the office of readings, hymns and intercessions and in the final Marian antiphon.

With regard to antiphons of Our Lady the General Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours states: "...one of the antiphons of the Blessed Virgin Mary is said. In Eastertide this is always the *Regina caeli Joy fill your heart, O Queen most high*) In addition to the antiphons given in *The Divine Office*, others may be approved by the Episcopal Conference."¹⁴²

There is also the possibility of exploiting the riches of inspiring writings of great masters within a culture. However, these are to

¹³⁹ GNLY 49, 55.

¹⁴⁰ Canon 1246 §2.

¹⁴¹ GNLY, 45-47: "On rogation days and ember days the practice of the Church is to offer prayers to the Lord for people's various needs, especially for the fruitfulness of the soil and for human labour, and to give God public thanks. So that rogation days and ember days may be adapted to the needs of people and places, the time and manner of their celebration should be laid down by the Episcopal Conferences. Furthermore the competent authority should lay down norms taking into account local conditions which fix the length of such celebrations. (extending over one or several days), and on the frequency of their recurrence each year."

¹⁴² GILH, 92.

be used not as a substitute but as a supplement to the Office of Readings: “Episcopal Conferences may prepare other additional texts that are in harmony with the traditions and mentality of their own area; these texts may form a supplement to the optional Lectionary. They should be taken from the works of Catholic writers outstanding for their teaching and holiness of life.”¹⁴³

Yet another area open to adaptation is that of the hymns used in the Divine Office. In this regard the General Instruction states: “New hymns can be given melodies of the same rhythm and metre as the traditional ones. With regard to celebrations in the vernacular, Episcopal Conferences may adapt the Latin hymns to the nature of their own language. They may also introduce new compositions, provided they suit the spirit of the Hour, season or feast; one should constantly beware of permitting those popular songs which are of no artistic value and completely unworthy of the liturgy”.¹⁴⁴

Finally adaptations may also be made of the intercessions at the Liturgy of the Hours. “Episcopal Conferences have the right to adapt the formulas of the Divine Office and approve new intercessions, keeping however the following norms...”¹⁴⁵

OTHER AREAS OF ADAPTATION

Other sacraments and sacramentals in which areas of adaptation are specified in the liturgical books, and which are treated in this work include Infant Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Pastoral Care for the Sick, Ordination¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ GILH, 162. Cf. SC, 38.

¹⁴⁴ GILH, 177-178.

¹⁴⁵ GILH, 184.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *De Ordinatione Episcopi Presbyterorum et Diaconorum, editio typica altera, Praenotanda*, 11. (Unlike the subsequent editions of the liturgical rites, the *editio typica* of the ordination rites was published without the introductions (*Praenotanda*) to the rites that are envisioned by the Constitution on the Liturgy art. 63 b).

ADAPTATIONS NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE LITURGICAL BOOKS¹⁴⁷

Apart from the adaptations provided for in the liturgical books, it may be that “in some places and circumstances an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties. This is more than the sort of adaptations envisaged by the general instructions and the Praenotanda of the liturgical books. It presupposes that an Episcopal conference has exhausted all the possibilities of adaptation offered by the liturgical books; that it has made an evaluation of the adaptations already introduced and maybe revised them before proceeding to more far-reaching adaptations. Adaptations of this kind do not envisage a transformation of the Roman rite, but are made within the context of the Roman rite.”¹⁴⁸

In some places when there are still problems about the participation of the faithful, a bishop or several bishops can set out their difficulties to their colleagues in the Episcopal conferences and examine with them the desirability of introducing more profound adaptations, if the good of souls truly requires it. It is the function of Episcopal conferences to propose to the Apostolic See the modifications it wishes to adopt following the procedure set out in the Fourth Instruction.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ IRL 63-69. Cf. SC, 40.

¹⁴⁸ In practice, however, it is not easy to envision adaptations which are radical, and not envisioned in the liturgical books which, at the same time do not involve a transformation of the Roman Rite.

¹⁴⁹ See IRL 65-69.

METHODS OF INCULTURATION

Liturgy must be a changing reality. If it did not change, it would risk being a thing of the past; because society changes, people change; their outlook, their culture, their understanding of the world around them change. In order for liturgy to be meaningful to them it must be presented in a manner that agrees with their outlook. At the same time there must be within the liturgy elements that do not change, because at the centre of the liturgy is God who does not change.

Technically one can say that in every liturgical act there is a *theological content* and a *liturgical form*. The theological content must be preserved, for “the Church herself has no power over those things which were established by Christ himself and which constitute an unchangeable part of the Liturgy”.¹⁵⁰ Failure to preserve the theological content may result in errors in doctrine, breaking away from the teaching of Christ, cutting oneself from the Church.

The liturgical form must change in a process we call these days “Inculturation”. The distinction between these two constituents of the liturgy is an important principle which guides adaptation and inculturation. It also guided the reform of the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council as we hear in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 21: “...the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out

¹⁵⁰ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 10.

of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable...”

PROCESS OF INCULTURATION

OBSERVATION

It has already been said that inculturation should not be undertaken unless there is a good reason for it. The first step therefore is that one notices something amiss; something that has to be redressed. It may be a cultural practice which, while having very commendable elements, also has elements that are contrary to the faith. Or it may be a practice, superstition or taboo which does not seem to have any particular value, but which strongly influences people's lives because they believe in it. Or again it may be a feature of the liturgy which in one's estimation does not have the effect it should have on people's lives whereby for some reason a person believes that lack of inculturation is to blame for the non-assimilation. Ordinarily this initial observation comes spontaneously to a conscientious minister or participant at the liturgy.

SURVEY OF THE SITUATION

The second stage is deliberate and planned study of the situation observed. Attend the cultural ceremony you wish to inculturate. Observe what is done. Get involved to the extent that this does not endanger your faith. Make note of its structure and main stages. Take notes. Take notes. In doing this, however, one is to be careful not to raise people's suspicion by giving an impression of a reporter. It is wiser to write down one's observation away from the public. The use of a tape recorder, particularly one that is unobtrusive might be handy.

Apart from taking note of what takes place try to understand the meaning attached to every action by the people involved. Ask those who know: relatives, friends, elders. Older people are usually keen to share cultural information with the young who show genuine interest. Many of these older people feel saddened that too many young people despise tradition, and that this is giving way to modern practices which are not always better. Ask as many people as possible and compare notes. Many people are fond of explaining what they do not know, if only to appear knowledgeable. Clear contradictions. If any literature on the custom is available get acquainted with it. In this respect cultural research centres can be very helpful if available. At this stage do not challenge or argue; just gather information. You might evangelise or correct error if necessary, but if not this may be relegated to a later stage.

Evaluate the situation on the basis of your findings. Assess what is good in the culture practice and needs promotion, what is harmless, and what is contrary to faith or morals and needs elimination or at least correction. Not all situations require correction through inculturation. In some cases it may be enough to catechise people more. In others a homily, a talk or a seminar may be enough.

If this initial survey convinces you that the matter is worthy serious study then embark on the next stage of planning that study.

PRAYER

Any serious undertaking for God cannot afford to ignore God. Pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit to purify your intentions. Pray for the spirit of wisdom and understanding to discover the truth. Pray for strength and fortitude to pursue the undertaking in spite of problems involved. Pray for humility so that your own ego, ambition and self interest may not get into your way.

A big temptation for those who make a dedicated study and who develop convictions as a result of such a study is to refuse to submit to higher authority when their findings are rejected for one reason or another. Or they might submit but then go one undermining that authority in the background, disseminating their convictions at the authority's back. Prayer and the effort to submit to God's will helps one in the work of inculturation, especially at a later stage when it is submitted to higher ecclesiastical authority for examination and endorsement. Even when the work is unfairly judged by the authority of the Church, God is more likely to effect his plans and purposes through that unfair judgment rather than through the rebellious and non-submissive action of the one who proposes the changes. That does not exclude cases where one judges that not to follow one's conscience even against the judgment of authority is to go against God's will. Ultimately we are accountable to our conscience; a well-formed conscience.

It is not enough to pray only at the initial stage, but through the whole process of the undertaking. One might find it helpful to formulate a prayer which can be recited everyday or even one which can be said by others as well.

INVOLVE OTHERS

Meaningful inculturation cannot be the work of one person alone, however gifted. We are simply too limited and too dependent on others to stand on our own. Involve as many relevant people as possible. Design research and survey instruments to gather the opinions of others. Use questionnaires for instance. For an example of such a questionnaire see...

STUDY OF THE SIDE OF THE CHURCH ON THE MATTER

What light does faith and the Church's teaching through on the matter under study? Is there a corresponding liturgical rite? To

what extent does culture agree with it and to what extent does it not agree? What other Church documents elucidate the matter? What does scripture say on the issue? Consider Vatican Council II documents as well as other post-Conciliar Church documents. Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Look up the relevant canons in the Code of Canon Law.

At this stage one can avail oneself with the help of experts in the relevant disciplines: Scripture, systematic theology, liturgy, moral theology, pastoral theology, etc.

FORMULATION THE PROPOSED RITE

The formulation must not be just in form of recommendations; filled with “shoulds”. Rather, it should be a complete liturgical rite or part of rite. In other words, it should be written in such a way that if it were approved, a minister could use it in the actual execution of the liturgy in the same way as he or she might use the rite of baptism or the missal. In such a rite there should be an introduction that will be appended to the General Introduction/Instruction of the rite you are inculturating, prayers written in a form easy to read in the liturgy, scripture readings, rubrics, and other liturgical texts like antiphons, intercessions, litanies, etc.

When the proposed inculturated rite is a modification of an existent rite, one does not need to rewrite in full the unchanged parts of the old rite. It is enough to make appropriate references to the original rite. The full text of the modified rite is made out only after the new modifications are approved.

CRITIQUE

Designers of vehicles put them to rigorous test before putting them out for use. It is necessary also to critic one’s proposed rite with the appropriate instruments. Later on when the work is permitted for experimentation it will be tested by actual use, and

this is the best test. But even before that one can critique a proposal in the following ways:

How ready are people likely to accept these changes? Are they inclined to prefer the older form which you propose to improve? Do not rashly dismiss people's resistance to change as conservatism. Inculturation is meant to be for the people, not the other way round. It is true that a certain degree of resistance is expected with the onslaught of novelty; that was the case with the changes of the Second Vatican Council for instance. However, resistance can also be an indication of whether or not the changes proposed go against the *sensus fidei*. That is why inculturation that is likely to be appreciated is the result of a keen observance of people's worship patterns. It is a proper reading of the signs of the times.

Study what effects your proposed modifications will have on people outside of your culture that happen to be or to come in the same area of worship. Are they likely to feel at ease with the changes or might they feel alienated by these changes?

How are the modifications likely to meet with the constant change of culture? For instance might they be more acceptable to people in a rural environment than those in an urban setting? Normally the Church follows the same ritual for people in different settings, with only options within the rite to accommodate different situations. Does the proposed modification offer alternatives to suit people in different settings?

SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL FOR APPROVAL

No one, not even a priest, is permitted to rewrite his own liturgy and begin using it immediately without approval, or disseminate it to others for use in the liturgy. The next stage therefore is what we see in the next subtopic.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

In writing out an inculturation proposal the following would be a typical outline for the content of the proposal:

- *Introduction:* Why it is necessary to inculturate this rite? In what way will it help people to pray better?
- *Precedents:* What earlier attempts have been made in the inculturation of this rite? Where do they fall short in your opinion?
- *Justification:* Relevant Church documents that prove that it is permissible to make the modifications you intend to introduce
- *Praenotanda:* Explanatory notes you intend to add to the General Introduction of the Roman Rite, to clarify your suggestions.
- *Ritual:* A detailed liturgical formulation of the part of the rite you are modifying including: headings of the major sections, rubrics explaining the meaning of the different parts and the required accompanying actions (preferably in red), prayers to be read aloud (preferably in thicker or bold text and in sense lines), readings including their beginning and end as well as their corresponding biblical quotations, acclamations, intercessions if any, songs, etc. Include any options within the rite you deem necessary. If you are proposing this rite as an option explain the circumstances under which it might be used.
- *Process:* having written out the rite one must consider the next step of submission of the proposed rite to the relevant authorities.

PROCEDURE OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES IN PROPOSING ADAPTATIONS

It is the feeling of many that the Church's promotion of inculturation and adaptation is for a greater part on paper. In practice the procedures in place to permit adaptations make it so difficult and discouraging; that those who are chosen to examine the proposals have not the feeling of the culture for which the proposals are made and so they are likely to judge it from a purely rational point of view. Not knowing the language of a particular culture, they must rely on others to translate for them (even though each proposal submitted must have a translation as well); people who may not be liturgical experts themselves. It is also assumed that those employed in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments are probably chosen from among people deemed to preserve the authentic Church teaching; in other words, people who lean more towards the conservative than towards the progressive side.

Because there can be some elements of truth in these fears, it is imperative that those concerned seek to provide reassurance such that the effort towards inculturation is not stifled but promoted, and that there does not develop a spirit of rebellion, an attitude that let those in Rome issue their legislations and we take care of God's vineyard in the best way we know without recourse to them.

EXAMINATION AND PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS

The Episcopal conference examines what has to be modified in liturgical celebrations because of the traditions and mentality of the peoples. It asks the national or regional liturgical commission to study the matter and examine the different aspects of the elements of local culture and their eventual inclusion in the liturgical celebrations. The commission ensures that it receives the appropriate expert advice. It may be sometimes opportune to ask the advice of members of non-Christian religions about the religious or civil value of this or that element. If the situation requires it, this preliminary examination is made in collaboration with the episcopal conferences of neighbouring countries or those with the same culture.

The Episcopal conference presents the proposal to the Congregation before any experimentation takes place. The presentation should include a description of the innovations proposed, the reasons for their adoption, the criteria used, the times and places chosen for a preliminary experiment and an indication which groups will make it, and finally the acts of the discussion and the vote of the conference.

EXPERIMENTATION

After an examination of the proposal carried out together by the Episcopal conference and the congregation, the latter grants the Episcopal conference a faculty to make an experiment for a definite period of time, where this is appropriate.

The Episcopal conference supervises the process of experimentation, normally with the help of the national or regional liturgical commission. The conference also takes care to ensure that the experimentation does not exceed the limits of time and place that were fixed. It also ensures that pastors and the faithful know about the limited and provisional nature of the

experiment. It does not give it publicity of a sort that could have an effect on the liturgical practice of the country. At the end of the period of experimentation, the Episcopal conference decides whether it matches up to the goal that was proposed or whether it needs revision and it communicates its conclusions to the congregation along with full information about the experiment.

A *nota bene* needs to be added with regard to liturgical experimentation. "...individual Bishops and their Conferences do not have the faculty to permit experimentation with liturgical texts or the other matters that are prescribed in the liturgical books. In order to carry out experimentation of this kind in the future, the permission of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is required. It must be in writing, and it is to be requested by the Conference of bishops. In fact, it will not be granted without serious reason."¹⁵¹

PUTTING INCULTURATION PROPOSALS INTO PRACTICE

After examining the dossier, the congregation issues a decree giving its consent, possibly with some qualifications, so that the changes can be introduced into the territory covered by the Episcopal conference. The faithful, both lay people and clergy, should be well informed about the changes and prepared for their introduction into the liturgical celebrations. The changes are to be put into effect as circumstances require, with a transition period if this is appropriate.

¹⁵¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 27. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction, *Varietates legitimate*. AAS 87 (1995) pp. 288-314.

SAMPLE CASES OF INCULTURATION

BETROTHAL CEREMONY

BACKGROUND: DESCRIPTION OF THE CEREMONY

EVALUATION OF THE CEREMONY

Values to be Promoted

Elements Contrary to the Christian Faith

Elements that are harmless

WHY INCULTURATE THE BETROTHAL CEREMONY

Double expense

Reluctance to Marry in Church Afterwards

Cultural Mentality

THE CHURCH'S POSITION

PROPOSED FORMS

*First Form Betrothal Ceremony Combined with
Matrimony within Mass*

Entrance Rite

Liturgy of the Word

Rite of Betrothal

Rite of Marriage

Liturgy of the Eucharist

*Second Form Betrothal Ceremony Combined with
Matrimony outside Mass*

Entrance Rite

Liturgy of the Word

Rite of Betrothal

Rite of Marriage

Concluding Rite

Third Form: Matrimony following Immediately after Betrothal

Form Form: Matrimony following Days after Betrothal

LAST FUNERAL RITES

BACKGROUND: DESCRIPTION OF THE CEREMONY

EVALUATION OF THE CEREMONY

Values to be promoted

Elements Contrary to the Christian Faith

Elements that are harmless

WHY INCULTURATE THE LAST FUNERAL RITES

Elimination of Pagan Practice

THE CHURCH'S POSITION

PROPOSED RITE

The Vigil

Morning Prayer

Installation of the Heir

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study clearly reveals how the Church is careful to retain a firm control on the course of adaptation of the liturgy. It is hoped that the reader appreciates the reasons for this: that this control is not meant to stifle the spirit of creativity, but to direct it for the good both of the local and the Universal Church. It is also hoped that one appreciates the latitude given for inculturation and adaptation in spite of the regulation of the process of adaptation.

Again much is left to the decision of Episcopal Conferences. Again the purpose is to ensure that changes made are not arbitrary, localised or short-lived. At the same time one should appreciate that quite often Episcopal Conferences as bodies do not have the time to go through the painstaking work necessary for the study of aspects of the liturgy that require adaptation. They depend strongly on the initiatives of individual members of the Church. They have the advantage of submitting such proposals to the appropriate expert scrutiny who advise them on further steps to take.

An individual pastor therefore should find it a personal responsibility to make the liturgy meaningful to the faithful under his charge. It is at this level that proposals for adaptation are first made. Only they must not be implemented rashly without submitting them through the proper channels discussed above.

APPENDIX: SECTION OF THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION TO THE ROMAN MISSAL ON ADAPTATIONS

Chapter IX

Adaptations within the Competence of Bishops and Bishops' Conferences

386. The renewal of the Roman Missal, carried out in our time in accordance with the decrees of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, has taken great care that all the faithful may engage in the celebration of the Eucharist with that full, conscious, and active participation that is required by the nature of the Liturgy itself and to which the faithful, in virtue of their status as such, have a right and duty.¹⁴⁷

In order, however, to enable such a celebration to correspond all the more fully to the norms and the spirit of the Sacred Liturgy, certain further adaptations are set forth in this Instruction and in the Order of Mass and entrusted to the judgment either of the Diocesan Bishop or of the Bishops' Conferences.

387. The Diocesan Bishop, who is to be regarded as the high priest of his flock, and from whom the life in Christ of the faithful under his care in a certain sense derives and upon whom it depends,¹⁴⁸ must promote, regulate, and be vigilant over the liturgical life in his diocese. It is to him that in this Instruction is entrusted the regulating of the discipline of concelebration (cf. above, nos. 202, 374) and the establishing of norms regarding the function of serving the priest at the altar (cf. above, no. 107), the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds (cf. above, no. 283), and the construction and ordering of churches (cf. above, no. 291). With him lies responsibility above all for fostering the spirit of the Sacred Liturgy in the priests, deacons, and faithful.

388. The adaptations spoken of below that call for a wider degree of coordination are to be decided, in accord with the norm of law, by the Conference of Bishops.

389. It is the competence of the Conferences of Bishops in the first place to prepare and approve an edition of this Roman Missal in the authorized vernacular languages, for use in the regions under their care, once their decisions have been accorded the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See.¹⁴⁹

The Roman Missal, whether in Latin or in lawfully approved vernacular translations, is to be published in its entirety.

390. It is up to the Conferences of Bishops to decide on the adaptations indicated in this General Instruction and in the Order of Mass and, once their decisions have been accorded the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, to introduce them into the Missal itself. These adaptations include

- The gestures and posture of the faithful (cf. no. 43 above);
- The gestures of veneration toward the altar and the Book of the Gospels (cf. no. 273 above);
- The texts of the chants at the entrance, at the presentation of the gifts, and at Communion (cf. nos. 48, 74, 87 above);
- The readings from Sacred Scripture to be used in special circumstances (cf. no. 362 above);
- The form of the gesture of peace (cf. no. 82 above);
- The manner of receiving Holy Communion (cf. nos. 160, 283 above);
- The materials for the altar and sacred furnishings, especially the sacred vessels, and also the materials, form, and color of the liturgical vestments (cf. nos. 301, 326, 329, 339, 342-346 above).

Directories or pastoral instructions that the Conferences of Bishops judge useful may, with the prior *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, be included in the Roman Missal at an appropriate place.

391. It is up to the Conferences of Bishops to provide for the translations of the biblical texts used in the celebration of Mass, exercising special care in this. For it is out of the Sacred Scripture that the readings are read and explained in the homily and that psalms are sung, and it is drawing upon the inspiration and spirit of Sacred Scripture that prayers, orations, and liturgical songs are fashioned in such a way that from them actions and signs derive their meaning.¹⁵⁰

Language should be used that can be grasped by the faithful and that is suitable for public proclamation, while maintaining those characteristics that are proper to the different ways of speaking used in the biblical books.

392. It will also be up to the Conferences of Bishops to prepare, by means of careful study, a translation of the other texts, so that, even though the character of each language is respected, the meaning of the original Latin text is fully and faithfully rendered. In accomplishing this task, it is expedient to take account of the different literary genres used at Mass, such as the presidential prayers, the antiphons, the acclamations, the responses, the litanies of supplication, and so on.

It should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of the translation of the texts is not with a view to meditation, but rather that they be proclaimed or sung during an actual celebration.

Language should be used that is accommodated to the faithful of the region, but is noble and marked by literary quality, and there will always remain the need for some catechesis on the biblical and Christian meaning of certain words and expressions.

It is, indeed, of advantage that in regions using the same language, the same translation be used whenever possible for liturgical texts, especially for biblical texts and for the Order of Mass.¹⁵¹

393. Bearing in mind the important place that singing has in a celebration as a necessary or integral part of the Liturgy,¹⁵² all musical settings of the texts for the people's responses and acclamations in the Order of Mass and for special rites that occur in the course of the liturgical year must be submitted to the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for review and approval prior to publication.

While the organ is to be accorded pride of place, other wind, stringed, or percussion instruments may be used in liturgical services in the dioceses of the United States of America, according to longstanding local usage, provided they are truly apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt.

394. Each diocese should have its own Calendar and Proper of Masses. For its part, the of Bishops' Conference should draw up a proper calendar for the nation or, together with other Conferences, a calendar for a wider territory, to be approved by the Apostolic See.¹⁵³

In carrying this out, to the greatest extent possible the Lord's Day is to be preserved and safeguarded, as the primordial holy day, and hence other celebrations, unless they be truly of the greatest importance, should not have precedence over it.¹⁵⁴ Care should likewise be taken that the liturgical year as revised by decree of the Second Vatican Council not be obscured by secondary elements.

In the drawing up of the calendar of a nation, the Rogation and Ember Days should be indicated (cf. above, no. 373), as well as the forms and texts for their celebration,¹⁵⁵ and other special measures should also be taken into consideration.

It is appropriate that in publishing the Missal, celebrations proper to an entire nation or territory be inserted at the correct place among the celebrations of the General Calendar, while those proper to a region or diocese be placed in a special appendix.

395. Finally, if the participation of the faithful and their spiritual welfare requires variations and more thoroughgoing adaptations in order that the sacred celebration respond to the culture and traditions of the different peoples, then Bishops' Conferences may propose such to the Apostolic See in accordance with article 40 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* for introduction with the latter's consent, especially in the case of peoples to whom the Gospel has been more recently proclaimed.¹⁵⁶ The special norms given in the Instruction On the Roman *Liturgy and Inculturation*¹⁵⁷ should be carefully observed.

Regarding procedures to be followed in this matter, the following should be followed:

In the first place, a detailed preliminary proposal should be set before the Apostolic See, so that, after the necessary faculty has been granted, the detailed working out of the individual points of adaptation may proceed.

Once these proposals have been duly approved by the Apostolic See, experiments should be carried out for specified periods and at specified places. If need be, once the period of experimentation is concluded, the Bishops' Conference shall decide upon pursuing the adaptations and shall propose a mature formulation of the matter to the Apostolic See for its decision.¹⁵⁸

396. Before, however, proceeding to new adaptations, especially those more thoroughgoing, great care should be taken to promote the proper

instruction of clergy and faithful in a wise and orderly fashion, so as to take advantage of the faculties already foreseen and to implement fully the pastoral norms concerning the spirit of a celebration.

397. Furthermore, the principle shall be respected according to which each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also as to the usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition. These are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also so that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church's rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*).¹⁵⁹

The Roman Rite constitutes a notable and precious part of the liturgical treasure and patrimony of the Catholic Church. Its riches are of benefit to the universal Church, so that were they to be lost, the Church would be seriously harmed.

Throughout the ages, the Roman Rite has not only preserved the liturgical usages that arose in the city of Rome but has also in a deep, organic, and harmonious way incorporated into itself certain other usages derived from the customs and culture of different peoples and of various particular Churches of both West and East, so that in this way, the Roman Rite has acquired a certain supraregional character. In our own times, on the other hand, the identity and unitary expression of this Rite is found in the typical editions of the liturgical books promulgated by authority of the Supreme Pontiff, and in those liturgical books corresponding to them approved by the Bishops' Conferences for their territories with the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See.¹⁶⁰

398. The norm established by the Second Vatican Council—that in the liturgical reform there should be no innovations unless required in order to bring a genuine and certain benefit to the Church, and taking care that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing¹⁶¹—must also be applied to efforts at the inculturation of the same Roman Rite.¹⁶² Inculturation, moreover, requires a necessary length of time, lest the authentic liturgical tradition suffer contamination due to haste and a lack of caution.

Finally, the purpose of pursuing inculturation is not in any way the creation of new families of rites, but aims rather at meeting the needs of a particular culture in such a way that adaptations introduced either in the Missal or in

combination with other liturgical books are not at variance with the distinctive character of the Roman Rite.¹⁶³

399. And so, the Roman Missal, even if in different languages and with some variety of customs,¹⁶⁴ must be preserved in the future as an instrument and an outstanding sign of the integrity and unity of the Roman Rite.¹⁶⁴

Endnotes

147. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

148. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 41.

149. Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can. 838 § 3.

150. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 24.

151. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 36 § 3.

152. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112.

153. Cf. *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, nos. 48-51, below, p. 99; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Calendaria particularia*, 24 June 1970, nos. 4, 8: AAS 62 (1970), pp. 652-653.

154. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 106.

155. Cf. *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 46, below, p. 98; cf. also Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Calendaria particularia*, 24 June 1970, no. 38: AAS 62 (1970), p. 660.

156. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 37-40.

157. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, nos. 54, 62-69: AAS 87 (1995), pp. 308-309, 311-313.

158. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, nos. 66-68: AAS 87 (1995), p. 313.
159. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, nos. 26-27: AAS 87 (1995), pp. 298-299.
160. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 4 December 1988, no. 16: AAS 81 (1989), p. 912; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, nos. 2, 36: AAS 87 (1995), pp. 288, 302.
161. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 23.
162. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, no. 46: AAS 87 (1995), p. 306.
163. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, no. 36: AAS 87 (1995), p. 302.
164. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Varietates legitimæ*, 25 January 1994, no. 54: AAS 87 (1995), pp. 308-309.
165. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 38; Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, above, p. 14.

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“For the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable.” (*SC*, 21).