



Arise

A reflection / letter to foster pastoral and spiritual growth
By Bob Traupman / *contemplative writer*
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The 50th Anniversary of Second Vatican Council- The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

On this past June 11th, I travelled northwest from Ft. Lauderdale with my faithful furry companion *Shoney* to a little town north of Tampa called St. Leo where St. Leo University is. The town is so small I couldn't find it! The Benedictine monks have had an Abbey there since the beginning of the Twentieth Century and with just thirty monks now, they have developed one fine university that has online courses offering degrees to people all over the world. The picturesque campus encircles a lake. We were forewarned about swimming in the lake, though (alligators!) *So, I made sure Shoney would not become their lunch.*

I was going there for the inaugural assembly of the newly-formed **Association of United States Catholic Priests**. There were 240 of us gathered from all over the country for the three-day convocation – the theme of which was “**Keeping alive the Vision of Vatican II**” with a special focus on the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

After I found my room and had dinner, the first evening was focused on the word “Lament”:
What was it that that we have lost over the last 40 – 50 years?

John W. O'Malley, a Jesuit historian of the Council, has epitomized it for us. The Council moved us to a new vision of the church:

From commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from definition to mystery, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to dialogue, from ruling to service, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to horizontal, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from rivalry to partnership, from suspicion to trust, from static to ongoing, from passive acceptance to active engagement, from fault finding to appreciation, from prescriptive to principled, from behavior modification to inner appropriation.



It seemed to many of us, as we talked in small groups that evening, that there has been a reversal: from dialogue back to monologue; from trust back to suspicion; from appreciation to fault finding; from inclusion to exclusion.

But more importantly, we felt the major vision of the Second Vatican Council as Father O'Malley tried to express as it relates to liturgy has been veiled, if not rejected. Or so it seemed to many of us. We'll get there later in this offering.

But let's start at the beginning.

If you're of my generation, do you remember good Pope John the Twenty-Third?

He was supposed to be a caretaker Pope but he surprised everyone when he called for a new ecumenical Council, not a doctrinal one but a pastoral one. The bishops from all over the world assembled in St. Peter's Basilica on October 11, 1962. Here is an excerpt of the conclusion of his address opening the Council on that day:



The aim of the council musters the Church's best energies and studies with all earnestness how to have the message of salvation more readily welcomed by men. By that very fact it blazes a trail that leads toward that unity of the human race, which is so necessary if this earthly realm of ours is to conform to the realm of heaven, "whose king is truth, whose law is love, whose duration is eternity."

Thus, venerable brethren in the episcopate, "our heart is wide open to you." Here we are assembled in this Vatican Basilica at a turning-point in the history of the Church; by Saint Peter's tomb and the tomb of so many of Our predecessors, whose ashes in this solemn hour seem to thrill in mystic exultation.

For with the opening of this Council a new day is dawning on the Church, bathing her in radiant splendor. It is yet the dawn, but the sun in its rising has already set our hearts aglow. All around is the fragrance of holiness and joy.

With you We see other dignitaries come to Rome from the five continents to represent their various nations. Their attitude is one of respect and warm-hearted expectation.

Hence, it is true to say that the citizens of earth and heaven are united in the celebration of this Council. The role of the saints in heaven is to supervise our labors; the role of the faithful on earth, to offer concerted prayer to God; your role, to show prompt obedience to the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit and to do your utmost to answer the needs and expectations of every nation on earth. To do this you will need serenity of mind, a spirit of brotherly concord, moderation in your

proposals, dignity in discussion, and wisdom in deliberation.

God grant that your zeal and your labors may abundantly fulfill these aspirations. The eyes of the world are upon you; and all its hopes.

Unfortunately, Good Pope John died of stomach cancer a year and a half later on June 3, 1963. We lost two great men named *John* within a few months of each other and the Catholic world – if not many others – felt their loss deeply. President Lyndon Johnson posthumously bestowed on Pope John awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian award, in recognition of the good relationship between Pope John and the United States.

Pope Paul VI finished his work and the Council and set his own goals very clearly. His opening address on September 29, 1963 stressed the pastoral nature of the council, and set out four purposes for it:

- to more fully define the nature of the Church and the role of the bishop;
- to renew the Church;
- to restore unity among all Christians, including seeking pardon for Catholic contributions to separation;
- and to start a dialogue with the contemporary world.

Archbishop Rembert Weakland was with us at our convocation. He had worked closely with Pope Paul VI while he was Abbot General of the Benedictines and shared with us some wonderful stories about him.

The Council solemnly closed on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1965.

The premier document of the Sacred Council was *Sacrosanctam Concilium* – **the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**.

Pope Paul approved the “New Mass,” that was implemented in 1970. Do you remember – if you’re of my generation – that suddenly the Mass was all in English, the priest was facing the people, and we were singing strange songs in church like *Here We Are* and *Kumbaya*, (Praise God, church music has much improved over the years.)

The oils were hardly dry on my hands when my classmate Phil and I were asked to make the presentations to our brother priests how to celebrate Eucharist in the new fashion; we had been trained by Father Eugene Walsh, an outstanding pastoral liturgist before we left the seminary.

The excellent speakers at the priests’ convocation I attended reflected on the astonishing achievement that this document accomplished over the past 50 years.

I’m going to reflect on some of the points from *Sacrosanctam Concilium* myself in this reflection / letter. I hope I can make it interesting enough for you, so give it a try.

This is central statement of liturgy document:

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. (No. 10.)

Font and Summit. Is the liturgy the font, the *source* of and the summit, the *focus* of your Catholic life?

Have you gotten into the spirit of the liturgical life of the Church?

I've loved the sacred liturgy all my life.

I became an altar boy as soon as I could learn my *Ad Deum qui laetificats*. And in my senior year of high school I put together a book so that the priests could easily arrange the Holy Week services after I left. Later, in my seminary years, I was instrumental in persuading our university to provide good liturgy for the students. In my early priesthood, my bishop appointed me director of liturgy for the diocese, a work to which I gave myself enthusiastically.

These days, in my retirement, I still live the liturgy quietly from day to day. September, for example, is filled with feasts I love: Our Lady's birthday (*Sept. 8th*), the Exaltation of the Holy Cross that connects me with my beloved Holy Cross Cistercian Abbey in Berryville, Va. followed by St. Robert's day, ending up with St. Michael's Day at the end of the month. I also share my love of the liturgy with others through my blog (<http://bobtraupman.wordpress.com>) and this reflection / letter. Thus, the sacred liturgy is still the font and summit –the source and highlight of my life. And so, I ask again,

“Is the liturgy the font and summit – the source and focus of your Catholic life?”

Before Vatican II, we worshipped mostly in silence; we didn't understand what the priest was saying, unless we used a missal the Scriptures were few and in Latin but the priest read the gospel in English; the sermon was rarely on the scriptures and the choir sang everything.

But all that changed.

The liturgy constitution (SC) said the “**Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation that is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy** (no. 14).

Wow! That's quite a strong statement and quite a change. And the SC goes on to say, “yet it would be futile to entertain such hopes of realizing this unless pastors themselves, in the first place, thoroughly become **imbued with the spirit and power** of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it.”

So, a question for you:

When you participate in the sacred liturgy, do you do so just to fulfill your Sunday obligation -- half-heartedly -- or do you do so “fully, consciously and actively” as the Council Fathers hoped the renewal of the liturgy would bring about?

Full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy brings us together **in community**. That was the reason they turned the altar around. The Eucharist became an **experience of family, of communion**. Our worship was no longer individualistic – between me and Jesus, me and God.



We were to find God in each other – to experience the horizontal dimension of the Cross, as well as the vertical. All this becomes evident when we sing together.

Do you really **pray** when you go to Mass? Do you listen to the readings and the homily? Do you **sing**?

We Catholics were not known for our singing like the Protestants, but singing is an act of praise. St. Augustine taught [the one “who sings

prays twice,” though apparently he did not have a great voice himself. So, you see, you can sing from your heart, even though you can’t carry a tune in a bucket!

Give praise to your God for what he’s done for you this past week.

When you say the “Our Father,” do you say it by rote, or do you **pray it mindfully**? When you offer the sign of peace to someone, do you look them in the eye and smile; in other words, do you do that well – or do you do it only because you’re supposed to?

The Liturgy Constitution also wanted dioceses to set up liturgy commissions (*no. 44*). I recall right after my ordination driving the 68 miles from Orlando back to my parish in Satellite Beach late at night on a dark two-lane highway every few weeks for two years to set up the Diocesan Commission and then, as I said, the bishop appointed me Director of Liturgy.

I was all over the diocese giving training sessions for both priests and lay folk for four years, hoping that I could help them be “imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy.. I’ve had that spirit all my life and though I had to attend to my own ongoing liturgical education and training, I did the best I could to set the Diocese of Orlando on a solid foundation in liturgical renewal.

One of the achievements I’d especially like to note is to this day almost every parish in the diocese offers communion from the chalice whereas other dioceses do not.

We had to work hard to improve the music in the parishes. When I started, I had to wean the organists off of the “tremulo” that had the funeral parlor effect. So, early on I brought in Lucien Deiss for a workshop and later Alexander Peloquin and others.

Today, most parishes have competent music directors and the hymn books are much improved as well. The National Association of Pastoral Musicians with my friends Dr. Michael McMahon and Dr. Gordon Truitt provide excellent support for parish musicians across the country.

The Council also restored the catechumenate for adults (*no. 64*). I was very interested in getting hands-on experience with the new Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. A few years earlier, I had attended a seminar led by Father Aidan Kavanagh who was the leading American authority on the catechumenate in those days. I had the opportunity for two years to work with the new Rite and to form a catechumenate in a large parish in our diocese from '66 – '68 and then again in another parish in 1980. We made a lot of mistakes in those early years.

The last quote I'd like to give from the SC is this:

“The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetition; they should be within the people’s powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation” (*no.34*).

At the priest’s convocation, we had a lot of discussion about the new translation that took effect in Advent 2011. The reasoning that Pope John Paul set forth in calling for the revisions of the English translations of the Mass was to be more faithful to the Latin.

For example, the 2010 translation of the Gloria,
“and on earth peace to people of good will” is a literal translation of

“ et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

The 1970 translation has:

“and peace to his people on earth.

For most of our people the meaning of the sacred texts now is murky, not clear; encumbered, not simple. And for many who’ve not known any of the old church, much of it is beyond their powers of comprehension – especially children. Jesus used plainspoken words in his parables and in prayer. Our people seem resigned to the literal and arcane vocabulary “oblation,” “beseech,” “prevenient grace,” “venerable”.

Let’s compare a few phrases from the 1970 translation (**in red**) and the present one (**in black**).

The Lord be with you . . .

And also with you. **And with your spirit.**

We Americans are used to being quite direct. “And also with you,” connects with us better than “with your spirit,” that comes from the Latin “et cum spiritu tuo”.

From the Creed:

one in being with the Father consubstantial with the Father
Most ordinary folks haven’t the slightest idea what the heck that means – and a child would stumble over it. They might think it was a special sandwich! (When I came home from first grade, I told my Mom I learned the Apostles Creek today.

born of the Virgin Mary incarnate of the Virgin Mary
Why not speak simply?

He suffered, died and was buried. He suffered death was buried.
What?

The Sanctus:

Lord God of power and might Lord God of hosts.
The former is more understandable, more powerful.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.
Lord. I am not worthy for you to come under my roof but . . .
I realize that the latter reflects the Scripture story of the centurion and the formula from the old Latin Mass but it is weird, again, for children and just sounds odd to the American ear. If you have children, ask them what that calls to mind.

Now, let’s look at the priest’s parts – the Eucharistic Prayer – that is even more problematic.

We’ll start with the most important part – the Narrative of the Institution (the Consecration).

Unfortunately, they changed the word “cup” to “chalice”, as in “This is the chalice of my blood”, rather than “**This is the cup of my blood.**”

Father John R. Donohue, S.J. in an article entitled “Cup or Chalice? ~ *The Large Implications of a Small Change* has this to say:



In the Greek original of all the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, after the blessing of the bread, Jesus takes a cup (*poterion*) and says “*this is the new covenant of my blood*” (Luke).

He goes on to show how it was translated in to Latin and then in to English. But suffice it to say the Catholic Douay-Rheims translated the Latin *calix* as *cup*.

The introduction of the English word “chalice” at the most solemn moment of the liturgy not only obscures the biblical and historical image of Jesus that distances him from the disciples of his own day and of ours. In contemporary English a “chalice” is a liturgical vessel, and people are likely to think of gold or jewel-encrusted chalices found in museums or seen in artistic portrayals. At the Last Supper, Jesus was a Jewish layman using drinking cups of the world around him, which were to bear the deepest mystery of his life. “Chalice” obscures this transformation of the ordinary by the power of God and distances the celebration from the lives of the participants.

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And they changed the following also:

It will be shed for all which will be shed for many:

What is unfortunate about that is this:

You’re sitting in the congregation and you’re not too sure about how you’re measuring up. And you hear that. “*shed for many*”. “*You might well think*, “Well, I guess I’m not included.” Or even worse – that there isn’t any hope for you – that you’re on the outside – that Jesus didn’t shed his blood for you and does not love you.

But if you hear “**It will be shed for all,**” if you’re really praying at that moment, you’ll be comforted and feel *included; you won’t feel excluded or even worse – damned.*

See how the choice of one word (above) can have a detrimental or a healing effect on people? True, this is not in the scriptural accounts of the Last Supper, nor in the Latin. Yet, those responsible for the 1970 translation saw the wisdom of what I am saying here.

Let’s compare excerpts of the Eucharistic Prayers that the priest says.

From Eucharistic Prayer I (Roman Canon)

Remember. Lord, your people,
Especially those for whom we now pray, . . .
Remember all of us gathered here before you.
You know how we firmly we believe in you
and dedicate ourselves to you.
We offer you this sacrifice of praise
for ourselves and those who are dear to us.
We pray to you, our living and true God,

for our well being and redemption.

Remember, Lord, your servants N. and N.
and all gathered here,
whose faith and devotion are known to you.
For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise
or they offer it for themselves
and all who are dear to them:
for the redemption of their souls,
in hope of health and well-being,
and paying their homage to you,
the eternal God, living and true.

Notice that there are different theologies operative here. The celebrant *includes* the people in his prayer in the **1970 translation**. The priest is praying *in the midst of* the people. One could almost picture Jesus *in the midst of* his people. In the **2010 translation**, the priest prays for the people as if the priest is in front of the people – the leader of a parade. Note that the language is more formal. It seems to be a kind of Old Testament distance between priest and people and also between God and the people. In the 1970 translations, the language is familial or colloquial – the way Jesus spoke in prayer (*Cf. Jn. 17*). He wanted us to have an intimacy with his Father. Read the passages above again and see for yourself.

Father, accept this offering
from your whole family.
Grant us peace in this life,
save us from final damnation,
and count us among those whom you have chosen.

Therefore, Lord, we pray:
Graciously accept this oblation of our service,
that of your whole family;
order our days in peace,
and command that we be delivered from eternal damnation
and counted among the flock of those you have chosen.

Again, one is familial; the other, formal “*command*”.

Brief excerpts from Eucharistic Prayer III:
Look with favor on your Church’s offering,
and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to himself.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church,
and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death
you willed to reconcile to yourself, grant . . . (4 + lines.)

The sentences of the 2010 translation follow the Latin and run on and are difficult to comprehend or control in speech.

May he make us an everlasting gift to you
and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints,

May he make us an eternal offering to you
so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect.

It is difficult for me to pray the new Roman missal, as it is for many priests. This became evident at the convocation. I notice at Sunday Mass, the priest normally uses Prayer II that is the simplest and shortest.

To conclude my study, I gave a couple of sentences from the 2010 translation to a friend of mine known for his competence in English grammar without telling him where they came from. This is what he had to say about this sentence:

“Surpass for the honor of your name, what you pledged to the Patriarchs, by reason of the faith, and through sacred adoption increase the children of your promise, so that what the Saints of old never doubted would come to pass your Church may now see in great part fulfilled.”

Too convoluted. You have many subjects upon which you are treating in one sentence. Can you break this up into smaller declarative sentences?

“so that what the Saints of old never doubted would come to pass your Church may now see in great part fulfilled.”

I don't understand this part. It looks like a word or two is/are missing.

so that what the Saints of old never doubted would come to pass *and that* your Church may now see in great part fulfilled.

What if you omitted "that" from the entire sentence?

so what the Saints of old never doubted would come to pass, your Church may now see in great part fulfilled.

My friend didn't know that this prayer came from the new translation of the liturgy. When I told him, he said,

“Domine, libera nos a malo.” *Lord, deliver us from evil.*

Next page please for our conclusion . . .

We've come now to the end of our reflection on Vatican II and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

When I began this reflection, I said the first night of the convocation of the **Association of United States Catholic Priests** was a moment of lament.

We asked ourselves, "What was it that we have lost over the past 50 years?"

Where has the vision gone? Is it still alive?

As you can see, I am not enamored of the new translation. Of course, I am an obedient son of the Church and I accept, though reluctantly. Yet, I hope Rome will hear some of our concerns.



So, I think there is cause for lament – for sadness. And there's a tear in my eye as I write this.

But this is Jesus' Church. I'm still here. And so are you.

And we're here to celebrate one of the most significant achievements of the Twentieth Century – **The opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11th, 1962 – fifty years ago by his Holiness Pope John XXIII. He had a wonderful vision.**

We caught it. And it made me a priest!

And yes! That vision is alive. I've never forgotten it. And never will!

It was so good for me to be with my brother priests at the convocation who shared such pastoral concerns for our beloved church. The presentations were given by some of the finest theologians and liturgists in the country. We shared a lovely meal on the last evening together – the 240 of us -- and two of the famous St. Louis Jesuits gave us a concert. You probably know them for their great music such as *Be not afraid, Blest be the Lord, On Eagles' Wings, Here I Am, Lord, One Bread, One Body* and *City of God*.

Our evening, our time together, concluded as someone suggested they sing *Holy God*. There were a few moans at first; they played it. And then they asked us to stand and *pray it*. And we did.

They played it with a strong, slow rhythm. I *never* heard it sung more beautifully, more powerfully, more solemnly in all my life. Tears of joy flowed down my cheeks.

It was a moment I will remember and associate – not with laments, for they will always be there, but with the continuing story of a Church two thousand years in the making, to which I humbly, yet proudly belong, as together, we plod and grope our way to the kingdom.

God bless you, my dear readers!

I hope you enjoyed these offerings. May they help to renew your love of our sacred liturgy, *whether the homily or the music or the translations are up to snuff.*

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