

# The new Roman Missal: Catholic identity and parish life

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**The New Roman Missal:  
Catholic Identity and Parish Life**

**A Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree  
from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry**

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## **Chapter 1**

### **The Present State of Catholic Identity: a Sociological Reflection**

## I. Introduction

The rise of cotemporary secularity has been understood by many in the Church as the great challenge of the postmodern era to the Catholic faith. Pope Benedict XVI recognized this challenge in his homily that began the conclave that elected him pontiff stating, "The dictatorship of relativism is confronting the world." He is an important and emblematic figure who is central to understanding the most recent liturgical reforms of the Church, and the Church's ongoing response to new challenges. The complexities of ever increasing secularization has been a significant social factor in the United States for several decades, and has posed important pastoral challenges. Many dioceses, especially in the North East, have seen weekly Mass attendance decline to below twenty percent of the Catholic population.<sup>1</sup> In addition, many sociologists have found varieties of opinions and understandings regarding Church teachings and dogmas, and have questioned the nature of Catholic identity in the postmodern world. Nevertheless, religion and faith identity remain an important aspect within American society; as sociologist of religion Peter Berger observes in *The Sacred Canopy*, modern secularism itself arose within the context of Christianity, which is an important insight into understanding the present role of religion in American society. Berger is important to helping us to understand how ritual helps people continue to be connected within communities as well as provide a mechanism for making meaning from lived experiences in post-modern times. This for Catholics most clearly takes place

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<sup>1</sup> Fraga, Brian. "Northeast faithful losing connection to Church." *Our Sunday Visitor*. <http://www.osv.com/tabid/7621/itemid/8842/Northeast-faithful-losing-connection-to-Church.aspx> (accessed January 16, 2013).

within the context of the liturgy. Therefore any change to the experience of the liturgy is important and needs reflection and study.

If Berger is correct in his understanding that the process of secularization was born out of the historical developments of the Reformation and the Protestant reforms of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which renewed Old Testament values, then those forces had previously been held within Catholicism itself. The Reformation, therefore, accomplished the separation between religious and secular spheres of influence, which were previously held together. Therefore with the growth of the capitalist system, success in the secular sphere ultimately became determined by economic and political influence. As the ability to work and increase one's wealth and achieve financial success led to greater economic and political freedoms, the problem of forming a sense of "meaningfulness" in the ordinary routines of every day life began to arise.<sup>2</sup> With the growth of capitalism and Protestantism the world was no longer a place "ongoingly penetrated by sacred things and forces."<sup>3</sup> Rather, it became a place that was predicable, and no longer needed was the Church's mediation between heaven and earth through sacraments and the saints' intercessions. The need for political, economic and other systems were needed to provide people a means of maintaining social control and provide a sense of predictability in the world. The need for allegiance to the nation-state provided a means to maintain order and foster one's economic and political ability. God, therefore, historically, became relegated to spiritual matters and the radically

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<sup>2</sup> Berger, Peter L.. *The Sacred Canopy* . New York: Open Road , 1967, (Kindle) p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

transcendent, while the secular world increasingly had its focus on nature and humanity.<sup>4</sup>

## **I. The Role of Religion in Modern American Society**

The social role of religion has a very different position in society than it had in previous historical eras due to the rise of contemporary varieties of secularity. However, religion is part of the nature of the human person and experience, and even within the modern context is an important aspect of society. According to the great student of modernization and scholar of sociological theory, Peter Berger, he understands that religion is a unique characteristic of humanity, and it is part of people's innate ability to interact with the world. A human person is continually "compelled to externalize" -- to externalize him or herself in the world.<sup>5</sup> This externalization is in reaction to the chaos of the world and the desire to externalize oneself in a common activity, because of the need to produce a stable world for one's sense of wellbeing. Therefore, the process of socialization is a process of learning one's identity and effectively performing that role in a social context, which ultimately forms meaning for the individual. As Berger writes, "The individual who adequately internalizes these meanings at the time transcends himself."<sup>6</sup> The individual therefore gains a greater sense of oneself, inner worth, and identity within the context of society and its method of interacting with the larger world.

Berger uses the term "nomos" to describe the process of integrating society's

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

worldview and its values with individual experiences in order to form meaning for the individual. Although we receive our “nomos” from parents, teachers, and society, it is inevitable that we encounter others whose respective “nomos” are different than ours. It is in the experience of encountering someone whose formation, which differs from the dominant worldview or “nomos” that a society can be threatened. It is in the potential for conflict with other worldviews that religion, according to Berger, plays an important social role in today’s secular world.

Religion according to Berger “is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established”<sup>7</sup>-- meaning, that religion claims that the basis for the “nomos” is in the cosmos itself. The patterns of reality and nature are reflected in the cosmos. Religion, therefore, provides symbols and access to sacred powers that reflect the connection between reality and the cosmos; it also prevents the “nomos” from disintegrating if threatened by outside influences, and helps to provide a sense of order and connection for believers.

The role of religion therefore in the modern context is still important and serves to maintain a particular worldview and give people a sense of stability within society. “Religion legitimates social institutions by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by *locating* them within a sacred and cosmic frame a reference.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, divine commandments give believers a sense of doing something transcendent by following the commands, and provide a sense of meaning, which reinforces social norms. Rituals serve to reaffirm the individual in a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 24-25

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 33



way of life and provide a sense of meaning making. Funeral rituals, for example, reaffirm and legitimate a sense of theodicy. They provide participants with a means by which they “can transpose their suffering and their deaths to a plane of inherently comforting cosmic meaning.”<sup>9</sup> According to Berger, religion offers a type of knowledge that can explain extraordinary events in ordinary ways, which keep them connected to the cosmos and provides social stability. In the example of death and tragedy, Christianity uses the language of sin, the devil, and the resurrection to provide comfort and “meaning making” in light of the extraordinary events within a religious structure. Berger provides a good understanding of how religion is still relevant even within a pluralistic society – as in the American context – and so it continues to provide an important role in the process of meaning making for believers.

## **II Catholic Formation**

According to American theologian David Tracy, religious faith facilitates the encounter with the classical event of Jesus Christ and leads one to reflection on that event, which can take form in two major conceptual languages. The first language is that of analogy, which “is a language of ordered relationships articulating similarity-in-difference.”<sup>10</sup> This type of language focuses on meaning or analogy, and speaks of the harmony that exists in events as they relate to the reality of God, self, others, and the world. It is a,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

*second-order reflective language reexpressing the meanings of the originating religious event and its original religious language to and for a reflective mind: a mind searching for some order, yet recognizing, at every moment in its search, the irreducible tension at the heart of its own participatory and distancing experience of the originating event as an event of disclosure-concealment to focus the entire search; a mind recognizing, therefore, the ultimate incomprehensibility of the event that provides the focal meaning for developing both analogies-in-difference and order;...the human mind's and heart's need for some similarities-in-difference, some analogues, some principle of order, some ultimate harmony in the whole reality.<sup>11</sup>*

This sense of harmony involves negations, which maintain the Thomistic tradition's "doctrine of analogy," which understands the pluralistic sense of analogy and the importance of negation in forming the analogical imagination. Thomas understood the pattern of order in analogical relationships -- God-self-world -- to be the primary pattern for the analogical imagination to follow. According to Tracy, the language of analogy is the language of Catholic theology. Theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and Karl Rahner represent a particular way of understanding God, grace, sin, and redemption, as compared to the Protestant worldview -- which Tracy labels the "dialectical." This Catholic language emphasizes the commonalities with a classical reality. It understands the world as being graced, and understands God as mediating grace through real things such as bread, wine, and oil.

With the realities of pluralisms, Berger understands religion as having ongoing importance in the arena of meaning making, which makes important and relevant to modern society, as compared to its political and economic influence in previous periods of history. Although he recognizes that some of the present challenges to faith historically began with the Reformation and the rise of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 409.

Protestantism, Catholicism has nevertheless continued to attract believers and provide a means of engaging the world and deriving meaning from it differently than the Protestant tradition. In his work *The Analogical Imagination*, this distinction between Catholic and Protestant methods of providing meaning has been well explored by Tracy. This distinction is important in understanding how Catholic identity is being formed in our present context.

Tracy's understanding of the notion of the "classic" is important in understanding how theology authentically addresses society, the academy, and the Church and forms its members with what he calls an analogical imagination. Classical texts are those that "present [a] horizon of understanding [that] should always be provoked, challenged, transformed...[it is] something of genuine interest here and now, in this time and place."<sup>12</sup> A "classic" therefore is a book, song, ritual or event, which has an "excess of meaning" that can never be completely unpacked or exhausted. Catholicism and its symbols focus on the events and person of Jesus Christ as its religious classic not only because he is historical, but also because he provides symbols and stories that become normative for believers.

This analogical language is in contrast with dialectical language, which emphasizes radical negation in Christian theological language.<sup>13</sup> It is the language of Protestant theologians such as Metz, Barth, Bultmann and Calvin who insist on the negation of humanity's efforts to save itself from damnation. It highlights the greater

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<sup>12</sup> Tracy, David. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981, p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

differences between humanity and the mind of God, and seeks to expose the “cheap grace” that finds easy continuities between “Christianity and culture, between God and the human, God and the world.”<sup>14</sup>

The Protestant tradition in the United States, largely defined by this dialectical language, has emphasized the importance of individualism and an individual’s choice of conversion to the Christian faith. It is the choice of the individual who must desire to have an unmediated experience of the divine and come to recognize Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. The Word, therefore, has had primary significance in Protestant worship, and many denominations have deemphasized the role of signs and symbols, claiming that they have no deeper ontological reality. The dialectical imagination is primarily concerned with the experience of the individual and his or her experience of redemption with Christ.

The Catholic analogical worldview has offered a different perspective from that of the mainstream culture in the United States. Catholics have generally emphasized the community gathered for the sacraments as an important image for understanding the nature of the Church. God is mediated through the sacraments, which are symbols of His ongoing covenant with humanity. Sacramental moments, therefore, are moments of encounter with grace mediated through the Church. This worldview has not only informed academic theology, but also the entire Church. In the literary world, JRR Tolkien and Flannery O’Connor have often been used as examples of Catholic authors who emphasize this analogical worldview in their

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 417.

writings and their way of imagining the world and making meaning from it. Ritual is an important aspect of the formation of this analogical imagination. The sacraments are the common experience of Catholics, not only in the academy and literature, but also as the common means of identifying oneself as a member of the Church. Symbols and ritual are important resources that connect Catholics with the Catholic imagination; they transcend political, generational and theological differences.

This sense of ritual identity and Catholic imagination continues to be important in understanding the Church in the United States, and is reflected in how American Catholics form a sense of meaning as well as negotiate challenging aspect of Catholic moral teaching. For example, a 2011 study, which showed that fewer than a third of Catholics say that the Vatican's teaching authority is "very important" to them; they tend to de-emphasize the Church's moral and social teachings as part of their personal identities. In addition, despite the Church's investment in the issue, only 40 percent claim that the Church's stance on abortion is important to them; even fewer say that the Church's teachings regarding same-sex marriage (35 percent) and the death penalty (29 percent) are "very important."<sup>15</sup> This national study, as well as other generational studies which we will address later, show significant pluralism regarding moral teaching within the Church. Nevertheless, American Catholics continue to claim a Catholic identity even within a pluralistic context that maintains a sense of the analogical imagination and a connection to the

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<sup>15</sup> Dillon, Michelle. "What is core to American Catholics in 2011 | National Catholic Reporter." National Catholic Reporter | Home | National Catholic Reporter. <http://ncronline.org/news/catholics-america/what-core-american-catholics-2011> (accessed January 21, 2013).

Church's prayer and sacraments.

Building on Berger's understanding of religion in modern society as providing meaning making and stability, as well as Tracy's insights regarding Catholicism's distinct worldview in that process, ritual, prayer and sacraments are key aspects to understanding a Catholic identity today. As anthropologist of religion Anthony Wallace observes, ritual is religion in action.<sup>16</sup> Ritual and liturgy are essential aspects of Catholic prayer, and are the symbolic acting out of humanity's relationship with God and the transcendent.<sup>17</sup> Ritual "is symbolic; its significance lies not in the personal and unshared experiences associated with it but in public and typified significance negotiated for it in social history."<sup>18</sup> It is a "physical cognate of verbal process," a narrative that "embodies a relationship between the human and what is taken to be the divine."<sup>19</sup> Sociologist Anthony Blasi further recognizes that ritual and liturgy, "fix individuals and collective identities."<sup>20</sup> Therefore, participating in ritual is the core act of being religious and forms the individual in an active embodying stance in the world. Rituals such as those of the Catholic liturgy are an activity among cognizing individuals who share a symbolic system that reveals deeply held values, and provide a framework for religious conversation.<sup>21</sup>

Sociologist Michelle Dillon further affirms Tracy's insight that Catholic

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<sup>16</sup> Wallace, Anthony F. C. . "Ritual: sacred and profane ." *Zygon* 1, no. 1 (1966): 60-81.

<sup>17</sup> Blasi, Anthony . "Ritual as a Form of the Religious Mentality." *Sociological Analysis* 46, no. 1 (1985): p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 61

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

imagination is formed through the Church's liturgies and sacraments. She demonstrates this sense of a core Catholic identity in her study of Catholics who she describes as "pro-change;" those that would like to see changes to the Church's position on abortion, homosexuality and an all-male priesthood were compared with traditional Catholics who support the conservative teachings of the Church on matters of sexuality, human life, and the hierarchy. She found that although they disagree regarding issues of doctrine, morality, and ecclesial structures, they were engaged with the Church's sacramental and institutional dimensions simultaneously. She found that Catholic identity was a "way of life" where there was a greater sense of mutability of the tradition than clear plurality.<sup>22</sup> In short, she concludes that Catholicism cannot be reduced to an "all or nothing" reality. Although she confirms an erosion of knowledge and assent to Church doctrine and the interpretive authority of Church officials, the same has not occurred regarding the power of "traditional" Church symbols. She states building on Coleman<sup>23</sup> that "these symbols, rather have a 'depth' and diffuseness that allows them to be linked with personal identities in many diverse ways."<sup>24</sup> Although pro-change Catholics critique traditional narratives and some Magisterial teachings as well as symbols that have perpetuated inequality, the reality of symbols and rituals, even if reworked, continue to be important in forming individual and the collective goals of

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<sup>22</sup> Dillion, p. 205.

<sup>23</sup> John Coleman in 1989 in his "Raison D'Eglise: Organizational Imperatives of the Church in the Political Order" which was part of *Secularization and Fundamentalism Reconsidered*, ed. J. Hadden and A. Shupe (New York: Paragon House, 1989). Argued that the principle of hierarchy is deeply rooted in the Catholic imagination.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.,

Catholics.<sup>25</sup>

Dillon notes the remarkable overlap between members of the Catholic League and pro-change Catholics despite doctrinal and political differences and their personal understandings of what it means to be Catholic. For example, Dignity, WOC, and CFFC respondents agreed in similar proportions to members of the Catholic League (61 percent) in prioritizing “the church’s sacramental-liturgical tradition”.<sup>26</sup> Dillon’s research showed liturgy, ritual, and the sacramental tradition as an important bridge that transcended doctrinal differences among diverse groups of adult Catholics. Regardless of the differences between both traditional and pro-change Catholics, they claimed that the Mass was the core sacramental ritual of Catholicism, and the rituals were important to their identity as Catholics. According to Dillon both groups had similar experiences that gave them a sense of meaning and pride in being Catholic. Respondents gave examples of John XXIII, John F. Kennedy, children living the faith, as well as family celebrations of the sacraments and welcoming converts at the Easter Vigil as important to their Catholic identity.<sup>27</sup>

Additional research has confirmed Dillon’s insights regarding marginalized groups and suggests her insight regarding Catholic identity is also true of the greater Catholic population as well. A poll in the *National Catholic Reporter* in 2011 showed that more than three quarters of American Catholics say that the Church is “important” in their lives and more than a third state that it is one of the “most

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 208-209.



important” areas of their lives.<sup>28</sup> Despite challenges there continues to be significant loyalty among Catholics with more than two thirds of respondents (68 percent) claiming that they “cannot imagine being anything but Catholic,” and identify the Mass (84 percent) and the sacraments (80 percent) as the most meaningful aspects of the Church’s tradition.<sup>29</sup> Dillon’s work with marginalized groups as well as her analysis of larger trends among adult Catholics are helpful in recognizing the internal pluralism that exists within Catholicism. She also demonstrates the important connections between pro-change, moderate, and traditional Catholics with regards to the liturgy and the Sacraments. There appears to be in the American Church today a sense of the “good enough” Catholic, one who may or may not assent to all aspects of the Church’s moral or social teachings; who may struggle with ecclesial authority, and who may not attend Mass every week. Nevertheless, the experience of the Church’s prayer and sacraments continue to attract people to identify themselves as Catholics and form a sense of the analogical imagination and a basis for personal meaning-making in times of crisis and difficulty.

### **III. Generational Issues**

To understand Catholic identity today we also must understand how generational issues have affected and formed that identity and the trends that are threatening it. *American Catholics* identifies three generational groups of American Catholics who were formed in three different periods of history, the 1900-1930s, 1940s-1960s and the 1970s-2000. Among those formed between the 1970s-2000

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<sup>28</sup> Dillon, Michelle. “What is core to American Catholics in 2011”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.,

there are two distinct groups that are particularly noteworthy. Generation X and Millennial Catholics, and within these two generations sociologists have further categorized them into groups of spiritual seekers, those religiously disengaged, and the religiously devout Christians. The pre-Vatican II generation was formed between 1900 and 1930 when Catholics were 18% of the population, economically constituted the lower classes, and lived in the “Catholic ghetto.” Catholicism was its own complete sub-culture within American society; most Catholics were of European descent; and the male-dominated clergy provided a central authority and sense of moral leadership. This highly institutionalized experience gave this generation a sense of a punitive God and an experience of Church that was highly ritualistic and uniform.<sup>30</sup> They grew up in a model of Church that was separated and opposed to the dominant Protestant culture of the period. They turned to the institutions of family, church, and government when facing the crises of World War II and the Great Depression. They generally complied with authorities and power structures and promoted a sense of the common good.<sup>31</sup>

Data from a 2003 Notre Dame survey supports this understanding of this generation as being highly connected with social institutions. Concerning individual authority, 42 percent of Pre- Vatican II Catholics believe that “Catholics must obey church teachings even when they disagree with them,” and only 54 percent believed that “individuals should seek out religious truth for themselves and not

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<sup>30</sup> D’Antonio, William, James Davidson, and Katherine Meyer, American Catholics (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, Andrea, and James Davidson. “Catholic Conceptions of Faith: A Generational Analysis.” *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 3 (1996): 275.

automatically conform to doctrine.” Regarding the decision-making process of the Church, only 53 percent of Pre-Vatican II Catholics felt that “lay people should have some say in who their parish priest will be.” Pre-Vatican II Catholics were also more likely to be involved in their parish; the survey reported that 78 percent attended Mass “once a week or more,” and 80 percent were registered in their parish, while 46 percent claimed to have three or more close friends in the community. Finally, 92 percent agreed with the statement, “The Catholic Church is very important to me personally.” This data shows the ongoing institutional loyalty of Pre-Vatican II Catholics and their firm connection to the Mass and the Sacraments.<sup>32</sup>

In contrast, the Vatican II generation was formed in the period between the 1940s and 1960s and experienced the excitement of the Second Vatican Council as well as its many reforms. This generation grew up when Catholics constituted 20 percent of the United States population, and were economically among the lower middle class of the American population. William D’Antonio, in *American Catholics*, characterizes this as a period of great transition of values and identity. It was a period with significant movement from institutional religious identity to individualism and personal spirituality.<sup>33</sup> This generation of American Catholics was still defined by predominantly white Europeans, but was more tolerant than their parents when relating to other nationalities and denominations. Catholic society was still segregated within its own institutions during this period, but the Church

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<sup>32</sup> Hoge, Dean. “Catholic Identity Among Young Adult Catholics.” Faith Formation Learning Exchange.  
[www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/catholic\\_identity\\_among\\_young\\_adults\\_-\\_hoge.pdf](http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/catholic_identity_among_young_adults_-_hoge.pdf) (accessed January 22, 2013), p. 3-6.

<sup>33</sup> Williams, p. 276-277.

was in transition from the previous institutional model. The all-male clergy was still dominant; however, issues regarding morality, Church authority, one's image of God, the relationship of the Church to the world and with other Churches were all in transition.<sup>34</sup> The Vatican II generation modeled itself after the Council, which understood the Church as part of and in dialogue with culture. Furthermore, Vatican II defined the Church as the "People of God," who were on pilgrimage in the world towards greater unity with Christ; this was a radically new way of imaging Church for the Vatican II generation, which had many significant implications for their Catholic identity and imagination.<sup>35</sup>

The Notre Dame Study also affirmed that among Vatican II Catholics there was a social movement away from institutional identity towards a greater emphasis on individualism and personal spirituality. For example, only 20 percent claimed "Catholics must obey church teachings even when they disagree with them," while 88 percent agree that, "if you believe in God, it doesn't really matter which religion you belong to." Concerning decision-making in the Church, 75 percent agreed that, "lay people should have some say in who their priest will be." They were also less likely to attend Mass one or more times a week, with only 50 percent claiming to do so. Only 64 percent were likely to be registered in a parish, and only 22 percent had 3 or more friends in the Church. Yet, 82 percent stated that "the Catholic Church is very important to me personally," and 69 percent claimed that they "would never leave the Catholic Church." The Vatican II generation is, therefore, more likely than

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, pp. 276-278.

the previous generation to value individual spirituality over that of institutional authority.

The post-Vatican II group contains two distinct generations of Catholics: Generation X and Millennials. Both groups were formed between the 1970's-2000, when the Catholic Church constituted 23% of the United States population, and represented a noteworthy change in the Catholic imagination and one's experience of Church. Economically, they were part of the middle class, with significant numbers defined as upper middle class. This generation is highly integrated into American culture. Their experience of the Church is one that is more culturally diverse than the one experienced by their parents and grandparents. Their image of Church is firmly one of the "People of God." They do not see Christ and faith in tension or against the dominant culture and generally find harmony between them. Using H. Richard Niebuhr's categories, this generation's values suggest that the "Christ of culture" may be their dominant model of Christian faith.<sup>36</sup> The authority for moral normativity, in this generation seems to be the individual conscience, not the institutional Church's teachings. This generation experienced Church authority as being generally collaborative with lay people. The smaller numbers of priest, and religious resulted in greater authority and influence of laymen and women working in the Church. Lay professions such as Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministers, and Pastoral Associates now had important parish leadership roles. This generation's concept of God emphasizes God as love, and not as judge or Lord; liturgically this generation has experienced a variety of styles as well as the active

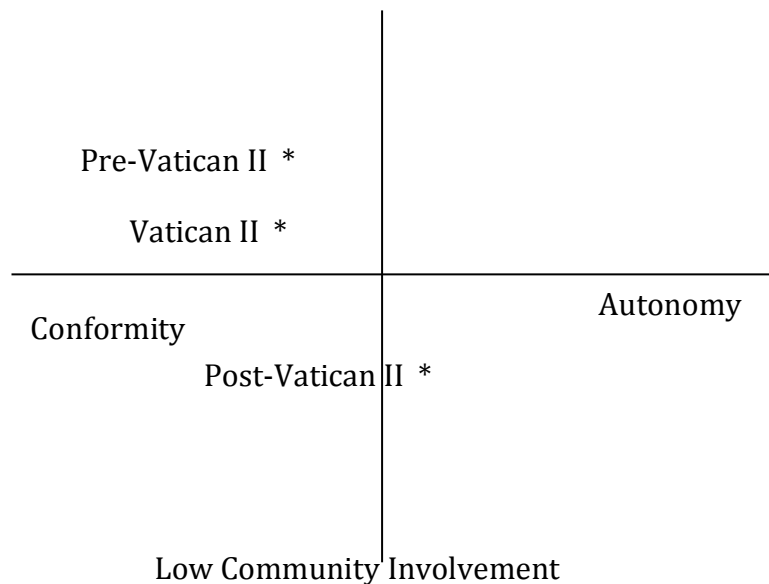
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<sup>36</sup> Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and culture*. San Francisco: Harper, San Francisco, 2001, pp. 83-108

participation of the laity in the liturgy. Their Church is integrated into the world and American society, so they have a tendency to find commonality with other denominations and religions rather than differences.<sup>37</sup>

Lenski's analysis gives us a useful way to visualize these generational groups

**Table 1: Variations in Community, Conformity and Autonomy:  
All Beliefs, 1999**



with the flowing X-Y axis.

He charts their beliefs and involvement in Church life in relationship to the generational group's sense of conforming to or being autonomous from Church teachings (Table 1).<sup>38</sup> This table shows us that based on polling data, the Pre-

Vatican II and Vatican II generations are more likely to be highly involved in community life, and to conform to Church authority and teachings. The Post-Vatican II generations are less likely to be involved in community, and they value autonomy over conformity to community norms.

In discussing post-Vatican II and Young Adult Catholics we must look at the two distinct generations separately, each having their own unique identity, experience, and connection with the Church. These generations pose significant

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 3

<sup>38</sup> D'Antonio, p. 142.

challenges to David Tracy's sense of the analogical imagination as basis for Catholic identity. Sociologists have defined Generation X as those young adults born between 1964-1979, and Millennials as those born after 1980.<sup>39</sup> Generation Xers are reported to tend to have a pluralistic worldview. They are open to exploring the world's many possibilities, and are suspicious of institutions and authority. Michael Hayes, an experienced youth worker, suggests that Gen X is a generation that is still searching for its identity, while also lacking a formative experience like their WWII parents or the Vietnam War that formed the Baby-Boomers. They were also too old to be affected by the realities of terrorism that impacted Millennials. They have responded to recent violence and natural disasters by turning to "communal and nurturing relationships for security rather than expressing an intellectual need for certainty."<sup>40</sup> Gen Xers, like Millennials, have grown up with family disruption by divorce, and have experienced busy or separated parents. The formation of Gen Xers has not only made them more likely to experience issues of loss, but also seek meaning through experiences of community.<sup>41</sup> Community and family identity therefore for GenXers is more likely to be identified as friendship groups than along lines of family relationships or civic or religious community. Finally, based on their experience of religious education or CCD, they tend to see religion as unintellectual and are suspicious of institutional religions; they therefore value private prayer over communal liturgical worship.

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<sup>39</sup> Hayes, Mike. *Googling God: the religious landscape of people in their 20s and 30s*. (New York: Paulist Press, 2007). ch. Introduction, para. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., ch. 1, sec. "Would you know a young adult...", para. 9.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., ch. 1, sec. "Differences in Family Experience", para. 1-3.

Dean Hoge, in *Young Adult Catholics*, wrote a significant and important work in 2001 that analyzed the religious experience and faith commitment of “Gen X Catholics.” Hoge and his colleagues collected data from young adult Latino and Caucasian Catholics who had been confirmed. Hoge found that young adult Catholics readily identified themselves as Catholic. Ninety percent of those in Hoge’s research continued to identify themselves as Catholics, with very low levels of denominational switching in the Gen X cohort.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, 87 percent of non-Latinos and 95 percent of Latinos believed that “In Mass the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ.”<sup>43</sup> Overall Hoge’s research shows a positive assessment of Gen X Catholics. The vast majority consider themselves to be “spiritual people” and cannot imagine themselves as anything other than Catholic. They also want their children to receive religious education.<sup>44</sup> The majority also find their parishes to be welcoming communities and places that generally meet their spiritual needs and those of their families.<sup>45</sup> They affirm the Church’s social mission to end racism, to close the gap between the rich and poor, and to preserve the environment.<sup>46</sup> Hoge thus finds that Gen X young adult Catholics have had a positive experience of their parish communities and a sense of Catholic identity that is stronger than other Protestant communities.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Hoge, Dean R.. *Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice*. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pg. 44-45.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 57-58.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 68



However, Hoge also uncovered some disquieting trends regarding the Catholic identity of Gen Xers. When asked if a “person can be a good Catholic without going to Mass,” 64 percent agreed. Hoge also cited the sociologist James Davidson, whose study found that 73 percent of young adults agree with a similar statement.<sup>48</sup> Hoge learned that regarding attitudes of Catholics toward the Institutional Church that 88 percent of non-Latinos believed that, in the management of the institutional Church *qua* institution, the participation of lay people is just as important as the participation of clergy. Respondents demonstrate that the value of the role of the laity and clergy are not heavily disputed among younger Catholics. Young adults, furthermore, were found to be highly individualistic, relying more on their own education and experience than on institutional authority. Most young adults affirmed statements such as “an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any churches or synagogues,” and “the major world religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth.”<sup>49</sup> Therefore, a major theme among “Gen X Catholics” is that, although they claim a Catholic identity, their commitment is to a personalized version of the faith, and they are less grounded in the institutional church and its teachings.

Hoge also researched those who identified themselves as being “spiritual but not religious,” because spirituality was identified as an important concern for many young adult Catholics. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, Catholic spirituality was defined by communal patterns of belief and practice, such as the need for self-

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p 55.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

mortification, asceticism, participation in the sacraments and the need to control one's passions. The spiritual life was seen as preparation for the otherworldly life that was expected to come as part of God's kingdom. Traditionally the religious and clerical states with their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were understood as "higher callings" than the lay state.<sup>50</sup> Hoge reported that young adult Catholics in the 1990s strongly valued spirituality, but that their spirituality was quite different from earlier Catholic spiritual practices. Hoge found, for example, that 80 percent of non-Latinos and 77 percent of Latinos considered themselves to be "spiritual persons," and even larger percentages claimed to pray to God, with most doing so "once a day" or "several times a week."<sup>51</sup> Hoge also found that "ninety-three percent believe that Jesus Christ was God or the Son of God. Eight-one percent believe in a divine judgment after death."<sup>52</sup> Hoge demonstrates that among young adult Catholics there is a clear understanding that there is an important distinction between the categories of "being spiritual," and "being religious," or attending church services. Most believe that one can be a spiritual person without attending church. The most important factor that affected an individual's church attendance among Gen X Catholics was if they came from a stable family where both parents were committed churchgoers.

Young adults therefore appear to have a spirituality, which is more likely to incorporate therapeutic practices, such as counseling, meditation or other therapies which emphasize the development of the authentic and holistic human person than

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 149-150.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

previous generations whose spirituality was based in retreats movements or other devotional activities. Although Mass has remained an important institutionally-based place for connecting young adults to Catholic spirituality, overall Mass attendance has declined, even though the majority of young adult Catholics believe in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist (one of the few areas of catechetical successes with Gen X). Hoge claims that young adult Catholics have moved away from a sacramental and communal model of Church toward a more autonomous spirituality, although he reported a growing trend of young adults seeking a “personal relationship with the Lord.”<sup>53</sup> This process of spiritual privatization has ultimately resulted in two spiritual “types.” The first type is the “Church-as-Choice Catholics:” this type of Catholic tends toward accepting spiritual individualism and is not concerned with denominational identity. This type of Catholic also tends to conflate religion and spirituality with ethical behavior.<sup>54</sup> The second spiritual type is that of the “Core Catholic” (which Hoge estimated as only 10 percent of his study group): they are less individualistic in their spiritual outlook and in their relationship with the church. They are more likely to take the teachings of the Pope seriously, and believe that it is necessary to attend Mass weekly in order to be considered a “good Catholic.”<sup>55</sup>

However, there are some signs of hope in Gen Xers and their involvement in parish life. Although Hoge finds that only 8 percent are considered *Parish-Involved Catholics*, 42 percent were classified as *Regular Attending Catholics*, attending

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 170-171.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

liturgy two to three times a month, thus showing an ongoing connection with the Church's liturgical life.

Millennial Catholics have a different generational identity than Gen Xers. They see the world, derive meaning, and make sense of their existence differently than their older counterparts. Millennials are those born after 1980, and are young adults who are "looking for something solid to base their lives on."<sup>56</sup> Millennials, those presently younger than thirty, have been formed in a world that has been filled with uncertainty. The major historical events that they tend to point to as important and formational in their lives thus far are: "9/11, the Columbine disaster, the Indian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and the Virginia Tech Massacre."<sup>57</sup> They are a generation that has grown up in a world where life itself appears fleeting. They have distinct memories of skyscrapers collapsing around them, and entire towns and cities being swept away by natural disasters. Those who worked with and studied this generation claim they are a generation that is in search of something that they can depend on, something that is true and dependable and is greater than themselves.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, they appear to be open to a God who is transcendent and who brings order to their world.<sup>59</sup>

Millennials are also a generation that has been supervised closely by parents and other adults. Therefore, they tend to accept authority figures as trustworthy, and generally believe that laws or rules are good things to have and follow.<sup>60</sup> They

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<sup>56</sup> Hayes, ch. "Introduction", para. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., ch.1 sec. "Identifying Young Adults", para. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., para 9

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., ch. 1, sec. "Differences in Family Experience", para. 3.

are accepting of the phenomena of “helicopter” parenting, and expect their parents to be actively involved in their academic, professional and personal lives.

Furthermore, when they attend church services they expect church ministers to be instructive and to be able to give answers that can be immediately integrated into their lives. They see church as a way to “clean the cobwebs out of their brain.” It is a place for them to “find relief both from the saturation of the media and the competition of the rat race.”<sup>61</sup> Millennials differ from Gen Xers in that they believe there is more to life than one’s experiences. Those who participate in church activities are not looking for a sense of community, but a place where they can engage a sense of quiet mystery that can serve their spiritual needs. Those who have ministered to this age group have often found them to be a generation that believes they have been unconditionally loved. They seek to prove that love is what is important to faith, because simply knowing it is insufficient for their intellectual needs. They accomplish this by demonstrating their love through service, or unwavering loyalty to their religious tradition with rigid adherence to laws and practices. Overall, religion is less threatening to Millennials than there Gen X counterparts.<sup>62</sup>

Christian Smith in his more in-depth analysis of Millennials, describes spiritual seekers as those who are interested in spiritual matters, but are not devoted to one religious tradition. They borrow from a variety of traditions to find what works for them. Therefore they, operate as spiritual consumers, and define

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., ch. 1, sec. “Differences in Family Experience”, para. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., ch. 1, sec. “Differences in Family Experience”, para. 5.

themselves as seekers who determine what is true based on their own feelings.<sup>63</sup> Smith found that 60 percent of teens believed that many religions were true.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, Smith concludes that today's young adult Catholics are committed to pluralism, but still believe that religion and faith offer valuable truth claims. When evaluating this category of seekers, Smith believes that only slightly over half (51%) have such an identity, because they claim that it is okay to practice more than one religion. Yet 54 percent of them believe that it is okay for people to convert others to their religious tradition.<sup>65</sup> Finally, in reference to the category of seekers, Smith reports that the majority of teens maintain an individualistic view regarding religion.

Smith also evaluated whether Millennial teenagers fit the typology of "religiously disengaged." Disengaged teens are those who claimed to be "not religious" for a variety of reasons. Surprisingly however, Smith discovered that even those teens that are disengaged or think of themselves as having "nonreligious" identities still considered themselves to be "religious" in some sense. For example, 52 percent of nonreligious teens believed in God's existence, and 24 percent prayed alone a few times a week.<sup>66</sup> When looking at different religious traditions, Smith learned that 22 percent of young people raised as Catholics and Protestants thought of themselves as not religious, leading him to conclude that this category was not

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Kindle edition, ch. 3, sec. The Generation of Teenage Spiritual Seekers, para. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., ch. 3, sec. "The Generation of Teenage Spiritual Seekers", para. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., ch. 3, sec. "The Generation of Teenage Spiritual Seekers", table 24.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., ch. 3 sec. "Religiously Disengaged Teenagers", para 2.

denominationally based.<sup>67</sup> In interviews with this group, teens said they stopped practicing because “it didn’t make sense anymore,” “Some stuff is too far-fetched for me to believe,” or “I think scientifically and there is no real proof.”<sup>68</sup> However, half of them left their faith traditions for no substantial reason; they simply stopped attending and being involved.<sup>69</sup>

“Religiously devoted teenagers” were a group made up of those teens that reported attending religious services more often, claimed that faith was an important aspect of their lives, and participated in youth ministry programs. In evaluating a variety of factors that contributed to teens being religiously devout, Smith discovered that Catholic and black Protestant teens were less likely to be part of a youth group than mainline Protestants, and were less likely to state that faith was important to them, as well as less likely to be in frequent attendance at religious services.<sup>70</sup> These three indicators of religiosity: (youth group, importance of faith, and attendance at church services) were the three key factors in determining religiosity. These factors were also discovered to have positive associations with teens more involved in organized activities, with close friends in religious groups, and with parents who attend religious services and who love, accept, and understand them.<sup>71</sup>

By evaluating Millennials using the categories of spiritual seekers, the religiously disengaged, and the religiously devout, Smith was able to gain many

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., ch. 3 sec. “Religiously Disengaged Teenagers”, table 27.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., ch. 3 sec. “Religiously Disengaged Teenagers”, para 8.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., ch. 3 sec. “Religiously Disengaged Teenagers”, table 28.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., ch. 3, sec. “Religiously Disengaged Teenagers”, table 32.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., ch. 3, sec. “Religiously Devoted Teenagers”, para. 2.

important insights into the religiosity of young adults. As a whole these insights affirmed America's values of inclusiveness, pluralism, and individualism in their religious perspectives. However, very few were actually active spiritual seekers or "spiritual and not religious." Millennials relied heavily on their parents in forming the character of their religious lives. Friendship was also an important factor in determining teenage religiosity and spirituality, and there were often correlations with a larger network of social activities, including sports, hobbies, and clubs. Smith also learned that some denominations were better at soliciting a serious religious response from Millennials than others. Catholicism was found particularly unlikely to produce seriously religious teens, while conservative Protestantism and Mormonism were the most likely denominations to have seriously religious teens, and disengaged teens had poorly articulated reasons for their lack of involvement with religion and spirituality.

CP- Conservative Protestant  
MP- Mainline Protestant  
BP – Black Protestant  
RC – Roman Catholic  
J – Jewish

LDS – Church of Later-day Saints (Mormon)  
NR – Not Religious

Religious Particularity and Individualism among U.S. Adolescents, Age 13-17 (Percentages)									
	U.S.	Religious Tradition							
		CP	MP	BP	RC	J	LDS	NR	
Beliefs about religion's truth									
Only one religion is true	29	46	26	31	19	9	67	5	
Many Religions may be true	60	48	67	63	71	79	23	62	
There is very little truth in religion	9	4	5	4	9	12	5	27	
Don't know/refuse	2	2	2	2	1	~	5	6	
Beliefs about religious particularity									
People should practice only one faith	46	59	38	57	40	21	59	25	
It is okay to practice religions besides own	51	36	59	40	58	78	36	70	
Don't know/refuse	3	4	3	3	2	1	5	5	
Beliefs about religious conversion attempts									
Okay for religious people to try to convert others	54	70	58	54	43	18	83	32	
Everyone should leave everyone alone	43	27	39	42	55	75	15	66	
Don't know/refused	3	3	3	3	4	2	8	3	



Okay to pick and choose religious beliefs without having to accept teachings of faith as a whole

Agree	46	36	53	34	54	71	31	62
Disagree	52	61	46	64	45	29	69	35
Don't know/refuse	2	3	1	1	1	~	~	4

For believers to be truly religious and spiritual, they need to be involved in a religious congregation

Agree	32	35	27	45	32	20	60	14
Disagree	67	64	72	54	67	80	40	84
Don't know/refuse	1	1	1	1	1	~	~	2

*Source:* National Survey of Youth and Religion, 2002-3.

*Note:* Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding cells <1 are reported as ~.<sup>72</sup>

Smith however, takes these important insights from traditional typologies of religious involvement, and finds a unifying theme that is at the core of what Millennials experience as religion -- its purpose -- as well as their own spiritual outlook. In reflecting upon his many interviews, as well as his survey results, he dismisses the adolescent myth that the teen-age years are about rebellion and being alone and disillusioned. In contrast he believes that teens of the Millennial generation are content with the faith of their families, and had little experience of questioning and rebellion.<sup>73</sup> In fact religion was not a significant area of tension between teens and their parents; most teens affirmed that religion was a positive force in society and was beneficial for a lot of people. Often Smith quoted teens making statements such as, "The morals that you learn, like don't kill people, that is a good thing in religion."<sup>74</sup> The majority of teens saw that religion gave people morals and gave them something to believe in, which they considered to be beneficial for society. In fact teens understand that the purpose of most religions is

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Table 24

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "Not A Big Deal", para. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "It's good for Lots of people", para. 2.

to teach people to love one another. However, religion is simply not a relevant topic of conversation in the social circles of American teens.

Therefore, due to this compartmentalizing of religion as a private matter, Smith found that even teens participating in church services or youth groups were very inarticulate about their faith and religious tradition. They were unable to explain to interviewers the basic tenants of their faith traditions, or why religion and spirituality might be important to them. What was clear for Smith was that Millennial teens were extremely individualistic in their approach to matters of religion.<sup>75</sup> Religion was something that people choose; it should not be something that tries to influence them and infringe on their autonomy.<sup>76</sup> What Smith found was that religion falls into the category of being subjective, having no correct or true answer. Millennials believe that the individual has authority over religion, and that one does not need to be part of a community to be a religious person. Religion's purpose is to help the person achieve what they want, and to feel happy. The image of God for most U.S. teenagers is that of a therapist or counselor who helps teens in troubled time; it was not connected with devotion, obedience, or self-sacrifice.<sup>77</sup> Religion can help one be good, but it is not a necessary component of being a good person for many Millennial teens. In the end, according to Smith, teens relegate being actively religious into their future as something that they might do when they are older. In looking at these many trends in Millennials, Smith labels them as being "Moral Therapeutic Deists." He outlines their creed as believing:

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "Everyone Decides for Themselves", para. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "Who am I to Judge?", para. 1-3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "Helps to do what you want", para. 1.

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve problems.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.<sup>78</sup>

Smith did an important follow up to his research of Millennial teens five years later when they are in their twenties in his work *Souls in Transition*. In his follow up work he looks at the developmental goal of teens becoming young adults. He particularly focuses on the developmental task of separation and individuation from one's family of origin as his main paradigm for understanding young adult development. Therefore, he labels them as emerging adults in a period of transition from adolescence to full independent adulthood. In areas of religion and religiosity Smith found that between 1990-2006 younger adults were less religious than older adults. For example 42 percent of young adults claimed that they prayed daily, compared to the 76 percent of those over 75 years of age who reported they prayed daily.<sup>79</sup> Younger adults according to Smith are not only less religiously involved, but they are less committed to nonreligious social institutions, associations, and activities. In addition they have less connection with Church communities and belong to fewer voluntary associations, give less to charity, volunteer less, read newspapers less, and are less politically involved than older adults.<sup>80</sup> In fact the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., ch. 4, sec. "A Summary Interpretation: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism".

<sup>79</sup> Smith, Christian, and Patricia Snell. *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Kindle edition, ch. 3, sec. "Age Differences in Religiousness", para. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., ch. 3, sec. "Age Differences in Religiousness", para 6.

emerging adult population is simply part of a general decline in religiosity that began in the 1970's. Although belief in an after life has remained strong, there has been an overall decrease in religious identity and in weekly religious service attendance, dropping 19 percent in the past 24 years.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., ch 3, sec. "Historical trends in Religiousness among emerging adults since 1972", para. 1.

**Chapter 2**  
**Liturgical Reform**  
**An Overview**

## **I. Vatican II, John Paul II and Liturgicam Authenticam**

Berger's insights regarding the role of religion as an important aspect of meaning making in the post-modern world is affirmed by Tracy and Dillon who claim that Catholic identity is a deeper reality than simply assenting to moral or doctrinal claims of the Church. Hoge, Smith, and others also demonstrate the great amount of diversity that exists within the Church based on generational identity. Although studies and statistical analysis raise important questions and concerns regarding the catechetical knowledge of Catholics, especially among young adults, they nevertheless affirm the reality of a Catholic identity. The common aspect of that identity transcends generational and political distinctions and is rooted in some experience of the Church's liturgies and sacraments. Catholic identity continues to persevere, despite the challenges of growing secularism. However, the lack of catechesis, and a growing sense that the sacred has been lost from the liturgy is a concern of many, and could impact what it means to be a Catholic. Those who suggest that the reforms of the post-Conciliar liturgy have gone to far, or have been misinterpreted, claim that there is a need to return to a greater sense of mystery and awe, which they characterize as being indicative of the prayers in Church's ancient Latin texts. Those who share such concerns have found hope and in the theology and pontificate of Benedict XVI. He serves as an important and emblematic thinker and Church leader, and has supported the most recent reforms of liturgy and will be an important focus of this section.

The recent revisions of *Roman Missal* and General Instruction have been enthusiastically met by some as a return to older Latin texts, and a renewal of a

sense of reverence and awe in the liturgy, while others have criticized the revisions of the missal as being difficult to understand and a distraction from prayer. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the starting point of these changes is rooted in the liturgical reform outlined in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). John Paul II on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of that document stated that the Council's vision provides the Church with an "enduring vision," and remains relevant for guiding the ongoing reforms of the Church's worship.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the pope stated in *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, that the principles of the Church Fathers "remain fundamental in the task of leading the faithful to an active celebration of the mysteries."<sup>83</sup> Therefore, as outlined by the pope the work of the Council still needs to continue.

Four main premises, found in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, affirm the present direction of the liturgical reform and the recent revisions to the *Roman Missal* and General Instruction. They are: "1) The Celebration of the Eucharist is first of all christo-centric; 2) every celebration of the Eucharist requires a Bishop or his Priest; 3) participation of the Faithful is the goal to be considered before all others; 4) the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian Life."<sup>84</sup>

Although, the *Ordo Missae*, issued in 1969, had as its primary aim to increase the participation of the laity, there were additional revisions to the *Roman Missal* in

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<sup>82</sup> John Paul II. "Apostolic Letter Vicesimus Quintus Annus." Vatican: the Holy See. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_04121988\\_vicesimus-quintus-annus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_04121988_vicesimus-quintus-annus_en.html) (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 5.

<sup>84</sup> Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "USCCB - Roman Missal | Resources - Background." United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <http://old.usccb.org/romanmissal/resources-reflections.shtml> (accessed February 8, 2013).

1970, 1975, and in 2002.<sup>85</sup> The 1969 *Ordo Missae* accomplished revisions that intended to achieve “the full and active participation” of the laity, and established new norms through testing “experimental celebrations” throughout 1967. Paul VI’s apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*, promulgated on April 3, 1969 notes four basic principles for the revision based on the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*: “clarity, simplicity of structure, expansion of biblical readings, and provisions for concelebration.”<sup>86</sup>

Therefore, the later revisions of the *Roman Missal* and the General Instruction represent a desire on the part of some reformers to prioritize certain premises of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* over others -- for example, the preference for the use of “christo-centric” language over other values such as, inclusive language, and ecumenism. *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states that in re-enactment of the Paschal Mystery of Christ in the liturgy is “based on the fact that ‘it was from the side of Christ as he slept on the Cross that issued forth the sublime sacrament of the whole Church.’”<sup>87</sup> By preferring a christo-centric language to other types of language, for example inclusive language or communal language, revisers of the liturgical texts have chosen to highlight the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist in which the lay and ordained participate in and with Jesus on the night of his betrayal. This preference can also be found in the *General Instruction of the*

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<sup>85</sup> Foley, Edward. *A commentary on the order of Mass of the Roman missal: a new English translation developed under the auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy ; general editor, Edward Foley ; associate editors, John F. Baldovin, Mary Collins, Joanne M. Pierce; foreword by Roger Mahony.*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>87</sup> SC 6.



*Roman Missal* (GIRM), which was translated for use in the United States in 2003, and was included in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* in 2011. The GIRM affirms that as “often as the commemoration is celebrated, the work of redemption is carried out.”<sup>88</sup> The GIRM appears to focus on the role of priest’s address to the Father, on whom the sacrifice of Christ is focused, as the way in which salvation is accomplished for humanity. The GIRM furthermore, affirms the christo-centric reality of Christian prayer, and the important role of the priest.<sup>89</sup> In each proclamation, the priest “in the name of the whole of the holy people... praises God the Father” and invokes the Holy Spirit “that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated,” and become the body and blood of Christ.<sup>90</sup>

The GIRM’s reminder of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, and the importance of the priesthood in presiding at it, may be one indicator of some of the objectives of more recent changes in the *Roman Missal* as well. Regarding language, the *Sacred Constitution on the Liturgy* stated that Latin was to be preserved, but the use of the vernacular was permissible, leaving the decision to episcopal conferences to determine the needs of particular peoples and places.<sup>91</sup> Many conferences quickly decided to adopt the vernacular after the Council. The process to produce uniform translations among different episcopal conferences supported by Paul IV was a significant and difficult task. He stated that, “liturgical translations have become.... The voice of the Church” as opposed to simply aids to understanding the

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<sup>88</sup> GIRM 2.

<sup>89</sup> USCCB.

<sup>90</sup> GIRM 79.

<sup>91</sup> SC 36.

Latin liturgy. He furthermore reminded translators of the words of St. Jerome “If I translate word for word, it sounds absurd; if I am forced to change something in the word or style, I seem to have stopped being a translator.”<sup>92</sup> In 1969, *Comme le prévoit* (CLP), after incorporating the amendments of Paul VI, produced the procedures for translating the Latin liturgical texts. CLP recommended that translations avoid technical language, and recommended a model of translation that has been described as “dynamic equivalence,”<sup>93</sup> meaning that translators should translate “meaning-for-meaning” rather than “word-for-word.”<sup>94</sup> It also indicated three general principles regarding the need to be faithful to the Latin texts. Translators need to translate: “to the message, to the intended audience, and to the manner in which the message is communicated to them in their language,” therefore, endorsing a style of translation that has been characterized as “dynamic equivalence.”<sup>95</sup> These suggestions eventually led the English-speaking conferences in 1969 giving ICEL<sup>96</sup> the task of using CLP’s recommendations to produce the first generation of English texts, and later a second generation of texts in the 1980’s.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Foley, p. 59.

<sup>93</sup> “Dynamic equivalence” and “formal equivalence” were terms used by E. A. Nida in *Toward a Science of Translating, with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964). Nida in his work provides a theoretical basis for what was being produced in modern biblical translation. “Dynamic equivalence” has come to mean that when translating translators should translate the meaning and sense of a sentence or phrase as whole. Nida was particularly concerned that rhetorically a translation should have the same effect on modern readers as it had on its original audience.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> The International Commission on English in the liturgy

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

By the late 1990's, there were growing tensions between ICEL and Rome, when in 1998; Rome withheld the *recognitio* of the revised Sacramentary.<sup>98</sup> Tensions between ICEL and Rome demonstrated a shift in attitude and a preference for literal or equivalent translation: word-for-word translation from the Latin original. This movement restricted much of ICEL's work, putting them under tighter control and supervision by Roman authorities. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001 the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments published *Liturgicam Authenticam*, which provided new guidelines for translation. Although it was positive regarding the liturgical renewal since the Council, it nevertheless expressed concerns about how liturgical manuals helped in maintaining Catholic identity, and fears over new rites.<sup>99</sup> Although it shared many of the same principles as CLP -- such as easily understandable texts, and full participation of the community, -- there were several added restrictions. For example, texts were to now express transcendent truths; exact translation would be required; no adaptations were to be allowed without prior consent of Rome; no alteration of gender language was permitted; a "sacred style" of speech was to be sought; and there was openness to developing a sacral language whether or not it might sound odd.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the new norms demanded that ICEL prefer formal equivalence (word-for-word) translation of liturgical texts to that of the previous "dynamic equivalence" model.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

## **II. Benedict XVI's Vision – Going forward or turning back?**

### **A Theology of Historical Continuity, Active Participation and the Interpretation of Vatican II**

In 2007 Pope Benedict XVI liberalized the possible usage of the 1962 Missal by issuing his *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*. The document stated that, because some of the faithful continue to find spiritual meaning in the “Tridentine” form of the liturgy, it should be fostered and be made more available throughout the Church. The Pope hoped that with the 1962 Missal’s reintroduction there might be a liturgical dialogue between the post-conciliar liturgy and its Latin predecessor. For many observers, this document suggested that Pope Benedict XVI was supporting a “reform of the reform,” a phrase which has been understood by some traditionally minded Catholics as a critique of the Second Vatican Council and the liturgical reforms promoted by the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*. But as both prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and as Pope, he has written extensively on the liturgy and has influenced the direction of many of the recent liturgical reforms. For many Benedict XVI represents a position, which does not reject the Second Vatican Council, but has been disappointed in some aspects of the reform.<sup>101</sup> But, Benedict’s perspective has found favor among traditionally minded Catholics and many of those in the Vatican. Therefore, it is important to understand Ratzinger’s thought, which can help us gain a greater

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<sup>101</sup> Baldovin, John F.. *Reforming the liturgy: a response to the critics*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008, p. 65.

understanding of the theological perspective of those who have formed the new *Roman Missal*.

Ratzinger uses two important lenses for his understanding of the Second Vatican Council, and in his evaluation of the reforms that have followed from the Council's call for "active participation" in the liturgy. His first thesis is that the liturgy is the participation in the "action of God himself."<sup>102</sup> His approach therefore places the liturgy within the context of the activity of God, and reaffirms the liturgy's eschatological and cosmological dimensions. The second important lens for understanding Ratzinger's liturgical theology and his position on the Second Vatican Council is his perspective on the nature of history itself. He views church history with a hermeneutical approach that favors continuity, which is important to understanding his liturgical project and the direction of some present reformers. Ratzinger uses this "hermeneutic of historical continuity" to understand liturgical and ritual prayer. He finds continuity between the Old and New Testaments, as well as in Jewish and early Christian forms of prayer. He therefore understands both the Council and its reforms through these lenses as well. This is why he is critical of liturgical innovation or the integration of new musical styles within the liturgical context.<sup>103</sup> True reform, according to Ratzinger, has as its objective refocusing us back to God and participating with Him in salvation history. Therefore, in light of these lenses he would appear to support formal equivalence translations, because of the sense of continuity that they clearly have with earlier texts.

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<sup>102</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000. p. 173.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

Ratzinger's sense of historical continuity has its greatest and most significant implication in his evaluation of the connections between worship in Israel and in the early Church. By understanding liturgical history and its developments within the larger meta-narrative of salvation history, Ratzinger is able to ground his liturgical theology in a Biblical faith. In *Feast of Faith*, Ratzinger critiques those who would claim that post-modernity, with its critique of metaphysics, has ushered in a period that will bring about the end of religion. This is a misreading of history and of Christianity's ability to form a "synthesis" between what the philosophers call "being" and Israel's encounter with a God who saves. He understands the history of Christian faith as part of the organic development of ancient Israelite religion and Greek philosophy. He uses both the language of Scripture and philosophy to say that for Christianity, "'The Absolute' can be God, but this very Absolute has the attribute of being 'relative,' relationship, Creator and Revealer."<sup>104</sup> The philosophical concept therefore of the 'person' of God is "someone who addresses the creature and to whom the creature can turn."<sup>105</sup> Therefore, modern philosophy has not introduced anything new, but has simply highlighted once again some of the more traditional tensions that exist in reference to the Christian concept of God.

#### *Historical Sense*

For Ratzinger this Christian concept of God can be found in the spirituality of Christian worship, which grew out of the Israel's liturgical tradition. Israel was distinctive from other ancient religions in that its liturgical worship was the belief

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<sup>104</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal . *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986. p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

that “Adoration is due to God alone.”<sup>106</sup> This style of worshiping God is affirmed in the First Commandment, with the role of sacrifice being added in relation to the Abraham story, where “representative sacrifice is established by the divine command.”<sup>107</sup> Moses, as Israel’s leader, constructs a tabernacle, which connects the proper ordering of worship with the law and moral instruction. These elements, especially the role of sacrifice, were never able to find completion in temple worship according to Ratzinger. However, these elements were further developed and given a sense of fulfillment in the New Testament, and most especially in Jesus Christ’s sacrificial act. Early Christians found in Jesus’ sacrificial action a new focus of worship, unifying the reality of temple worship with the Torah and with synagogue tradition. In the early Christian tradition, Jesus replaced the Law and the Temple as the center of worship and becomes a new tabernacle, the center and focus for Christian prayer. The early Christian community found an intimate relationship with God within the context of the Eucharistic celebration. It was therefore in the Eucharist that “Christ communicates himself to us and thus brings us into a real bond with the living God.”<sup>108</sup>

Ratzinger’s hermeneutic of historical continuity informs his understanding of history. It is important for his perceptions of the early Church and is a useful entry point into Ratzinger’s overall theological and liturgical project. By using a lens of historical continuity we can come to a greater understanding of his liturgical reform within his own sense of history. In contrast to his critics and some modern

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<sup>106</sup> Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*. p. 36.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

theologians, Ratzinger defends what can be characterized as the “official” Church position of why the Second Vatican Council cannot be understood as a radical departure from previous Councils. He understands the Council’s goals as bringing “purification and growth to a new maturation and a new fullness.”<sup>109</sup> Therefore, he views the history of the Church, and in fact all of salvation history, as a unified narrative that tells of our ongoing conversion and participation in the salvific action of Christ.

Regarding the development of the early Christian liturgy, in *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, he claims that neither the Temple activity of sacrificing animals, nor the synagogue reverencing of the Torah, were fully sufficient. Unlike when Moses constructed the tabernacle as a place for God, Jesus comes within the Eucharistic feast in a real and unifying way. Therefore, the Temple and synagogue traditions of word-based sacrifice, and the *logos*-liturgies in the pre Christian era, show the nature of continuity within the liturgical tradition. The reality of the incarnation and the corporality of the resurrection mean “that we are laid hold of by the Logos and for the Logos in our very bodies.”<sup>110</sup> The liturgy therefore, has a role that goes beyond simply an encounter with God or incorporation into the mystical body, but has real-world consequences for our ethics and our embodied natures. It is the theme of continuity that not only allows Ratzinger to see connections between the Old and New Testaments, but it is the framework for a unifying movement that he finds throughout Church history itself and, which has guided his sense of liturgical reform.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>110</sup> Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*. p. 175.



*Ratzinger as neither traditionalist nor creative liturgist*

Ratzinger cannot be considered to be supporting a sense of traditionalism that affirms the full restoration of the Latin “Tridentine” liturgy for all members of the Latin Rite, nor is he supportive of boundless creativity within the liturgical rites. Ratzinger, in the *Spirit of the Liturgy* and in his other liturgical works, is critical of creativity and experimentation. However, he holds this position because of his own sense of history and his understanding of the Church as being in continuity with not only Judaism, but also with the early Church of the Apostles. Ratzinger, unlike his critics, observes that the Second Vatican Council had as its agenda the radical standardization of the liturgy, in effect suppressing the Gallican and other liturgical traditions within the Western Church. This understanding of the Council is in stark contrast to his critics, who understand it as desiring greater diversity and enculturation. However, even though there was a movement toward the standardization of practice in the liturgical rites, the opposite phenomenon occurred; with the suppression of some rites, local communities have felt free to increase their own “creativity” in their liturgical practices.<sup>111</sup>

Ratzinger has been critical of “creativity,” because he defines the liturgical activity as being in union with God’s activity and founded in the tradition given by the apostles. Based in the apostolic tradition Ratzinger he states: “Rite makes concrete the liturgy’s bond with that living subject which is the Church, who for her part is characterized by adherence to the form of faith that has developed in the apostolic tradition. This bond with the subject, that is the Church, allows for

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<sup>111</sup> Ratzinger. *Spirit of the Liturgy*. p. 163.

different patterns of liturgy... but it equally excludes improvisation.”<sup>112</sup> This tie to the apostolic tradition grounds the liturgy in the activity of God, which is a key priority for Ratzinger. Therefore, creativity or innovation that would either fully restore the ‘Tridentine’ liturgy or promote local improvisation would not be appropriate, because such reforms would disconnect the liturgy from the apostolic tradition, and God’s on-going action in the Church. It is this theology, which is reflected in much of the recent changes in the liturgy during his pontificate.

### *Priesthood and the Eucharist*

One of Ratzinger’s important critiques of the reform movement over the fifty years since the Council has been the state of the priesthood, again an example of his desire to focus on other premises of the Council’s reform in light of his understanding of the nature of active participation. He is critical of the language used by sociology that has reduced priesthood to being thought of as a clerical monopoly, which is a perspective that dissolves the unity of the community into what is perceived as only the institutional Church.<sup>113</sup> In contrast to modern inclinations, Ratzinger affirms that the priest is one who offers sacrifice, and is not simply reduced to the role of presider, leader of the liturgical assembly, or Church professional. The priest is not a “self-made” man and is not called to ordination to develop his own gifts and power, but is to become a sacrament to the world. For Ratzinger this means the priest should have the attitude of “I give what I myself cannot give; I do something that is not my work; I am on a mission and have become

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>113</sup> Ratzinger. *A New Song for the Lord*, p. 113.

the bearer of that which another has committed to my charge.”<sup>114</sup> Although the roles of the priest and the laity are distinct, it is through the Sacraments that the whole Church is joined with Christ to become “united to the Lord,” and become “one spirit with Him.” (1 Cor 6:17) Therefore, the primary action of the Eucharistic liturgy lies in the “fact that God himself is acting and that we are drawn into that action of God. Everything else is, therefore, secondary.”<sup>115</sup> Posture, music, and liturgical roles are then secondary to the prayerful task of preparing to look for the Lord by participating in the liturgical drama of going out to meet Him.<sup>116</sup>

Ratzinger also addresses the issues of body and sacrifice, which have been important aspects of traditional Eucharistic theology, and have been de-emphasized since the Council in favor of a “communal meal” concept that has been presumed to speak more profoundly to the ethical demands of Christian life in the modern world. Ratzinger recognizes the distinctions between word-based sacrifice and the *logos*-liturgies in the pre Christian era. The reality of the incarnation and the corporality of the resurrection “means that we are laid hold of by the Logos, for the Logos in our very bodies.”<sup>117</sup> The Eucharist as meal and as a sacrifice has a twofold significance: “it expresses communion with God, in whose sacrifice people are permitted to share, and communion among the participants.”<sup>118</sup> The liturgy has a role that goes beyond simply an encounter with God or incorporation into the mystical body, but has real-world consequences for our bodies and their relations with others. St. Paul says, “I

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<sup>114</sup> Ratzinger. *Called to Communion*. p. 115.

<sup>115</sup> Ratzinger. *Spirit of the Liturgy*. p. 174.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>118</sup> Ratzinger. *Feast of Faith*. p. 53.

must train my body and subdue it." (1 Cor 9:27) St. Paul imagines this training to be similar to the exercise and training of an athlete who has as his orientation, and goal competing with others. The liturgy and the priest for Ratzinger must do the same thing, and "orientate" the faithful toward the risen Christ. The gestures of the liturgy therefore gain greater significance because they have as their goal not just unifying the assembly in their prayer, but must do the work of orientating one towards Christ and form a universal language within the Church. For Ratzinger the priesthood, and sacrifice are important because they not only connect us to the activity of Christ, but also integrate us into all of salvation history.

*Is it a "Reform of the Reform?"*

It is clear that although the agenda of "reforming the reform" has been associated with Ratzinger his project is not a reform in the sense of attempting to turn back the Second Vatican Council. Ratzinger affirms that his project is not a repeal of the Council, but that his desire is to reaffirm the Council's place within the liturgical and apostolic tradition.<sup>119</sup> He re-emphasizes this desire with three main points that affirm his dedication to the Council's reform. He first articulates the need for proper space for the liturgy of the Word and that the reform of the Ambo accomplished the objective of a dialogue between those who announce the Word and those who receive it. Second, he commented that in many places the altar has been too far from the people and should be positioned to create spaces that promote a sense of closeness between the people and the Eucharist. Third, with regard to the issue of "orientation," Ratzinger says that the desire to return to a posture that is

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<sup>119</sup> Ratzinger, Cardinal Joseph. "The Spirit of the Liturgy or Fidelity to the Council: Response to Father Gy." *Antiphon* 11, no. 1 (2007): p. 98-102.

toward Christ in worship does not require that the priest's place necessarily be changed.<sup>120</sup> Some of these observations have been taken up as part of the new missal and the general instruction.

*Implications: Active Participation, and Posture*

Ratzinger addresses many areas where the liturgy since the Council needs to be re-imagined to more fully fulfill the liturgy's goal of being the work of God. He addresses perhaps one of the most popular and often-quoted phrases of the Second Vatican Council: "that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" (article 14 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*). Since the time of the Council this theme of "active participation" has been the foundation for much of the reform in the Church's liturgical practice. The concept of "active participation" is of primary importance and gives a greater context for understanding the nature of his proposed changes to liturgical practices, because it was so important to the 1969 revisions of the *Ordo Missae*. Ratzinger ultimately argues that the early reformers of the liturgy have misinterpreted this phrase as meaning that everyone is to have a "part" to play in the liturgical rites, which according to him is not the proper concept behind this key phrase.<sup>121</sup>

Ratzinger's argument is based on his understanding of the linguistic meaning of the words "active participation." The etymology of "active participation" does not lead to an understanding of everyone needing an active role, but rather refers to a

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<sup>120</sup> Ratzinger. *Response to Fr. Gy.* p. 101.

<sup>121</sup> Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*. p. 171.

“principal action in which everyone has a ‘part.’”<sup>122</sup> This insight in addition to being contrary to much of what has been described as the “liturgical spirit” of the Second Vatican Council, is an approach that attempts to give the liturgical reform a sense of a deeper spirituality, proposing an understanding of the sacraments as primarily liturgical prayer. For Ratzinger, the primary action that we participate in is the Eucharistic prayer, which has the truest sense of *actio*, but it is within *oratio*, which is the priest’s proclamation of the words of Christ – “This is my Body,” “This is my Blood.”<sup>123</sup> Therefore, “the real ‘action’ in the liturgy in which we are all supposed to participate is the action of God himself.”<sup>124</sup> This approach places liturgy back within the context of the activity of God and reaffirms the liturgy’s eschatological and cosmological dimensions.

For Ratzinger the liturgy is deeply connected to, and rooted in, the apostolic tradition and orientated toward Christ. Therefore, any application of the Council must be viewed through these lenses to be considered “authentic reform.” At the heart of his critique of excessive innovations and his discouragement of dance and modern music within the context of the Latin Rite are these two core values. Furthermore, with the publication of his Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* in 2007, following the groundwork of John Paul II’s letter *Ecclesia Die* published in 1988. He further expanded the possible use of the 1962 Roman Missal throughout the church with the hope of ritual cross-pollination within the Latin Rite. This action was similar to Pope John Paul II’s introduction of the *Pastoral Provision* for an

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

Anglican use liturgy of the Latin Rite, allowing for an Anglican adaptation of the Latin Rite.

Ratzinger does support liturgical practices that provide an experience of Christ as one that is counter-cultural, or as H. Richard Niebuhr might classify his position: a Christ against culture model.<sup>125</sup> For example, Ratzinger concludes that kneeling is “alien to our modern culture—insofar as it is a culture, for this culture has turned away from the faith and no longer knows the One before whom kneeling is the right, indeed the intrinsically necessary gesture.”<sup>126</sup> The controversy regarding kneeling is symptomatic of a culture that has turned away from God, and he believes the lessons of this example can certainly be extended to the many misuses of art, music, architecture, and homiletics in the Church’s contemporary worship. He further promotes the reintegration of silence within the liturgy, a practice that appears even more necessary in light of the noisiness of modern life in the West. His rediscovery of the apostolic tradition within the Catholic liturgy and its participation with the activity of God is ultimately an invitation and call to prayer, not a “reform of the reform” as some of his critics may claim. It is his theology of historical continuity that drives his sense of the need for further reform, which has driven many, especially those in Rome, to implement a new missal with clearer ties to the ancient Latin texts.

### **III. Critiques of Ratzinger and issues with the current state of reform**

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<sup>125</sup> Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001, p. 45-76.

<sup>126</sup> Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 194.

Although Ratzinger never uses the term “the reform of the reform” in his liturgical writings, he has been criticized for his use and understanding of the Second Vatican Council, which has influenced the *Roman Missal* and the GIRM. It is his interpretation of the Council -- more than particular concerns about ritual practice, -- which raises concern among some of his critics. Ratzinger’s use of the Second Vatican Council is specifically criticized in responses to *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. For example, the liturgist John Baldovin states in his comments on Ratzinger’s preference for a silent Eucharistic prayer, that Ratzinger “reveals just how far removed he is from the spirit of the liturgical reform, one of whose cardinal principles is the intelligibility of the Eucharistic prayer of the entire church, voiced by the priest.”<sup>127</sup> Baldovin clearly categorizes Ratzinger as among those who have been critical of the liturgical reforms and sympathetic to those who desire a “reform of the reform.” He takes issue with Ratzinger’s interpretation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, as being responsible for the reformed liturgy and having given the Church a set of Rites that were not organically produced.<sup>128</sup> One issue of contention between Ratzinger and some of his critics is his narrow understanding of history and the role of the Council. Baldovin argues that Vatican II and the liturgical reform represent, “a change in Roman Catholicism that transcends the documents themselves.”<sup>129</sup> Additionally Pierre-Marie Gy, OP, in his critique, warns Ratzinger of his misguided interpretations, and asks, “that, in our twilight years, are we in danger

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<sup>127</sup> Baldovin, John F. "In Form and Expression." *America* 7 May 2001: 29.

<sup>128</sup> Baldovin, John F.. *Reforming the liturgy: a response to the critics*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008, p. 135.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.



of retracing the intellectual path we traveled at the outset of our maturity? ... [we must] ask ourselves where the liturgical spirituality of each of us is not still in need of reforming, in order to be truly faithful to the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>130</sup>

The liturgical changes after the Second Vatican Council were perhaps the most significant ritual break from the past experienced by most Catholics since the reforms instituted by the Council of Trent. The interpretation and application of the Council’s documents have been a significant issue for pastors and academics over the last fifty years. The historical understanding of the Council is one of the major issues of division between Ratzinger and his critics. Many of them disagree with Ratzinger’s sense of historical continuity, and agree with Church historians such as John O’Malley, who describes three major trends in reaction to the Council. The first trend views the Council as an aberration to the historical realities of the Church and claim that the Holy Spirit was simply “asleep” throughout the 1960’s and the years after the Council. The second group (according to O’Malley), which represents the majority view within the power structures of the Catholic Church, interprets the Council as having not made a significant break with the past. For this group, according to O’Malley, the Council was a moment of time characterized by great celebration and enthusiasm. Therefore, now that we are fifty years after the Council, we have come to a point in time where some of those aberrations inspired by the Council need to be corrected, and Ratzinger would be part of this group.

The third group is certainly not only just O’Malley’s understanding of the Council, but the dominant view among many of Ratzinger’s critics. This view

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<sup>130</sup> Gy, OP, Pierre-Marie . "Cardinal Ratzinger's The Spirit of the Liturgy: Is It Faithful to the Council or in Reaction to it." *Antiphon* 11, no. 1 (2007): 95.

understands the Council as making a significant break with the past. O'Malley supports his thesis of historical discontinuity being the proper interpretation of the Council by citing the fact that the Second Vatican Council produced more pages and documents than any previous Council: it is therefore, radically different from what had been established by previous Councils. Also, the fact the Council Fathers themselves claimed that the Second Vatican Council was "the end of the Counter Reformation," "the end of the Constantinian era," and a "new Pentecost" is further evidence of his claim. Thus, according to O'Malley, the Second Vatican Council promoted a radically new style of being Church and cannot be understood in the same context as other Church Councils, which were more similar in style and worldview.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, the liturgy should reflect a significant departure from the pre-conciliar liturgy; thus efforts to "turn-back-the-clock" misunderstand the intention of the Council Fathers.

Critics of Ratzinger's liturgical project, particularly how he addresses the liturgical reform in the *Spirit of the Liturgy*, have been met with criticism primarily based on how he interprets the Second Vatican Council's documents. Baldovin and Gy point out several issues with Ratzinger's work, and why it has been welcomed by some as being a movement counter to the spirit of the Council. One significant challenge to Ratzinger's work is his understanding of the Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and its use of the phrase "active participation." Ratzinger finds in this phrase a real risk of the Church coming to celebrate itself rather than orienting itself towards the activity of God. However, what appears to be lacking in

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<sup>131</sup> O'Malley, John. "The Style of Vatican II." *America* 24 Feb. 2003: 12.

Ratzinger's interpretation of this phrase is its connections to the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. It is within this context that Gy argues that Ratzinger's move toward orientating the faithful toward God actually promotes the practice of private Masses as a worthwhile act of piety. For Gy this "shows no concern for how active participation deepens the piety of the faithful, nor for spiritual values such as that of the role (expressly mentioned in the council documents) of the faithful in the Eucharistic sacrifice, or of communion under both species."<sup>132</sup> For Gy and others, Ratzinger and those sympathetic to him, miss the mark regarding what the Council Fathers were attempting to accomplish when calling for more active engagement in the liturgy.<sup>133</sup>

Critics have also raised concerns regarding the present state of liturgical reform, especially with *Liturgiam Authenticam* and the new *Roman Missal*. Peter Jeffery, a chant historian and self-confessed conservative, gives a pointed critique of *Liturgiam Authenticam*. He is highly critical of the authors of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, not only because of their anonymity and the lack of a peer review process, but also because of their lack of familiarity with the history of Roman traditions, as well as "the treatment of Greek and Semitic words in Latin Scriptures and liturgies."<sup>134</sup> According to Jeffery, the lack of transparency and peer review in the process of translating liturgical texts is the most worrisome. *Liturgiam Authenticam* therefore, "speaks words of power and control rather than cooperation and consultation, much

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<sup>132</sup> Gy, p. 90.

<sup>133</sup> Baldovin, p. 89.

<sup>134</sup> Jeffery, Peter. *Translating tradition: a chant historian reads Liturgiam authenticam*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005, p. 52.

less charity.”<sup>135</sup> Jeffery argues that on these grounds it should be withdrawn until further consultation with appropriate experts can be achieved. Although he recognizes that among *Liturgiam Authenticam*’s authors and supporters there is a desire to restore a sense of the sacred to the liturgy, (which is not necessarily a bad thing) it cannot be achieved by controlling the texts: the method that *Liturgiam Authenticam* has used in attempting to achieve its goal of forming a greater sense of mystery in the liturgy is quite limited, because it has only focused on textual issues without a full knowledge of the nature of language.

John Baldovin affirms Jeffery’s observations and points out the difficulty in the ability of the new translation to be picked up aurally. He cites as the example Nicene Creed, which in the 1973 ICEL translation read “...one in being with the Father...by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary” as compared to the *Roman Missal*’s translation: “...consubstantial with the Father...by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary.”<sup>136</sup> The directives of *Liturgiam Authenticam* and the *Roman Missal* have failed not only to incorporate concerns of translators, liturgical historians, and ecclesial conferences; the authors of *Liturgiam Authenticam* have failed to recognize the reality that the translation of the liturgy into the vernacular does not take place in a vacuum, and could be difficult for many congregations to understand. Translation does and cannot occur isolated from ecclesial contexts and pastoral concerns, and the authors and translators of *Liturgiam Authenticam* are accused of doing just that.<sup>137</sup> The reality of “word-to

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>136</sup> Baldovin, John F.. *Reforming the liturgy: a response to the critics*, p. 120.

<sup>137</sup> Foley. p. 71

word” translations, according to Filipino liturgist Anscar Chupungco is that these translations “for the sake of fidelity to the original text often [do] not make sense.”<sup>138</sup> Not that dynamic equivalence translations do not have their own dangers of changing the meaning of liturgical texts, but literal translations require great attention to Latin grammar and lexical usage if such translations are to be done well and be intelligible to the hearers of such translations, and in short the new *Roman Missal* has failed to accomplish that task.<sup>139</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

In imagining a way forward for the reform of the liturgy, there are many voices to consider. Critics of aspects of the reform, like Ratzinger, believe that the reforms have gone too far and we have lost a sense of the sacred, while other scholars wish to continue to build on the reforms of the post-conciliar period. The reality is that there is no going back. The Second Vatican Council made significant changes to the Church’s style of prayer and has brought millions into a more vibrant sense of worship and a relationship with the Lord. Also, regardless of one’s preference for dynamic or formal equivalence translations the authors of *Liturgiam Authenticam* with their juridical authority has produced a *Roman Missal*, which (as with all translations) have aspects that are both helpful and potentially harmful for the prayer life of the Catholic Community. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, means, “The law of prayer is the law of belief:” any change in the style or language of prayer has both intentional and unintentional consequences for the entire Church. Critics of the Second Vatican Council’s reforms often point to the unintended consequence that

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

with the reform there has been a loss of silence and sense of awe and wonder in the Mass, both Jeffrey and Baldovin think there is something true in this claim. Certainly part of the agenda of *Liturgiam Authenticum*, the *Roman Missal*, and GIRM is to try to address some of these concerns raised by Ratzinger and others. We should also, therefore, expect intentional and unintentional consequences in the implementation of the new *Roman Missal*. In the next chapter I will begin to look at the experience of believers and hope to gain a sense of how the experience of liturgical change has helped or hindered the lives of faith and the identity of Catholics. I will begin by summarizing some of the sociological data that has been collected thus far regarding the *Roman Missal* in its early years of implementation and then discuss the findings of my own focus groups held in the New England area.

**Chapter 3**  
**Analysis of the New *Roman Missal* One Year Later**

## **I. The new *Roman Missal* one year later**

Having gone into effect at the beginning of Advent in 2012, the new *Roman Missal* is only in its early stages of implementation. Nevertheless, even within such a short period, there have been several polls to study the successes and difficulties of its implementation. Three polls in particular represent the diversity of experience in the application of the new *Roman Missal*. Therefore, I will briefly review the polling data collected by the *Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies* at The Catholic University of America, and conducted by the *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate* (CARA) at Georgetown University, as well as polls conducted by *U.S. Catholic*, and *The Tablet*. These three quantitative surveys provide helpful reference points for my own qualitative analysis of five focus groups held in the New England region as part of this project on liturgy and Catholic identity.

CARA's research survey was completed in 2012 and included 1,047 self-identified Catholics who were 18 years of age or older.<sup>140</sup> Overall, CARA's study found that "seven in ten Catholics agree that the new translation is a good thing (with 20 percent feeling 'strongly')." <sup>141</sup> Among Catholic's who attend Mass weekly, they responded in even higher positive numbers when asked if they thought the new translation of the Mass was a "good thing." Among this group eighty-four

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<sup>140</sup> Pogorelc, S.S., Rev. Anthony . "A Year After: Catholics React Positively to Changes to the English-language Mass." Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association from institute for Policy & Catholic Studies , Phoenix, November 9, 2012 p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 1.



percent responded that they “agreed,” and forty-seven percent “strongly agreed” that the changes were positive.<sup>142</sup>

Participants were polled if they had noticed changes in the language of the prayers said during Mass. Only ten percent reported that they had noticed that the words of the Mass had changed to a “great extent.” Twenty-four percent indicated that they believed that the language had “remained about the same.”<sup>143</sup> CARA also attempted to assess if the language of the Mass had become more difficult for parishioners to understand. Eighty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I have a good understanding of the meaning of the prayers recited by the priest and people at Mass.”<sup>144</sup> Seventy-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “the words of the prayers recited by the priest and people make it easier for me to participate in the Mass.” When compared with a 2011 poll, which indicated that eighty-six percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, this was a notable decrease of seven percent. However, overall the differences regarding the understandability of the prayers, the ability of the liturgy to help people feel close to God, and the Mass’s ability to inspire parishioners to be more faithful Catholics saw differences only within the margin of error. CARA affirmed its previous research and found that the more regularly one attended Mass the more likely one was to be comfortable with the prayers of the priest and people.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Participants also found that the Mass helped them grow closer to God, and claimed that the translation affirmed their participation in it.<sup>145</sup>

In contrast, a *U. S. Catholic* poll suggested that the new translation of the *Roman Missal* has not been as widely accepted as CARA's study might suggest. Nearly half (49 percent) of *U. S. Catholic* readers who took the survey reported that they remain negative and are unhappy with the new translation of the Mass.<sup>146</sup> Participants reported concerns with the theology behind the new language of the Mass, and that they found it difficult to pray with because of its technical nature and the difficulties in memorizing it. Some also reported concerns with the missal's implementation. For example, Eric Brown of Louisville stated, "The new translation was presented as an edict. The official catechesis looked suspiciously like political propaganda."<sup>147</sup> Many also expressed that the new translation did not properly express their relationship with God, and what they felt the Mass was about for them. Frank Butler of Lansdale, Pennsylvania commentated that the new translations were "antiquated and individualistic, rather than gospel-based and communal."<sup>148</sup> While others pointed to the oddity of the word "chalice" rather than "cup" in the words of consecration, and readers expressed disappointment that the new translation did not include more gender-neutral language. Anecdotally, twenty-five percent of participants reported knowing someone who had left the Church due to

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>146</sup> Murphy-Gill, Megan . "Words fail us: Parishioners respond to the new Missal a year later." *U.S. Catholic*, December 2012, p. 17.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

the translation.<sup>149</sup> One mother stated, “It is difficult to hear my 17-year-old daughter, who is an active, faith-filled young person, say that she feels that the translation has lofty, non-inclusive language that puts greater distance between the people in the pews and the clergy.”<sup>150</sup>

*U.S. Catholic* also found that among priests that participated in its survey, fifty-eight percent of the 1,200 participants concurred with the statement; “I dislike the new translations and still can’t believe I’ll have to use them for the foreseeable future.”<sup>151</sup> *U.S. Catholic* found that among participating priests there was a general feeling of not being consulted and being forced to implement the new missal. The top complaint about the translation, however, was that the wording is “clumsy” and “confusing.” Father Thomas Colgan of Buffalo, New York simply stated, “It is lousy English.” Father Bob Cushing further commented that translators did not have a good sense of English and stated “I am an English teacher when I am not a priest and both practices make me deeply discouraged to realize that our language could be so badly abused...Vocabulary, syntax, diction, and simple uncompleted sentences are so abundant.”<sup>152</sup> Priests were overall very critical of the literal style of the new text, which has attempted to make the English more similar to the original Latin prayers. Many have found the technical theological language in the new missal to be aloof and unintelligible.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Alessil, Scott. "Words fail us: Priests respond to the new Missal a year later." *U. S. Catholic*, December 2012, p. 15.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Overall, *U.S. Catholic* reported that neither priests nor laity has accepted the new missal. Although they recognize that slightly more than fifteen percent of both groups have had positive reactions to the new missal, they are the clear minority. *U.S. Catholic's* survey is helpful in demonstrating some key concepts and language that parishioners may use in describing their experience of the new liturgy. Their results are strikingly different from the CARA study, which had a more positive to neutral interpretation of the *Roman Missal's* introduction. This difference can mostly likely be accounted for by recognizing the nature of the sample group. *U.S. Catholic's* group was highly self-selecting. They were not only readers of *U.S. Catholic*, but also chose to participate in the survey, therefore giving us a much more limited window of opinions than CARA's study. CARA in contrast polled self-identified Catholics who were members of the Knowledge Networks Panel.<sup>153</sup>

*The Tablet* also conducted its own survey regarding the new translation of the missal. *The Tablet* conducted its survey via its website between December 5, 2012 and January 9, 2013 and received 5,700 responses.<sup>154</sup> Participants described themselves as practicing Catholics who attended Mass once a week. A potential detractor of online surveys is that respondents represent constituencies that are active online. For example, *The Tablet* found that nineteen percent of respondents preferred the Extraordinary Form of the Mass to the *Novus Ordo*, and that they overwhelmingly supported the new translation. Nineteen percent is a significantly high percentage of Catholics who preferred the Latin Mass than the general Catholic

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<sup>153</sup> Pogorelc, p. 4.

<sup>154</sup> Frymann, Abigail, and Elena Curti. "One year on: verdict on the new translation." *The Tablet*, February 9, 2013, p. 8.

population, and demonstrates a weakness of on-line polls.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, it is the largest survey conducted to date on the new missal and included respondents from the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the United States. It was also a mixed group of lay, religious, and clergy who overwhelmingly reported attending Mass once a week.

Overall *The Tablet* found that its respondents were split over the new translation. They found that forty-seven percent affirmed that they “liked” the translation while fifty-one percent did not.<sup>156</sup> Participants were similarly split when asked about their preference for a formal liturgical style (49 percent yes, 47 percent no). When asked if they found the language “obsequious and distracting,” fifty-two percent stated they did while forty-five percent stated they did not. When asked if they considered the new translation to be more prayerful or reverent than the old translation, forty-eight percent agreed with the statement while forty-nine percent did not.<sup>157</sup>

More than fifty percent approved of hearing and saying the new words and phrases in the Mass. Respondents approved of phrases such as: “Go forth, the Mass is ended;” “I believe;” “And with your spirit;” “Through my fault, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;” “For you and for many;” “chalice;” “Consubstantial with the Father.” However, fifty-one percent still prefer the previous English translation. What is most striking are the differences between US Catholics, and those from the UK and Ireland. Catholics in the UK and Ireland were far more critical than their US counterparts of the new translation. Priests

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

however, were the most likely to dislike the text. “Two-thirds were unhappy with its more formal style and almost three quarters (72 percent) found some of the language obsequious and distracting.”<sup>158</sup> Two-thirds of priests claimed that they found the new texts less prayerful and objected to new words and phrases such as “consubstantial,” “for many,” and “chalice.” Overall, sixty-nine percent of clergy preferred the old translations as compared to twenty-two percent who preferred the new text. Less than a third believed that the new text was an improvement, and seventy percent felt that there is a great need to further revise the present Rite.

Respondents, who preferred the Ordinary Form of the Mass, were less likely to view the new translation positively. Of this group only thirty-seven percent liked the new translation, and sixty-four percent had issues with the translation’s elevated language and disliked new sayings such as “consubstantial.” Furthermore half felt that the old translation should still be available, and sixty-one percent believed that there is an urgent need for further revisions.<sup>159</sup> In light of *The Tablet’s* survey, Nicholas King, SJ, of Campion Hall at Oxford University commented that it would appear that sufficient catechetical preparation was not done prior to the implementation of the new missal, and further revision is still needed. However, he was also encouraged by the results and stated, “what is clear from all the responses is that people care very much indeed about the Mass and want it to be appropriately celebrated. It is far from clear that the present translation is achieving this aim.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

Recent surveys have shown a variety of opinions regarding the successes and difficulties in the implementation of the new *Roman Missal*. One weakness of the online surveys has been their self-selecting nature, and their tendency to reflect the views of actively online constituencies. However, they have demonstrated mixed reviews of the implementation and experience of the new missal by the laity, as well as expressing a generally critical stance regarding the new texts by the clergy. Although one year is a relatively short period of time, such studies have already indicated that Catholics now experience a more formal style of prayer. Some have welcomed this change and accepted it as part of a need to reintroduce a greater sense of the sacred in the liturgy, while others have found it difficult, and some are reported to have felt further ostracized from the Church. These initial studies have also been primarily quantitative in their design, using surveys and on-line questionnaires to collect data. Additional research is needed which would incorporate a qualitative design model. This would allow participants to narratively express their experience of liturgical change and how it has affected their prayer, experience of the Mass, and identity as Catholics.

## **II. Research design**

This research was a descriptive and qualitative study using focus groups to collect narrative data, which described the experience of practicing Catholics who were active in their parishes. The focus groups took place during the months of March and April of 2012. Four parishes hosted focus groups, and provided a diverse sample representing three different New England Dioceses. Participation came from a parish in the Archdiocese of Boston located near a nationally known university, two

in the Diocese of Worcester, one located in a suburb and a second in a rural community, and a parish in the Diocese of Norwich located in small seafaring coastal city. The researcher asked a series of open-ended questions to determine the quality of experience regarding liturgical change in order to determine how the change had affected participant's prayer and Catholic identity (Questions found in the appendix). A qualitative study of this population was appropriate because the researcher was seeking to document the quality of experience that parishioners have had since the implementation of the *Roman Missal* in 2012. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to inquire about the experience of parishioners, observations regarding change, the meaning making process, as well as how pastoral leaders had facilitated the transition to the new translation.

The researcher worked with local pastors to recruit a sample that attempted to reflect different ages, family life, career goals, and marital status of active parishioners. The study was a descriptive study, because the study had as its aim to provide descriptive information regarding the experience of change concerning the new translation of the missal, and its affects on Catholic identity. The ninety-minute interviews were recorded electronically, and an independent observer took notes of not only what focus group members discussed, but also recorded their nonverbal communications as well, in order to assist in providing a "thick description" of participant's comments. The audio recordings also provided the researcher with dependable and reliable data that was archived and used throughout the research project. Finally, the researcher reviewed the transcripts with participants and



confirmed that the information was accurate and reflected the intentions of the focus group members.

The qualitative open-ended questions were distributed to the focus groups by the researcher prior to the meeting of the group. This was done so they could form their own answers and avoid possible “group think” during the focus group conversation, which is a common detractor of qualitative studies. By using focus groups the researchers was able to record common themes among the groups and identify common experiences and difficulties, as well as positive aspects of the new *Roman Missal*.

Coding, thematic analysis, and interpreting for content were the basis for the analysis of the focus groups data. Inductive analysis also helped to identify themes in the content, and helped to identify the thematic patterns during the process, the interaction of the group members, and their verbal and nonverbal behaviors. This analysis was accomplished through coding and memoing, which enable the management of the large volume of information. The analysis of the interactions among focus group members paid special attention to the following: shared language, terms taken for granted; shared beliefs; arguments used by members when their views or experiences were challenged or affirmed; sources of information and basis for understanding; arguments and sources and types of information that generated change; and tone of voice, body language, and degree of emotional engagement exhibited by group members. The memoing activities were documented in the analysis form, which provided a means for the researcher to identify and clarify coding terms, and document meaning.

### III. The Results

The focus groups explored a variety of themes including the role of pastors and pastoral staff in introducing the new translation. Participants discussed their sense of the new translation as being either a positive or negative experience, as well as their experience of the liturgy as children and young adults. Participants were also asked to identify their liturgical and musical style preferences, the degree to which the linguistic change had been noticed, and how the new language had affected their prayer, participation in the Mass, and their sense of Catholic identity. The focus groups, also discussed if they thought further formation was needed and what lessons could be learned from their parish's experience regarding the new missal's implementation. Parishioners were generally informed regarding the new translation of the *Roman Missal*. Many were able to articulate that the new translation was done to make it more similar to Latin, and other romance languages. They recognized that the changes have created difficulties for the elderly, as well as for those who do not attend Mass regularly. However, the majority participants were positive or neutral about the changes despite some of its difficulties. One group, however, was overwhelmingly critical of the changes. They were distinct from the other four groups. Four focus group conversations reflected a generally positive attitude and suggested that the changes have been generally easily integrated into Church life, however there were many suggestions regarding areas for further change and the need for further adult catechesis about the Mass.

Focus Group Members Demographics		
<b>Age:</b>		
<i>Pre-Vatican II</i>		
70 +		1
60-70		7
<i>Vatican II</i>		
50-60		6
40-50		2
<i>Post-Vatican II</i>		
20-30		2
<b>Gender</b>		
Male		4
Female		14
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single		5
Married		13
<b>Mass Attendance per month</b>		
1-4		7
5-12		7
20-30		4

The focus group members came from parishes in three different Dioceses in New England, and were all Caucasians. Ten members worked full or part time, six were retired and two were full time graduate students. Two were between the ages 20-30, two between the ages of 40-50, six between the ages of 50-60, seven between the ages of 60-70, and one was over the age of 70. Fourteen of the group members were female and four members were male, and five were single while thirteen were married. All participants reported that they attend Mass at least once a week. Many, however, regularly attended Mass more often; seven stated that they went to Mass 5-12 times a month, and four reported that they attend Mass 20-30 times per month. Therefore, focus group participants are among those Catholics

who can be defined as being highly involved in the liturgical life of the Church and participate more regularly than the general population of American Catholics.

Focus group members were generally aware of many of the language changes to the Mass. However, there was a general sense of needing to “go with the flow,” and for them the impact of the change was not overly concerning. All participants spoke highly of their pastors and parish staffs regarding the implementation of the new missal. Many stated that the implementation took place slowly over several months and was introduced to parishioners from the pulpit, through mailings, and presentations by guest speakers. One participant recognized the important role that the attitude of the pastor played in the missal’s introduction. Describing his parish, the member stated, “Certainly the workshops we’ve had, the prep, and in anticipation Father who was almost giddy with, you know, ‘Oh the translation is coming’ and ‘its going to be....’” Group members noted the excitement or lack of excitement of pastors and parish staffs, but they also recognized the sensitivity that pastoral leaders had in trying to address some of the concerns regarding the new translation. One member remarked that before “it was official the pastor took his time, made light of it to help make it a little more easier for people, and really seemed to understand that it wasn’t something that maybe a lot of us were going to like.” Pastors and parish staffs appeared to play an important role in the attitudes that parishioners had. Parishes where pastors reportedly “made light” of the translation also had group members who were more critical of the translation, as compared to members where the pastor was enthusiastic about the changes. Nevertheless, for many the experiences of transitioning from the old translation to

the new was described as being “gradually introduced and it didn’t feel overwhelming,” and for most focus group members it was an “easy transition.”

In addition to praising their pastor’s leadership in introducing the new translation most felt that homilies were an important part of the Mass and they were “lucky” to be in parishes that had good preaching. Members also affirmed the importance of music as well, and that it is an important and vital part of the Mass, and an important part of forming community. Although participants were roughly split in their preferences for traditional and contemporary liturgical and musical styles, what was universally described was the need for a sense of reverence and intentionality by the celebrant, as well as quality music that reflected the themes of the day’s readings, and the expectation that a good homily have a clear message based on the scripture readings.

When addressing if the translation was a “good thing” comments were mixed. Positively, some members experienced the new language, as creating a greater sense of God’s transcendence and making the liturgy feel more sacred. One member commented, “the basic trend towards the transcend to a more formal language, I think is basically a good thing, for example my brother-in-law not that we get into discussions about this, but he said what is up with consubstantial? But the upside of that is it implies that this is a very-very special relationship between the Father and the Son so you do have to have a word [that captures that fully].” In addition to recognizing a new liturgical or sacred vocabulary there was a recognition of greater reverence in the liturgy, which was something that some Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II generation members recognized as having been lost in the post conciliar liturgy.

However, many members recognized that in recent years presiders have introduced more times for silence in the liturgy. Members also spoke positively about how the new translation is perceived as being more scriptural. One member commented that “I love it, I love the fact that its Scriptural, I love the roots of it.”

Another positive attribute, which was discussed by members, was that the translation has brought a greater sense of universality. One member in her sixties commented, “I think any time that there is universality within our faith it is a good thing, it encourages unity.” A Millennial generation woman in her twenties also saw the new translation as having a greater sense of connectedness with other cultures. She stated “I like that it’s the same as what the Spanish speaking community is using, and I’ve been to Mass in French at a few different places and it’s the same there, so I like the more universality of that, we’re all kind of using the same words even if were using our own languages.”

One of the most frequently stated positive comments regarding the new translation was that it has helped members focus and to pay attention. One member commented, “it makes me want to look and follow along so I’m not dozing off in my mind, you know for years we heard the same thing over and over again, now its something different, so I’m paying attention.” Or as another member put it, “I think I going to agree with him on what he said before, that it makes you more conscious about what you’re saying, and some of the language, like during the Eucharistic prayer, [it] makes me concentrate more during that part of the Mass, because I listen to the prayer more than I did before, because it has become wrote, you know, and sometimes you drift off.”

Focus group members also stated that the new missal has formed a greater sense of community. Strikingly male participants in several groups spoke of the importance of community as part of their experience of common prayer. Many stated that the new translation has produced a feeling that the community “is in it together.” As one male participant spoke at length about the connections between more focused prayer and the community he said, “There’s also the community dynamic of good prayer that’s an important part of why you go to Mass, [it] is the communities formation that happens in group prayer.” For many members the new translation reemphasized the communal nature of the liturgy and the activity of saying the new prayers together and appears to have been important in highlighting the importance of community for participants, especially for male members.

Although the majority of focus group members had generally positive experiences of the change, and felt that there have been many positive outcomes because of the new missal, there nevertheless were those who were critical of the translation. One group did not find in the new translation many positive attributes or results. Among this group members expressed an attitude that saw the new missal “as a step backwards.” These members saw the recent changes in the liturgy as “the distancing of the priests from the people, and a distancing of God from the people in the language.” Members of this group understood the reason for the change in the missal in political terms, as tensions between conservatives and liberals, or those for and against the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. One member commented that “it feels like they looked to all the ones, all the winners of the past, [the] theological winners of the past, and lets make sure we can get

through and all of those things into this new liturgy.” Or stated by another, it flies “in the face of all the things that we were taught in Vatican II, about inclusion, and about how God is for everyone. This language goes way backwards it goes back 50 - 60 if not hundreds of years, and I just think that’s wrong. I think it’s anti-women, it’s anti non-Catholics, and I just think, it’s not just bad, I think it’s harmful this language.”

Overall this focus group’s members were not convinced of the need of a new translation, and were not sympathetic to explanations that claimed that the new missal was more similar to Latin texts, or other romance languages. However, focus group members of this group were very supportive of their parish and felt that it was a different type of parish from others in the region. One member expressed in an angry tone of her disapproval of other congregations, especially those Catholics who were attracted to the Latin liturgy or hymns. She felt like others in the group, and concluded that that their parish was unique in its welcoming attitude and stated; “I pretty much won’t go to Mass anywhere else, because it just feels so unfriendly, so backwards it’s just a very big turnoff.” Or as another member noted, she is able to “do things” at her present parish that she would not be able to do in other communities.

All focus group members identified and discussed specific changes to prayers, and their comments were also mixed regarding the particulars of some of them. One response that received many comments and received both positive and negative remarks is the prayer “Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof...” Those who were aware of the prayer’s Scriptural foundation tended to like the response. One member commented that there are important theological images in



that response. He stated, “the roof of my mouth, this idea of my mouth being a tabernacle, my body being a tabernacle, so I like that [change].” However, others commented that they still have not gotten use to the change or do not understand its meaning because it is not an image that is generally used by people today. The sternest criticism came from a Eucharistic Minister who stated, “I have a problem right there saying that I am not worthy to receive. We’ve gone through the penitential rite. We’ve gone through talking about gratitude to God; God’s loving kindness and everything, why at that very moment I feel when you’re most vulnerable about to receive, you know, Christ in a very intimate way. Why you can’t state it in the positive, something like, Lord I am, I feel so worthy to receive you because of your love and your grace, because that’s enough for me.”

Group members were well versed regarding many of the specific changes and were able to identify changes they liked or found meaning in. Members stated, “I really like the priest’s words, I really like the Dewfall;” “I like in the creed where we have consubstantial so there’s quite a few things, especially what the priest says I like;” “Through my fault, through my fault through my most grievous fault, I feel like the over 80s like that;” “it’s like the good old days (referring to the Confiteor);” “I enjoy the sending forth right when it says ‘go and proclaim the Gospel by your lives,’ and that sort of new addition, I like that;” “the new memorial acclamations ‘Lord, savior, savior of the world.’” Several members also saw the changes as an academic exercise that has created a more formal language in the liturgy. One positively commented, “Putting some of the traditional language back in, when I was young we didn’t hear the word incarnation much. So the first time I heard that [term was]

when I was in college and I didn't know what it meant, because we had used simpler language to describe the whole thing, you know, the same thing as 'Christ becoming man,' and so, I know, it's a tough word for young children, but I think maybe it's a good thing to be introduced to some of the traditional terms."

Some members also commented on the prayers of the priest and found them to be more engaging and beautiful. One member stated, "The prayers of the priest [that] we're seeing now are prettier, or more beautiful than the prayers that they were saying before, so I tend to listen to them more, I listen for the language."

Another commented that "Eucharistic prayers do really help to draw me in, even though I struggle there [to pay attention], it does help to draw me in, and in him we live, we move, and have our being, you know, God gathering people from the 'east to the west,' you know, 'from the rising of the sun to its setting.' I think there's a richness in those prayers if you really pay attention they really draw you in, and prepare you for the significance of the Eucharist."

However, almost all participants commented that there are still areas of difficulty and perhaps the need for further revision. The *Gloria* was discussed in almost every group as being one area needing further change, especially when it is sung. One member commented, "it was so beautifully sung before, and it fit the music, it fit the words and the words fit the music. Now it's like someone figured out the words and said okay go throw a melody to it, and I don't know that it works." The *Creed* was another prayer that was widely discussed during the focus groups. Although a few members had positive comments about the new translation, most stated it has been the prayer that has been the most difficult to adjust to, and

members reported still being dependent on cards or missals to recite it correctly.

In two groups there was a concern regarding the lack of inclusive language in the translation, especially in the *Creed*. As one Millennial generation male stated, his preference is for “gender inclusive language, and I don’t really understand why they continue to maintain, ‘He became’ that, the man stuff, really focusing on man in the creed.” A Vatican II generation convert also mentioned that “what I am saddened by is in the Nicene creed saying ‘I’ instead of ‘our,’ I have always loved that we use ‘our’ and ‘we’ because that says to me one of the sacred things about being Catholic.” The term “consubstantial” was another aspect of the creed that was mentioned by most groups. Those who liked the term tended to have clearer memories of the pre-Vatican II liturgy, and liked the transcendent and theological nature of the term. However, most who commented on “consubstantial” found it to be a “big word,” or a “\$50 word,” that was difficult to explain and was overly complicated and was a change that did not seem as necessary.

The phrase, “with your Spirit” did not receive much attention in most focus group conversations, and appears that group members have easily accepted it. Those few members, who did mention it, stated that they liked that it replicated the responses of French and Spanish. A couple of members also stated that they were aware of other parishioners who have interpreted the response “with your spirit” as a distancing of the presence of God from the community, but no participant raised serious issues of their own with the phrase. The replacement of “cup” for “chalice,” was only mentioned by two focus group members who saw it as another example of the more formal or technical language of the translation. The change also opposed

their firm belief that Jesus never had a “chalice.”

In the one focus group where members appeared to have more significant objections to the new translation, they discussed the reality that many of them have begun to pick and chose what aspects of the Mass they participated in. Members were passionate in their responses about areas of the liturgy that have changed, and some stated that they have become angry about it over the past year. Regarding their change in participation, in addition to adapting the prayer “Lord I am not worthy,” some members of the group stated the following:

*I've noticed selective editing I do it myself. I won't say consubstantial it's a stupid word to be in there, and I say for us, and I do that and I've noticed other people won't. I take out all the references to men and I change them or skip over them and other people do that, so people are selectively editing to make it more meaningful.*

*You just are going to change them and adapt things a little bit and are just going say them the way they [you] want to.*

*I stopped listening a year ago because there's just nothing there to hear anymore. (In reference to the Eucharistic prayer)*

*I like the community, that's why I come to church, and when there are pieces that I can't say or won't say it just makes me feel not as involved, and that's not a good thing.*

*The Confiteor with the 'my fault my fault, my most grievous fault' and when we have done it, I will not say that prayer, because that is, I'm being told to beat myself as a horrible sinful person and that's not what I am and that is not what God sees me as, and for my church to be having me proclaim that to everyone around me, is horrible. It's church being the judge that God is not, and I find that actually, probably the most offensive part of the whole Mass, and I will not say that, and what all this is done with this language, it's making me have my own private Mass, you know I'm choosing what words I will say and not say, ignoring different things, tuning out different things, and I'm sure I'm not alone in that.*

However, these impassioned comments regarding members choosing to opt out of

different aspects of the liturgy were not characteristic of most focus group members. Hence these comments are noteworthy. This group also spoke of stories of elderly and ill parishioners who they had heard had stopped participating in the liturgy, and some had even stopped attending Mass.

The majority of members, however, did not see any significant change in their attendance or participation in the Mass. In fact, for some, participation had improved. Many described their dependence on the cards containing the new prayers as helpful in forming more focused and active participation in the Mass. However, many members look forward to the time when the new translations will become memorized and the need for reading the prayers will no longer be necessary. Surprisingly, to the researcher, many focus group members gave a variety of answers regarding how common prayer helps to build their relationship with God, prayer life and Catholic identity. Responses included:

*I don't necessarily pray at Mass, okay, I sit there and let the priest pray; he's leading this boat. So, I follow along, but I do my own prayer outside that's not necessarily Mass prayer*

*If you think of Catholicism, way down to its essence, it's about I think, a lot of Protestant sects are about God and me, Catholicism understood is God and us; alright so, the 'us-ness' is expressed in common prayer.*

*I go back to the thought of it's a recitation. As a group and part of the community and the feeling of kind of shared faith in God being among us, and not being off someplace where we're praying to, but it's us and we represent to each other. By our acts and by our faith we represent God, and kind of personify God. That's hard to understand without looking at each other and sharing that experience, so it's more that dynamic than the words, it's more the community process leads to understanding God.*

*Recited prayer, you know, and the other responses that we make that invite us to participate I think are crucial, and this idea that it's not just the priest offering some sort of sacrifice up here and offering something*

*over there, which is the way it kind of seemed in the Tridentine liturgy, but this idea that we're actually apart of it, we together, are doing this as one, as a community. So I think that the recited prayers are important to keep us engaged and help us recognize that it's as a whole communal event that is going on.*

*Sometimes if I tune out, I go more into my own prayer in the middle of Mass and so feel disconnected from what's going on, very often with the Eucharistic prayer.*

Overall, focus group members found the common prayers of the Mass to be helpful in creating community connections. Furthermore the common prayers provide an image of God as in and among the community. In some of the common prayers there was also recognition that they contain the heart of the Catholic faith, and that they provided prayerful and meaningful words during times of crises. The majority also found no difference in their ability to understand the words of the priest or the congregation during the Mass. However, one member stated that the *Collects* were often difficult to understand and that they have difficult grammatical structures. Many members also mentioned “wordiness” as being a characteristic of the new translation.

Finally, members discussed the need for further formation regarding the new translation of the missal and lessons that they had learned from their parish’s experience of the translation. Most affirmed their parish’s pastor and staff, and applauded the slow implementation of the new missal and its gradual introduction as being key to the smooth transition that they experienced in their particular parish. Most members however, agreed that further adult formation is needed regarding the Mass, but further formation regarding the new missal is not desired. Opinions regarding why further formation on the new translation was not needed

varied greatly. Some members felt that there would be little interest among parishioners, and it would be challenging to get parishioners to attend such an event. Others, however, were not interested in further formation, because of a sense that “more formation, to make it better puts the problem on us, and the problem is not on us, it's not our fault that the language is so hard.” Therefore, these members saw no need for further education, but firmly believed that further revisions to the missal are needed. Across the focus groups, it was universally felt that adult education is generally needed, and education about the Mass should be part of any good adult education program. When discussing what such a program might look like participants mentioned Msgr. Robert Barron’s *Catholicism* series, Bible Studies, books by Scott Hahn, “teaching Masses,” Family based Religious Education, and programs similar to the RCIA process for Baptized Catholics.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This qualitative study’s use of focus groups affirmed CARA’s and *The Tablet’s* findings that many actively participating Catholics have felt that the new translation of the Roman Missal has been generally a good thing and that the changes have not been a disruption to parishioners prayer, relationship with God, and identity as Catholics. In chapter two it was noted that based on the guidelines given to ICEL, regarding the new translation of the *Roman Missa*, the translation was to express the following: transcendent truths; exactness in translation was required; no adaptations was allowed; no alteration of gender language was to be permitted; a “sacred style” of speech was to be sought; and there was openness to developing a

sacral language.<sup>161</sup>

Among active Catholics there is a general awareness of these goals either by formation programs in the parish, homilies from pastors, or through experiencing the change itself. Focus group members have recognized these objectives -- forming a sense of the transcendent, a more exact reflection of Latin texts, not using gender inclusive language, and the formation of a "sacred style" of speech. Regardless if members were favorable or unfavorable of the translation, many were able to express these goals. For example one member stated, "My sense is that the emphasis has shifted from the immanence of God to the transcendence of God...I think it will be a plus, where the emphasis is God's otherness." Another member noted, "I didn't know that our translation for that was different from what a lot of, like obviously the Latin, or what a lot of other languages were using, but I knew when I went to Mass in French or in Spanish...it was different." Commenting on the language a focus group member commented, "I'm disappointed that they still have a lot of non-gender inclusive language and I don't really understand why they continue to maintain it," and another said, "It's a \$50 word consubstantial, it's a \$50 word, its like okay, I guess we ratcheted this up a bit." Regardless of reception, focus group members were able to recognize the goals of Vatican authorities in the new translation. In some sense, we can say that the authors of *Liturgiam Authenticam* have succeeded and formed a general awareness of the intended goals of the most recent reform of the liturgy, which desired to bring about a greater sense of the transcendent, form a sacred language, and be more authentic to Latin texts.

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<sup>161</sup> Foley, p. 65.



However, as positive as those goals might have been there are some areas of concern, or unintended consequences of the most recent reform of the liturgy. In chapter one we looked at the role that religion plays in a postmodern society. Berger's work was helpful in demonstrating that religion's role is to form meaning for the faithful and provide a stable worldview in times of crisis and conflict. Furthermore, the writings of Tracy and Dillon demonstrated that a Catholic identity and imagination is formed by the experience of the liturgy and sacraments, which is a unique aspect of Catholicism. However group members, especially those who were highly critical of the translation, demonstrate a disturbing phenomenon in their picking and choosing which parts of the liturgy they chose to participate in or opt out of. Certainly further research is needed to understand the scope of this practice, but similar attitudes were expressed in *U.S. Catholic's* survey as well. Although there has been significant research regarding a sense of "Cafeteria Catholicism;"<sup>162</sup> one that prioritizes certain moral teachings of the Church, and deemphasizes or ignores others, more research is needed to determine if this way of expressing one's Catholic identity has been extended into the liturgical life of the Church as well. If it has, then the sense of meaning making and the formation of a Catholic worldview could be threatened or compromised if it is formed by only the parts of the liturgy that one asents to, and chooses to participate in. Another possible trend could be the practice of attending Mass, but performing one's own private devotions, as is

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<sup>162</sup> Dean Hoge addresses this phenomenon in his article "Core and Periphery in American Catholic Identity." Published in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* in 2002 (Vol. 17, Is. 3). In the article he addresses the fact that today's Catholics understand helping the poor and the sacraments as essential to the faith, and other moral teachings are more optional.

often the description of the experience of the pre-Vatican II liturgy. During this era, many of the faithful who attended Mass were primarily focused on their own devotional practices (e.g. saying the Rosary) during Mass. If this were found to be a growing trend, then it would threaten the sense of “active participation,” which has been a hallmark of the post conciliar liturgy.

The focus group members affirmed CARA’s study that most people continue to understand the Mass, and find it helpful in growing closer to God in prayer. Surprisingly, CARA’s data found that 73 percent of Catholics agreed or strongly agreed that the prayers recited by the priest and people and inspired them to be a more faithful Catholics. It was about this area of prayer and Catholic life that focus group members had the least to say. Regarding how the Mass and its prayers helped or inspired them to be more faithful Catholics, some stated that it had “little” or “no bearing” at all, or they were not able to answer the question, or did not know if the prayers did affect their identity as Catholics. While a few said they reflected the core of Catholic beliefs, and were prayers that one could rely on such as the “Our Father,” or they helped form community. Only one member stated that they help form a sense of meaning. He stated regarding common prayers and Catholic identity, “there’s a value to them, in that it’s not quite a mantra in the sense if you just say ‘om, om,’ as part of some meditation exercise, but the words actually do sink in and assume a meaning other than just their overt meaning.” However, his sense of the prayers giving one a sense of meaning as a Catholic was a clear exception.

What members reported as being helpful during the period of transition was the good work of pastors and parish staffs who offered explanations, and programs

to educate parishioners on the reasons for the change. This is not surprising because the majority of Catholics generally have a positive attitude regarding their own parishes.<sup>163</sup> Most focus group members were working professionals or recent retirees, and were part of parishes that appeared to be a part of middle or upper-middle class and educated communities. Surprisingly, difficulties and challenges with the new translation were often associated with scholars and academics and some members expressed a lack of connectedness with scholarship, and its role in parish life. There were very few remarks that identified the Bishops Conference, or Vatican authorities as responsible for the difficulties of the translation. There seemed to be a preference for the “heart.” A member stated when discussing homilies, “I really-really like that you know if they care about their own spiritual journey, and it’ll show in the homily, and that to me is a powerful witness, not just academic.” Another commented, “I think the homilies here are good...but I think the Religious Order priests here, tend to be pretty intellectual and they get caught, and I love the Religious Order’s spirituality, but I think they get a little caught up in, this is just my opinion, caught up in the kind of, the intellectual, and don’t bring it back to the heart.” There was a clear preference of members to prefer areas that they identified as related to the “heart” over those associated with the “intellect.”

Several members believed that the new translation was simply a scholarly exercise that did not have a significant impact on their own lives. For these

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<sup>163</sup> CARA found in a 2013 pew survey that 58% of parishioners rated their satisfaction with their parishes as “excellent,” with 94 percent rating them “good.” “Largest In-Pew Study of Catholics: Most Rate Parishes Good or Excellent - Georgetown University.” Home - Georgetown University. <http://www.georgetown.edu/news/cara-in-pew-catholic-study.html> (accessed April 25, 2013).

members, this reality justified a 'go with the flow' attitude. One member stated, "Yeah, I think maybe a scholar would appreciate the changes more than the, you know, the person in the pew." While another commented on what she learned during the preparation period for the new translation was the scholarship behind it. She said in reference to that discovery and her experience of the new translation, "I did have that feeling because, but then it's sort of a scholarly thing, so what did we learn? We learned to put the little plastic things out." A male member commented after describing the complexities of Latin, Greek, oral tradition, and Church Councils that "those are kind of, my overall thoughts and the precision of the words, just doesn't matter that much to me, because of the pedigree of them, the heritage of them, is coming from these ambiguous sources." When talking about the committees that worked on the new translation another member stated, "I wonder if in their deliberations about this, if they included anybody other than scholars?" In all groups there appeared to be an almost anti-intellectual, or anti-academic strain of thought, or minimally an attitude that did not highly value religious scholarship, which was brought out by the new translation.

Going forward the Roman Catholic liturgy will continue to be the primary place that Catholics interact with the community, pray in common, and are formed as Catholics. Members were generally well aware of the recent changes as well as those caused by the Second Vatican Council, and were enthusiastic about the use of the vernacular, the priest facing the congregation, the study of scripture, and the call for greater participation by the laity. The desire, and the demands for greater participation have certainly found a home in the Catholic identity of those

participating in the focus groups. Many were sympathetic to, or desired, liturgies that contained silence, were prayerful, and had a greater sense of the transcendence and reverence. Although individual parishes and pastors were reviewed positively, there are still great challenges in providing liturgies that are inviting and provide opportunities for prayer and formation of the Catholic imagination. The fact that some Catholics are resisting change by picking and choosing at what moments they will and will not participate deserves further reflection and study. Nevertheless, all members demonstrated significant care and concern for the liturgy and have been formed by it, which is a clear sign of hope for the Church and must be accompanied with clear homilies, quality music, and adult formation that promotes spiritual and intellectual growth.

## **Appendix**

### **Introduction**

#### *Welcome:*

Welcome and thank you for coming. My name is Bret Stockdale, SJ and I am a graduate student at Boston College studying the changes in the Church's liturgy. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to be with us.

#### *Introduce the study*

In December of 2012 the Church introduced changes to the English-language liturgy. This study will examine Catholics reactions to those changes.

You were recommended by your pastor or other parish leadership to participate in this focus group. I will be asking you some questions about your experiences and opinions about the new English-speaking liturgy. What I am looking for from you is your opinion.

As you may know, a focus group is simply a guided discussion or conversation. It is a way to understand how people think or feel about a particular topic or issue and to get some feedback from them. This is not a test. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions we will be asking. I also want to be clear that I am not here to promote any particular policy or agenda. I am here for your honest feedback.

Our discussion this [morning, afternoon, or evening] will be audio-taped and transcribed and a summary of the findings will be included in a report for this project. However, no participant will be identified in the transcripts or in the report. Any information that could reveal the identity of an individual participant will be stripped from the transcripts and will not be included in any report of the findings. The report will focus on patterns in the discussions and will highlight representative comments.

We want you to be candid and to tell us what you really think. We also ask that you respect the confidentiality of the other participants and not share anything a particular participant might say.

Q: Does anyone have any questions?

### **Overall Experience**

Q: Describe how the new translation of the Mass was introduced to you?

Follow-up: What did the Pastor or Parish Staff do to prepare the community for the changes?

Q: Overall, do you think the new translation of the Mass is a good thing?

### **Prayer**

Q: Describe your memories of Mass as a child and as a young person?

Follow-up: How have they changed?

Follow-up: What has been your experience of music at Mass?

Follow-up: Do you prefer a certain style?

Follow-up: How important is preaching in your experience of the Mass?

Q: During an average Mass, what would you say are the changes you have noticed?

Follow-up: To what extent have you noticed these changes?

Follow-up: To what extent have they affected your prayer?

Follow-up: Have the changes affected your participation and attendance at Mass?

Q: What is your understanding of the prayers recited by the priest and people at Mass?

Follow-up: How do the recited prayers help you to participate in the Mass?

Follow-up: How do the recited prayers help you to feel closer to God?

Follow-up: How do the recited prayers help you to be a more faithful Catholic?

Q: Do you think more formation is needed to understand the Mass and the translation?

Follow-up: Do you think you would benefit from such a program?

Follow-up: What are some of the main 'lessons learned' from your parish over this past year regarding this new translation?

Q: Any other comments or suggestions you would like to include?

Thank you so much for your time on this important research!

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