



“ . . . by baptism, all are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with him, are buried with him, and rise with him”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 6)

The Paschal Mystery, the mystery of Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection, is the heart of liturgical celebrations. The faithful participate in this mystery by the power of the Spirit, who allows them to be united with Christ himself. The heart of this mystery is Christ’s saving (which means “healing” in Latin) presence, which heals fragmented lives. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that our union with Christ and the Church occurred in the waters of Baptism. This union with Christ is why, as St. Augustine once said, we are called Christian, because our identity has changed. Baptism is thus an entrance into union or communion with Christ and his Church (this is one reason why baptismal fonts are often near the entrance of the worship space). Baptism is nourished and strengthened in the celebration of the Eucharist, especially on the Lord’s Day, Sunday.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

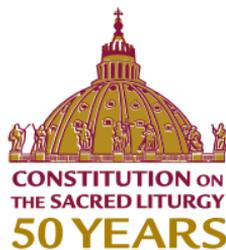


“Christ is always
present in his Church,
especially in its
liturgical celebrations”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 7)

© John Zich

The Second Vatican Council re-emphasized an ancient image of the Church: the Body of Christ. Not only does the Body of Christ refer to the Eucharistic species, it is a biblical image for the Church. By receiving the Eucharistic species, the faithful are transformed by the Holy Spirit into Christ’s own Body. People are united in communion with Christ and the other members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Christ is the Head of the Church, and the lay and ordained make up the Body of the Church. Christ’s presence makes possible the union of the faithful with one another and with Christ himself. During the liturgy, people grow closer and deeper into Christ’s presence. Christ’s presence makes human transformation into deeper holiness possible.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“[Christ] is present
in the sacrifice
of the Mass . . .
in the person
of his minister”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

The priest celebrant’s role is theological as well as functional. The priest’s role is more than that of simply leading the liturgy. Through the grace of ordination, the priest embodies the presence of Christ. The liturgical actions, the proclamation of the prayers, the presiding at sacraments, and so forth are efficacious because Christ is acting through the presiding celebrant to empower his prayers and actions. The minister acts in Christ’s person. Christ is the Head of the Church, and the minister embodies Christ who presides and ministers to the members of the Church. Of course, this ministry is for the healing and building up of the entire Church since the minister embodies Christ’s healing and compassionate presence.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

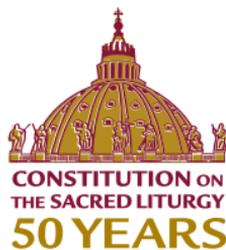
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“[Christ] is present
in the sacrifice of the
Mass . . . especially under
the eucharistic elements”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

Each Sunday at Mass, Catholics gather to hear Christ’s Word, to pray the Eucharistic Prayer in union with the priest celebrant, and to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The Eucharistic Prayer is the height of the Eucharistic liturgy. In this prayer, the Church asks God to transform the bread and wine into Christ’s Body and Blood. We who receive Christ are then able to become his Body and Blood in the world. The Eucharist is a very intimate sacrament. Christ’s presence in the Body and Blood enters our being and transforms our hearts closer to the love of God. In this activity, more occurs than an individual transformation of the person. Rather, in the Eucharist, Christ transforms many individuals into his Body, a communal Body that is his Church. Christ lives, therefore, both in the individual and in the unity of his members as the Church.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“By his power [Christ]
is present in the
sacraments”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed that Christ is present both in the Eucharist and in the other six sacraments. Each sacrament affirms a different aspect of Christ’s powerful presence. In Eucharist, disciples are brought into deep communion with Christ and one another. When that unity is fractured, Penance is the sacrament of healing that restores communion with Christ and the Church. When sickness and poor health challenge us physically, mentally, and spiritually, Anointing of the Sick is the balm that soothes and heals bodies, minds, and spirits. In Marriage, Christ makes possible the deep bond between the married couple. The couple becomes the domestic church. Through Holy Orders, the priest bears the presence of Christ in order to preside over the sacraments and to build up the Church. Each sacrament thus expresses an aspect of Christ’s unfathomable presence and desire for us.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

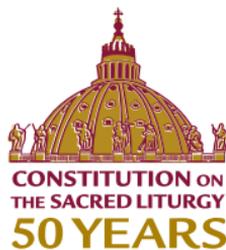
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“[Christ] is present
in his word, since it is he
himself who speaks when
the holy Scriptures are read
in the Church”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the place of Scripture in the liturgy. More Scripture was added to the liturgy and Scripture began to be read in the vernacular language (or the language of the people) rather than Latin. The theological nature of Scripture in the liturgy is reaffirmed by the Council, because it reminds us that in the proclamation of Scripture Christ is indeed present. The words of Scripture provide more than information, they embody Christ’s very presence. The words embody Christ himself. When we listen and take to heart Christ’s words, we grow closer to him. There is a building of communion in the acceptance of Christ’s words between Christ and those who listen. In other words, the proclamation of Scripture builds the relationship of people with Christ himself. We come to know who Christ is and what he means for us who are called to live his words.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“[Christ] is
present . . .
when the Church
prays and sings”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

Since the Second Vatican Council, parishioners have been encouraged to sing the texts of the liturgy. Much of the music of the liturgy is based on Scripture, and thus on the words and life of Christ. Music expresses the faith of the Church, but also builds unity and harmony. Singing and praying requires the use of our lungs, the breath that comes out of our being. *Breath* is an ancient word for the Spirit. When we pray and sing, the Spirit given to us in Baptism flows through us, empowering our words and music with Christ’s presence. When members of the Church pray and sing, their words are infused with Christ’s words. It is indeed Christ, present in the action of singing and prayer, who takes our prayers to God.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

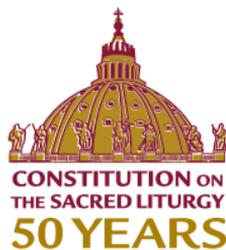


“The Church is the Lord’s beloved Bride”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 7)

The Second Vatican Council likened the bond between Christ and the Church to the nuptial bond. Just as the couple promise faithfulness, so Christ will be faithful to the Church. Just as the nuptial bond is not to be

broken, the bond between Christ and the Church will not be broken. As a couple’s actions with others are to mirror their love for each other, so the Church is to reflect Christ’s love to the world. The union between Christ and the Church is rooted in faith and strengthened in the liturgy. The bond is made intimate during the liturgy as Christ’s Word enters our being as the Scriptures are read and we partake of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. As Christ’s deep bond of love becomes a part of us, we are transformed. This transformation changes us toward the holiness of Christ.

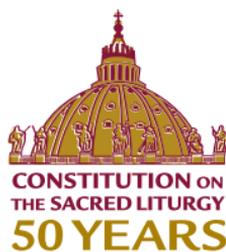




“In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

Liturgy means “the work of the people.” It is an ancient Greek word used theologically by St. Paul, but it was employed before him by Aristotle, who used it to describe the public work done on behalf of the city. Liturgy is public worship because it is the activity of the Church. Liturgy is thus communal, a gathering together of the members of the Church. One image the Second Vatican Council used for the Church is the “Mystical Body of Christ.” The Body of Christ refers to the Church and to the Eucharistic species. In receiving the Eucharistic species, members of the Church grow in deeper union with God and one another. What holds the Church together is the power and presence of Christ united to each of us. The liturgical act is a communal act performed by those united to one another and in deep communion with Christ as the Church, the Body of Christ.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“Every liturgical celebration . . . is a sacred action surpassing all others”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7)

Liturgy is sacred because it is God’s activity in our midst: God speaks to us through his Word, God touches us through the gestures and sacraments, and God becomes part of us through our acceptance of his Word and Body and Blood into our very beings. This is indeed “a sacred action surpassing all others.” The intimacy of God’s presence and power is deeply felt through liturgy. God’s intense healing is deeply felt in the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. God’s deep love is felt within Baptism and Eucharist, when the Spirit enters into us and makes us members of the Church (Baptism) and draws us closer to God and one another (Eucharist).



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 8)

We think of Jerusalem as both the earthly city where Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection took place and the heavenly city to which we aspire. In this sense Jerusalem is the heavenly kingdom. In this heavenly Jerusalem, we will be united to God and one another in a deep bond of love, peace, and joy. Liturgy is a foretaste, a glimpse, of what the final destination will be like for us: a deep communion with God. In the present, we build communion through the words, prayers, music, actions, and gestures of the liturgy. God is present and empowering us to become what God desires: his holy people. While God’s immense goodness and love cannot be known fully in the present, the liturgy gives a glimpse of this deep love of communion.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

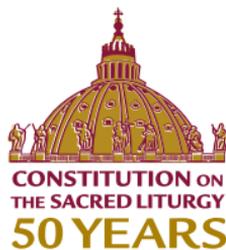
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

“We journey as pilgrims”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 8)

The “pilgrim people” is one of many images documents from the Second Vatican Council use for the Church. Being a disciple is a journey of growing deeper in faith and communion with God. While each of our lives is a pilgrimage, we are not alone on our journey, because the Church is on pilgrimage. We see the Church on pilgrimage every time we gather for liturgy.

Each individual at the liturgy is at a different place on the pilgrimage but journeying toward the same goal: communion with God and one another. The Communion procession reflects this journey as we journey to communion with Christ Jesus and one another. We all have the same destiny, though we might differ in where we are within the pilgrimage.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.





“Before people can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and conversion”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 9)

Liturgy is the work of Christ in the midst of his people. For any type of work to be fruitful, something needs to happen beforehand. Before a paper is written or a movie is produced, painstaking research occurs. For the work of

Christ to transform the faithful during the liturgy, faith and conversion need to happen beforehand. This call to faith and conversion is a continual part of the life of disciples. As we prepare for the liturgy each week, we prepare for Christ’s work in our lives, a work that can transform us and deepen our life with him through our openness.

Conversion is the transformation of our hearts, our whole being, to the love of Christ. This journey, or pilgrimage, takes our entire life. In preparing for liturgy, we might consider where we are in our faith journey.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

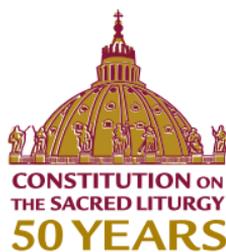
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed . . . the fount from which all the Church’s power flows”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10)

Liturgy is an event, an activity. This activity is both what the faithful do and what God does for the faithful. In the liturgy, God’s desire for holiness is made concrete in words, music, gestures, and sacrament. Liturgy is the summit, because it is the primary activity of the Church in building its relationship (communion) with God. Everything else the Church does is somewhere between the valley and the peak. What is done outside of the liturgy, then, is a journey toward the summit, or the liturgy. Yet, the liturgy is the source of power for the Church. Thus, outside of liturgy, our lives should be guided by Christ’s holiness, glimpsed (revealed) and made tangible in the liturgy. Therefore, each day our lives are moving toward the liturgy but are still guided by Christ revealed to us during the liturgy and within our lives.



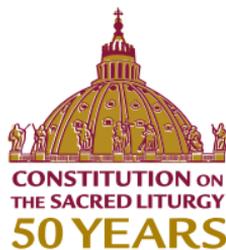
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“The liturgy . . .
moves the faithful,
filled with ‘the paschal
sacraments,’ to be
‘one in holiness.’”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10)

The liturgy enacts the saving or healing presence of Christ that removes human brokenness, sin, and death. In place, Christ gives the gifts of love, peace, justice, and life. This is the Paschal Mystery: Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The Spirit empowers us to move from death (brokenness, fragmentation, and sin) toward life (healing, communion, and love). God’s gift of the Spirit, given in Baptism, allows us to receive Christ’s presence in his Word and Eucharist so that we might be more united to the Father. This transformation by the Trinity leads us closer to the holiness God desires and at the same time brings about a greater harmony and unity (communion) between the faithful and God.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The renewal in the eucharist . . . draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire”

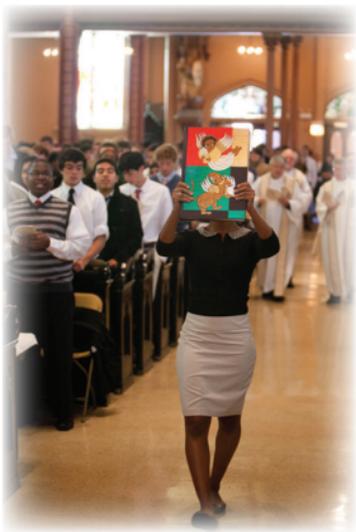
(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10)

The scriptural inference here is the story of the road to Emmaus in the Gospel according to Luke. Two disciples on a journey shortly after Christ’s Crucifixion are joined by a stranger. Upon arriving at Emmaus, they break bread together, and in this action, recognize the risen Christ. This was a liturgical event: the Scriptures were proclaimed and preached on the road, while the Eucharist was celebrated around a table in Emmaus. The Scriptures tell us that the disciples’ hearts were set on fire. In the liturgy, we receive Christ’s words and his Body and Blood. Christ’s burning heart, his burning love, enters into our being—through our eyes, ears, mouths, and skin (through touch, anointing, the Sign of Peace, and so forth). This fire warms up and purifies our hearts, setting us on fire so that Christ’s love might be felt through our compassion toward others.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The liturgy is the source for achieving . . . human sanctification and God’s glorification”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10)

Liturgy is an event, an activity, during which the Church gathers to offer praise and glory to God. God, in all of his attributes (compassion, mercy, faithfulness)

is worshipped during the liturgy. The faithful on their own cannot hope to accomplish holiness. God’s presence and power works through the faithful so that they might be sanctified, that is, healed and made holy by God. The documents of the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed that the baptismal call is to holiness. How do we know what the holiness of God is like?

The prayers, readings, gestures, and actions of the liturgy provide a glimpse into the holiness God desires for each person.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“It is necessary that the faithful come to [the liturgy] with proper dispositions”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 11)

To participate in the liturgy fruitfully, one should be prepared to participate in the liturgy. The faithful prepare for the liturgy in two senses. First, there is the sense of preparation to enter into the liturgy, to

participate, to be open to Christ’s power and presence to transform us. We can ask ourselves about the mood and attitude that we have upon entering the liturgy. We might also ask: Have I prayed before going to the liturgy? Do I contemplate the prayer that I am to enter at the liturgy? The second sense of preparation concerns readiness to be open to Christ’s activity in the liturgical event. Thus, preparing to enter into the liturgy and being inclined to participation in the liturgy are closely tied together so that the work of Christ might be accepted by each of us more fruitfully.



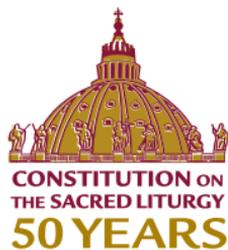
**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**



“The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14)

This sentence may well be one of the most-quoted phrases from the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Participation in the liturgy, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* suggests, has three aspects. First it is full. The faithful are to be engaged in their participation in the parts proper to them throughout the liturgy. Secondly, participation should be conscious. The faithful should not only have a sense of knowing what they are doing but seek to take to heart, to embody, what is said in the prayers, sung in the music, and done in the sacraments. In other words, through our participation, we consider how we are called to be disciples of Christ. Finally, we actively participate in each part of the liturgy in the hopes of growing in the discipleship Christ calls each person to within the liturgy.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

“Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’ (1 Peter 2:9; see 2:4–5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14)



© John Zich

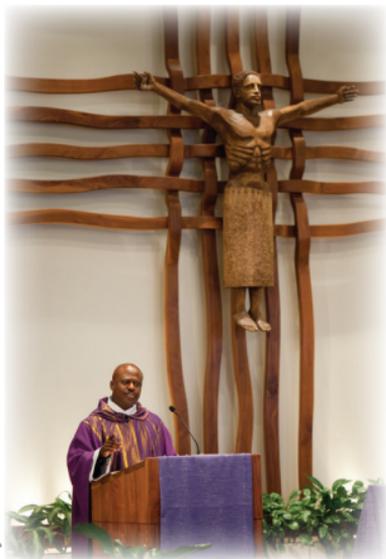
That the Church is “a chosen race” suggests that God chose, or called, each of us to be members of his Church. Priests are those who offer prayers and worship on behalf of others. Each baptized person prays for the needs of the world, the Church, the nation,

and those in need. Daily prayer is a priestly act by the baptized. During Lent, the giving of alms, praying for others, and fasting are aspects of the priesthood of the baptized. The Church is also called to be “a holy nation.” When we think of the word *nation*, we tend to think of our country and its government or political concerns. As a holy nation, the Church promotes holiness in families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. This means living the fruits of faith in what one does daily.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“With zeal and patience
pastors must promote the
liturgical instruction of the
faithful and also their active
participation in the liturgy”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 19)

Since the Second Vatican Council, many pastors have worked hard to promote instruction, or catechesis, for the faithful on the liturgy. To actively participate in the liturgy requires

some knowledge about the liturgy. Yet, it is not enough to know about the liturgy. Participation in the liturgy is necessary, too. Active participation is important because participating in the liturgy provides us with knowledge of Christ. For faith in Christ to grow, the faithful need both to understand what they do in the liturgy to build faith, and to actively participate in the liturgy where Christ is at work, calling us to deeper union with him.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

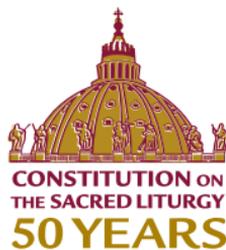
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“Pastors must promote . . .
active participation in the liturgy
both internally and externally”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 19)

Participation in the liturgy is the human response to the God who calls and seeks each of us to be his holy people. Our participation is both internal and external. External participation includes singing; postures such as kneeling, standing, and sitting; gestures such as the Sign of the Cross; processing for Communion; and responding with acclamations. Internal participation means allowing the action to become part of us. In other words, the external participation in rites should become a part of our hearts, our minds, and our beings. External activity is our adherence to God, and this should have an internal effect on us. This effect is God’s transformation of us toward the desired holiness God intends. External participation and internal participation together lead to transformation, to the holiness God desires.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

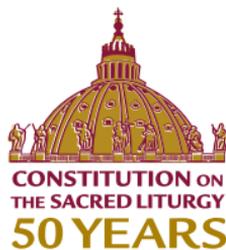


*“Texts and rites should . . .
express more clearly the holy
things they signify”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 21)

One guiding goal of the Second Vatican Council was to ensure that the rites express the ways God works in and through the liturgy.

In the reform of the rite, a reading from Scripture may be proclaimed during the liturgy. Here, the penitent listens to God’s Word expressing compassion, mercy, and forgiveness in the midst of our failing to live as God commands. Another example is the Eucharistic Prayer. Before the Second Vatican Council, there was one, the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I, as it is called today). Now there are eleven Eucharistic Prayers. This greater diversity provides particular focus to our praise and thanks to God for God’s transforming covenant with humanity. In particular, the prayers focus on God’s desire to transform his disciples, through his Body and Blood. Clearer rites afford the faithful the ability to enter into the divine mystery being celebrated and to be open to God’s wondrous presence.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

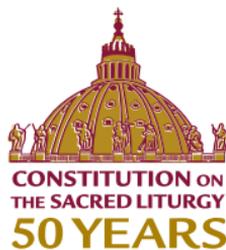


“Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 24)

Scripture is important to the liturgy because it is Christ who speaks through the readings. Faith is shaped and deepened by listening to the readings and taking them to heart. Scripture

in the liturgy is not limited only to the readings, however, because the prayers of the Mass and the liturgical music contain scriptural passages, or allusions. When we pray and sing in the liturgy, we are immersing ourselves in Christ’s saving Word. It is significant that, with the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the amount of Scripture proclaimed at Mass increased from two readings to three. The amount of Scripture drawn on for the liturgy also expanded. Prior to the Council, the same readings were proclaimed each year. With the reforms of the Council, a three-year cycle of readings was established for Sundays and a two-year cycle for weekdays.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“Liturgical
services involve
the whole Body
of the Church”*

*(Constitution on the Sacred
Liturgy, 26)*

Liturgy is an activity that includes “the whole Body of Church.” This Body includes the lay faithful who gather to become the assembly. Their activity during the liturgy is to respond with the acclamations, sing the music, perform the gestures (for example, the Sign of the Cross) and postures, and to internalize these activities, so that they may live out what God does to them through the liturgy. The priest celebrant is also part of the Body of the Church. His ministry is to lead and preside over the liturgy. And, of course, Christ is also part of the Body—actually, it is his Body. Christ is the one who calls, gathers, and constitutes the lay faithful and the ordained into his Body. All gathered are united through his power in a deep communion.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“[Lay liturgical ministers] must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 29)

We have all known people whose liturgical ministry seems to be enmeshed in their very beings. These individuals might be ministers of hospitality who radiate warmth, or readers or lectors whose proclamation of the Scripture seems to come from a spirit deep within them. Being “imbued with the spirit of the liturgy” is different than being trained well in a ministry. Those who are imbued with the liturgy have allowed the liturgy to form and transform them. The lector or reader with a deeply imbued spirituality has studied Scripture to develop a spirituality of the Word, and prays and meditates with the Scriptures. This spirituality goes beyond the knowledge of the liturgy to the spirit of the liturgy. This spirit of the liturgy is lived in the minister’s life.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kristopher W. Seaman. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The people should be encouraged to take part”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 30)

A hallmark of the reformed liturgy is this idea that the people should take part in it. Elsewhere in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, we hear that the act of participating in the liturgy is the “right and duty” of the baptized. Here, the Council

Fathers show just how expansive that right and duty is: It includes singing and speaking the various parts of the liturgy, but it also includes “actions, gestures, and bearing [posture].” Think of this as practicing our humanity. Just as Jesus Christ came to this world as a human being like each of us; just as he used words, songs, actions, and gestures to experience life as a human being; in our worship, we use our senses to commune with Christ and the Church. Through participating in the liturgy, our very human acts of praise and prayer are raised to the level of worship that honors our humanity by praising our Creator.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

*“At the proper times
all should observe a
reverent silence”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 30)

Sometimes we are speechless in the presence of wonder. I can remember finishing a Rocky Mountain hike with my dad and brother and not finding words to describe the grandeur surrounding us. We are also quiet at

poignant moments that need only an embrace and the steady presence of a trusted companion, such as at the death of a loved one, or a moment of vulnerability and sadness.

This is also true of the liturgy. The call to “observe a reverent silence” does not mean that we sit passively and politely, as though everything was frozen in time.

When we are silent during the liturgy, we can open ourselves to be embraced by God in the midst of the community of faith, or we can contemplate the experience of life in God, full of awe and wordless praise.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“In the liturgy God is speaking to his people and Christ is still proclaiming his gospel”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 33)

© John Zich



The liturgy happens in the present, in the here and now. Our participation in the sacred celebration of the liturgy occurs within a fullness of time in which we encounter God active in our lives. It is rooted in tradition, but it isn't a

re-enactment of a historical event. What is important is the above reminder that our God is living and active in the mess and joy of our lives. The joy of the liturgy, then, is its now-ness: Christ living and present in the Church, proclaiming his Gospel through the Holy Spirit's abiding presence in the Church. Christians differ on how God continues to speak to the People of God, but we share this belief. God is speaking to us in the liturgy. How are we listening?



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“The faith
of those taking
part is nourished”*

*(Constitution on the Sacred
Liturgy, 33)*

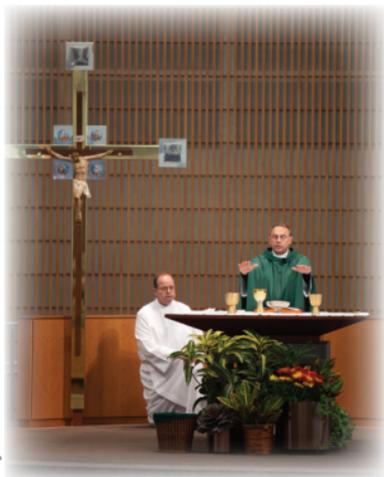
We are created by
and yearn to grow
ever deeper in communion
with God. One of the

joys of the gift and challenge of free will is that we must grow in that communion. It doesn't always come naturally. We believe that, above all else, the liturgy is “the worship of the divine majesty” (33). Yet it is a gift of God that, in praising God, we grow. We find nourishment in giving ourselves in praise back to our Creator. Is this not also true, if to a more limited extent, in other relationships? When we love and honor those in our lives who are in need, do we not grow in love? In worship, we honor God with external and internal prayers, songs, or actions, and in doing so, we create space for God to nourish the recesses of our hearts.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

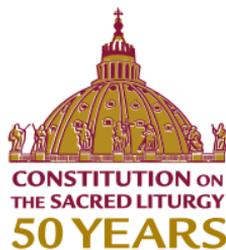


*“The rites should be marked
by a noble simplicity”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 34)

Mozart lived and composed his music during a time when artists retreated from the ornate displays of the previous era. Many government buildings have been built in a similar model, with clean lines and balanced proportions, beautiful

but not “too much.” We find “noble simplicity” in other areas of life, such as a gracious acceptance speech characterized by a few well-chosen words, or perhaps by a single rose in a vase on a small table. The Council Fathers explain that a liturgy of “noble simplicity” means that the rites should be brief, non-repetitive, and easily understood without much explanation. The framers of the reformed liturgy sought to bring out these patterns observed from antiquity: clean lines and balanced proportions in worship, a noble simplicity at liturgy that facilitates our worship of and nourishment by God.



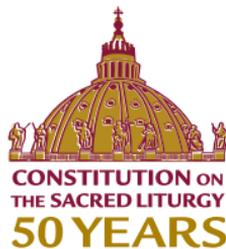
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

“There is to be more
reading from holy
Scripture”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 35)

Once I tried to retell the
story of the prodigal son.

I knew it was from Luke and that I tended to behave more like the older son than any character in the story, but I lost many of the details. I heard a conference speaker say that Catholics today are better at telling broad strokes of the stories than at quoting chapter and verse, possibly a result of more than forty years of hearing more Scripture at Mass. This article of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* also states that Scripture at Mass should be more varied and *apposite*, which means, “strikingly appropriate and relevant.” The reformed *Lectionary for Mass* was developed with this in mind. A scan through the liturgical year shows how much of God’s inspired Word we hear over three years. Even if we can’t recite Scripture exactly, the Word of God is a part of us through our participation in the Sacred Liturgy.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



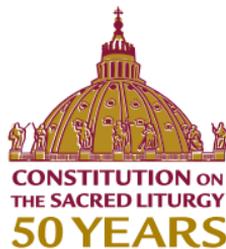


*“Preaching [is] . . .
a proclamation of God’s
wonderful works in the
history of salvation”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 35)

“**P**reach it, brother!” Yes, there are Catholic assemblies that are free enough to make such

exclamations. Have you ever been so excited that you wanted to make such a shout, or call out an “Amen”? People of many faiths flocked to houses of worship after the horror of September 11, 2001, looking to hear the Word of God and to hear it applied to that experience. When the homilist opens up God’s Word and proclaims “God’s wonderful works in the history of salvation,” the People of God are moved. The homilist seeks to open the Word and liturgical celebration and to apply it to the present time, place, and community. Finding our place in the midst of the grand story authored by God is one part of our lifelong quest, and the Homily is a moment in our journey where we find assistance in that search.

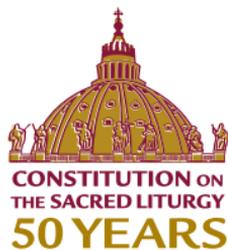




“The use of the mother tongue . . . may be of great advantage to the people”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 36)

In 2007, I stayed with my brother-in-law’s family in the West African city of Dakar, Senegal, for almost a month. I attended Mass at two parishes—the cathedral, and nearby Keur Moussa Benedictine Abbey. In each liturgy, the people and choirs together sang Latin chant, French hymns by the pastoral theologian and musician Lucien Deiss, CSSP, and belt-voice chorales accompanied by West African drums and other instruments and sung in local African dialects. It was remarkable that these communities held together their past and present with several languages. Since the Second Vatican Council’s allowance of greater use of the vernacular, every culture that celebrates the liturgy has demonstrated that use of the “mother tongue” facilitates prayer. Latin plays an important role in our prayer, and yet the Council Fathers wisely encourage the People of God to also use their native languages as we deepen our communion with God.



“Our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood . . . in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross . . . until he should come again”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 47)

© John Zich



One of the most puzzling instructions for the Sacred Paschal Triduum, the “great three days” of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, is the note that the tabernacle should be empty at the beginning of the

Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. Many parishes will leave the tabernacle open and the sanctuary lamp extinguished. If the tabernacle is visible from the main body of the church, this is an especially shocking sight upon entering the worship space. It is a reminder that the celebration of the Eucharist, in all its timelessness and bringing together of the past, present, and future, began at one point in history. There was a beginning of this expression of love between Christ and his people. It began, as all things begin, at the Lord’s invitation. It continues by his command and with our faithful response, whenever we gather at the Lord’s Table.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

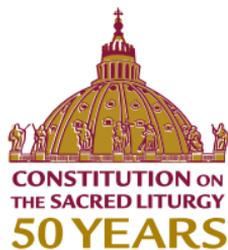
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



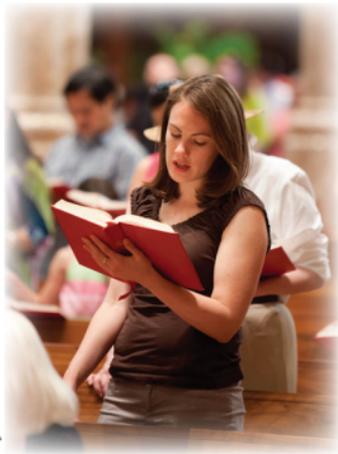
“A sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 47)

Be careful! Going to Mass may be hazardous to your grudges. There have been several occasions when I have attended Mass with someone about whom I care very much when we were in the middle of an uncomfortable argument, disagreement, or conflict. Without fail, the experience of hearing God’s Word and being with others who were seeking God would gradually work its way into my hardened heart. By the time the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer arrived, with its encouragement that we lift up our hearts to the Lord, my posture toward my loved one was more open and so too was my hope that the problem could be resolved. This sacrament of love does indeed effect what it symbolizes—it draws us together in unity and charity. Selfishness and anger can be overcome when we enter into the presence of God and join together at the Paschal banquet, a banquet of sacrificial, self-giving love.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

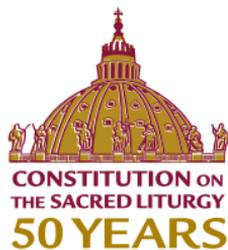


*“Christ’s faithful . . .
should not be there as . . .
silent spectators”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 48)

The Council Fathers are daring in this paragraph: We shouldn’t be “strangers or silent spectators.” They go on to say that we participate in the priest’s activity by offering Christ with him, while at the same time offering ourselves.

This is a high level of activity to which we are called; it is the activity of the salvation of the world. These words remind us that our worship is fuller when we know one another. Our worship is fuller when we join in the salvific activity of the Church, as is our “right and duty” (see paragraph 14). The audacity of the Eucharist is reflected in the last line of this paragraph, in which we are reminded that the goal of Eucharistic thanksgiving is an “ever more perfect unity with God and with each other.” When we worship together as the Body of Christ, “finally God may be all in all.”





*“The treasures of the Bible
are to be opened up more
lavishly”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 51)

And how they have been!
At each liturgy, we hear four
proclamations of Scripture: the
First Reading, which is usually
Scripture from the Old Testament
(or Acts of the Apostles during
Easter Time); the Psalms—the

Church’s oldest book of prayer; the Second Reading, usually taken from one of the New Testament letters; and a Gospel reading from one of the four evangelists. Over the course of a three-year Sunday cycle and a two-year weekday cycle, the Church now proclaims nearly three-quarters of the New Testament in the context of liturgy. The one-year cycle prior to the Second Vatican Council allowed about one-sixth of those texts. The proclamation of the Old Testament grew from quoting eight books to thirty-two, plus the psalms. The result is a “richer share in God’s word” at the ambo.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

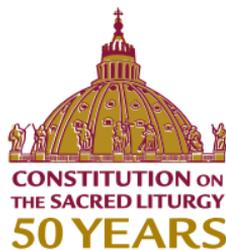
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“Intercession shall be made . . .
for all people, and for the
salvation of the entire world”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 53)

The classic sense of the word *liturgy* is a public work that is done by the people on behalf of others. The Prayer of the Faithful is one way in which we respond to the ongoing needs of the people of the Church, the world, those who are suffering, and our local community. The timely petitions are offered after the Gospel, the Homily, and the Profession of Faith. The Prayer of the Faithful becomes a “communion of prayer”: having heard the Word of God proclaimed and applied to our lives, we unite in a common profession of faith and then in prayer for all God’s people. In this, we follow Jesus’s encouragement: “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened” (Luke 11:9–10, NRSV; also see Matthew 7:7–8).



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kyle Lechtenberg. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“The liturgy of the word
and the liturgy of
the eucharist . . .
form but one single act
of worship”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 56)

Before the Second Vatican Council, Catholics knew when they had to arrive at Mass: before the Offertory. If you arrived by then on a Sunday or Holyday, you satisfied the obligation to attend Mass. So, what about the first part of the Mass? Was that optional? No, but it was seen as different, both in kind and in importance, from the second part of the Mass. The Council changed that with this teaching that the two primary parts of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, “form but one single act of worship.” Christ comes to us in his divine Word before he comes to us in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. We are nourished with heavenly wisdom, then with heavenly food. The Mass is not a clockwork of discrete parts, easily taken apart. The Mass is an organic whole.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

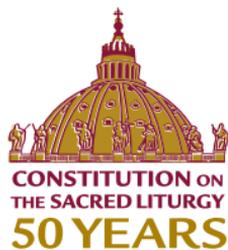
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

“The purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 59)

What is a sacrament? A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ

to give grace. And why does Christ pour out grace on his people in this way? To make them holy. Through the sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—Christ forms a holy people, seals them with his Holy Spirit, and nourishes them, day by day, with his Body and Blood. Through the sacraments of healing—Penance and the Anointing of the Sick—he makes them whole when they are sick in spirit or body. And through the sacraments of vocation—Marriage and Holy Orders—he chooses them to be witnesses to his love in the Church and in the world. Some sacraments are received only once in a lifetime, but the sacraments of Eucharist and Penance can, and should, be received again and again. Through the sacraments, Christ touches us with his grace, and makes us holy.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.





*“The sacraments . . .
nourish, strengthen, and
express [faith]”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 59)

The sacraments of the Church confer grace through words and visible signs. They “bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1131). But there is more. The sacraments also “nourish, strengthen, and express” faith. In other words, the way the sacrament is celebrated—the words, prayers, and ritual gestures—have a power to teach us, and to change us, in a way no explanation ever could. That is why the Sacrament of Baptism can take place in the midst of the Sunday Mass. The elements of the rite—the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith, the pouring of water, the white garment, the lighted candle, and the anointing with sacred Chrism—speak so powerfully of what Baptism is about, and reignite in all present the desire to live the Baptism we have received, and to share with others the faith we profess.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The catechumenate for adults . . . well-suited instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 64)

In the early Church, there was a clear path for those who wished to become Christian: Over a period of several years, they would listen to instruction, join the community for prayer, and receive special blessings and exorcisms, culminating in their initiation at the Easter Vigil. In 1955, Pope Pius XII restored the Holy Week liturgies, bringing adult Baptisms back to the Easter Vigil. And a few years later, the Council Fathers called for the restoration of the catechumenate, the ancient process of preparation for Baptism. Today, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) provides a rich array of prayers and rites, through which catechumens, as well as already baptized candidates for full communion, feel surrounded by the prayer of the Church from the very beginning of their journey. And, the RCIA allows those in the assembly to experience the joy that comes with the continued spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“[Through the divine office]
the whole course of the day
and night is made holy by the
praises of God”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 84)

For many Catholics, the Divine Office is a well-kept secret.

But it shouldn't be. While the Eucharist is our highest form of prayer, it is not the only way the Church gives praise to God. The Divine Office is how the Church obeys the command to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NRSV). It is also known as the Liturgy of the Hours, and as that name suggests, marks the hours of the day with seven different “offices” or liturgies: Morning Prayer (Lauds); Midmorning Prayer; Midday Prayer; Midafternoon Prayer; Evening Prayer (Vespers); Night Prayer (Compline); and the Office of Readings, which may be prayed at any time of day. Bishops, priests, deacons, and many religious communities of men and women are bound to pray the Divine Office daily. While it is optional for most of us, the Council Fathers hoped that all Catholics would come to know and love this form of prayer.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“[The divine office] is the very prayer that Christ himself, together with his Body, addresses to the Father”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 84)

It is a holy paradox: In the Church, we not only pray to Christ; we pray *with* Christ and Christ prays with us to his Father and ours. That is true in the celebration of the Eucharist as well in the celebration of the Divine Office, the Liturgy of the Hours. The psalms, with their exuberant praise and rejoicing, their lament, and the directness and honesty with which they speak to God, are the heart of the Liturgy of the Hours. These are the same psalms to which Jesus turned in his prayer, the same psalms that allowed Jesus to give voice to his most intense suffering: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1, NRSV). As we pray the psalms, we hear the voice of Christ, the voice of the Church, and the echo of the prayers in our hearts.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

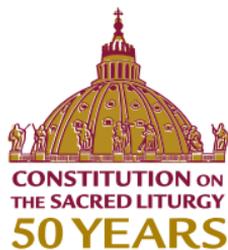


“Within the cycle of a year . . . the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 102)

Through the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year, the Church “unfolds the whole mystery of Christ.” Notice that the Council Fathers did not say “mysteries,” but “mystery.”

We do not celebrate a different mystery at Christmas than at Easter. Rather, we celebrate different aspects of the Paschal Mystery. At Christmas, we celebrate “the beginnings of our redemption” in the Incarnation of Christ (*The Roman Missal*, Prayer at the Vigil Mass of Christmas). At Easter, we celebrate the fullness of redemption in the Lord’s Resurrection. In the feasts of the saints, we honor those who died with Christ and who now share in his eternal life. In the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we honor the first disciple of Christ, who participates in a special way in God’s plan for our salvation. Through the rich prayers and traditions of the liturgical year, the central mystery of our faith—the Paschal Mystery—is revealed to us.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“In [Mary] the Church holds up and admires . . . that which the Church itself desires and hopes wholly to be”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 103)

What does it mean to say that Mary is what “the Church itself desires and hopes wholly to be”? How can the Church be like Mary? The Church is like Mary when it is totally open to the will of God, when it brings forth Christ for the world, when it treasures and meditates on the Word of God. The Church is like Mary when it has compassion for those in need, when it stands by the cross of those who suffer, when it prays for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Second Vatican Council gave us a new title with which to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary: She is truly “Mother of the Church.”



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“Sacred song . . .
forms a necessary or
integral part of the
solemn liturgy”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 112)

The Council’s teachings about music in the liturgy have been summarized neatly as a shift from singing *at* Mass to singing *the* Mass. In other words, music is not an adornment to the rites of the Church. Rather, music is integral to the liturgy, inseparable from the liturgy, especially when what is sung is the liturgy itself: the dialogues, hymns, prayers, and acclamations of the Mass. “Sacred music will be the more holy the more closely it is joined to the liturgical rite” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 112). In other words, the most important singing we do at Mass is not the hymn during the procession, but the prayers that are part of the liturgy: the Penitential Act, the Gloria, the Alleluia, the Sanctus, the Memorial Acclamation, and Amen. This is what it means to sing the Mass. Singing *at* Mass is not enough!



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



*“A liturgical service
takes on a nobler aspect
when the rites are
celebrated with singing”*

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 113)

What makes a liturgy solemn? Is it the number of people present? The number of priests or deacons assisting? The number of candles carried? The style of vesture the ministers wear? The answer to all of these questions, the Council Fathers tell us, is no. What makes a liturgy solemn is the singing, not only of the choir, but of the priests and people. “A liturgical celebration can have no more solemn or pleasing feature than the whole assembly’s expressing its faith and devotion in song” (*Musicam Sacram*, 16). The Council urged priests to sing the parts proper to them; it called on choirs to cultivate their art and to see themselves as leaders of the assembly’s song; and it urged the people to raise their voices in praise. The solemnity of the liturgy is about singing the praises of God with heart and voice.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.



“The texts intended to be sung . . . should be drawn chiefly from holy Scripture and from liturgical sources”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 121)

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that the Church’s musical tradition, especially

Gregorian chant, should be preserved with the greatest care. At the same time, it calls on composers to enrich this treasury by writing new music, in new styles, especially works suited to small choirs and to the singing of the congregation. This new music is to be drawn from Scripture and the liturgy. The Old and New Testaments are full of hymns and canticles: Isaac, Moses and Miriam, Hannah, David, and Isaiah all sing, as do Mary, Simeon, and Zechariah. St. Paul quotes from early Christian hymns in his letters. The liturgy is full of music as well—hymns for many feasts still have a place in the Missal. These ancient songs are still our best songs. The *Constitution* envisions a marriage of ancient texts with contemporary forms, adding new classics to the treasury of sacred music.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

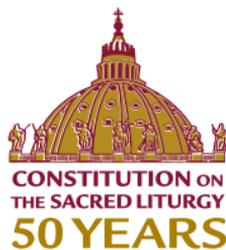
The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.

“Sacred art . . . [turns]
the human spirit devoutly
toward God”

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 122)

In the eighth century, a
great controversy arose in
the Church: iconoclasm.

Iconoclasts claimed that it was wrong, even blasphemous, to represent Christ and the saints in wood, glass, or stone. They were zealous Christians, who felt the only way properly to image Christ was in the goodness and virtue of one’s life. But the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 decreed that sacred images were not only permissible, but good because they can direct our thoughts to the holy things they represent. Sacred art—whether architecture, glass, mosaics, paintings, or sculpture—opens a window to spiritual realities. That is why our church buildings draw our eyes heavenward, why we illuminate the mysteries of faith in stained glass, why we light candles before statues and icons. Sacred art—both representational and non-representational—leads us by the *via pulchritudinis*, the way of beauty, toward God.



The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.





“The Church . . . has admitted styles from every period, according to the proper genius and circumstances of peoples”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 123)

No one artistic style can be described as “Catholic.” Rather, just as the Church has drawn people of all races and

languages to Christ, the Church has taken to herself many forms of music, art, and architecture. Had this not been the case, the glory of the Gothic cathedrals would never have leapt up toward the heavens and the exuberance of the Baroque would never have had a chance to express the joy and glory of Christ’s Resurrection. Today, we are more aware than ever that we are a global Church: Our experience of the faith is enriched by Russian icons, Ethiopian illuminations, vestments from Vietnam, and a myriad of contemporary architectural styles. Who we are as Catholics is not defined by any one “look” or language. To be Catholic is to be open to what is beautiful from every time and place—including ours.



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**

The 50th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration © 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. Orders: 1-800-933-1800. Written by Corinna Laughlin. Text from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* © 1982, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). Imprimatur granted by the Reverend Monsignor John F. Canary, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Chicago on June 5, 2013.