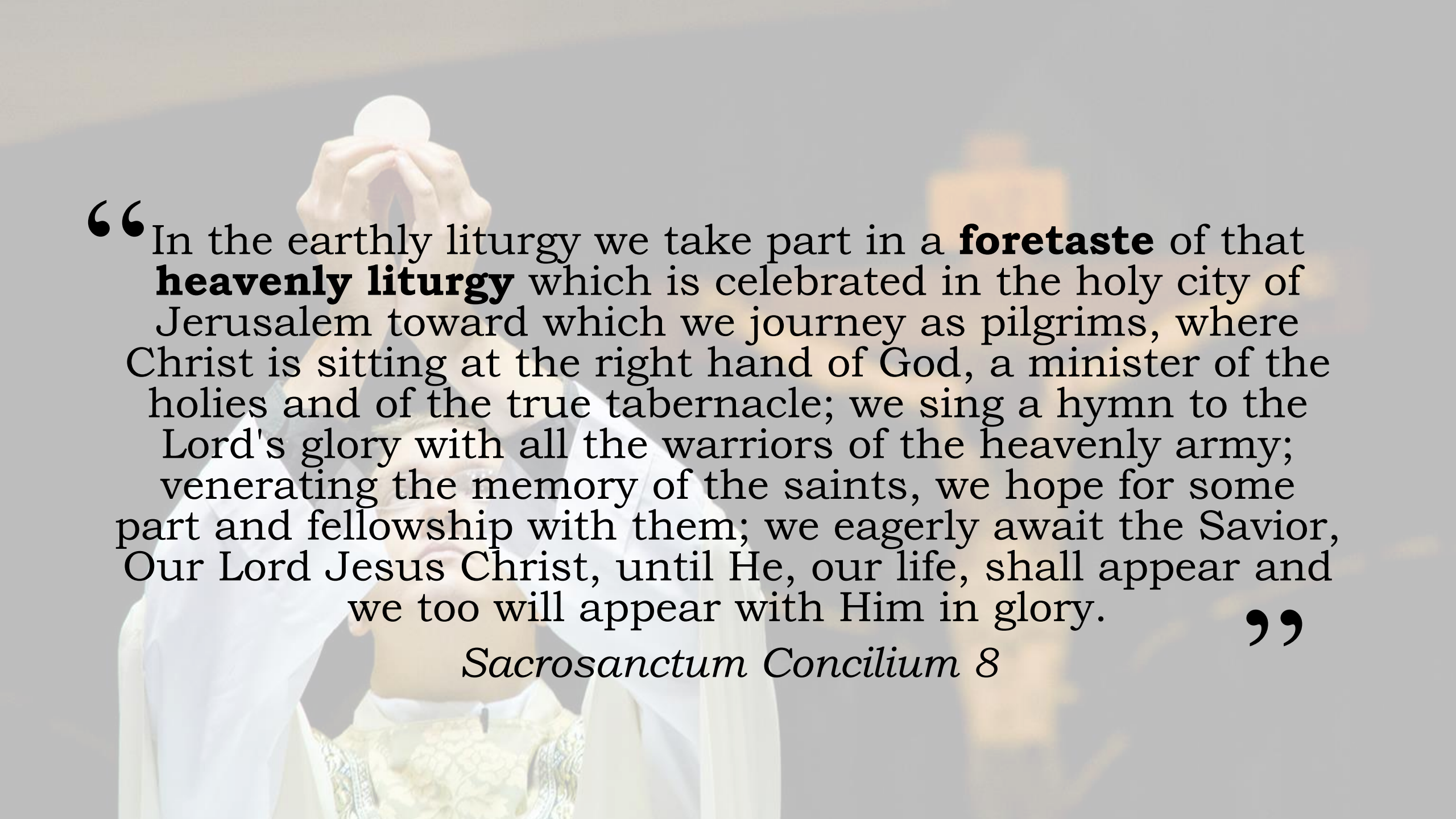




(re)Learn the Mass

*A Brief Catechesis
on the Heart of the Sacred Liturgy*

Rev. Fr. Brian J. Crenwelge



“ In the earthly liturgy we take part in a **foretaste** of that **heavenly liturgy** which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory. ”

Sacrosanctum Concilium 8

What do we even mean by the
“sacred liturgy”?

?



?

?

?

“Liturgy”

comes from the Greek word, λειτουργία (*leitourgia*), a public work of the people

- The liturgy as the Church understands it is the official prayer of the Church
- Since the Church is the Body of Christ, the liturgy is the prayer of Christ
 - The liturgy is not just about rubrics, ceremonies, externals. These are important, but not the essence. The essence is **the worship of the Father through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit**. It is the prayer of Christ’s self-offering to the Father.
 - The liturgy is the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. When the Church baptizes, it is Christ who is baptizing. When the priest offers the Mass, it is Christ who is offering.
- The liturgy is the **full, public worship** by Christ and his members, surpassing all other actions of the Church (SC 7)
- In the liturgy, we (The Body of Christ) unite ourselves to Christ’s Offering of Himself to the Father
 - We encounter Christ in and through the Liturgy
- The liturgy’s purpose is to glorify God and sanctify man



Which means...

It's not about US.

It's about giving full, public worship to the Father through Christ in the power of the Spirit.

It *involves* us. We participate in it. But it's ultimately about adoration of the Father.

We meet Christ in the Liturgy, and united with Christ, we offer ourselves to the Father.

What constitutes the liturgy?

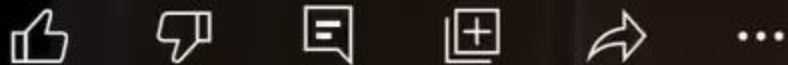
- The Mass
- The Sacraments
- The Divine Office (the “Liturgy of the Hours”)
- Funeral Rites
- Certain sacramentals/devotions
 - Sacramentals: Blessings, exorcisms
 - Devotions: Eucharistic adoration and processions
- The liturgical year

All these components comprise the “Liturgy”, the public work of the Church!

Your average Sunday participation...

While You Were Sleeping >

Josh Wright



More videos

Tap or swipe up to see all



How should we
participate
in the liturgy?

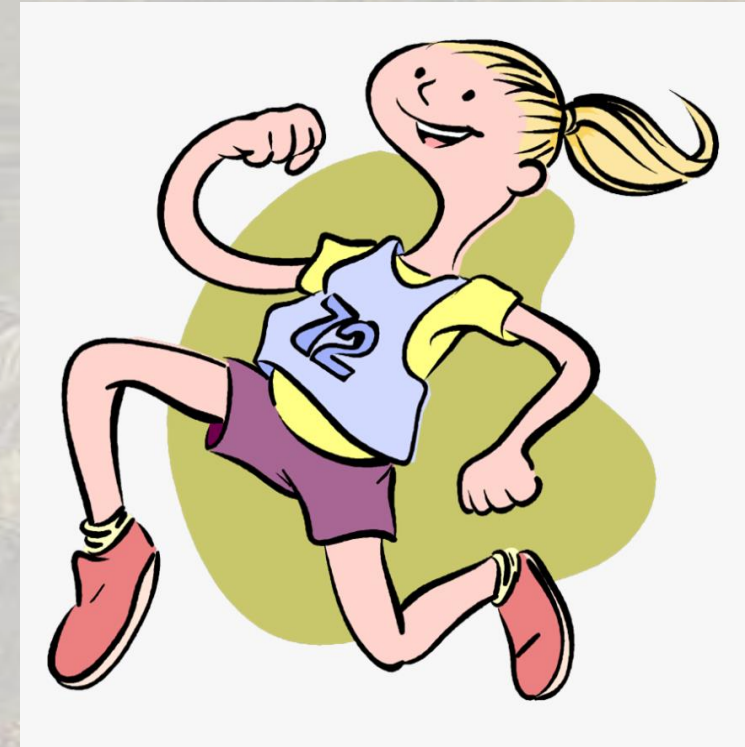


We participate **Actively!**

“Being moved with the most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish again in every way among all the faithful, the first thing to which We must turn our attention is the holiness and dignity of the temple. There Our people assemble for the purpose of acquiring the Christian spirit from its first and indispensable source, namely the **active participation** in the most sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.” – Pope Pius X, 1913

"Mother Church earnestly desires 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."

- *Sacrosanctum Concilium 14*



What does it mean to *actively* participate?

- **Interior participation**

- Your heart, mind, soul are awake, alert and engaged prayerfully in the celebration; self-offering

- **Exterior participation**


- Saying things and doing things – bodily gestures, singing, responding

- You must have **interior** participation in order to have proper **exterior**.

- You should always have interior participation; at times, not everyone has the same exterior.

How do you prepare for good, active participation?
Arrive early! Pray before Mass. Quiet your heart. Ride to Mass without the radio on. Don't fight in the car!

but
first,
PRAY

A detailed painting of a church service, likely the Eucharist. A priest in ornate golden vestments stands at the altar, holding a host aloft in his right hand. Other clergy members are visible around the altar, some kneeling. The congregation is seated in the foreground, looking towards the altar. The scene is set in a grand, ornate church interior with high ceilings and architectural details. The overall tone is solemn and reverent.

Postures of the Liturgy

Catholic Mass Gymnastics



The "Someone is trying to pray behind you"



The "Person in front of you is sitting while you try to kneel"



The "Letting someone get into your row"



The "Stepping over someone not going to Communion"



The "Running after child rushing altar"



The "Find the way through the crowd after Mass"

Postures of the Liturgy

Standing

Sign of respect; usual posture of Jewish prayer

- With Christianity, it became a sign of the Resurrection

Kneeling

Sign of humility, awe, and supplication

- Acts 9:40 – St. Peter kneels down and prays before the dead woman's body before commanding her to rise.

Sitting

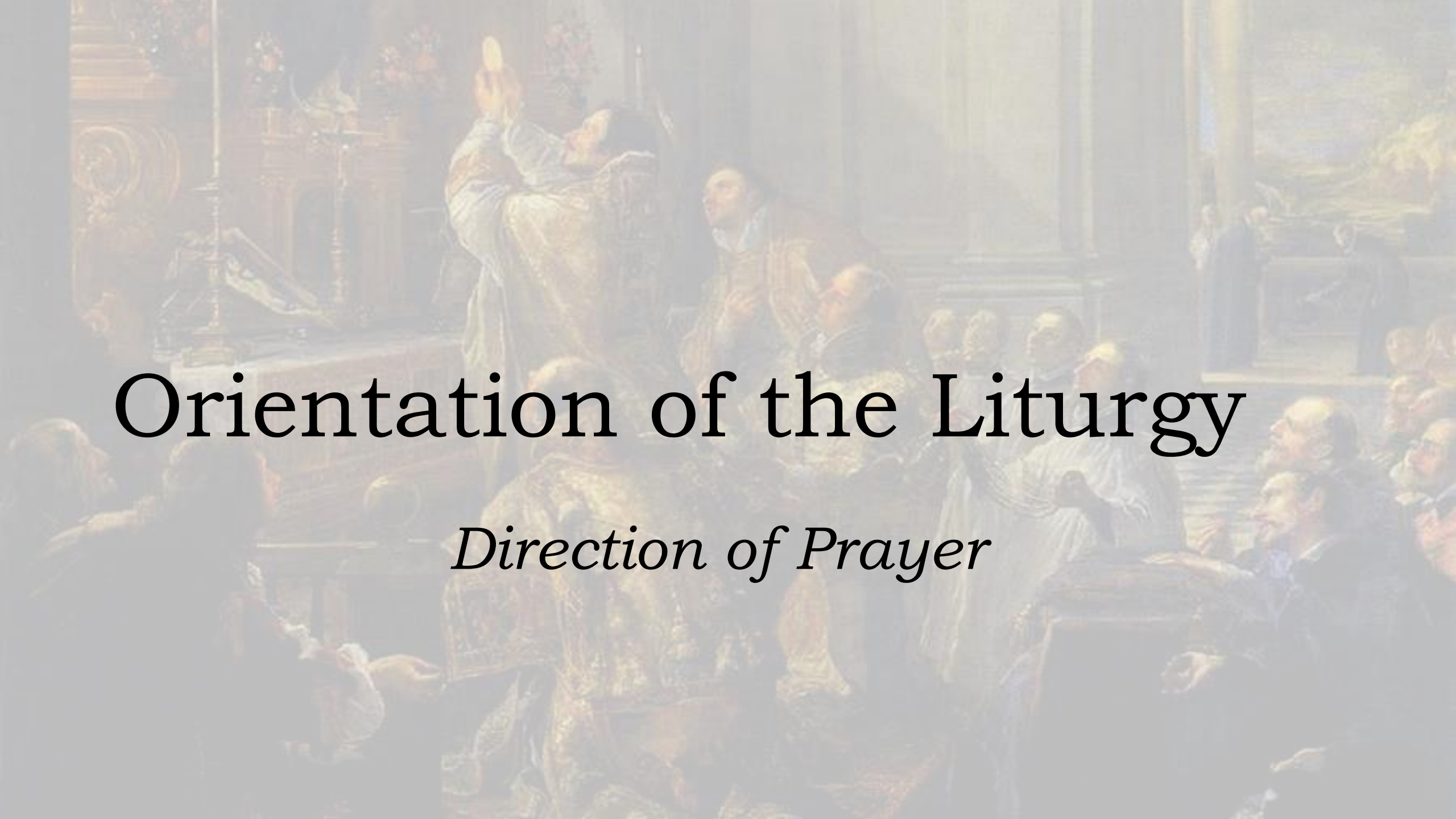
Traditional posture for teaching and instruction

- When a rabbi would teach he would sit (i.e. Luke 4:20; Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount)
- When a bishop preaches, he has the option to preach from his chair as a sign of teaching/authority

Bowing at the Holy Names

- “A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the name of Jesus, Mary, and the saint in whose honor Mass is celebrated.”
- *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 233*





Orientation of the Liturgy

Direction of Prayer

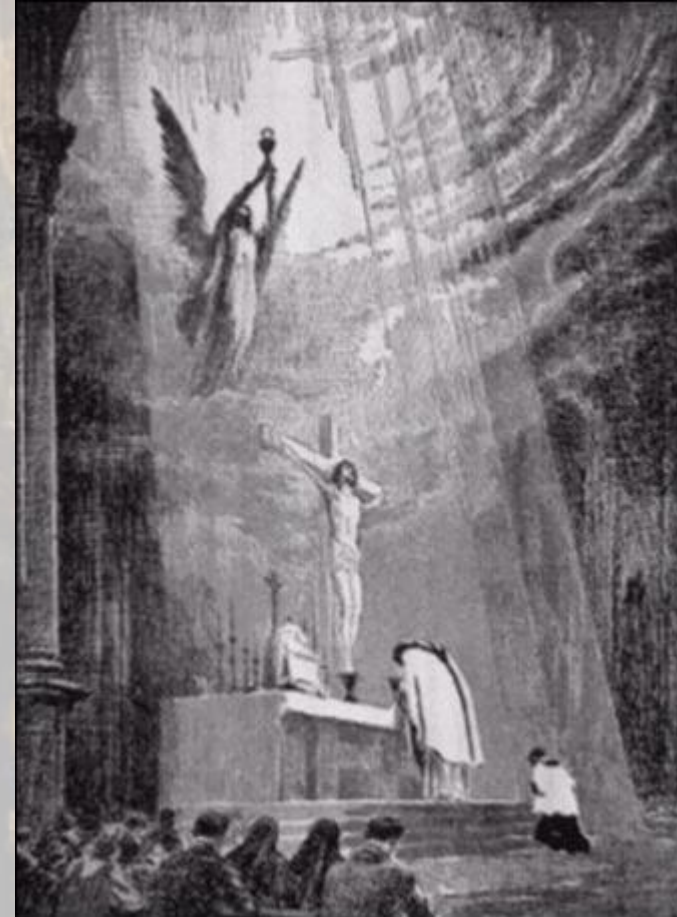
Where is our Prayer directed to?

Ultimately...

Ad Deum!

To God!

It's the Prayer
and Offering of
Christ and His
Body to God the
Father



Two Orientations (Directions):

Ad Orientem:

“To the East/Orient”



Versus Populum:

“Facing the People”



Versus Populum

- When Mass is celebrated with the Priest facing the people
- It became the norm after the Second Vatican Council, but interestingly, it was actually not mentioned in the Second Vatican Council
- It had begun individually in churches and dioceses before the Council, but after the Council it began to spread because it was believed by some liturgists to help promote participation
 - It enabled the people to see more clearly the actions going on at the altar in the course of the Mass and so it was believed that would help them to enter into a deeper understanding/appreciation of those actions.
- Gradually became more and more accepted and eventually became the norm of celebration, encouraged in the official documents of the Church
- Most people today only have memory of Mass being celebrated *versus populum*, even though it is still in our lifetime that it became the norm

Ad Orientem

- Less common orientation seen today – no longer the norm
- Historical – the majority of the history of the Church Mass was celebrated *ad orientem*
- Matthew 24:27: “For as lightning comes out of the East, and appears even into the West: so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.”
 - This suggests the East as the place from which Christ will return at the end of time, making eastward-facing prayer *eschatological*. The eschatological nature of the Mass is the way the Mass recalls and makes real for us not only past events such as the Last Supper and Calvary, but also the future return of our Lord and the consummation of world history.
 - We are journeying *toward* the Second Coming.
- The Priest is leading his people to God
- Clear representation of the Priest (Christ) offering the Sacrifice on behalf of the People - the priest is acting as Christ the Head to offer the sacrifice of his Body on our behalf to the Father for his glory and our sanctification.

Ad Orientem

“Why is your back to us, Father!??”



A man with short brown hair and a beard is shown from the chest up, wearing a white t-shirt. He has a very intense, angry expression, with his mouth wide open in a shout and his eyes wide. His hands are clenched into fists near his chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

“But that’s against
Vatican II, Father!”

Can the modern Liturgy be celebrated *Ad Orientem*?

- According to the current Roman Missal, Mass can be celebrated either with the priest “facing the people,” versus populum, or with the priest facing in the same direction as the people.
- The rubrics actually *assume* he is facing the altar and not the people.

132. The Priest genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice, **while facing the people**, says aloud: “Behold the Lamb of God...”

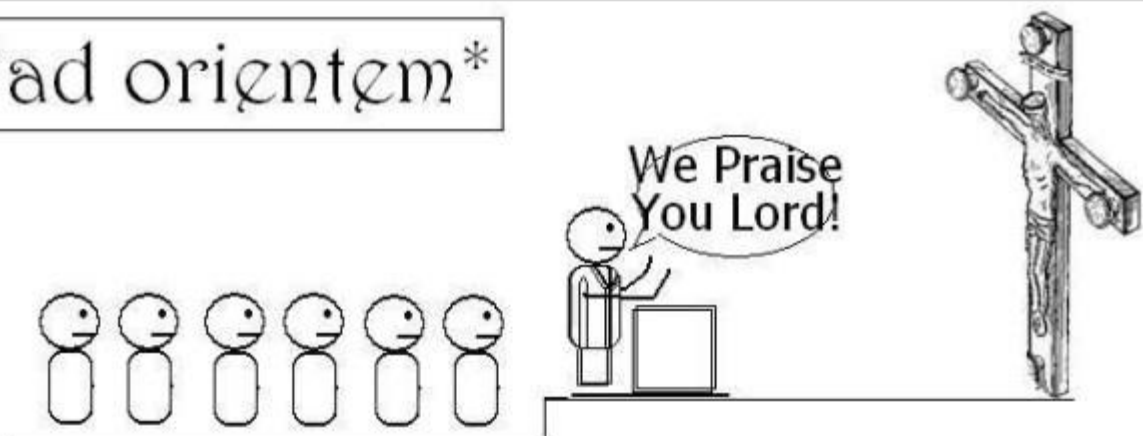
133. The Priest, **facing the altar**, says quietly: “May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life. And he reverently consumes the Body of Christ.”...

- It is primarily the Liturgy of the Eucharist that is celebrated *ad orientem*, while during the Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, and Concluding Rites, the Missal foresees the priest generally facing the people.
- The basic logic of the liturgy is that when the priest is speaking to the people he faces them; when the priest is offering the sacrifice to God the Father, he is facing in the same direction as the people, as their head. While the Son took flesh and dwelt among us, the Father is spiritual and immaterial, so praying to the Father has traditionally been signified by praying in the same direction, almost universally toward the East, or orient. As St. Augustine puts it, “when we stand at prayer we face the East.... This is not to signify that God is dwelling there, as though he had forsaken the other parts of the world—for God is present everywhere, not in habitations of place but in power of majesty. It is done so that the mind may be admonished to turn toward God while its body is turned toward” the East.” – from St. Augustine’s *Commentary on the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*

“Liturgy Wars”

Which Makes Sense?...

ad orientem



versus populum

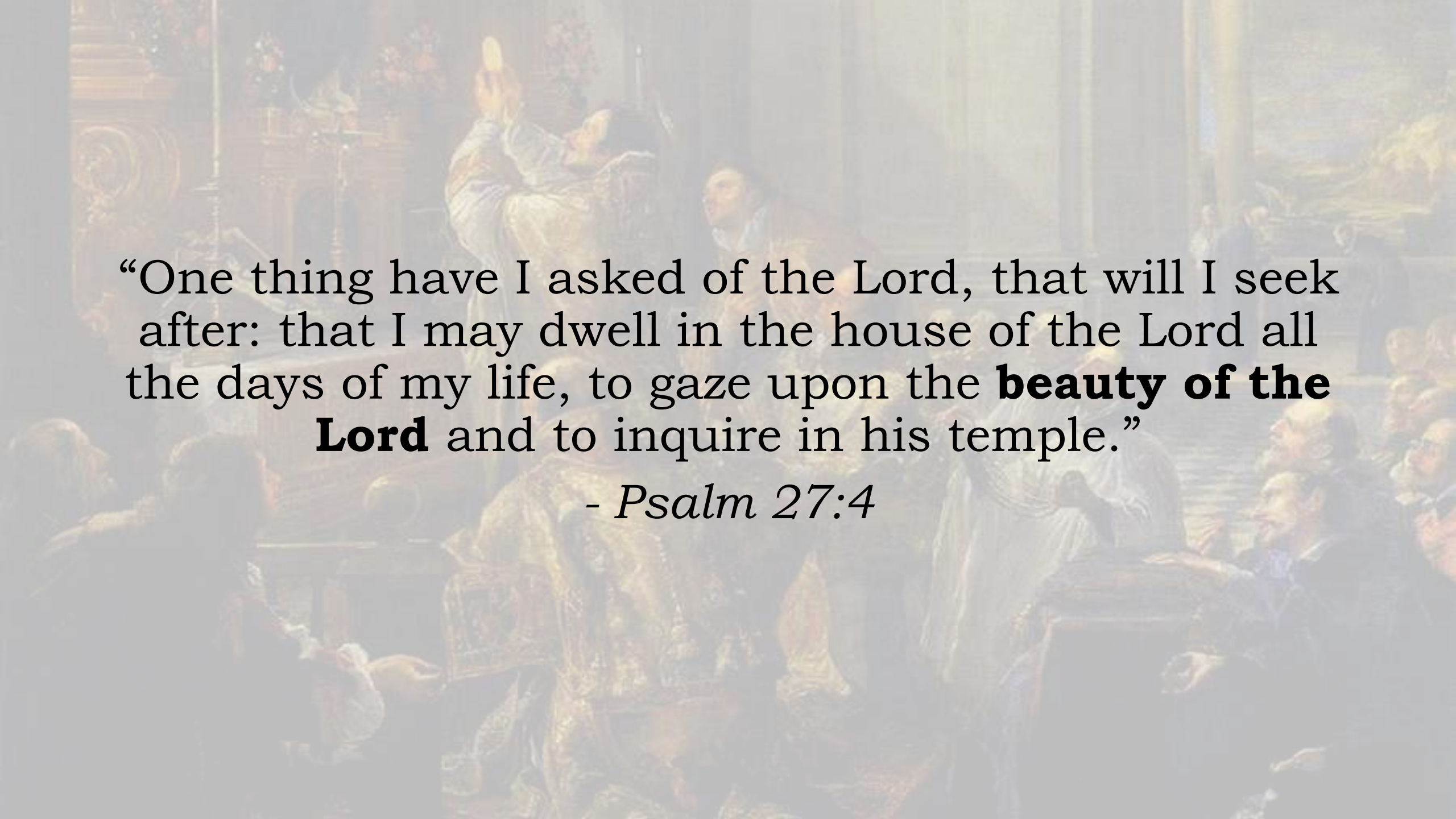


A detailed painting of a church service. In the center, a priest in ornate golden vestments holds a host aloft. To his right, another priest in white vestments looks on. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit kneels in prayer, his hands clasped. Other people are visible in the background, some seated and some standing, all engaged in the service. The scene is set in a grand, dimly lit church with high ceilings and architectural details.

The “Elements” of the Liturgy

A painting depicting a religious ceremony in a church. A priest in ornate, golden vestments stands at the altar, holding a host aloft. He is surrounded by other clergy members and a congregation of people, some of whom are looking up at the priest. The scene is set in a grand, classical-style church interior with high ceilings and architectural details. The overall atmosphere is solemn and reverent.

1. Sacred Space



“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the **beauty of the Lord** and to inquire in his temple.”

- *Psalm 27:4*



vs.

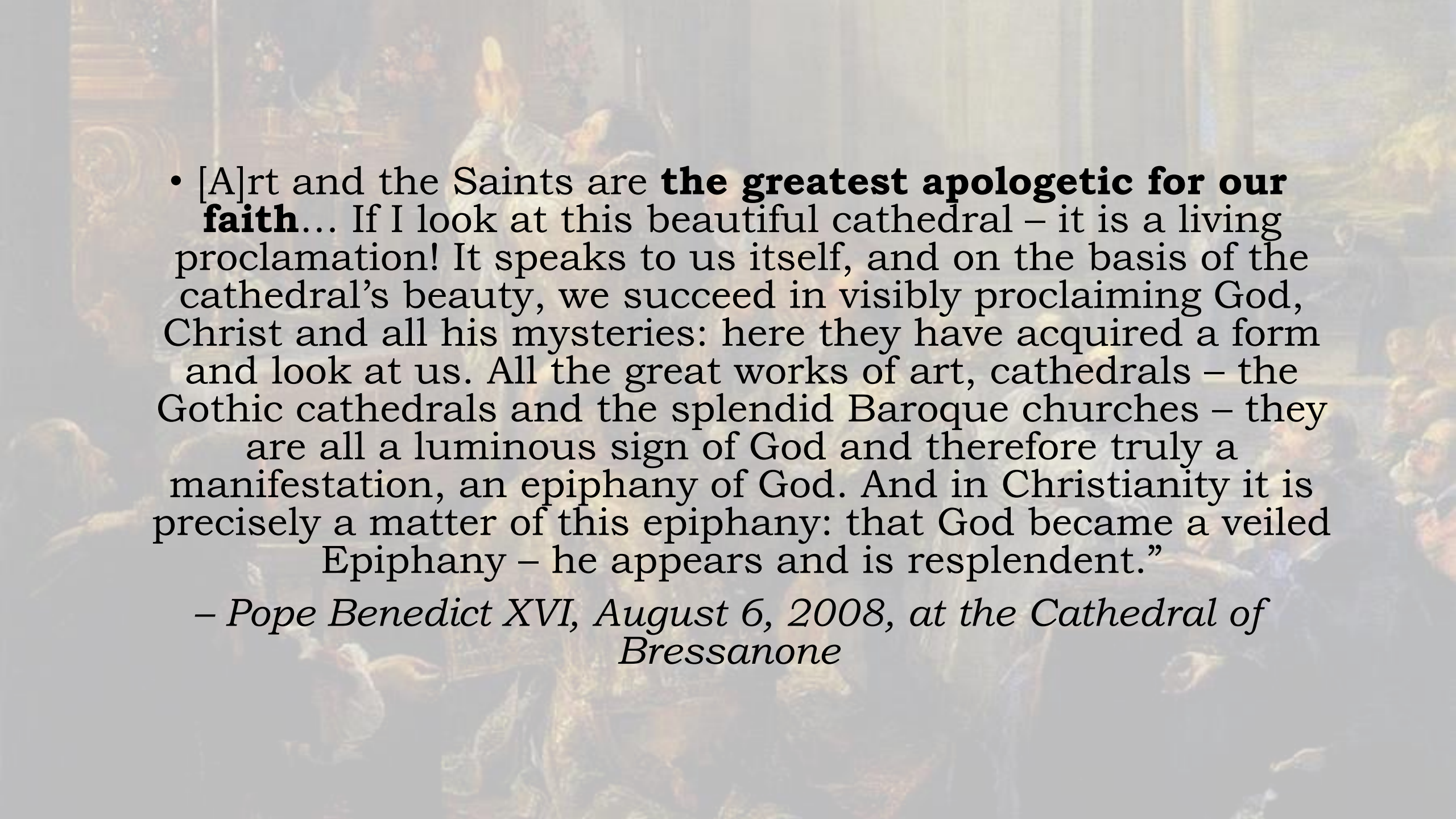


Externals help raise our mind to holy things.

Something about the place of worship should elevate the hearts to God.



The church's furnishings help to exteriorly point to heaven since the earthly liturgy is a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy



- [A]rt and the Saints are **the greatest apologetic for our faith**... If I look at this beautiful cathedral – it is a living proclamation! It speaks to us itself, and on the basis of the cathedral’s beauty, we succeed in visibly proclaiming God, Christ and all his mysteries: here they have acquired a form and look at us. All the great works of art, cathedrals – the Gothic cathedrals and the splendid Baroque churches – they are all a luminous sign of God and therefore truly a manifestation, an epiphany of God. And in Christianity it is precisely a matter of this epiphany: that God became a veiled Epiphany – he appears and is resplendent.”

– *Pope Benedict XVI, August 6, 2008, at the Cathedral of Bressanone*



Sacred art and architecture becomes a Gospel proclamation in itself!





2. Sacred Vessels

“Sacred vessels should be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, they should generally be gilded on the inside.”

General Instruction of the Roman Missal

#328

Paten

- Holds the Celebrant's Host



Intinction Set

- Holds the Precious Blood and Hosts



Ciborium

- Holds the people's Hosts



Communion paten**

- Catches any particles or hosts during Communion time



Chalice (not the "cup"!)

- Holds the Precious Blood



**“The Communion-plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling.” – Pope John Paul II, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 93

Why are certain items covered/veiled in the liturgy?

- We veil that which is **sacred!**
- Veiling points to the Eucharistic Presence



“It is a praiseworthy practice for the chalice to be covered with a veil, which may be either of the color of the day or white.”

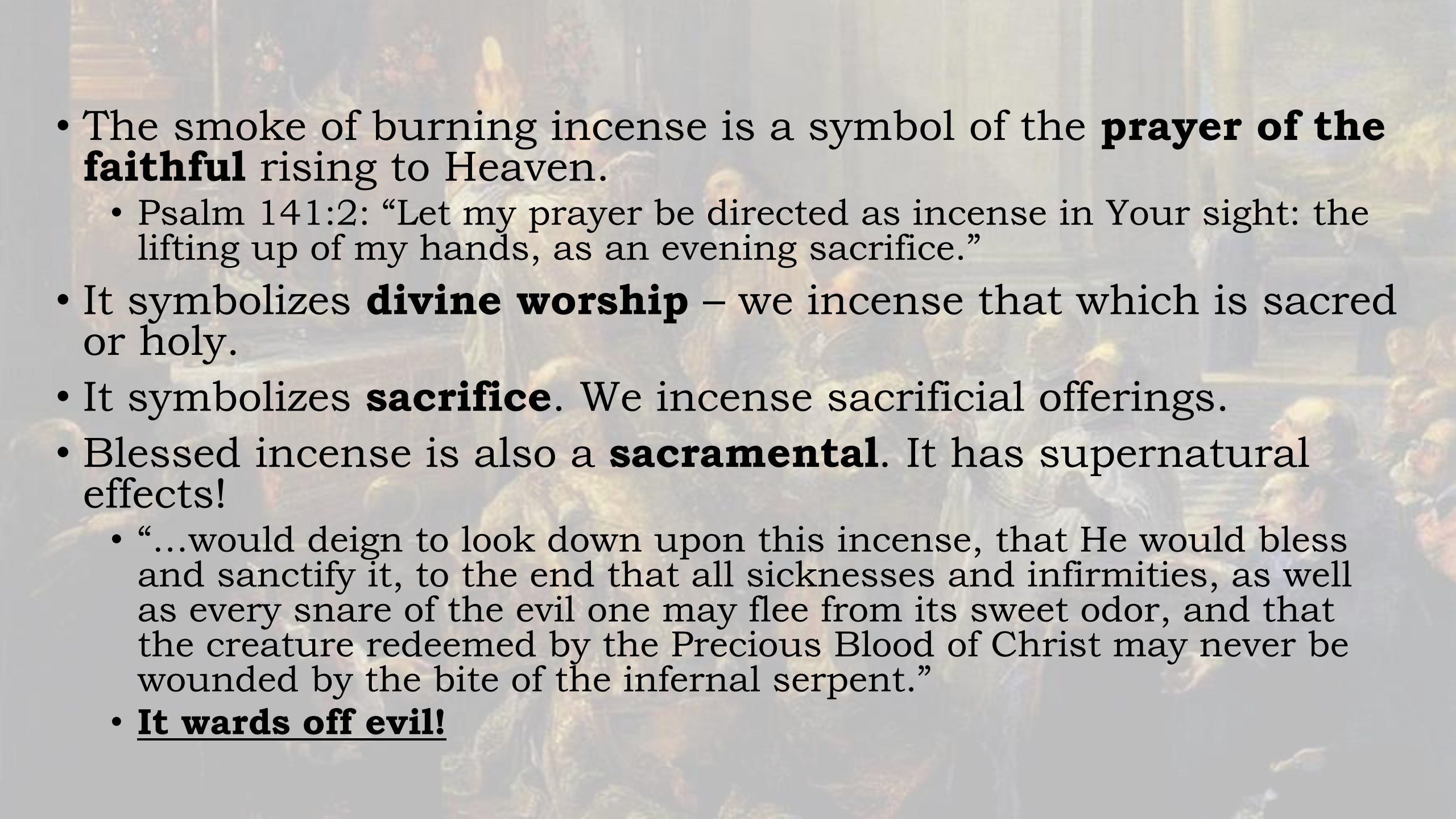
– *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* # 118

WE VEIL WHAT IS SACRED



Buy why so much
incense,
Father??



- 
- The smoke of burning incense is a symbol of the **prayer of the faithful** rising to Heaven.
 - Psalm 141:2: “Let my prayer be directed as incense in Your sight: the lifting up of my hands, as an evening sacrifice.”
 - It symbolizes **divine worship** – we incense that which is sacred or holy.
 - It symbolizes **sacrifice**. We incense sacrificial offerings.
 - Blessed incense is also a **sacramental**. It has supernatural effects!
 - “...would deign to look down upon this incense, that He would bless and sanctify it, to the end that all sicknesses and infirmities, as well as every snare of the evil one may flee from its sweet odor, and that the creature redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ may never be wounded by the bite of the infernal serpent.”
 - **It wards off evil!**

A painting depicting a church service. A priest in ornate, golden vestments stands at an altar, holding a host aloft. Other clergy members in white and blue vestments are visible, some kneeling. The scene is set in a grand, dimly lit church interior with architectural details like columns and a large window in the background. The overall tone is solemn and reverent.

3. Vestments

Why wear vestments?

- Vestments set the person wearing them apart from others. They **exteriorly** point to the **interior** reality that something sacred is happening.
 - You don't wear vestments to Walmart. A trip to Walmart is not a sacred function. You wear ordinary clothes to ordinary functions. You dress up for important functions. For sacred functions, you dress a particular way as well.
- They are rich in symbolism.
- They point to the office and function of the minister (priest/deacon/minister).

The Amice

- Hides the priestly collar in order to point to the fact that the priest is working *in persona Christi* and not as himself.
- **Symbolism:**
 - “The helmet of salvation”
 - Defends against the temptations of the devil
- **Prayer of the Priest:**
 - “Place, O Lord, the helmet of salvation on my head to fend off all the assaults of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:17)



The Alb

- **Symbolism:**

- The alb is white, symbolizing the baptismal purity of heart that the Priest must bring to the altar

- **Prayer of the Priest:**

- “Make me white, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that being made white in the Blood of the Lamb, I may deserve an eternal reward.”



The Cincture

- **Symbolism:**
 - Virtue of Priestly Chastity
- **Prayer of the Priest**
 - “Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me.”



The Maniple

- Rarely used in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, required in the Extraordinary Form
- *“It fell into disuse in the years of the post-conciliar reform, even though it was never abrogated.”*
(https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/details/ns_lit_doc_20100216_vestizione_en.html)
- Derives from a handkerchief, used to wipe away tears or sweat
- **Symbolism:**
 - The burdens/fatigue of the priesthood
 - The burdens of the people of God that the Priest brings to the altar
 - Tears of penance
- **Prayer of the Priest:**
 - “May I deserve, O Lord, to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow in order that I may joyfully reap the reward of my labors.”



The Stole

- **Symbolism:**
 - Priestly/Diaconal Power or authority of Christ
 - When performing a sacred function, it is always worn – it is Christ acting through the Deacon/Priest/Bishop
 - Differences in Deacon, Priest, Bishop
- **Prayer of the Priest**
 - “Restore, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which I lost through the collusion of our first parents, and unworthy as I am to approach Your sacred mysteries, may I yet gain eternal joy.”



The Chasuble

- **Symbolism**

- Worn above all the other vestments because it symbolizes the virtue of charity
- “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” (1 Corinthians 13:1)

- **Prayer of the Priest**

- “O Lord, who has said, ‘My yoke is sweet and my burden light,’ grant that I may so carry it as to merit Your grace.”



The Cope

- The cope is worn by the priest or bishop for solemn functions, most notably during processions.
- From the Latin word *cappa*, meaning “hood” or “cape,” the shape is derived from the large overcoats worn by Romans to protect themselves from the rain.
- **Symbolism:**
 - Authority of the Church



The Dalmatic

- For Deacons
 - **Symbolism:**
 - Joy, innocence
 - **Prayer of the Deacon:**
 - “Lord, endow me with the garment of salvation, the vestment of joy; and with the dalmatic of justice ever encompass me.”





4. Liturgical Colors



- **Green**

- Green is the color of “Ordinary Time” or “*Tempus Per Annum.*” Ordinary Time is any time of year between Easter and Advent and between Christmas and Lent. Green symbolizes **life and hope.**

- **Red**

- Red is typically worn during Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and the celebration of martyrs. This color symbolizes **the Holy Spirit, blood, fire.**

- **White/Gold**

- White and/or gold are worn during Christmas and Eastertime as well as on celebrations of the saints. These colors signify the birth and resurrection of Christ. White symbolizes **the Resurrection.** White is also a color that can be worn by clergy that perform funeral Masses.

- **Violet**

- Violet is the color worn during Advent and Lent, but can also be worn for funeral Masses. It symbolizes **penance and contrition.**

- **Black**

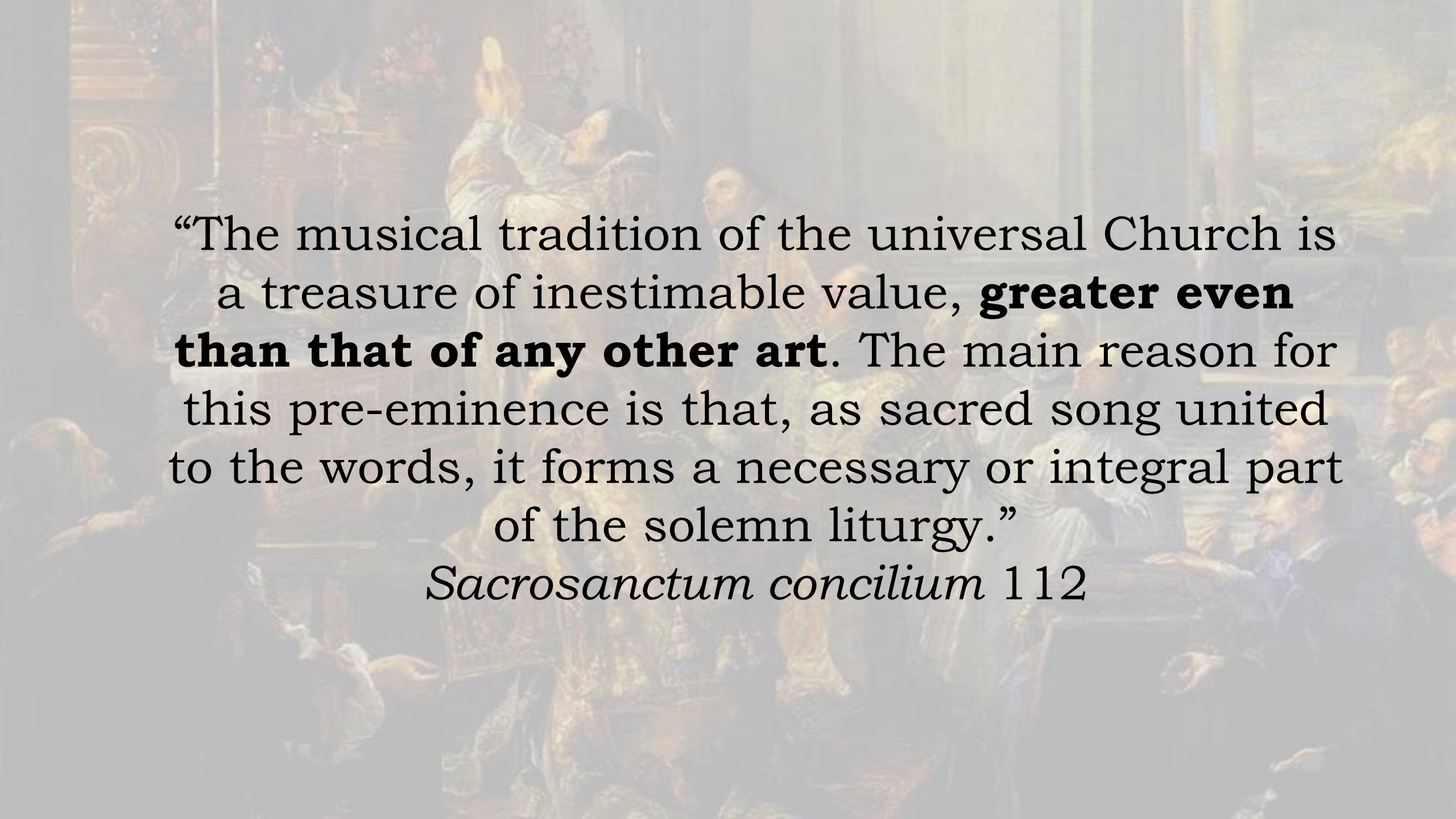
- Black is the standard color for the clergy’s everyday clothing, but is also can be worn at funeral Masses or the anniversary of the death of loved ones, or All Souls Day. It symbolizes **death and mourning.**

- **Rose**

- Rose is worn twice a year – on Gaudete Sunday and Laetare Sunday. Rose symbolizes the **joy** that Christmas / Easter is approaching.

5. Sacred Music



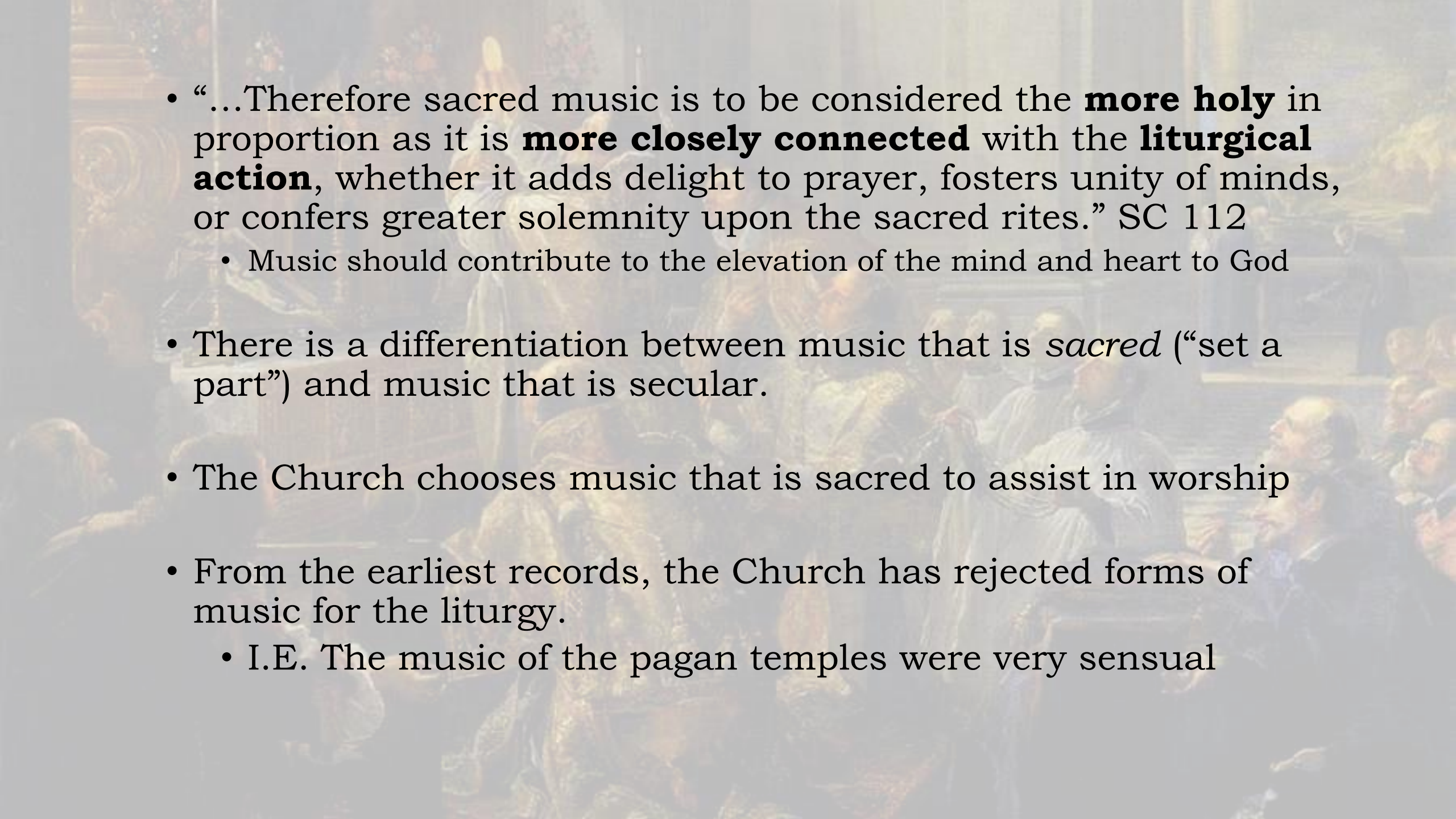


“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, **greater even than that of any other art.** The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.”

Sacrosanctum concilium 112

What is sacred music?

- Sacred music is music created to **support, elevate, and better express the words and actions** of the sacred liturgy.
- Sacred music is *distinct* from the broader category of what we may call “religious” music, that which aids and supports Christian faith but is not primarily a part of the sacred liturgy. “Religious” music includes various devotional music, such as much popular hymnody, “praise and worship” music, as well as a host of other musical forms.
- Religious music is not a bad thing—it aids in spiritual growth in its own way
 - “We must also hold in honor that music which is not primarily a part of the sacred liturgy, but which by its power and purpose greatly aids religion. This music is therefore rightly called religious music... As experience shows, it can exercise great and salutary force and power on the souls of the faithful, both when it is used in churches during non-liturgical services and ceremonies, or when it is used outside churches at various solemnities and celebrations.
- Pope Pius XII, [*Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*](#) 36

- 
- “...Therefore sacred music is to be considered the **more holy** in proportion as it is **more closely connected** with the **liturgical action**, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.” SC 112
 - Music should contribute to the elevation of the mind and heart to God
 - There is a differentiation between music that is *sacred* (“set a part”) and music that is secular.
 - The Church chooses music that is sacred to assist in worship
 - From the earliest records, the Church has rejected forms of music for the liturgy.
 - I.E. The music of the pagan temples were very sensual

Why do we chant/sing the Liturgy?

- Singing is a higher form of speaking.
- Singing is considered more “beautiful” than speaking. We notice a beautiful singing voice much more than we notice a normal speaking voice
- Singing requires more effort than speaking
- At Mass, we offer ourselves to God the Father through Christ
 - It is a “sacrifice of praise”
 - Therefore, to offer the highest sacrifice, we give of ourselves completely
 - Singing is how we offer ourselves completely, that conveys both beauty and effort.
- The Mass, you could say, is a song from the Son to the Father
 - We participate in this as baptized members of the Body of Christ
- The Mass is most “itself” when it is sung



Gregorian who?

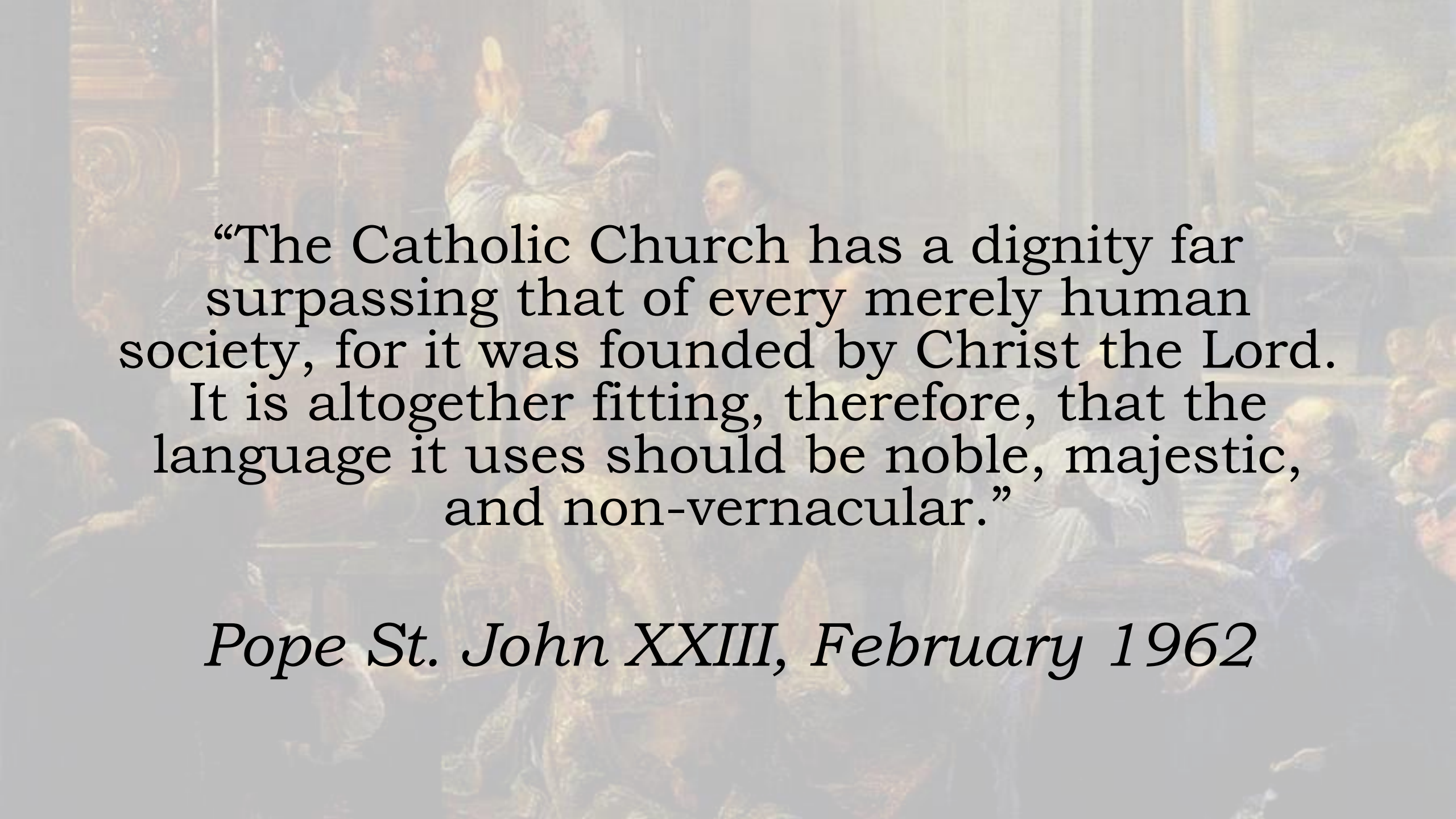
- “The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as **especially suited** to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given **pride of place** in liturgical services. But other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action...” SC 116
- Why does the Church prefer Gregorian chant in the liturgy?
 - It is not based on a particular time period, culture or style—it doesn’t go “out of date”
 - It is not about the melody, but about conveying the words
 - Chant makes the text primary—the melody serves the text, not the other way around.
 - We tend to like hymns normally not for their text, but for their melody.
 - Chant is first and foremost about what words its conveying—the liturgical text/psalm

But what about instruments?

- “In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.”
SC 120
- “But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority, as laid down in Art. 22, 52, 37, and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the **dignity of the temple**, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.” SC 120

A detailed painting of a church service, likely a Mass. A priest in ornate golden vestments stands at the altar, holding a host aloft. Other clergy members are visible, some seated and some standing. The background shows the interior of a grand church with architectural details like columns and arches. The overall tone is solemn and reverent.

6. Liturgical Language



“The Catholic Church has a dignity far surpassing that of every merely human society, for it was founded by Christ the Lord. It is altogether fitting, therefore, that the language it uses should be noble, majestic, and non-vernacular.”

Pope St. John XXIII, February 1962

“Father, why do we sing
so much Latin!?”



Because Vatican II said so!

- “Particular law remaining in force, **the use of the Latin language is to be preserved** in the Latin rites”(SC 36).
- “In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and "the common prayer," but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people, according to the norm laid down in Art. 36 of this Constitution. **Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.**” (SC 54)

But *why* a liturgical language?

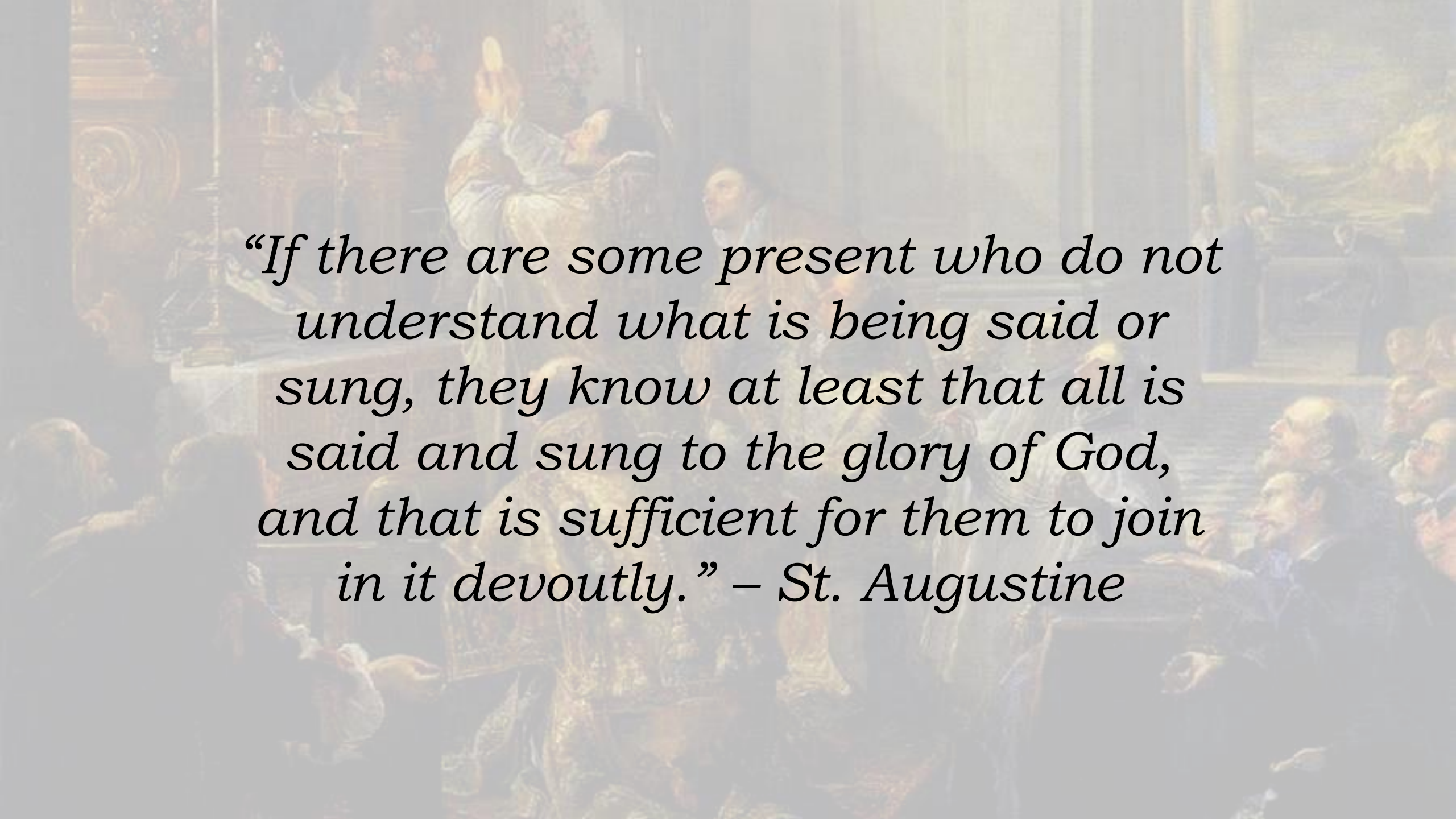
- It fosters **unity**.
 - Wherever you go in the world, you can participate with heart and voice, whether in West Virginia, Jerusalem or Rome. It unites in worship different nationalities, and cultures.
- It maintains a sense of **mystery**.
 - Latin is a dead language, not spoken by the faithful. The use of Latin conveys to the mind of the people that something is going on upon the altar which is beyond their comprehension; that a mystery is being enacted. Something greater than the average service is happening. It's intriguing.
- It's maintains a **heritage**.
 - The Jewish people used Hebrew as their liturgical language. It united them and was the means by which they preserved their teachings. The Catholic Faith is also more than a religion—it's a culture, a way of living. We inherit our Faith. Through Latin, we pray the same, exact words as Mother Teresa, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Catherine of Siena. Latin connects us with the past and future. We should be proud of our heritage!



Isn't Latin outdated, though?

Latin is a language,
As **DEAD** as **DEAD** can be.
It killed the Ancient Romans,
and now it's **KILLING** me.

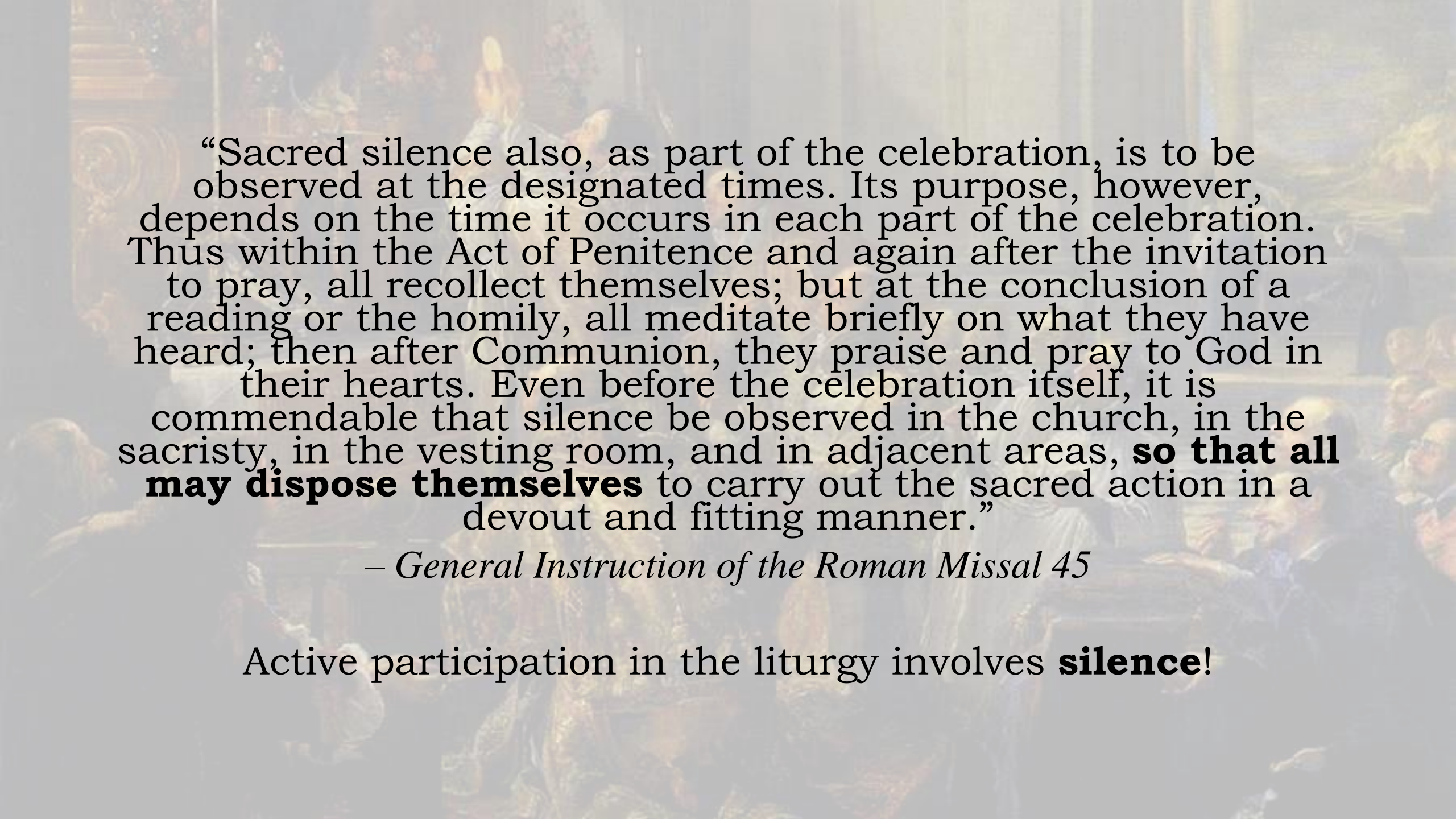
- “We also, impelled by the weightiest of reasons ... are fully determined to restore this language to its position of honor and to do all We can to promote its study and use. The employment of Latin has recently been contested in some quarters, and many are asking what the mind of the Apostolic See is in this matter. We have therefore decided to issue the timely directives contained in this document, so as to ensure that the ancient and uninterrupted use of Latin be maintained and, where necessary, restored.”
- **Pope John XXIII**, *Veterum Sapientia*, 1962
- We address especially the young people: In an epoch when in some areas, as you know, the Latin language and the human values are less appreciated, you must joyfully accept the patrimony of the language which the Church holds in high esteem and must, with energy, make it fruitful. The well known words of Cicero, “It is not so much excellent to know Latin, as it is a shame not to know it” in a certain sense are directed to you. We exhort you all to lift up high the torch of Latin which is even today a bond of unity among peoples of all nations. - **Pope John Paul II**, 1978
- “The Roman Church has special obligations towards Latin, the splendid language of ancient Rome, and she must manifest them whenever the occasion presents itself.” – **Pope John Paul II**



“If there are some present who do not understand what is being said or sung, they know at least that all is said and sung to the glory of God, and that is sufficient for them to join in it devoutly.” – St. Augustine



7. Sacred Silence



“Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts. Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, **so that all may dispose themselves** to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.”

– *General Instruction of the Roman Missal 45*

Active participation in the liturgy involves **silence!**

A painting depicting a Mass in progress. A priest in ornate, golden vestments stands at the altar, holding up a host. Other clergy members are visible around the altar, and a congregation of people is seated in the foreground, looking towards the altar. The scene is set in a grand, ornate church interior.

The Sacred Liturgy: **The Mass**

Why do we call it “Mass”?

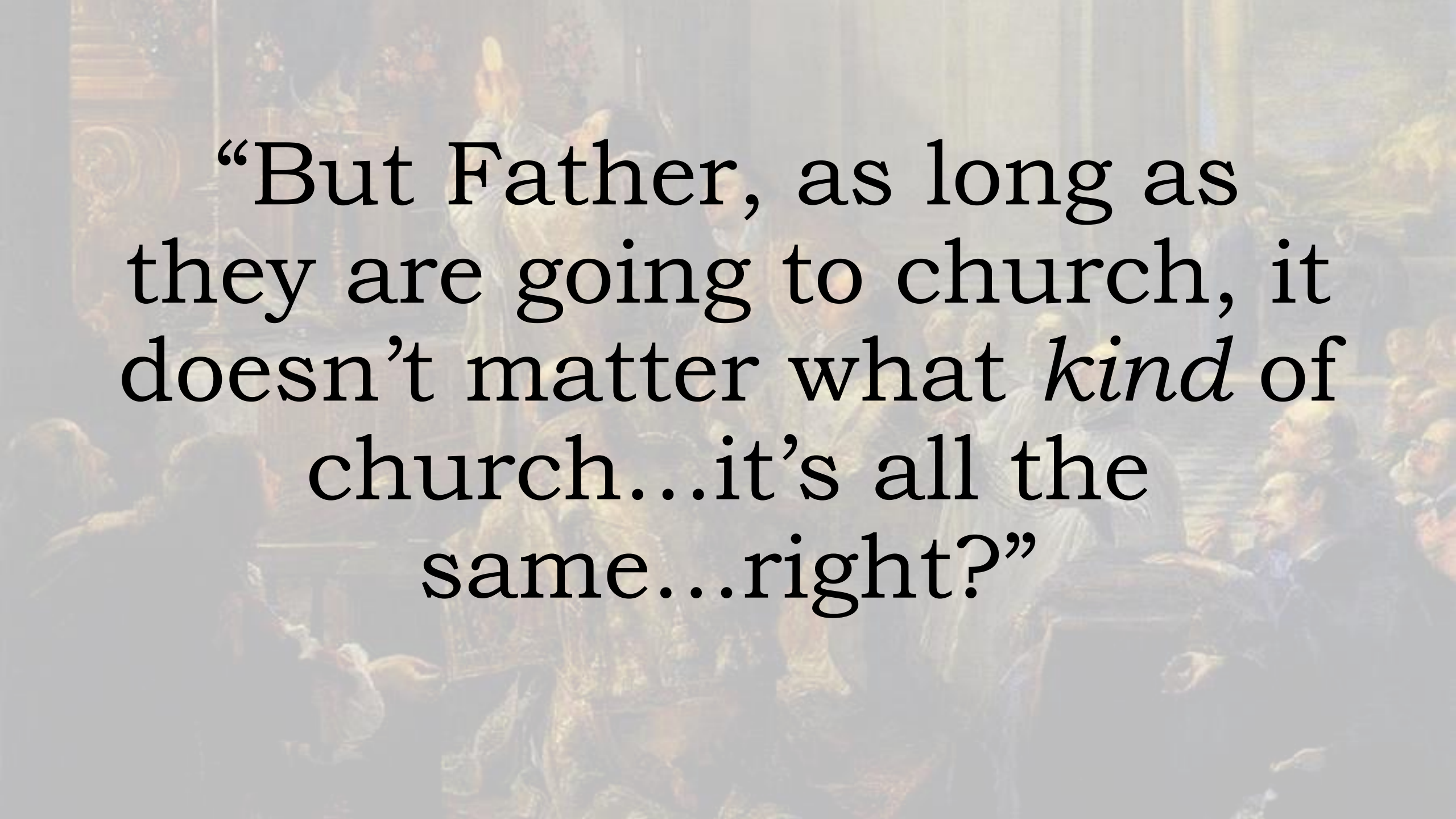
- “Ite **missa** est.”
 - Modern translation: “Go forth, the Mass is ended.”
 - Actual translation: “Go, it is sent.”
 - What is sent?
 - The “Sacrifice”; the oblation. The Sacrifice has been offered.
 - Venerable Fulton J. Sheen compared the “Ite, missa est” with Christ’s words, “It is finished.”

4. 

I - te, mís-sa est.

A Modern Interpretation...

- In his Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI discussed the development of *missa* from meaning “sent” to meaning one’s “mission.”
- “In antiquity, *missa* simply meant ‘dismissal.’ However in Christian usage it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word ‘dismissal’ has come to imply a ‘mission.’ These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church’ (Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 51).



“But Father, as long as they are going to church, it doesn’t matter what *kind* of church...it’s all the same...right?”

A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a maroon sweater, is shown from the chest up. He has a frustrated or angry expression, with his eyes squeezed shut and his mouth wide open in a shout. His hands are clenched into fists, held up near his chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

WRONG!

But why??

What is the “**Holy Sacrifice**” of the Mass?

- The Mass is the **re-presentation of the Sacrifice of Calvary**.
 - The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice of Calvary are **one and the same sacrifice**.
 - Only the *manner* of the offering is different.

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’ – *Catechism of the Catholic Church par. 1323*

What are the purposes of the Mass?

- **Adoration**

- “We adore you, we glorify you...”

- **Thanksgiving**

- “...always and everywhere to give you thanks!”

- **Atonement** (Forgiveness of Sins)

- “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...”

- **Petition**

- “In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel...”

How do we participate in the Mass?

- “On Calvary, Mary did not take a passive part in the Passion of her Son; she united herself with His intentions, and offered Him to the Father. In the same way, when we are present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we, too, can offer the Father the divine Victim who is ours, because He offered and immolated Himself for all of us.” – *St. Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalene*
- When we are at Mass, we should **interiorly** offer God our week, our struggles, our frustrations, our sorrows, our joys, our prayers, and unite them to the prayer and sacrifice of the Priest.

“Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours, will be acceptable...”

We offer our very **SELF** to God the Father through Christ.

The Mass is not our own!

*“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.” – 1 Corinthians 4:1*


We do not *own* the Mass. It is not ours. We are **privileged** to **participate** in it.

The Mass is not there to entertain us.

It is a foreshadowing and participation in heaven.

The Priest's personality should not be a focus – he is acting *in persona Christi*.

“The gestures and bodily posture of both the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers, and also of the people, must be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to making clear the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to fostering the participation of all. Attention must therefore be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and by the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.” - *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* #42




Parts of the Mass

- **1. Liturgy of the Word**
- Originally called “Mass of the Catechumens”
 - Catechumens were dismissed at its conclusion
 - *Still is an option today*
- **2. Liturgy of the Eucharist**
- Originally called “Mass of the Faithful”
 - Only the baptized Catholics remained

A detailed painting depicting a Mass of the Catechumens in a grand cathedral. The central figure is a priest in ornate golden vestments, holding a host aloft. Other clergy members in white and gold vestments are visible around the altar. The congregation, including men and women, is seated in the foreground, looking towards the altar. The architecture features high vaulted ceilings and classical columns. The overall atmosphere is solemn and reverent.

The Liturgy of the Word

“The Mass of the Catechumens”



Liturgy of the Word

- **Introductory Rites**
- **Penitential Act**
- **The Gloria**
- **Collect**
- **Readings**
- **Homily**
- **Creed**
- **General Intercessions**

1. Introductory Rites

Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and celebrate the Eucharist worthily. (GIRM 46).



The Entrance Processional (Stand)

- “When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins.
- “This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from the Missal or the antiphon with its Psalm from the *Graduale Romanum*, as set to music there or in another setting; (2) the antiphon and Psalm of the *Graduale Simplex* for the liturgical time; (3) a chant from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) another liturgical chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.



Reverence to the Altar

“When they have arrived at the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the ministers reverence the altar with a profound bow.”

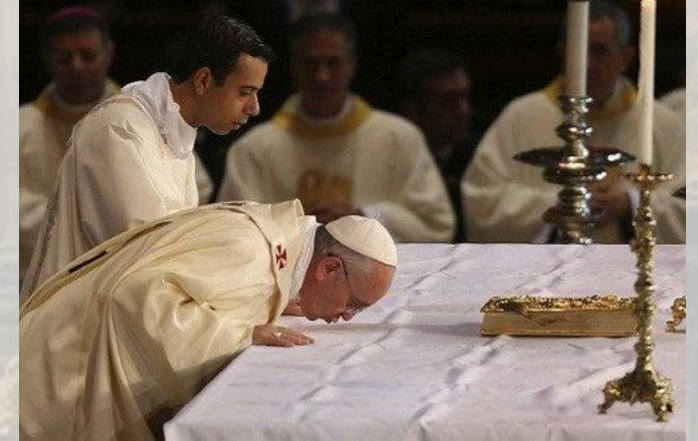
“A bow of the body is made before the altar, if the Blessed Sacrament is not present.” – GIRM 234

“Moreover, as an expression of veneration, the Priest and Deacon then kiss the altar itself; the Priest, if appropriate, also incenses the cross and the altar.”

But why?

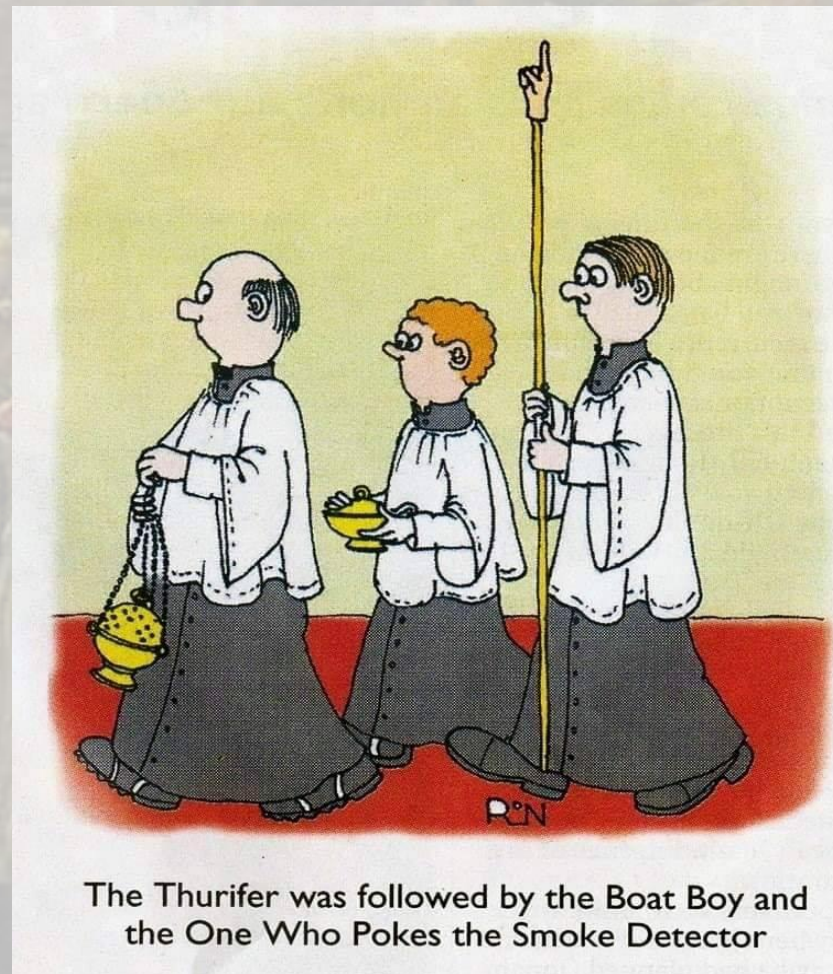
The Altar

- Symbolizes Christ
 - Reverenced with a bow when passing
- An “altar” is where sacrifice is offered
- Kissed at the beginning and end of Mass
 - “Underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the word of God” (Rev.6:9).
 - This is not just evidence of the Church’s practice in the first century but becomes a model. The altar marks not only the place of the Lord’s sacrifice, but the tombs of martyrs and saints as well. We see in the early Church enormous efforts made to construct altars and churches directly over the graves of the holy ones.
 - *“We beseech You, O Lord, by the merits of Your Saints, whose relics are here, and of all the Saints, that You would grant to forgive me all my sins. Amen.”*



Why the incense, Father!?

- The incensing of the altar at the beginning of the Mass symbolizes and calls to mind the holiness of the consecrated altar. The blessed clouds of incense, therefore teach us to enter with a pure intention into the Holy of Holies, to stand at the altar and to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with a devout heart.
- The incense shows that this is a sacred and solemn event!



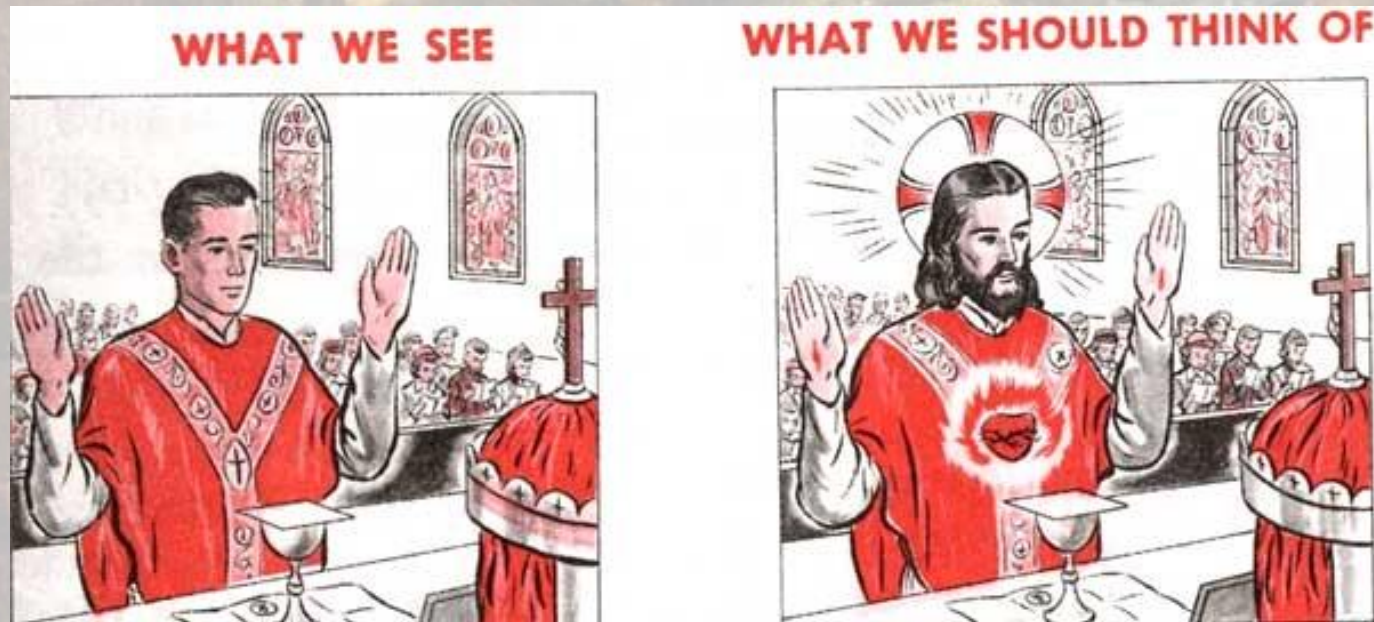
The Greeting

“When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of the Cross. Then by means of the Greeting he signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.

After the greeting of the people, the Priest, or the Deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.” – (GIRM 49-50)

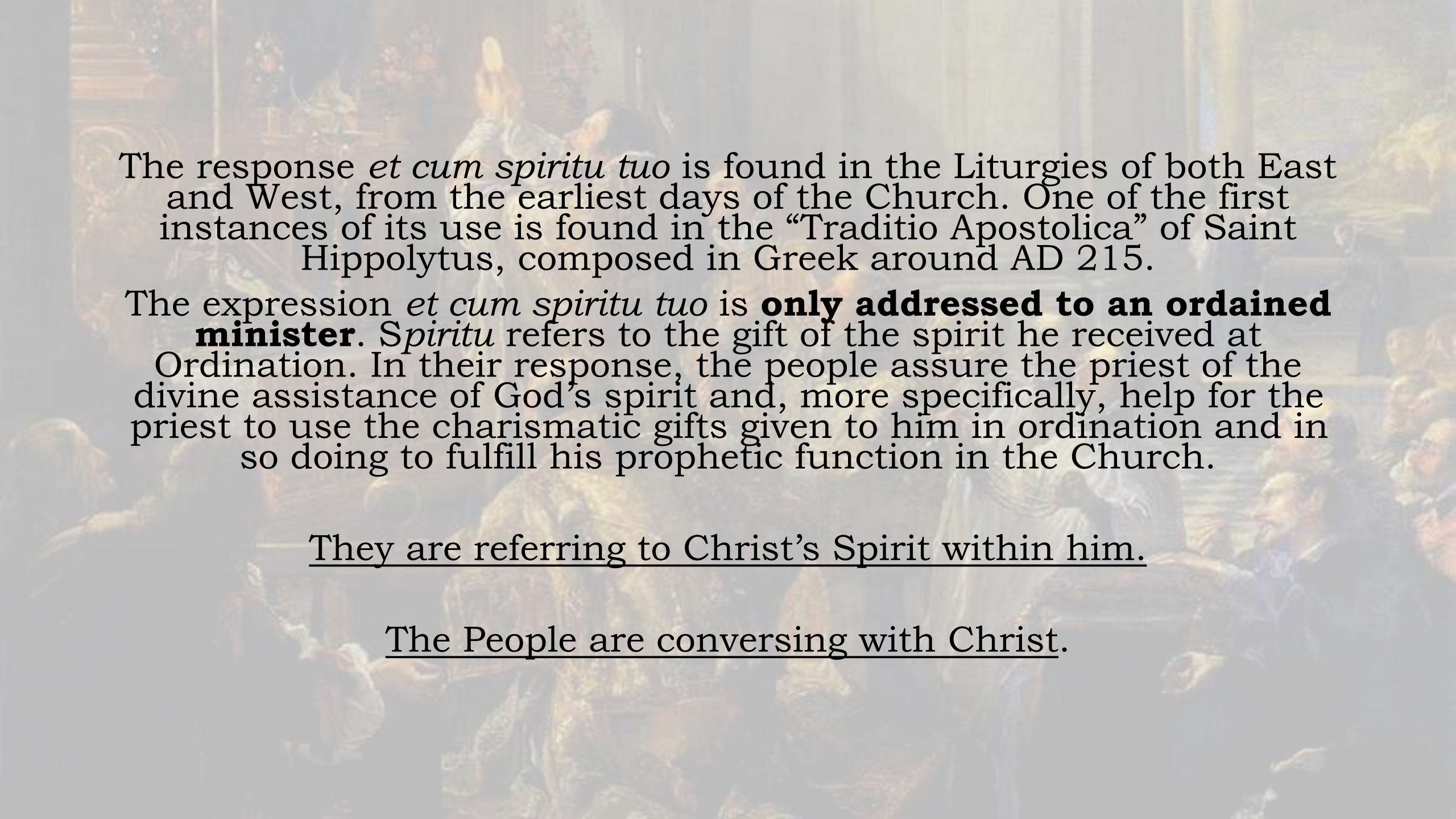
“The Lord be with you.”

- Christ, in the person of the priest, greets His people.



Why do we say “And with your spirit?”





The response *et cum spiritu tuo* is found in the Liturgies of both East and West, from the earliest days of the Church. One of the first instances of its use is found in the “Traditio Apostolica” of Saint Hippolytus, composed in Greek around AD 215.

The expression *et cum spiritu tuo* is **only addressed to an ordained minister**. *Spiritu* refers to the gift of the spirit he received at Ordination. In their response, the people assure the priest of the divine assistance of God’s spirit and, more specifically, help for the priest to use the charismatic gifts given to him in ordination and in so doing to fulfill his prophetic function in the Church.

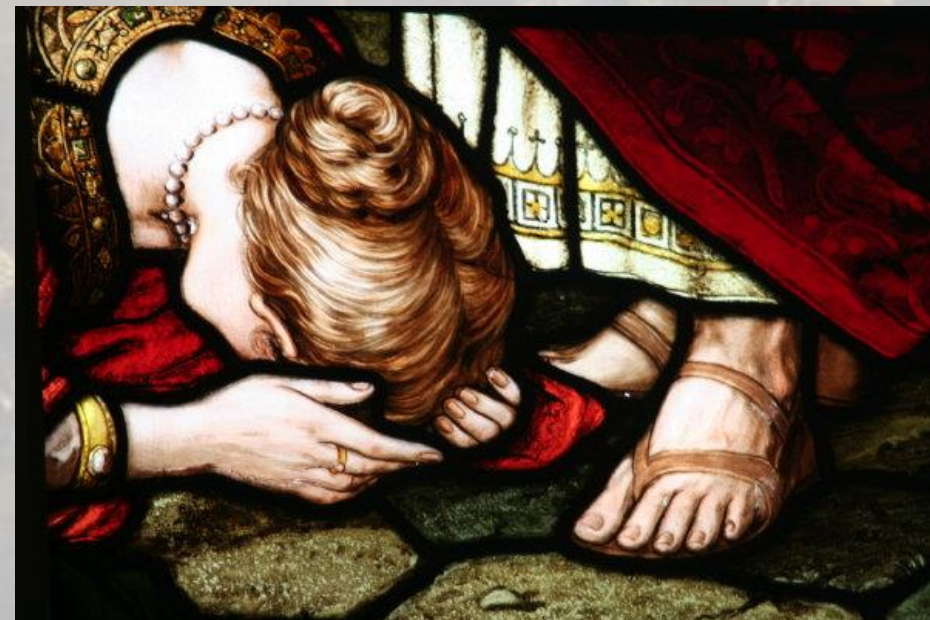
They are referring to Christ’s Spirit within him.

The People are conversing with Christ.

2. The Penitential Act

“After this, the Priest calls upon the whole community to take part in the Penitential Act, which, after a brief pause for silence, it does by means of a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the Priest’s absolution, which, however, lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance.

From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter Time, instead of the customary Penitential Act, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place as a reminder of Baptism.” (GIRM 51)



The “Confiteor”

Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite

I confess to Almighty God,
to blessed Mary ever Virgin,
to blessed Michael the Archangel,
to blessed John the Baptist,
to the holy apostles Peter and Paul,
and to all the saints
that I have greatly sinned
in thought, word, and deed,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault.
Therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever Virgin,
blessed Michael the Archangel,
blessed John the Baptist,
the holy Apostles Peter and Paul,
and all the saints,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

A blurred background image of a church interior. In the foreground, a person is kneeling in prayer, their hands clasped. In the background, other people are visible, some standing and some kneeling, in a dimly lit sanctuary with tall windows. The overall atmosphere is solemn and spiritual.

1. We ask God to forgive us for **those things that we've thought**, things that go on in our mind that get us dwelling on sin, letting it have its way with us. These thoughts can actually become mortal sin, whether it's thinking about inappropriate things, or getting even with someone at work. We've thought about these things, so we confess them during the Confiteor.

2. We also ask God to forgive us for **the things we've said**. Maybe we gave a harsh word to someone. The Confiteor is where we ask God to forgive us for our harsh words or for being short-tempered, or for saying something about someone at work that was just wrong.

3. Then the prayer moves to a different category of sin: **what we actually did**, the actions in our life. So, we confess that as sin at this point.

4. Then there's **the things we failed to do**. Scripture says, "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17). We can step around responsibilities and avoid being the witness that God called us to be in various ways. We need to confess that too.



Kyrie

We next sing the tri-fold “Kyrie.”

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

We ask each person of the Blessed
Trinity for mercy.



**“But why do we
sing in Greek??”**

**It's all
greek
to me**



In the first century AD, Greek was the universal language. Latin, Aramaic and other languages were known locally.

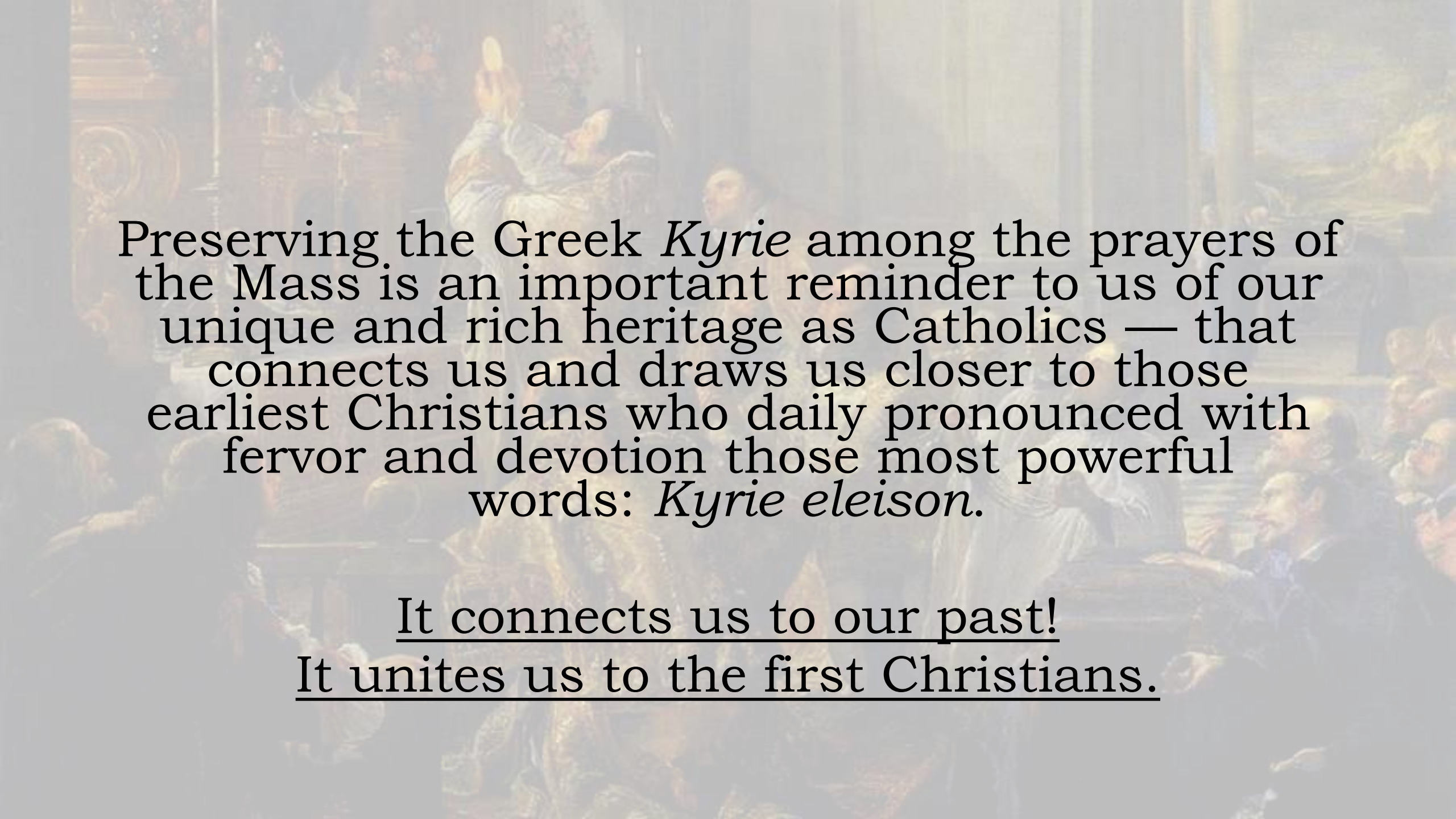
- (Not unlike English is today.)

The earliest liturgies were prayed in Greek (universal language).

In the 3rd century, Latin began to become the universal language of the Roman Empire.

The Church adopted Latin as its own, though it did not use “vulgar” Latin, but a more formal, “high” form...

But it chose to retain the Greek Kyrie. *Why?*



Preserving the Greek *Kyrie* among the prayers of the Mass is an important reminder to us of our unique and rich heritage as Catholics — that connects us and draws us closer to those earliest Christians who daily pronounced with fervor and devotion those most powerful words: *Kyrie eleison*.

It connects us to our past!
It unites us to the first Christians.

Kyrie - Missa VIII (de Angelis) - Basílica de S. Pedro 2016 >

Música Litúrgica pelo Mundo



0:01 / 1:52



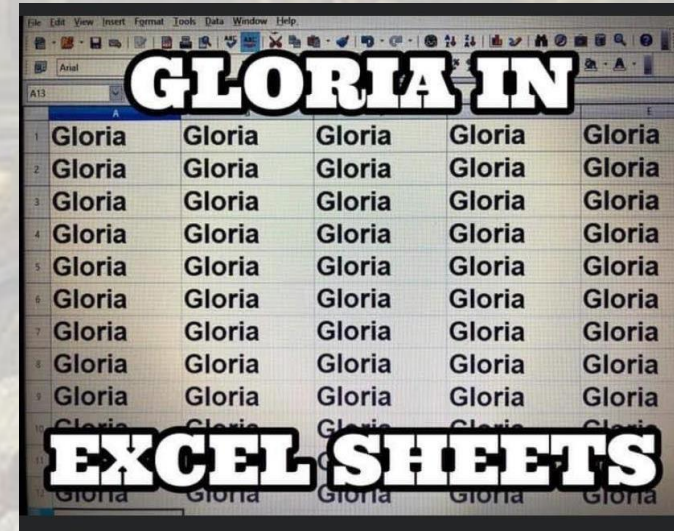
More videos

Tap or swipe up to see all



3. Gloria

- “The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is a most ancient and venerable hymn by which the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other. It is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other.” – GIRM 53
- Having received his mercy, we break into the ancient hymn of praise, the Gloria. The Gloria goes from the Incarnation to the sacrifice of Christ. It’s like salvation history in miniature form. As a church we’re giving glory to God. We’re praising him for all that he has done. We confessed our sins, we called on the mercy of God. What’s the proper response? We give glory to God.
- The Gloria is sung on days of celebration – Sundays, feast days, Solemnities, ordinations, weddings, etc.
- It is not sung during the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent



4. The Collect

- “Next the Priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the Priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of being in God’s presence and may call to mind their intentions. Then the Priest pronounces the prayer usually called the “Collect” and through which the character of the celebration finds expression. By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit...” (GIRM 54)



5. The Readings

“[Christ] is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read in the Church.” – Sacrosanctum Concilium 24

First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading
Gospel

First Reading (*Sit*)

- Usually taken from the Old Testament
- During the Easter season, it is taken from the New Testament
- Tends to foreshadow, follow the same theme as the Gospel



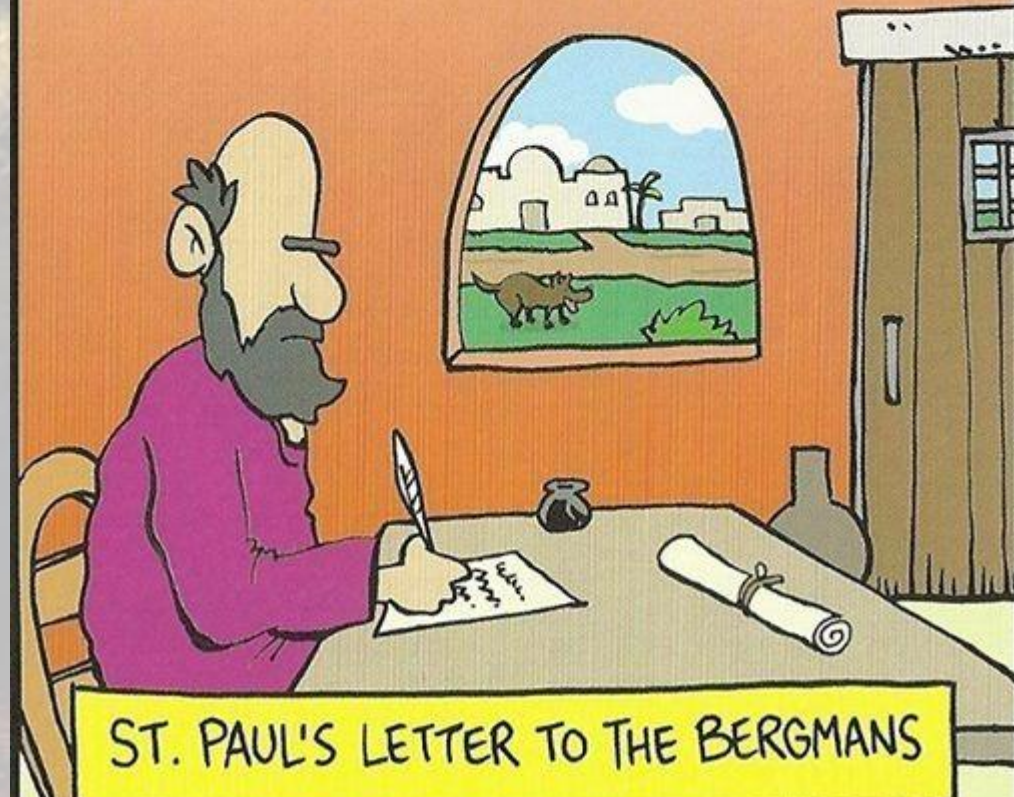
Responsorial Psalm

- After the First Reading follows the Responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and which has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God.
- The Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should usually be taken from the Lectionary.
- In the Dioceses of the United States of America, instead of the Psalm assigned in the Lectionary, there may be sung either the Responsorial Gradual from the *Graduale Romanum*, or the Responsorial Psalm or the Alleluia Psalm from the *Graduale Simplex*, as described in these books, or an antiphon and Psalm from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, including Psalms arranged in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop. Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.

Second Reading

- Normally taken from one of St. Paul's letters.
- This reading does not necessarily relate to the First Reading and Gospel, though on occasion it does.

I, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, greet you in the name of the Lord, and ask you to keep your dog out of my petunias.



Alleluia and the Gospel (*Stand*)

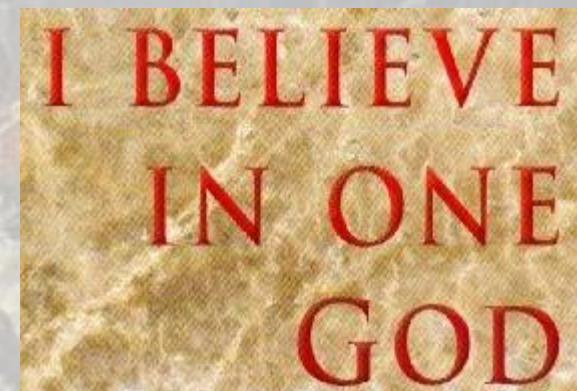
- “The reading of the Gospel constitutes the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches the great reverence that is to be shown to this reading by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honor, by the fact of which minister is appointed to proclaim it and by the blessing or prayer with which he prepares himself; and also by the fact that through their acclamations the faithful acknowledge and confess that Christ is present and is speaking to them and stand as they listen to the reading; and by the mere fact of the marks of reverence that are given to the Book of the Gospels.” – GIRM 60

6. Homily (Sit)

- *“By means of the homily the Mysteries of the Faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text, during the course of the liturgical year; the homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the Liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason.”* – Sacrosanctum Concilium 52
- “The Homily should ordinarily be given by the Priest Celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating Priest, or from time to time and, if appropriate, to the Deacon, but never to a lay person. In particular cases and for a just cause, the Homily may even be given by a Bishop or a Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate.
- “On Sundays and Holydays of Obligation there is to be a Homily at every Mass that is celebrated with the people attending, and it may not be omitted without a grave reason. On other days it is recommended, especially on the weekdays of Advent, Lent, and Easter Time, as well as on other festive days and occasions when the people come to church in greater numbers.
- “It is appropriate for a brief period of silence to be observed after the Homily.” – GIRM 66

7. Creed/Credo (*Stand*)

- “The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the Homily and that they may also honor and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use and before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist begins.
- The Creed is to be sung or said by the Priest together with the people on Sundays and Solemnities. It may be said also at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.
- If it is sung, it is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir. It is then sung either by everybody together or by the people alternating with the choir.
- If it is not sung, it is to be recited by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other.” – GIRM 67-68

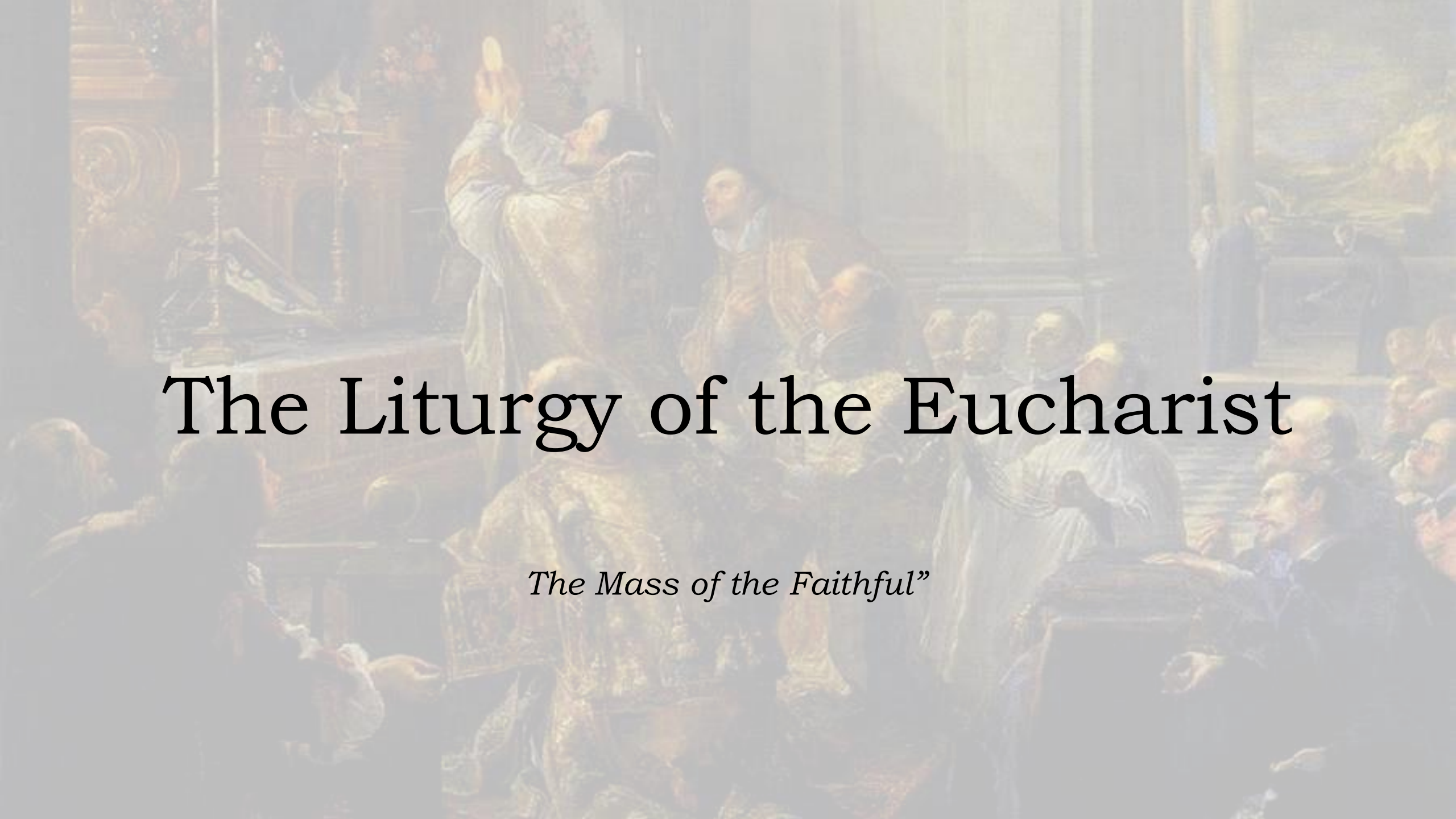


Why do we need to say the Creed?

- The Nicene Creed captures the essence of our faith and the truths that are at the heart of Catholic Church teachings. The Creed is as relevant today as it was in the formative years of the church.
- We must be proud of what we believe!
- When we recite the Creed, we proclaim both our individual identity in Christ and our identity as a part of the whole Church.
- We need to keep in mind that the Creed gives substance to our personal faith. Our personal faith is guided by the Creed. Reciting the Creed is a wonderful way for us to remember our salvation and affirm our faith.
- Aside from being a personal proclamation of our Catholic beliefs, the Creed guides us in the way we must live as Christians. We can think of our Catholic Creed as a map for navigating through the real world. It helps us stay within the righteous path and stops us from going astray.

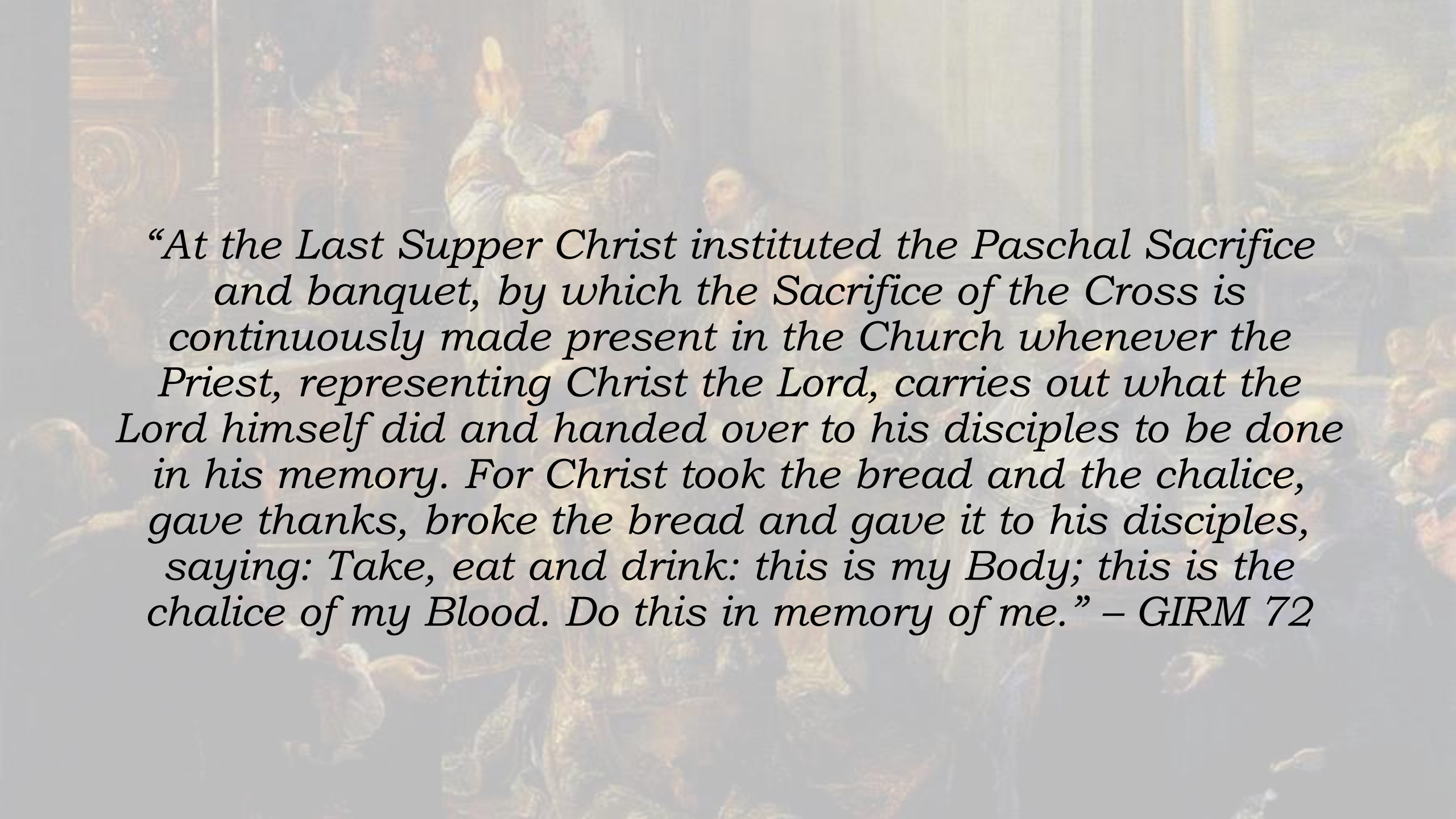
8. Prayers of the Faithful

- Especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation there is to be restored, after the Gospel and the homily, “the common prayer” or “the prayer of the faithful.” By this prayer, in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for Holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world.” – SC 53
- Also referred to as the “Bidding Prayers”, “General Intercessions”, “Universal Prayer”
- “In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal Priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all.” – GIRM 69
- Remember, one of the purposes of the Mass is **petition**.

A painting depicting a church service, likely the Eucharist. A priest in ornate, golden vestments stands at the altar, holding a host aloft. He is surrounded by other clergy members and a congregation of people seated in pews. The scene is set in a grand, ornate church interior with high ceilings and large windows. The overall tone is solemn and reverent.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Mass of the Faithful”

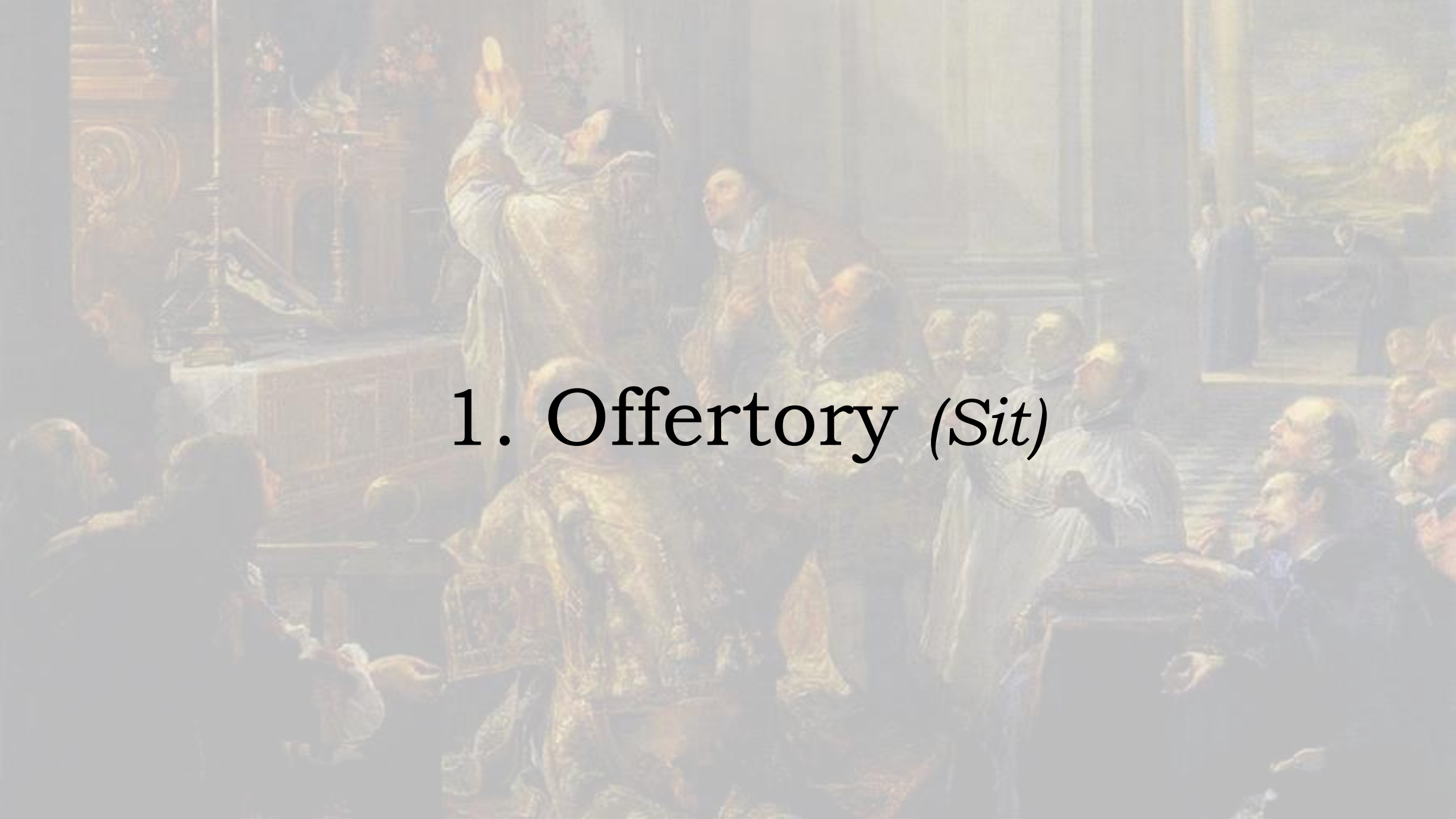


“At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the Priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. For Christ took the bread and the chalice, gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat and drink: this is my Body; this is the chalice of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.” – GIRM 72

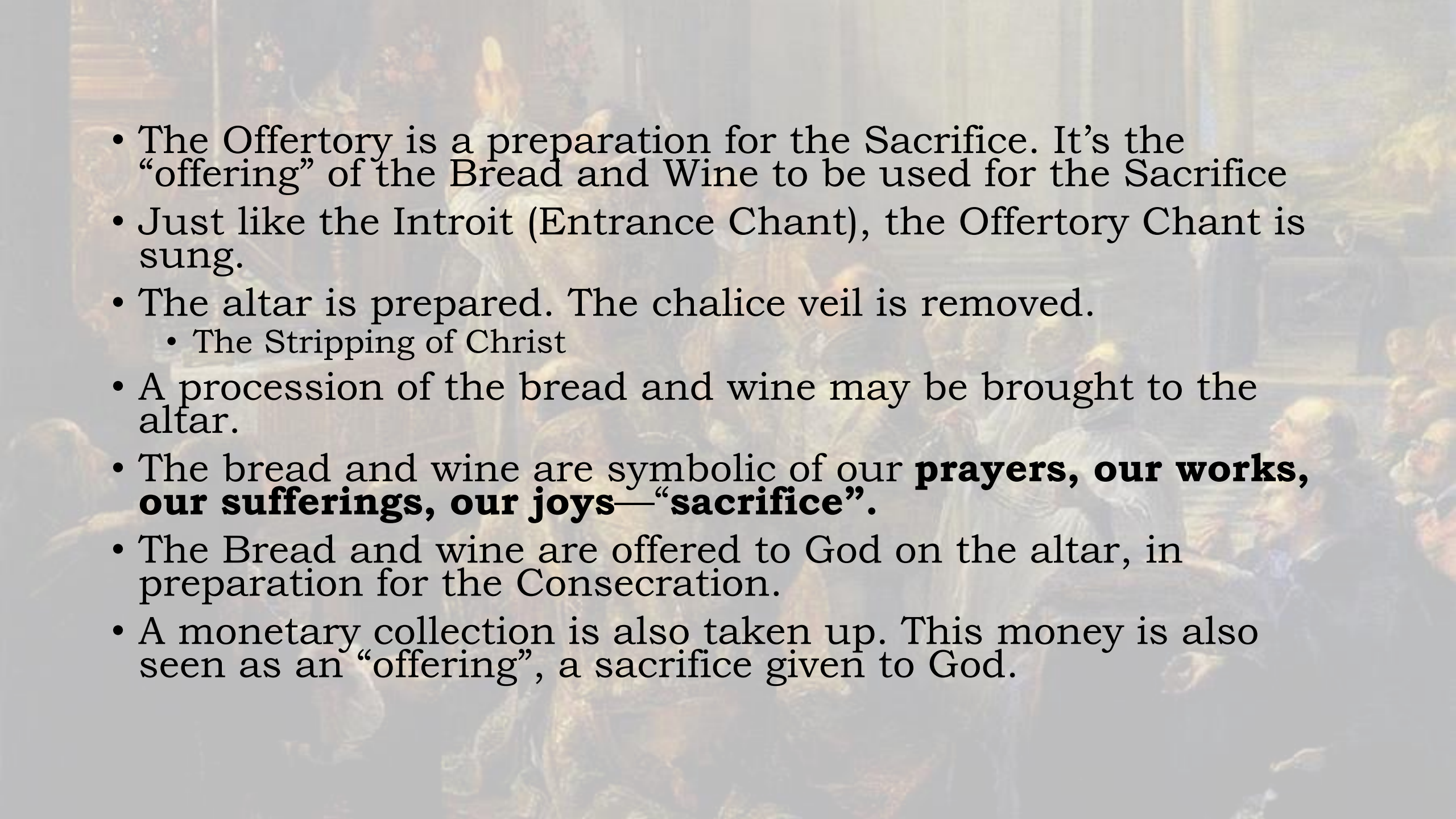


Parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Offertory (Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar, Prayer over the Offering)
2. Eucharistic Prayer
3. The Communion Rite



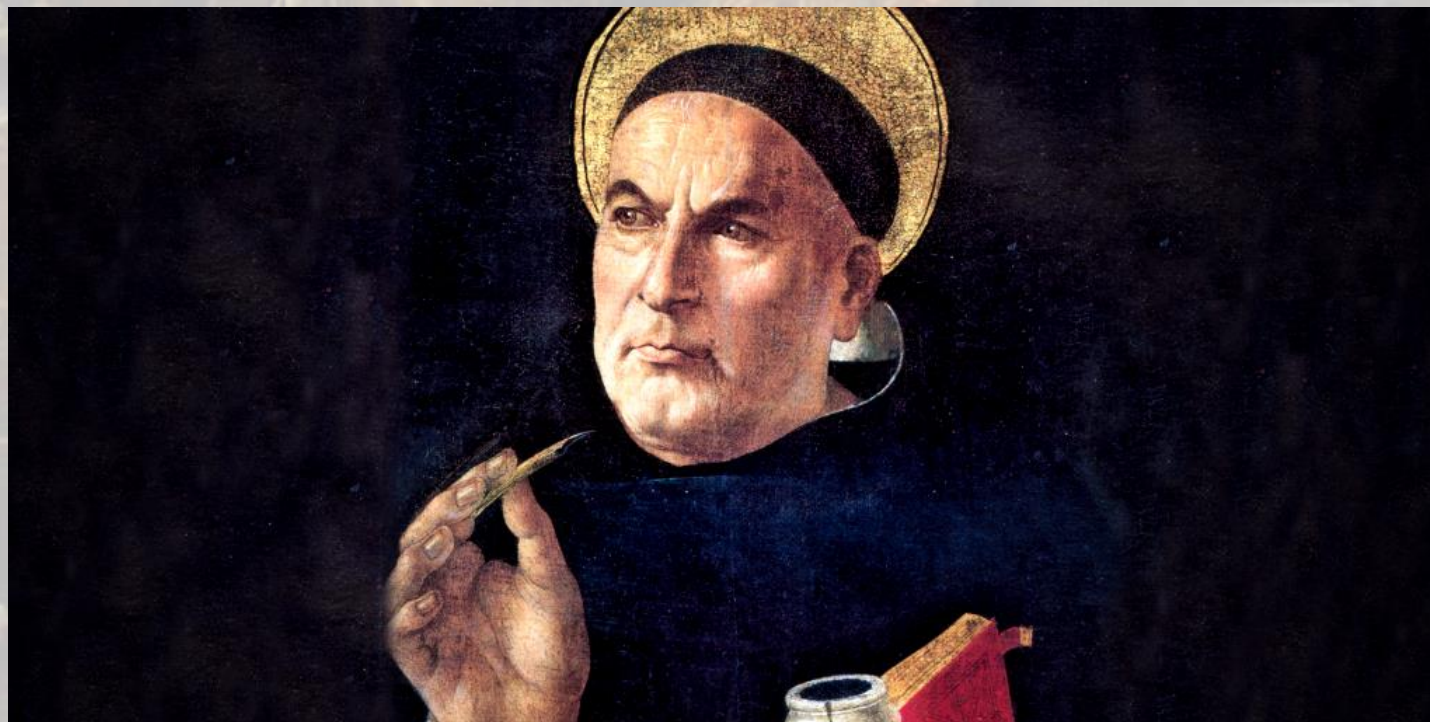
1. Offertory *(Sit)*

- 
- The Offertory is a preparation for the Sacrifice. It's the “offering” of the Bread and Wine to be used for the Sacrifice
 - Just like the Introit (Entrance Chant), the Offertory Chant is sung.
 - The altar is prepared. The chalice veil is removed.
 - The Stripping of Christ
 - A procession of the bread and wine may be brought to the altar.
 - The bread and wine are symbolic of our **prayers, our works, our sufferings, our joys—“sacrifice”**.
 - The Bread and wine are offered to God on the altar, in preparation for the Consecration.
 - A monetary collection is also taken up. This money is also seen as an “offering”, a sacrifice given to God.

Why do we mix a little water into the wine?



Let's ask St. Thomas Aquinas...



- "First of all, on account of its institution: for it is believed with probability that our Lord instituted this Sacrament in wine tempered with water according to the custom of that country: hence it is written (Proverbs 9:5): 'Drink the wine which I have mixed for you.'
- "Secondly, because it harmonizes with the representation of our Lord's Passion...In the Lord's chalice neither wine only nor water only ought to be offered, but both mixed because we read that both flowed from His side in the Passion."
- "Thirdly, because this is adapted for signifying the effect of this sacrament...'We see that the people are signified by the water, but Christ's blood by the wine. Therefore when water is mixed with the wine in the chalice, the people [are] made one with Christ.'"

Incense, *again*, Father!?



Incensation of the Gifts and Altar

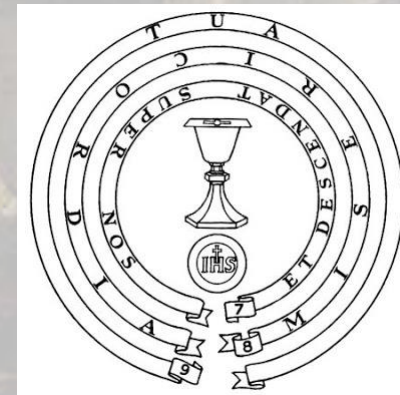
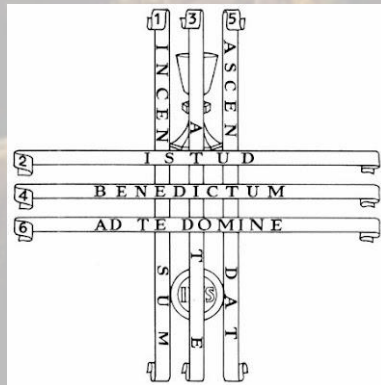
“The bread and wine are placed on the altar by the Priest to the accompaniment of the prescribed formulas; the Priest may incense the gifts placed on the altar and then incense the cross and the altar itself, so as to signify **the Church’s offering and prayer rising like incense in the sight of God**. Next, the Priest, because of his sacred ministry, and the people, by reason of their baptismal dignity, may be incensed by the Deacon or by another minister.” – GIRM 75

The fragrant clouds of smoking incense signify, that this Sacrifice, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will ascend to Heaven as a “sweet odor” and be for us the source of all spiritual odors of grace.

The incensation of the Priest and the People refer to their distinctive roles in the offering of the Sacrifice. The people’s sacrifice is united to that of the Priest’s and the Priest offers them in union with the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord to God the Father.

Incensation of the Gifts explained...

- Traditionally, the priest incenses the gifts three times in the form of a cross calling to mind Christ's Crucifixion. Christ's body was anointed three times in the Scriptures, each time by Mary Magdalene. The anointing of the Body was associated with death.
- Next, the incense is moved above the gifts in three circles, signifying Christ's three-fold office of Priest, Prophet and King.



Washing of the Hands

- A priest washes his hands **as a sign of his spiritual cleansing and preparation to wash away his impurities** before handling the consecrated Eucharist which is holy and sacred and before the offering of the Sacrifice. It is meant as an act of humility and respect which should be given to God.



“Pray, brethren...”

- The priest then asks the people to pray that their sacrifice and his may be acceptable to God.
- The People’s Sacrifices and the Priest’s are united into one with the bread and wine.
 - Our sacrifices are being united to Christ’s
- The movement of the Priest’s hands symbolize this.
- The priest then concludes with the Prayer over the Offerings—ultimately asking the Lord to accept them.

2. The Eucharistic Prayer (*Kneel*)

- Also called the “Anaphora” – the “Offering”
- “Now the center and high point of the entire celebration begins, namely, the Eucharistic Prayer itself, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The Priest calls upon the people to lift up their hearts towards the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he associates the people with himself in the Prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of this Prayer is that the whole congregation of the faithful joins with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer requires that everybody listens to it with reverence and in silence.” – GIRM 78
- The Eucharistic Prayer is worship offered to the Father by Christ as it was at the moment of his passion, death and resurrection, but now it is offered through the priest acting in the person of Christ, and it is offered as well by all of the baptized, who are part of Christ's Body, the Church. *This is the action of Christ's Body, the Church at Mass.*
 - (*I.E. Re-presentation of Calvary*)

The Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)

- Prior to His Passion and Death, Jesus enters the City of Jerusalem, riding on a colt. The people greet Him by waving palm branches, laying their cloaks on the ground before Him, singing, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mt. 21:9) Even today, we remember this occasion on Palm Sunday.
- Just as the people in Jerusalem sang this hymn and prostrated themselves before the Lord, so now we also sing the same hymn, and immediately kneel in anticipation for His coming in the Holy Eucharist. The Church stipulates that it is important for the assembly to kneel, as Our Lord is **literally entering into room under the appearance of bread and wine**. Our posture thus commemorates this physical Presence. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states,
- “In the dioceses of the United States of America, [the faithful] should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the Sanctus until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer.” (GIRM 43)
- In this glorious moment of the Sanctus, the Church Militant on earth unites with the Church Triumphant in heaven, as we sing with the angels, “*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.*” (Is. 6:3)
- The Sanctus is one of the most ancient hymns, as Catholics have been singing it since the year 60-90 AD. Saints have spoken of this hymn throughout the very beginnings of the Church: St. Clement of Rome (d.104), St. Athanasius (d. 373), St. Cyril (d. 373), St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), Tertullian (d. about 220), and many others have alluded to the splendor of the Sanctus. In fact, Charlemagne gave a decree that the Sanctus should be sung by both clerics and faithful in his *Admonitio generalis*, written in 789.
- It’s saying—*God is coming! Heaven and earth are meeting! Get ready!*



Four Main Eucharistic Prayers

- Diverse forms of the Eucharistic prayer existed in common usage for centuries in different parts of the Christian world. The differences were not great, but there were variations in the words used and the order in which the parts of the canon were prayed. Historical names for rites such as the Mozarabic, Gallican and Ambrosian rites, or the Gelasian Sacramentary.
- **The Roman Canon** (Eucharistic Prayer 1), is referenced as early as the 300's. Under the direction of Pope St. Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604), he codified it in its present form. He wished to make uniform the texts of the Eucharistic Prayer throughout the Latin-rite Church. It was the only Canon consequently used for 1600 years in the Roman Rite.
- **Eucharistic Prayer 2** is based off the Anaphora of St. Hippolytus (circa 215) and was composed after the Second Vatican Council.
- **Eucharistic Prayer 3** is based off the Roman Canon, though influenced by the Gallican and Mozarabic rites of centuries past. It was composed after the Second Vatican Council.
- **Eucharistic Prayer 4** draws its substance from Eastern sources, especially the fourth century Anaphora of St. Basil. It was composed after the Second Vatican Council.

- a) The **Preface**, in which the Priest, in the name of the whole of the holy people, glorifies God the Father and gives thanks to him for the whole work of salvation or for some particular aspect of it, according to the varying day, festivity, or time of year.
- b) The **Sanctus**, by which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, calls to mind the presence of heaven and earth before them.
- 🔔• c) The **epiclesis**, in which, by means of particular invocations, the Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ's Body and Blood, and that the unblemished sacrificial Victim to be consumed in Communion may be for the salvation of those who will partake of it.
- 🔔• d) The **institution narrative and Consecration**, by which, by means of the words and actions of Christ, that Sacrifice is effected which Christ himself instituted during the Last Supper, when he offered his Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine, gave them to the Apostles to eat and drink, and leaving with the latter the command to perpetuate this same mystery. The Body and Blood of our Lord are incensed in adoration once confected.
- e) The **anamnesis**, by which the Church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the Apostles, celebrates the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.
- f) The **oblation**, by which, in this very memorial, the Church, in particular that gathered here and now, offers the unblemished sacrificial Victim in the Holy Spirit to the Father. The Church's intention, indeed, is that the faithful not only offer this unblemished sacrificial Victim but also learn to offer their very selves, and so day by day to be brought, through the mediation of Christ, into unity with God and with each other, so that God may at last be all in all.
- g) The **intercessions**, by which expression is given to the fact that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church, of both heaven and of earth, and that the oblation is made for her and for all her members, living and dead, who are called to participate in the redemption and salvation purchased by the Body and Blood of Christ.
- h) The **concluding doxology**, by which the glorification of God is expressed and which is affirmed and concluded by the people's acclamation, "Amen." Also traditionally called the "Minor Elevation" because the gifts are slightly raised up.

A detailed painting of a church service, likely the Eucharist. A priest in ornate golden vestments stands at the altar, holding a host aloft in his right hand. He is surrounded by other clergy members, some in white robes and others in darker vestments. The background shows a grand, ornate church interior with high ceilings and architectural details. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden glow emanating from the altar area. The text "3. The Communion Rite" is overlaid in the center of the image.

3. The Communion Rite

A painting depicting a church service. A priest in ornate golden vestments stands at an altar, holding up a host. A congregation of people is seated in the foreground, looking towards the altar. The scene is set in a grand, dimly lit church interior.

Parts of the Communion Rite

1. The Lord's Prayer
2. The Rite of Peace
3. The Fraction Rite
4. Communion
5. Prayer after Communion

The Lord's Prayer (*Stand*)

- Now, that the bread and wine have been changed into the Body and Blood and the priest has asked that this be offered to God the Father, we purposely prepare to receive our Lord in Holy Communion.
- In the Lord's Prayer a petition is made for daily bread, which for Christians means principally the Eucharistic Bread, and entreating also purification from sin, so that what is holy may in truth be given to the holy.
- The the Priest alone adds the embolism, which the people conclude by means of the doxology. The embolism, developing the last petition of the Lord's Prayer itself, asks for deliverance from the power of evil for the whole community of the faithful.

The Rite of Peace

- In preparation to receive the Holy Eucharist, the Rite of Peace follows. The celebrant prays that the peace of Christ will fill our hearts, our families, our Church, our communities, and our world.
- Reception of the Eucharist is a sign of unity. We should not receive the Eucharist if we are not united with our fellow Christians in thought, word, and action.
- As a sign of communion and peace in preparation for receiving the Eucharist, the people may extend to those around them a sign of peace.
- Though the external display of peace is optional; the internal is not, and contained already throughout the Mass.
 - “The priest’s command, “The peace of the Lord be with you always” contains and symbolizes the prayer of peace of everyone.

The Fraction Rite

- In the Fraction Rite, the celebrant breaks the consecrated Host as the people sing the Agnus Dei. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). The action of "breaking the bread" recalls the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, when he broke the bread before giving it to his disciples. One of the earliest names for the Mass is the "breaking of the bread" (Lk 24:35; Acts 2:42, 46).
- The reuniting of the "Body" and "Blood" of our Lord symbolizes our Lord's Resurrection and his Glorified Body.
 - I.E. We receive the Risen Christ in Holy Communion.



The Agnus Dei (“Lamb of God”)

- “Lamb of God.” These are the words spoken by Saint John the Baptist when he spies Christ, while baptizing repentant sinners at the Jordan River. This liturgical prayer is one of many examples in the Roman Rite where a Scripture text is essentially copied directly into a liturgical book. The sacrificial nature of this lamb is reinforced by a text from the Book of Revelation in the passage from Chapter 5, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing.” So it is not just any lamb, or the lambs of Christmas carols, but Christ, the lamb who was slain, whom we honor in the fraction rite.
- We ask for his mercy as we prepare to receive Him.

“Lord I am not worthy...”

- We believe as Catholics that in the Holy Eucharist the Lord is truly and substantially present. If we believe this, we also believe that we are unworthy to receive the most holy of gifts offered by Christ, the gift of himself; body, blood, soul and divinity.
- This response at Mass comes after the priest, elevating the Body of Christ in the Sacred Host and the chalice of the blood of Christ says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to receive the supper of the Lamb” (the reference to John the Baptist’s words when he observes the coming of Jesus). When we respond, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed,” we are using the words of the centurion from St. Matthew’s Gospel when he asked Jesus to heal his servant who was paralyzed.
- We come before our Lord in humility.

Communion of the Priest

- The Priest prepares himself by a prayer, said quietly, so that he may fruitfully receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Then the Priest shows the faithful the Eucharistic Host, holding it over the paten or over the chalice, and invites them to the banquet of Christ; and along with the faithful, he then makes an act of humility, using the prescribed words from the Gospels.
 - Heaven on earth
- 🔔 • When the Priest receives Communion, it is customary to ring the bell. 🔔
The Sacrifice has been completed.
- While the Priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion Chant is begun, its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the “communitarian” character of the procession to receive the Eucharist. The singing is prolonged for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful.

4. Communion of the Faithful

- One must be properly disposed to receive the Blessed Sacrament.
 - Have waited one hour since eating or drinking (except medicine/water)
 - Believe in the Real Presence of Christ
 - Be in proper standing with the Church (living a sacramental life)
 - Not be conscious of any grave sin on your soul
- After having received, return to your pew in prayer of thanksgiving.
- “When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation.” – GIRM 88

Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- The “Ordinary” Ministers of Holy Communion [those who distribute] are Bishop, Priest and Deacon (*CIC 910*)
 - Why? Through their Ordination, they are conformed to Christ – they act as Christ (“*in persona Christi*”)
 - Christ offers Himself to His People as a Gift
- *“The dispensing of Christ's body belongs to the priest for three reasons. First, because, as was said above (Article 1), he consecrates as in the person of Christ. But as Christ consecrated His body at the supper, so also He gave it to others to be partaken of by them. Accordingly, as the consecration of Christ's body belongs to the priest, so likewise does the dispensing belong to him. Secondly, because the priest is the appointed intermediary between God and the people; hence as it belongs to him to offer the people's gifts to God, so it belongs to him to deliver consecrated gifts to the people. Thirdly, because out of reverence towards this sacrament, nothing touches it, but what is consecrated; hence the corporal and the chalice are consecrated, and likewise the priest's hands, for touching this sacrament. Hence it is not lawful for anyone else to touch it except from necessity, for instance, if it were to fall upon the ground, or else in some other case of urgency.” – St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III.83.3*

Extraordinary Ministers?

- Distribution of Holy Communion has always been distributed by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons with some exceptions
 - St. Basil, Tertullian, and others mentioned at times that some lay members would bring to the sick or take our Lord home with them to receive during the week in fear of persecution; the Desert Fathers would take the Eucharist home with them to receive Holy Communion during the week since there was no priest in the desert. St. Tarcisius was sent with the Eucharist to those in prison; but by the 7th century there was laws forbidding lay ministers of Holy Communion.
 - The majority of texts refer only to the Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, therefore it is clear that it was not the norm and allowed with exceptions (i.e. persecution, grave need)
- Extraordinary Ministers have always been seen to be...extraordinary.
- In January 1973, the Vatican issued the document *Immensae Caritatis*, which established Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist once again to assist with distribution of Holy Communion, particular to Masses 1) when other priests or deacons were not available, 2) when either ill-health or old age impeded the Celebrant from distributing Communion alone, or 2) most notably, whenever the number of faithful wishing to receive Communion was so great that the Mass would take too long.
- Noteworthy - Never was it cited as a reason for Extraordinary Ministers that it was to help the people better participate in the liturgy. It was for true need and had nothing to do with baptismal identity—which is often the most common reason we hear today about why people have extraordinary ministers (to get the people to participate better in the liturgy). There have always been distinct roles in the liturgy.
- So why were EMHC's permitted again? In the 1970's, the Church was at its largest that it had been at the time, and the vocation crisis was already looming. Yet, the Vatican never meant for Extraordinary Ministers to become common.
- Ergo...

The Vatican intervenes...

- In 1997, the Vatican issued a document, “Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest” that clarified the use of Extraordinary Ministers:
- *“Extraordinary ministers may distribute Holy Communion at eucharistic celebrations **only when** there are no ordained ministers present or when those ordained ministers present at a liturgical celebration are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion...This function is supplementary and **extraordinary** (101) and must be exercised in accordance with the norm of law...To avoid creating confusion, certain practices are to be avoided and eliminated where such have emerged in particular Churches: Extraordinary ministers receiving Holy Communion apart from the other faithful as though concelebrants; Association with the renewal of promises made by priests at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday, as well as other categories of faithful who renew religious vows or receive a mandate as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion; The **habitual use** of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass thus arbitrarily extending the concept of “a great number of the faithful.”*
- *2002 Redemptionis Sacramentum 158: “Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged.²⁵⁹ **This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation, considering the circumstances and culture of the place, is not at all a sufficient reason.**”*

In summary...

- We should not be afraid to be Catholic.
- The Ordinary Ministers are the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. In true need, there can be extraordinary ministers. But a football game, lunch, or Father's long-winded homily, or "because I think we should" is not a true need.
- *"...[O]ne must not forget the primary office of priests, who have been consecrated by their ordination to represent Christ the Priest: for this reason their hands, like their words and their will, have become the direct instruments of Christ. Through this fact, that is, as ministers of the Holy Eucharist, they have a primary responsibility for the sacred species, because it is a total responsibility: they offer the bread and wine, they consecrate it, and then distribute the sacred species to the participants in the assembly who wish to receive them. Deacons can only bring to the altar the offerings of the faithful and, once they have been consecrated by the priest, distribute them. How eloquent therefore, even if not of ancient custom, is the rite of the anointing of the hands in our Latin ordination, as though precisely for these hands a special grace and power of the Holy Spirit is necessary! To touch the sacred species and **to distribute them with their own hands is a privilege of the ordained**, one which indicates an active participation in the ministry of the Eucharist."* – Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Coenae* (1980)

Purification of Vessels

- “The sacred vessels are purified by the Priest, the Deacon, or an instituted acolyte after Communion or after Mass, in so far as possible at the credence table. The purification of the chalice is done with water alone or with wine and water, which is then consumed by whoever does the purification. The paten is wiped clean as usual with the purificator. Care is to be taken that whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ after the distribution of Communion is consumed immediately and completely at the altar.” – GIRM 279

5. Prayer after Communion (*Stand*)

“To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the whole Communion Rite, the Priest pronounces the Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated.”



Concluding Rites

To the Concluding Rites belong the following:

- a) brief announcements, should they be necessary;
- b) the Priest's Greeting and Blessing, which on certain days and occasions is expanded and expressed by the Prayer over the People or another more solemn formula;
- c) the Dismissal of the people by the Deacon or the Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God

Why the St. Michael Prayer?

- The prayer to St. Michael was once a part of the prayers which Pope Leo XIII prescribed to be recited at the conclusion of every low Mass. Those who are 60 years of age and older likely remember these prayers.
- It's beginning to resurface in the United States in popular devotions
- Pope Francis called on all faithful to pray more often the Prayer to St. Michael in 2018.
- The St. Michael prayer reminds Catholics who their real enemy is and that St. Michael and the good angels defeat the fallen angels.
- We ask for spiritual help as we go back out into the world.

