

Josef A. Jungmann, SJ

(1889–1975)

Josef Andreas Jungmann, SJ, may best be recognized as a pastoral liturgist who spent his academic career demonstrating the inherent intersection between catechetics and liturgy. His predominant quandary was whether the lived Catholic life was successful in preaching the Gospel to the world.

As a parish priest in Austria, Jungmann discovered a gulf between liturgy and piety; the joy he preached seemed incapable of conquering the fear of God in the faithful. Thus, his first writing was the collection of reflections, “The Way to Christian Joyousness,” and was later reworked into his well-known piece, *The Good News and Our Proclamation of Faith*.

Four years after ordination, Jungmann decided to become a Jesuit, and at once, embraced the intellectual apostolate, preparing to teach pastoral theology at the University of Innsbruck. There, he furthered the connection between pastoral experience and theological inquiry. Besides being recognized as a man of deep faith, Jungmann the educator was touted as rigorously disciplined yet capable of expressing himself in plain language.

Jungmann helped pave the way to the liturgical renewal of the Eucharist with two classics in the field of liturgical studies. His 1925 *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* traced methodically the evidence in ancient liturgies to answer the question: “Do we pray *to* Christ or *through* Christ?” Second, his 1948 two-volume, 1,000-page *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* was one-of-a-kind in providing an academically rich catechesis of the parts of the Mass as it had morphed through time.

As *The Mass of the Roman Rite* showed, Jungmann championed the primitive era of the Church’s liturgy and demonstrated how the Mass evolved with accretions and emendations. Exposing the Roman liturgy to such scrutiny proved to be invaluable research for the Liturgical Movement. Regarding the

“In the liturgy of the Church there is deposited a mighty potential for human guidance, the Christian orientation of life and for the mastering of life; but it is a potential which up till now has been only partially utilized. . . . The liturgy has been an affair for the priest, and the faithful felt it as their prime duty to assist at Mass on Sundays until everything had been completed conscientiously. In this way the minimum conditions of a Christian way of life were assured. . . . But a mere trickle ran where a mighty stream should have been flowing.”

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primitive liturgy, Jungmann wrote, “Christianity flourished and was vitally alive—because the great truths of Christianity were learned and were a living experience in the liturgy” (“The Pastoral Idea in the History of the Liturgy,” 1957).

While his scholarship was both prolific and meticulous, Jungmann believed that academic achievements in the area of liturgy meant nothing if they did not produce renewal of liturgical practices. Thus, he could rightly be given the title “Father of Pastoral Liturgy.” In Jungmann, acute intellectual prowess combined with a powerful sense of pastoral care.

Such qualities made him a desirable choice to serve as a member of the preparatory commission for the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, as a *peritus* at the Council, and as member of the Consilium responsible for the implementation of reform.

Jungmann’s role as a liturgical pioneer was summarized thus: “It will be a long time before any individual comes along who can match Father Jungmann in his roles as priest, theologian, teacher, scholar, and especially liturgist. He performed them all in a distinguished manner, and for that reason his writings will influence the contemporary Liturgical Movement for years to come” (Mary Ellen Evans, editor of Jungmann’s 1976 *The Mass: An Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Survey*).



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