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Advanced Formation for Liturgical Ministers:
Understanding and Integrating Full Participation

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Advanced Formation for Liturgical Ministers:
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The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy calls for the “full, conscious, and active participation” of the faithful in the celebration of the liturgy, as a right and duty by baptism. Heeding this call in the years since the Council, liturgical formation has defined “full, conscious, and active” as taking part in the rites, texts, singing, gestures, and external actions of the celebration. In addition, formation for liturgical ministers has centered on skills needed to perform a specialized role. The problem addressed in this paper is how to help experienced liturgical ministers move to a level of understanding of participation in the liturgy that goes beyond the external actions to the internal movements of the heart, to transformation of life, so that all who participate in the liturgy may live out what they have become.

The primary texts of the project include *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen Gentium*, as well as Kathleen Hughes’ *Saying Amen: Mystagogy of Sacrament*, Susan Wood’s *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, and Louis-Marie Chauvet’s *Sacraments*. The method includes pre-workshop and post-workshop research questionnaires and a full day workshop.

The workshop began with an overview of participation as understood in the documents of the Church. With this background, an extended presentation on participation as primarily internal was given. Interior participation consists of taking part in the sacrifice of Christ by the offering of self with Christ in gift to God at the liturgy. The day ended with a practical experience of mystagogical reflection on the liturgy, which the participants used to process their own participation.

The results of the project showed a significant increase in understanding of a deeper level of participation. Half of the participations indicated an increase in their awareness of how they participate in the sacrifice of Christ, and that their participation involves a giving of self, as Christ gave fully of himself on the cross, to God and to others.

The conclusion is that further formation in a deeper level of participation for those who are committed to the liturgical life of the parish can reap strong results when focused on increasing interior participation.

This dissertation by James A. Wickman fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Ministry approved by Michael Witczak, S.L.D., as Director, and by Stephen Rossetti, D.Min., Ph.D. as Reader.

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Introduction

Identification of the Issue in Ministry

The promulgation of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, particularly *Sacrosanctum Concilium: the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (December 4, 1963), changed the way Roman Catholics throughout the world worship, pray, and understand their role in the liturgical assembly. The Council introduced a renewal of liturgical principles that ushered in a new era. The forty-plus years of living with these renewed principles has led to many positive changes in the level of participation in the Mass as well as in the role of Catholics in areas such as social justice and involvement in the wider community. In the United States, parishioners and parish leaders, as well as lay parish staff members and clergy, are more educated in the principles of liturgy and the meaning behind the various symbols, rituals, and gestures that are used in the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments than ever before.

After the Second Vatican Council, as the reform of the liturgy took shape in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, changes came quickly. Many Catholic Churches implemented the reformed rites swiftly, while trying to catechize about the new rites at the same time. The people had to learn all about their new role in the celebration, why the altar had been turned around, and even why Father is now facing toward them and no longer speaking in Latin. Throughout the United States many parishes and dioceses did extensive catechesis for the clergy and laity alike. However, one must remember that catechesis is ongoing and life-long. Simply introducing a

change is never enough, for each person in the community needs to keep learning on a deeper and deeper level what the liturgy means. In addition, some people, no matter how many times they hear something, will only integrate it when they are ready. There are many reasons to continue catechesis on the liturgy throughout life.

Many parishes in this country have done and continue to do a thorough job of formation for those involved in liturgical ministry. This includes those who serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, readers, hospitality ministers, altar servers, and sacristans. Many parishioners who are part of these ministries attend workshops, skills sessions, talks by well known liturgists, and even days of reflection for special seasons or times of the year. They know their role as liturgical ministers well, they know how to participate in the liturgy, and they know the gestures, movements, words, songs, and rites that make up the celebration of the liturgy.

However, something has been missing. While those parishes with strong ministerial formation programs accomplish many good things, the formation only goes so far. Many of those who have been doing ministry in their parishes in the years since the Second Vatican Council think that there is nothing beyond their special ministry training. Some do not see the need for further development, and they have proved to be very tough candidates for attendance at parish formation events. On the other hand, some workshops for liturgical ministries are lacking in a deeper reflection on the meaning of the liturgy and its full implications for everyday life outside of the liturgy. In my experience, these people have a strong

understanding of what it means to participate in the liturgy, but that participation stops at a certain point.

The result is that participation is centered in the activity of specialized ministry. I have often asked myself, would it make a difference in the everyday lives of our parishioners if they truly understood what participation in the liturgy is all about, took it to heart, and then lived it out in the world? Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee issued a pastoral letter in 1997 titled *Eucharist Without Walls*. The title alone gives a glimpse into the idea that Eucharist and the celebration of the liturgy is not something that takes place just on Sunday morning, within the confines of the Church building, with these people only, no matter how well they participate in the Mass. The Pastoral Letter states: “We are Eucharist in the way we love, challenge, and support one another in living our faith in God. We are Eucharist when we become Christ’s presence daily to our family members, our neighbors, and our co-workers — to all whom we encounter in every realm of our lives.”¹ The difficulty in parish ministry is working with those who went through this formation and think there is nothing beyond it. They do not remember that there is always more to learn. Christ continues to reveal himself to God’s people in this very celebration, at this very time, and we should always strive for new ways to understand it and live it out in the world.

This, then, is the root of the issue in ministry that is the basis of this paper. The purpose of this project is to design, implement, and evaluate a workshop for liturgical ministers based on the meaning of fully conscious and active participation

¹ Rembert Weakland, *Eucharist Without Walls: A Vision of the Church for the Year 2000* (Milwaukee, WI: Archdiocese of Milwaukee, November 30, 1997), 4.

in the liturgy at a deeper level. It is intended for experienced liturgical ministers, and could even be called “advanced formation” for liturgical ministers. The project strives to renew in the ministers a more profound appreciation of the meaning of participation in the liturgy. The project also seeks a change in the participant’s experience of the liturgy, after examining and exploring that experience in a new way, so that they can continue to become the people that all are called to be by reason of their baptism.

The project supplied the participants with these three main elements as a basis for a renewed understanding:

First, the project offers an overview of participation in the liturgy as understood in the documents of the Church, particularly the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* of the Second Vatican Council, as well as the Pastoral Introduction to the Order of Mass, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, and Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini: On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy*. This understanding of participation is based on a renewed appreciation for baptism as the root of our call to live the life of the Church.

Second, this project instills an appreciation of ritual and how it works in the celebration of the liturgy. While many have a basic knowledge of ritual, a deeper level of catechesis is essential to a full appreciation of the power of ritual to shape lives. The work of Nathan Mitchell on the characteristics of ritual along with the writings of Louis-Marie Chauvet on participation in the Sacrifice of Christ is essential to this awareness.

Finally, the workshop gives the participants a practical experience of mystagogical reflection on the liturgy that they can use to process their own participation. This mystagogical reflection was experiential in its application, and was based on the excellent work by Sr. Kathleen Hughes on using a mystagogical model of reflection on the liturgy.

As part of their commitment before and after the workshop, the participants answered pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires. The pre-workshop questions examined the attendees' understanding of ritual and participation based on their experience before attending this formation event. Several weeks after the workshop, the follow-up questionnaire investigated changes in behavior or attitude that may have been the result of new learnings and deeper understandings discovered in the workshop. While such subjective learning is almost impossible to measure, this thesis will undertake an analysis of the responses of the participants to various questions about their understanding of ritual, participation, and their behavior both during and outside of the celebration.

Finally, this paper examines the contributions to ministry that may come from such an endeavor. When liturgical catechesis focuses on both interior and exterior aspects, with reflection on action and contemplation on ritual, can it help deepen the spiritual lives of the participants in a new way? Several conclusions may be drawn.

Summary of Chapters

This exploration of the meaning of participation begins with an examination of baptism as the root of the call to participate in the liturgy. This leads to an analysis of the significance of mystagogia, and how a mystagogical model can serve as the basis of reflection on liturgical experience. This mystagogical model was instrumental in the workshop as a way to experience and reflect on experience.

An examination of the levels of participation in sacraments is in order following this. Sacraments are a deeper experience of God's grace that is already present in the world.² As important as the ritual of the liturgical celebration is for our experience of the grace of God, our participation in the sacraments goes beyond taking part in the ritual alone. What is called for is a deeper appreciation of interior participation in the liturgy. How do the people gathered around the altar participate in the sacrifice of Christ taking place on that table at that time? How are lives brought together with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in gift to God the Father, and by extension to one another? One result of the celebration of the liturgy is a change in how one lives life after leaving the Mass.

Finally, this paper will analyze the results of the research and the work of the project. Did the project work or not? Did the project carry out its goals? Did the participants walk away with a deeper understanding of what they do every Sunday so that it makes a difference in their every day lives during the week? That is the goal of this formational experience and the theological foundation underlying the

² For a full exploration of sacramentality as the general framework for celebrating the sacraments in the world, see Kevin Irwin, "A Sacramental World: Sacramentality as the Primary Language for Sacraments," *Worship* 76:3 (May 2002): 197-211.

project. It is a goal that steers this project in ministry, so that the effort of both the candidate as workshop presenter and the liturgical minister as workshop attendee moves everyone closer to a renewal of their own participation.

Chapter One

The Roots of Participation and Mystagogia

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) calls for the “fully conscious and active participation” of the faithful in the liturgy.³ This invitation has been the core and driving force of the liturgical renewal in Roman Catholic Churches throughout the world. It is a call to participate in the liturgical celebration for all who attend, from the clergy to the laity, and it is a call that has been interpreted, written about, acted on, and reinterpreted many times since it first appeared on December 4, 1963, at the Second Vatican Council.

The Council rooted this call to active participation in baptism. It is a call found in the texts of the rite itself, such as this closing blessing from the *Rite of Baptism for Children* says:

By God’s gift, through water and the Holy Spirit, we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, may he continue to pour out his blessings upon all present, always, wherever they may be, faithful members of his holy people.⁴

Those who are baptized are made new in water and the Holy Spirit and become faithful members of God’s holy people. As faithful people, they continue to celebrate the sacraments and participate in the life of the Church. They become members of the Body of Christ in the celebration of the liturgy, and it is through the liturgy that the Body is realized.

³ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), 14.

⁴ International Committee on English in the Liturgy, “Rite of Baptism for Children” in *The Rites of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 1:70.

In other words, the Body of Christ is made real in the celebration of the liturgy. It is here that one strengthens the bonds of the unity with the Body, and where one learns what it means to live the life of a follower of Christ. "The celebration of Mass is the action of Christ and the People of God, ministers and congregation...The participation of all is demanded by the nature of the liturgy and, for the faithful, is their right and duty by reason of their Baptism."⁵

As members of the Body of Christ, we participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is Christ himself, as the unity of the earthly and the heavenly, who is the head of the Body.

Through Baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." In this sacred rite a oneness with Christ's death and resurrection is both symbolized and brought about: "For we were buried with Him by means of Baptism into death;" and if "we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be so in the likeness of His resurrection also."⁶

In baptism we die with Christ and are raised to new life. Whether as an adult or a small child, the one who is baptized dies to sin and a life of sinfulness, and rises to new life in Christ. The newly baptized become a new creation, and part of the Body of Christ. During the rite of Baptism, the one to be baptized goes down into the water and is raised up out of the water and into this new. Therefore, the newly created person is free from that life of sin and free to live the life of Christ into which he or she is incorporated.

⁵Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Introduction to the Order of Mass* (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 4.

⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1964), 7.

Furthermore, participation in the sacraments of the Church is the realization of this new life. “Really partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another.”⁷ The Baptized are to participate in the life of the Church both in the sacraments and in the living out of the grace that is given in the sacraments. In other words, by taking part in the Breaking of the Bread and coming into communion with one another and Christ, we are called to live out that communion in the world. This is a call to live a new life because one has been baptized and because of participation in the life of the Church. Participation in the liturgy is essential to living the Christian life.

What does this participation mean and what does it look like? How is Baptism the root of this participation and what does it signify in the world? Mark Searle has put it this way:

Baptism creates for those being baptized a new set of relationships to Christ, to the Church, and to the world. Anyone who is baptized, then, assumes the responsibility of taking part in representing God to the world and the world to God because this is the work of Christ that has passed over into the liturgy of the Church.⁸

These new relationships are realized in the liturgy itself. That is where each of the baptized learns what it means to live a new life in Christ. It is through our baptism that we “discover ourselves fully, our truest identity, in the life of the Church.”⁹

⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, 7.

⁸ Mark Searle, *Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual, and Social Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Searle and Anne Y. Koester (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), 31.

⁹ Richard Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 27.

Through the actions of the liturgy itself, the life of the Church, the members of the Body of Christ *become* the Body of Christ, more fully, more actively, and more consciously.

Many Catholics who attend Church today learn that fully conscious and active participation is the goal of the liturgy. They know that the assembly is to be active in their participation. In a parish such as Holy Trinity, located in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C. where this project took place, this type of active participation is well known. Workshops, liturgical formation sessions, homilies, articles, and bulletin inserts are some of the many tools of liturgical catechesis that have been employed to help instill this in the hearts of the people at Holy Trinity parish. It is obvious that much time and energy has gone into this effort, to form people who understand what the liturgy is about and their role in it.

This understanding of participation is demonstrated through the level of commitment to ministry and to the liturgy at Holy Trinity. The parishioners take their roles at Sunday Mass seriously. The liturgical ministers are committed individuals who understand their function and do it well. In addition to involvement in special roles such as lector or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, there is an understanding that all who are gathered have the right and responsibility to take their proper place at the weekly celebration of the Liturgy.

This participation in ritual can be seen as participation in the “external” expressions of the liturgy. In this way of thinking, the ritual of the liturgical act is the activity of the worshipping assembly. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* describes the need for this kind of participation: “The people should be encouraged to take

part [in the liturgy] by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.”¹⁰ Mark Searle calls this the “formal” characteristic of ritual behavior.¹¹ Participation of this type “calls for conformity rather than uniqueness, practice rather than inventiveness. It puts words into our mouths and assigns us roles to act out.”¹² Traditional catechetical tools were employed to help liturgical ministers learn about these roles and their characteristics.

Catechesis for Liturgical Ministers

In the years since the Second Vatican Council, programs of formation for liturgical ministers in the parish have primarily focused on skills that individuals need to perform a given ministerial role. These ministers have learned to be good lectors, proclaiming the Word of God with clarity, faithfulness, and transparency. They have an understanding of the Eucharist, and their position as assisting in the distribution of the Body of Christ to the Body of Christ. In addition, they know that hospitality is important to welcome both the one who is familiar and the one who is a stranger as they walk in the door to come to the feast. In the section on “Norms drawn from the hierarchic and communal nature of the liturgy,” the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that liturgical ministers “must all be deeply imbued

¹⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 30.

¹¹ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 20-22. Formal is one of four characteristics of ritual Searle identifies here, the others being collective, performance, and formative.

¹² Searle, *Called to Participate*, 20.

with the spirit of the liturgy, each in his own measure, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner.”¹³ However, is that enough? Is there anything more to learn?

As members of the Body of Christ, all are called to full participation that is more than a function within the celebration. It is more than just what we do at the liturgy, because we are called to an understanding beyond the externals. We are also invited to live life differently because of what we celebrate at the liturgy. However, most parishes focus on formation of liturgical ministers. As a result, the practice of promoting active participation in the liturgy usually concentrates on the “functional” or “ministerial” with an emphasis on doing ministry well. Many experienced liturgical ministers have not had the opportunity to further explore the meaning behind taking their individual part in the liturgical celebration.¹⁴

In those parishes that have programs of catechesis on the liturgy targeted to parishioners in general, the spotlight for the most part has been on the history of the liturgy or information about the liturgy.¹⁵ The result of this emphasis is that most of what is being done in liturgical catechesis is about imparting information, something that is not necessarily helpful for the “living out” of the liturgy in daily life. As Kathleen Hughes writes in *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament*: “What is

¹³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 29.

¹⁴ My initial research with liturgical ministers who have multiple years of experience in parish ministry indicates a level of satisfaction regarding their own knowledge of active participation and communal experience of the liturgy. Conversely, the post-workshop questionnaires indicate a willingness to accept that new light can and has been shed on their past knowledge. This will be further explored in Chapters four and five.

¹⁵ Kathleen Hughes, *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament*, (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999), 7.

needed is a way to help us enter the world of the liturgy, not simply to think about it but to dwell inside it, not remaining detached students or spectators but rather allowing ourselves to be captivated and claimed by the mystery that unfolds.”¹⁶

Liturgical ministers in particular have a great potential to appreciate what is called for in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* in regard to this deeper level of participation: “the faithful take part [in the liturgy] fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects.”¹⁷ Because they already are committed to the life of the liturgy and are leaders within the parish, the prospect of these leaders influencing other members of the parish is greater than any other group in the parish. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore how these prominent persons might have a more intense experience of the sacramental life of the Church.

The Problem in Ministry

The problem in ministry that this project and paper seek to address is how to help experienced liturgical ministers move to a deeper level in their formation that will allow them to experience and reflect on their participation in the liturgy in a new way. Because they are called by Baptism to share in this celebration of the love of God, this project seeks to help the participants see beyond the exterior level to the interior level, beyond the external. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, in its

¹⁶ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 8.

¹⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 11.

opening paragraphs, speaks of the essential character of the Church as active and contemplative, physical and spiritual:

It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek.¹⁸

Participants in the liturgy must learn to move beyond the externals. It is in both the action of the liturgy and contemplation on that action, through their participation and their reflection, that participants will find “fully conscious and active participation” in the liturgy.

This project has two goals. First, to persuade the participants to question what it means to take part in the liturgy and their liturgical role. To do this, we will delve into questions such as, what is there beyond exterior participation in the rite? What is interior participation? While taking ownership of their own liturgical ministerial role is a positive thing, all must be encouraged to see beyond that one specialized function. Liturgical ministers should understand that the Eucharist is both a communal meal and participation in Christ’s sacrifice. The activities and discussions of the project workshop are designed to help experienced liturgical ministers develop an understanding of participation in the celebration of the Eucharist that is both interior and exterior, heaven and earth, meal and sacrifice.

The second aspect of this effort to push liturgical ministers toward a deeper understanding of the liturgy is to provide a formational experience on which to reflect in a new way. This worship experience and reflection will instill a more

¹⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2.

thorough understanding of the power of ritual to change people's hearts and live their lives differently because of their participation in the liturgical act. In a sense, liturgy is a "rehearsal" for living the kingdom of God in the world. This project aims to help the experienced minister understand that when they leave the liturgy, they are to live in a new way because they have been changed by participation. Reflecting on a real life liturgical experience, within the context of the project presentation, will lead the attendees to examine their definition of participation. The process of paying attention to liturgical experience and then reflecting on that experience in a meaningful and deliberate way is called mystagogy.

Mystagogy Defined

Literally translated, mystagogy means "teaching of the mystery." In the earliest centuries after Christ, the "mystery" referred to the unknown rituals of the Church. In the case of those becoming new members of the Christian Church, the mysteries were revealed by participating in them. They did this through their initiation and taking full part in the community for the first time at the Easter Vigil. Mystagogy took place after baptism and anointing in the Holy Spirit, during the celebration itself, when the mystery these "neophytes" had just experienced was unfolded through the preaching. The newly baptized were catechized in the meaning of dying and rising with Christ as they had experienced it in the water of the Baptismal pool. They learned the meaning behind the oil that covered their heads, and what the white garment in which they were clothed symbolized. The significance of these rituals and actions was explained to them only after they had

experienced the ritual. At the same time, all those who gathered with the newly baptized were renewed in their understanding and reminded of their own experience.

The mystagogue Bishops of the fourth-century such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopseustia left behind examples of this mystagogical preaching. Their reflections demonstrated “a focus on formation in Christian living and discipleship in Christ, not merely mastery of doctrinal content.”¹⁹ These mystagogical preachers, in order to help the newly baptized live out what they had become in these rituals, coordinated mystagogical homilies “so as to explain to the neophytes the spiritual and theological significance of the various rites, symbols and gestures of the initiation sacraments in which they participated at the Easter Vigil.”²⁰

St. Cyril, one of the great mystagogical preachers of the East, addressed the newly baptized about his desire to wait until after they had encountered the sacraments to reveal the meaning of the mystery and to lead them to a deeper appropriation of their experience. St. Cyril longed to provide the new Christians with a more complete knowledge of the great mysteries of the sacraments of the Church:

Cyril expresses that he has greatly desired to speak with them on these spiritual and celestial mysteries, but he knows that: “. . . seeing is far more persuasive than hearing, [so] I waited till this season; that finding you more open to the influence of my words, from this your experience, I might take and lead you to the brighter and fragrant meadow of this present Paradise . . . especially as you have been made fit to receive the more sacred Mysteries . . .

¹⁹ Mary Ann Clarahán, “Mystagogy and Mystery,” *Worship* 83:6 (November 2009): 507.

²⁰ Clarahán, “Mystagogy and Mystery,” 506.

let us now teach you exactly about these things, that you may know the deep meaning of what was done to you on that evening of your baptism."²¹

Mystagogy, then, is rooted in experience. Mystagogical teaching begins with experience and infuses it with meaning. It answers many questions: what is the water bath all about and where is the meaning found? What is the purpose of the experience of the cleansing? The words of the scriptures themselves provide the explanation: as one went down under the water and then was pulled up, washed clean and new in the living waters, one was dying and rising with Christ. It was revealed to those who were baptized that they died and rose to new life as Christ was crucified and then rose on the third day. The unfolding of the meaning of the event using the light of scripture has so much more power when it is heard after the sacramental encounter than as part of the preparation for the liturgical act.

That same principle may serve as the foundation for mystagogical reflection today. As Kathleen Hughes says, "First the experience, then the teaching."²²

In all cases, [mystagogy's] function was to help its hearers enter the world of the liturgy, walk around inside it, explore their experience of its sights and sounds and smells, savor its memory, ponder the meaning of what was said and done, and live out of its vision.²³

Mystagogy, then, can serve as a method of theological reflection on experience that leads to a deeper level of understanding and participation. In a mystagogical method, the experience of the baptized is the point of departure. The main reflection is on the ritual itself, as the participants have experienced it in their faith lives. This model is employed today in the renewed Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

²¹ Clarahan, "Mystagogy and Mystery," 511.

²² Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 9.

²³ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 9.

Mystagogy in the RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process through which adults become members of the Catholic Church. The “ritual progression” of the RCIA is largely made up of the celebration of the various rites that lead up to Baptism. These rites celebrate the different stages in the course of becoming fully initiated into the Catholic Church. By taking part in these rites, the candidate, catechumen, or elect who is in this development moves from one stage to the next. The four primary stages are Inquiry, Catechumenate, Election, and Mystagogy. We will explore each stage in detail.

One first comes to the Church in a phase of inquiry, during which the individual approaches the community and inquires about the faith. They are encouraged to ask questions and even question their own desire to join the faith. This is a period of exploration and discovery.

The second part of the process is the catechumenate. Through the Rite of Acceptance the inquirer is brought into official relationship with the Church and becomes a catechumen. During this more formal stage, one experiences and learns about the life and teachings of the Catholic Church. The Rite of Acceptance is the first of the liturgical rites that assists in the formation of those who are being brought into the Church. Each of these rites is followed by a reflection on the experience. This “mystagogical” reflection is a penetration of what happened to them and what it signifies for their faith life.

The third stage of the RCIA is a period of purification and enlightenment. Catechumens enter this stage through the Rite of Election that takes place in the presence of the Bishop. Through this liturgical rite the elect are “called to” the sacraments of Initiation. They are “chosen” for the sacraments to take their final steps on the journey to become members of the Catholic Church. The Rite of Election takes place on the First Sunday of Lent and, as in ages past, Lent is then seen as a period of final preparation and “purification” for initiation at the Easter Vigil. At the Easter Vigil, the elect take part in the sacraments and the sacramental life of the Church fully; they become members of the Church through Baptism, are anointed in the Holy Spirit, and take part in the sacrificial meal of Christ for the first time. Through the rituals, they become who they are called to be.

The final part of the RCIA process is the period of Mystagogy. The primary work here is not to *prepare* the newly baptized to participate in the Church, it is to *reflect* on the rituals they have experienced, chiefly at the Easter Vigil, so that they may live out who they have become. During this time, the newly baptized have the opportunity to fully appreciate their experience by reflecting on it and coming to an understanding of how the experience itself is the source of how their lives are to be lived differently as members of the Body of Christ. In turn, all who are present at the Easter Vigil, accompanying the elect through the rites of Initiation, are called to reflect on their own experiences of baptism and remembrance of it, to continue their own conversion to the ways of Christ. As Kathleen Hughes reminds us about this final stage of the RCIA process:

The initiation rituals of water, oil and table-sharing — when done lavishly in our presence — stir our own baptismal consciousness, invite us to embrace

the ordinary, everyday dying and rising with Christ, urge us to live no longer for ourselves, summon us to live in deed what we proclaim in word and ritual action, what we seal with “Amen.”²⁴

All who take part in the ritual, both the baptized and candidates alike, are called to live the Body of Christ in the world.

However, this is not always the case. The experience of many RCIA programs is that once the Easter Vigil is over, the process is complete. Follow-up afterward usually consists of exploring how the newly baptized can become part of the Church, from joining the parish “pledge program” to becoming a minister or volunteer in one of the many parish ministries. While it is commendable to encourage these new members to become involved in liturgical ministry, social justice, or some other program, what about the real meaning of the period of mystagogical reflection? The opportunity to reflect on how the worship experience of the newly baptized is a source of real change is missed. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* describes this as a call to live a life of faith:

The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with “the paschal sacraments,” to be “one in holiness;” it prays that “they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith:” the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.²⁵

Through the use of the ordinary things of this world, through the use of water, oil, bread, and wine, the baptized have become the Body of Christ and are to live as followers of Christ in the world. They are admonished to live what they have

²⁴ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 57.

²⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

become, to be the Body of Christ, as that reality is celebrated in the sacraments. The grace of God is poured forth in the world, is present in the things of the world and is experienced on an even deeper level in the sacraments of the Church.²⁶ A mystagogical reflection on the experience of the sacraments calls one to that action in the world.

Mystagogical Reflection

The liturgical ministers of Holy Trinity Parish, as the subjects of the project, are not familiar with the form of mystagogical reflection described here. Since they are primarily concerned with the “exterior” functioning of their particular ministerial role, a new way to assess their participation will present significant challenge. They will be asked to reflect on what happens in the experience of a liturgical rite and focus on the meaning behind the exterior symbols, gestures, and parts of the ritual. Therefore, in order to provide a deeper understanding of participation in the liturgy and encourage them to look beyond their external practices, a mystagogical model is exactly what the people need. Such a method is ideal for use with people who have significant experience with liturgical formation. So then, what does this mystagogical reflection look like?

According to contemporary writers like Kathleen Hughes and Mary Ann Clarahan, the first essential element of successful mystagogy is well-celebrated liturgies.²⁷ “Excellent, care-full, well-planned and well-executed liturgy is the first-

²⁶ Irwin, “A Sacramental World,” 198-200.

²⁷See further: Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 8-16 and Clarahan, “Mystagogy and Mystery,” 517-519.

level mystagogy... an absolute prerequisite to rich symbolic participation and contemplation.”²⁸ It is only through well done liturgical actions that the participants are able to reflect fully on their experience. Do the symbols speak well and clearly? Is the liturgy well prepared so that the ministers are able to enter the prayer and not appear to be caught up only in the “performance” of their ministry or role? Are the words, meanings, and actions of the ritual apparent?

The second essential element is attending to the experience of the liturgy. Kathleen Hughes divides concentrating on the event of the liturgy into two categories: “attending to the liturgy as it unfolds and attending to the movements of our hearts before, during, and after the celebration.”²⁹ Here we find an echo of the call of paragraph 14 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* to be “full and conscious” in our participation at the liturgy. We are called to be conscious of the action that is happening on the outside all around us, known as attending to the liturgy itself, as well as the feelings and emotions on the inside of each one of us as we go through the experience, identified as attending to the heart.

Hughes then goes on: “active participation in the liturgy is primarily internal.”³⁰ This statement may come as a surprise to many active Catholics. Some will ask, wasn’t an internal focus on the liturgy part of the Mass before the Second Vatican Council, when the people gathered at the liturgy did not actively participate? Isn’t active participation all about the movements, gestures, speaking, singing, and taking part in the ritual expression of the liturgy? Hughes bring the two

²⁸ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 16.

²⁹ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 17.

³⁰ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 18.

together: “Active participation has to do with a kind of mindful engagement in the rites, an attending to the words and gestures, the symbols, the choreography, the space, the season. Without interior participation the rites are empty formalism.”³¹

This idea forms the basis of the mystagogical reflection on the liturgy that is the root of this project in ministry. In the next chapter, we will examine the levels of participation in the liturgy, both as meal and as sacrifice. This is followed by a description of the project itself and the experience of mystagogical reflection on the liturgy by the liturgical ministers of Holy Trinity Parish.

³¹ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 18.

Chapter Two

Active Participation: Internal and External, Individual and Communal

Paragraph seven of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* describes how Christ is present in the liturgy in order to accomplish the great work that is the liturgy and the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. “To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations.”³² Drawing on that tradition, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* lays out the presence of Christ in four distinct ways:

Christ’s promise applies in an outstanding way to such a local gathering of the holy Church: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Mt 18:20). For in the celebration of Mass, in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated, Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his word, and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species.³³

Christ is present in the assembly gathered, in the Priest who presides, in the word that is proclaimed, and most especially in the bread and wine that have become his Body and Blood. The presence of Christ calls the assembly that gathers into active participation. This participation is because Christ gathers them; Christ is the head of the celebration. The gathered assembly participates in Christ’s presence by listening to the word, both as it is proclaimed and preached. They experience Christ in the leadership of the priest who prays in the name of all gathered. Most importantly, at the celebration of the Eucharist the gathered assembly participates in

³² *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

³³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 27.

the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species. How is that so? When “two or three are gathered” in Christ’s name, what are they to do? As we have already seen in Chapter One, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* calls all to participation. *Actuosa participatio* (or active participation) is the right and dignity of the baptized, but where do we find a complete definition of what that means?

The phrase *actuosa participatio* first appeared in *Tra le Sollecitudini*, the 1903 Motu Proprio of Pius X. In the introduction to this document, the Holy Father expressed the need for an instruction on sacred music. This was called for because of abuses that were present in the liturgy. Pope Pius X stresses the importance of assuring the “sanctity and dignity” of the celebration of the liturgy, because it is through active participation that the true Christian Spirit is achieved.

It being our ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit restored in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, we deem it necessary to provide before everything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for the object of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable font, which is the active participation in the holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.³⁴

While this term appears in other papal documents and instructions of the first half of the 20th century, it was in paragraph 14 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* that “active participation” took on an even greater consequence:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.³⁵

³⁴ Pope Pius X, “*Tra le Sollecitudini: Motu Proprio of Pope Pius X on the Restoration of Church Music*” in *Worship and Liturgy*, ed. James J. Megivern (Wilmington, NC: Consortium Book, 1978), 18.

³⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

As paragraph 14 reveals, *actuosa participatio* is fundamental to the celebration of the liturgy. The same paragraph goes on to say that instruction in an understanding of the spirit of the liturgy is crucial, starting with the clergy and moving to the faithful:

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless the pastors themselves, in the first place, become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to give instruction about it. A prime need, therefore, is that attention be directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy.³⁶

In the section on “who celebrates” the liturgy, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that it is the entire Body of Christ who celebrates, that they are “actively participating” in the celebration, and that the Body is indeed made manifest by the celebration of the liturgy.³⁷ In this section the *Catechism* also references paragraph 14 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* by calling for full, conscious, and active participation. However, it does this without fully defining what all that participation entails.³⁸

The *Catechism* does define the roles of those who lead the assembly. Paragraph 1142 describes the importance of the ordained minister, particularly the bishop. The ministry of the bishop is most evident in his role of presiding at the Eucharist, with the priest and deacon in communion. There are additional roles in the celebration “for the purpose of assisting the work of the common priesthood of the faithful.”³⁹ It is clear in number 1143 of the *Catechism* that the “whole assembly”

³⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

³⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 1140.

³⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1141.

³⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1142.

does the work of the liturgy, and that each person should participate only in their particular role, but it does not delineate the “active” role of the assembly.

Defining Participation

As pointed out in Chapter One, paragraph 30 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* characterizes “active” by listing the means by which the people are encouraged to take part. In this way, the function of the assembly to speak, respond, sing, stand, sit, process, and physically take part in the celebration promotes their participation. At the same time, however, paragraph 30 does not limit active participation to these external activities. It simply says that these actions and ritual expressions promote that value. Note that silence is included in the list of ways to promote participation. While it is not always part of the activity of all who gather together in praise and worship, the communal observance of silence at various points during the liturgy is part of the very fabric of the celebration.

Paragraph 48 of *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is more telling of what is included in the type of participation called for by the liturgy:

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s word and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.

This section contains the intriguing phrase “they should take part in the sacred action *conscious* of what they are doing, with *devotion* and full *collaboration*.” Here, *conscious* implies a type of awareness, as in the members of the assembly should have an awareness of what they are doing. Another word could be *mindfulness*, so that as they pray the people of God have a *mindfulness* about what they are doing. This means paying attention to more than just the surface level of the ritual being celebrated.

The word *devotion* in number 48 brings thoughts of affection, loyalty, and dedication. The kind of *devotion* referred to here goes beyond the definition of *devotion* as an exercise in piety to even a fondness or commitment to the ritual. It is a way of approaching participation in the ritual with a certain enthusiasm and attachment. Celebrating a ritual with *devotion* involves religious fervor and fidelity to both the celebration and those who are taking part in it as a community.

The third term of interest in this section describing participation is *collaboration*. The use of this term implies that teamwork and group effort are involved in the work of the people at the liturgy. Perhaps there is a need to describe participation in the liturgy more often as *collaboration*. After all, it is possible for one to participate individually and not necessarily require the involvement of another. *Collaboration*, however, denotes the actions of a relationship, between and among those present, with each one taking his or her part in the effort, but doing the whole of the work together with Christ as the head. It is crucial that no one person takes more or less than his or her part in this effort, but all the parts are required. In *collaboration*, there is a certain alliance and cooperation among those involved.

Defining participation in the liturgical celebration as collaboration with the work of God as shared by all is one way to drive this notion home.

In general, parishes need more liturgical catechesis in the area of developing a complete understanding of active participation that is internal and external, individual and communal. This is in contrast to training and formation efforts that only define roles and teach what each person does at the celebration. While in itself this approach is good, it is not enough. In the texts of the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy* we have examined so far, the assembly is encouraged to be inwardly aware of what they are doing, cognizant of what full collaboration with the work of Christ in the liturgy is all about.

This is especially true for those who are involved in liturgical ministry at the parish. While they are normally better formed in the spirit of the liturgy than the average “person in the pew,” they tend to concentrate their participation on their “job” at the liturgy. This can happen when formation processes for the various ministries focus on doing ministry well. Once again, while in itself this is a good thing, it is not enough. As established in the identification of the problem in ministry for the project, it is an incomplete realization of *actuosa participatio* and thus an area in need of deeper awareness and appreciation.

This project-in-ministry took place at Holy Trinity parish to address this specific issue among those who are long-time liturgical ministers. These parishioners have been through formation programs similar to those described here. Some of them have done it for many years. The project sought out a limited number of these experienced ministers to take part in a one-day workshop that was presented twice

at the parish, with 28 people at one session and 27 at the other. These were randomly chosen from among those who responded to the invitation to participate. They completed pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires that focused on their understanding of participation and whether or not the work of the project influenced that understanding (see Appendix Two). They were told that participation in the liturgy is central to our identity, but not given any other advance information about the focus on individual/communal or interior/exterior aspects of the liturgy. We will now consider that research aspect of the project.

Participation Responses

Of the 55 people who participated in the workshops held at Holy Trinity for this project, 95% had experience as liturgical ministers that went back multiple years, some as many as 20 or more. Since the project is interested in learning how people experience participation in the liturgy, the pre-workshop questionnaire included a number of questions related to their own personal experience. In response to questions on “how would you describe your participation in the liturgy,” 99% of respondents listed their role as a liturgical minister first. Of these, only 45% answered that their participation included that as members of the assembly. In addition, of the 45% who responded in this way, 20% of those said they were members of the assembly passively, and did not really participate in the celebration if they were in the mode of being in the assembly only. For these individuals, the primary means of involvement in the liturgy is through one of the various specialized liturgical ministerial roles.

In response to a question about the meaningfulness of their participation, there was an even split between descriptions of the work of a particular ministerial role and the work of a “person in the pew.” Those who listed themselves as members of the assembly mostly answered this question with a description of a meaningful liturgy that they attended. Nearly half of these mentioned their participation in the Triduum in general or the Easter Vigil in particular as their most meaningful memory of liturgy.

Questions on the meaning of ritual followed, including ritual in daily life. The participants were asked to describe some experience of ritual in their everyday routine, as an understanding of ritual is key to participation. Sixty-five percent of respondents portrayed some understanding of ritual in their day-to-day living, whether as their morning routine, exercise regimen, or other daily activities. Seventy-three percent of the total number of respondents illustrated daily ritual behaviors that related to prayer, personal piety, or worship activities. These respondents clearly saw a relation between ritual and religious activity.

When asked to describe their experience of ritual in terms of the celebration of the liturgy, the respondents referred to such things as the sign of peace, listening to the homily, and giving thanks to God. The largest number of common responses included participating in the music and singing, taking Holy Communion, and listening to the Liturgy of the Word. In addition, nearly ten percent included a description of their role as liturgical minister in their response.

There are two conclusions drawn from this survey of experienced liturgical ministers. First, the parish has done a good job of forming its liturgical ministers in

their specialized roles, but these ministers need to expand their understanding of participation further. Participation in the liturgy is the action of the Body of Christ, internal and external, with Christ as its head. This awareness was not present in the answers to this questionnaire. As noted, some responded that if they are not taking a specialized role in a particular ministry, they are more passive and not fully participating. However, it is clear that the respondents integrated what they learned about being a liturgical minister, and this is a strong foundation on which to build a fuller understanding of participation.

This leads to the second conclusion drawn from the results of the pre-workshop questionnaire: these ministers are prime candidates for a catechetical program that highlights the “work of the people” at the celebration of the liturgy. Work in this area will help them understand that their participation is more than being a liturgical minister. For example, there is a parishioner at Holy Trinity who calls himself “a minister of the assembly.” He is not involved in any of the specialized liturgical ministries, but focuses his participation on his role as one of the people gathered. His example is a good one. All should understand their role in the liturgical action with a mindfulness about their active participation.

With this background information, the stage was set. The course for the project was to review this level of current thinking and then develop a new concept of participation that goes beyond it. In order to do this, and continue the focus on what the documents of the Church say about this deeper level, we turn to the revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

Participation Explored

The opening paragraphs of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) are helpful in defining the importance of active participation:

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church.⁴¹

All share in the memorial of the Lord's Supper in order to derive the benefit that Christ promised. This is another way of looking at participation. It is a vision not so much of what is done, active or passive, but of the result. In the liturgy, the participants take part "more abundantly" in the fruits of the sacrifice of Christ. This involvement is at a deeper internal level, and it requires a consciousness that the *General Instruction* goes on to describe:

This will best be accomplished if...the entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and demanded by the very nature of the celebration, and to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism.⁴²

This participation goes beyond the externals alone because it calls for involvement of both the mind and the body. Because of their Baptism, each member of the Church is to be active in the liturgical life of the community. "Baptism does not just make one a different kind of individual; it draws the person into a profound ecclesial relationship within the life of the Church as a follower or disciple of Jesus

⁴¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 17.

⁴² *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 18.

sent in mission to the world."⁴³ Being in that ecclesial relationship means joining others in worship that is both interior and exterior.

Preparation for the liturgy is to keep this in mind as a goal as well. Since participation is to be *burning* with faith, hope, and charity, the planning process must be infused with the same. These values are not outwardly demonstrated in the external actions of the assembly. For example, when doing liturgical preparation and making musical choices, a value to be considered is how will this particular part of the liturgy or piece of music help the Body of Christ express its participation in a way that is burning with hope.

In this paragraph from the *General Instruction*, the door is open to seeing participation in a new way. As Mark Searle wrote when he examined how participation is understood today, "Participation, it now appears, means much more than getting the assembly to appear more involved."⁴⁴ Participation requires that the people understand what they are doing, why they are doing it, and to whom it is directed. Searle says there are two sides required when studying the participation of the gathered assembly:

On the front side is the gathered assembly and its ritual performance. On the hind side is the mystery of the invisible God. Between the two is the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ. The challenge in liturgical practice is to know how to move from the visible to the invisible, from the human to the divine, from the signifier to the signified. For this, the key word is "participation."⁴⁵

⁴³ Gaillardetz, "Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry," 35.

⁴⁴ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 44.

⁴⁵ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 44.

There must be an inward dimension of participation equal to the outward. This dimension is the mindfulness spoken of earlier. It is the prayerfulness that goes beyond the movements, gestures, singing, and speaking of the ritual act, and yet at the same time it is not present without those same ritual movements. These two dimensions of participation are not only dependent on each other, one can even go so far as to say that fully conscious and active participation *does not exist* without both the interior and the exterior, with the visible leading to the invisible and then back to the visible yet again.

Searle describes this participation in three levels. He bases these on the three dimensions of sacramental sign in classic Catholic theology. "Since the high Middle Ages, it has been customary to differentiate not two dimensions to the sacramental sign — the signifier and the signified — but three."⁴⁶ Within a sacramental celebration, these three levels are, first, the signifier (*sacramentum tantum*); second, that which is immediately signified (*res et sacramentum*); and third, the ultimate meaning of the sacrament (*res tantum*). Searle maintains that each of these levels of meaning in a sacrament holds a corresponding level of participation.

Participation in the first level is taking part in the ritual behavior of the liturgical act itself. Ritual in this sense refers to "behavior that is patterned, repetitive, and thus more or less predictable."⁴⁷ This may include any ritual behavior, such as those identified by the participants in their pre-workshop questionnaires considered above. Those who follow this ritual behavior are expected

⁴⁶ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 17.

⁴⁷ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 18.

to participate in a set pattern, and “observe the constraints associated with the particular kind of ritual in question, so that it might be effective in defining or redefining the participants’ roles.”⁴⁸

An example of this is the “external” participation at the celebration of the Eucharist, as those who gather pray, sing, recite, and make gestures and movements during the celebration. However, one must keep in mind that this is more than just ritual movement, it is a sacramental celebration, and so it has a deeper meaning. This deeper meaning corresponds to the fact that symbols in the liturgy point to something beyond themselves. Liturgical symbols find their meaning in something beyond what is visible. The meaning of the bread and wine, for example, is in the Body and the Blood of Christ. The meaning of the lighting of the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil is in the Resurrection of Christ breaking the darkness of sin and death. Here we find the second level of participation.

This second level involves movement from the visible to the invisible, from the signifier to that which is signified. For example, in the sacraments, we participate in the Paschal Mystery.

The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passions resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, whereby “dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life.”⁴⁹

This is the interior level of participation, which requires an understanding of what is being done at the liturgy. What is the meaning behind the rituals of the liturgical

⁴⁸ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 26.

⁴⁹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5.

act? How does one participate in the Paschal Mystery at the celebration of the liturgy? The question that this project and workshop asks is, how can reflection on the actions of the liturgy help bring about a change of heart, which is the very nature of the liturgy itself?

The answer to that question is found in participation. This level of meaning of a sacrament (*res et sacramentum*) is that which is signified. Participation in this second level is participation in that which is actually signified. For example, in the sacrament of marriage, the two people getting married is signified. So when one is married, this level of participation is in a loving married relationship. In the sacrament of penance, the sinner is forgiven of their sins. Participation at this level is to live free from sinfulness. In baptism one becomes a member of the Body of Christ. Once again, participation here is taking part in the life of the community as a member of the Body. Searle explains participation at this second level:

The rite of ordination can make someone a priest, but it cannot make that person holy or competent. On the other hand, the common expectation is...that priests should be religious leaders, that newlyweds should care about each other. In other words, we expect that the relationship should in each case be more than purely formal or juridical. It should be, we might say, *real!*⁵⁰

This kind of participation goes beyond the “external” sharing in the liturgical act, to involvement in the interior meaning of the sacramental action. How do we get to this? One method is mystagogical reflection on the liturgy itself. Hughes calls this liturgical contemplation. “In the liturgy we gradually cultivate an awareness of God at the very heart of the touches, sights, sounds and smells, of the word, gestures and

⁵⁰ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 32.

objects, even of the faces of those with whom we have gathered.”⁵¹ This mystagogical reflection is a central element of the experience of the workshop and it is fully explored in Chapter Three.

Taken together then, we see a movement from the visible to the invisible, from exterior to interior, from the sign to what is signified. This movement is toward the next level, which is partaking in the ultimate meaning (*res tantum*). This third level is the *ultimate* meaning of being a member of the Body of Christ, or a married person in the Church, or one who is forgiven of their sins. This ultimate meaning is a union with God and how we live that out in our daily lives. Searle calls this third level, participation in the life of God. “To be a credible sign, the liturgical assembly must be more than just the Church on duty; it has to be a community that can be taken seriously as witnessing to the living God and holding out hope for humanity.”⁵²

If this is a movement from the visible to the invisible, then this third level of participation is back to the visible once again. The ultimate meaning is visible because it is found in the living out of the sacrament in daily life. It is all about what happens when we leave the Church on Sunday morning. This is where the love and mercy of God are made visible in the world through the actions of the one who has been renewed in Christ at the sacramental celebration. Does our participation in the liturgy make a difference in the rest of our lives? This third level is where that difference is made.

⁵¹ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 24.

⁵² Searle, *Called to Participate*, 37.

Of course, this is not necessarily a linear happening, as if one literally “moves” from one level of participation to the next. They ideally happen all at the same time. For example, Hughes suggests that through contemplation on the liturgy, at the celebration itself, “we open our whole being to the sights and sounds around us, and specifically to the liturgy as it unfolds.”⁵³ This awareness can help the participant experience more than one level at a time, because it opens the way for a new experience of what is happening all around. Openness to experience leads one beyond the experience itself to the deeper meaning of participation, and to a deeper experience of the grace given in the sacramental celebration. The hope of this project is to teach the participants how to reflect on that deeper level and help these experienced liturgical ministers come to a new appreciation of participation through their reflections. The hope of this project is also that they will gain a new understanding of participation in the Sacrifice of Christ at the liturgy, and that new understanding will lead them to a deeper contemplation on the liturgy, and ultimately, to a deeper involvement in all three levels of participation.

Participation in Sacrifice

The sacraments are a participation in the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Paschal Mystery. Let’s look again at the second part of paragraph 48 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and what it says about our participation in the Sacrifice of Christ:

[Christ’s faithful] should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they

⁵³ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 25.

should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.⁵⁴

Participation in the Sacrifice of Christ on the cross is an essential part of participation in the Eucharistic celebration. It is here that we join with Christ in giving of his very self to God the Father. A renewal of this understanding is crucial to helping the participants in this workshop move to a deeper level of understanding their own participation. If, as Hughes says, without interior participation, the externals are in danger of empty formalism, then a rediscovery of this level of participation is an essential step.

To carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the Kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us the mystery of that kingdom. By His obedience He brought about redemption. The Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world...As often as the sacrifice of the cross, in which Christ our Passover was sacrificed, is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried on, and, in the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, the unity of all believers who form one body in Christ is both expressed and brought about. All men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world, from whom we go forth.⁵⁵

According to *Lumen Gentium*, participation in the sacrifice of Christ, at this altar, at this moment, both expresses what it is to be the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God on earth, and brings about that Kingdom on this earth. It is in the liturgy that one joins with the sacrifice of Christ in gift to God the Father, and those who celebrate become part of the sacrifice of Christ. In this work of Christ, we both signify the Body of Christ and become the Body of Christ to the world. It is at once representative and constitutive. Partaking in the third level of participation would

⁵⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.

⁵⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, 3.

then require that one acts in a new way, as a changed person, because of participating in this sacrifice.

The French liturgical theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet proposes a three-part model of sacramental celebration: Word — Sacrament — Ethic. Chauvet holds that all three must be part of the Christian experience of Sacrament. In short, “Word” is the celebration of the liturgical act itself, “Sacrament” can be seen as the meaning of the sacrament, and “Ethic” is how we live as a result of participation in the sacrament. “The grace received in the sacraments is given as a task to accomplish as one prayer after communion expresses: ‘Makes us become what we have celebrated and received.’”⁵⁶ According to Chauvet, this is a necessary bond between sacrament and ethic, between what is celebrated in the liturgy and how it is lived out in one’s life:

Without the liturgy, ethics can be most generous but is in danger of losing its Christian identity of response to the prior commitment to God. Without ethics, sacramental practice is bound to become ossified and to verge on magic. It is the sacrament that gives ethics the power to become a “spiritual sacrifice”; it is ethics that gives the sacrament the means of “verifying” its fruitfulness.⁵⁷

This way of living, based on who we have “become” because of what we have celebrated, is a faith response to what has been freely given by God. One is reminded of *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* from the work of Msgr. Kevin Irwin. This is the liturgical axiom that says the law of prayer (*orandi*) shapes the law of belief (*credendi*) and in turn, Irwin adds, the law of living (*vivendi*). In this third level of participation in the sacraments, the law of living flows from our praying and

⁵⁶ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 65.

⁵⁷ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 65.

believing. According to Irwin, liturgical theology demands an ethic as a result of the action of the liturgy.⁵⁸ The expansion of *lex orandi, lex credendi* to include a *lex vivendi* can be seen as living in the grace of God, in the gift of God's self:

The way that liturgy deals with ethics sets up a model in the sense that liturgy continually acclaims and draws the community more fully into the mystery of God's love. This becomes the basis on which ethical demands are made. It is not that in living the ethical life that we *earn* salvation. The primacy of the overarching love of God grounds any response to that love in terms of right conduct. To return "again and again" to the liturgy is to experience continually God's reconciling love in order that this love might so overtake us as to enable us to extend this love to others more and more spontaneously and fully.⁵⁹

The root of the *lex vivendi*, I propose, can be found in participation in the Sacrifice of Christ, in the "return gift" of Christ to the Father. Chauvet grounds his thinking about this mediation of exchange between God and humanity on a model of symbolic exchange.⁶⁰ Christ is given as a free gift by God the Father to humanity. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). It is out of pure love that God gave his Son, and it is out of that same love that Christ gave up his life to God the Father. Humanity is then caught up in this gift exchange between the Father and the Son. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we join in with the gift of self to God the Father that is given by the Son. We participate by giving freely of ourselves just as Christ does. In this exchange, it is important to remember two key elements.

⁵⁸ Kevin Irwin, *Context and Text: Method In Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 331.

⁵⁹ Irwin, *Context and Text*, 331.

⁶⁰ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 123.

First, the gift is freely given, and it is not dependent in any way on human warrant. "In the sacraments, the position of gift is occupied by God's gratuitous action. Under this aspect of gratuitousness, God's grace is not something due."⁶¹ The gift is given purely out of love, which is God. It is a gift of pure grace, and there is nothing that human beings do or can do to deserve it. It is pure gift.

Second, it is important to remember that the reception of this gift of God's grace requires the return gift of faith. The reception of God's grace requires the return-gift of faith, conversion, and changing the way one lives one's life.⁶² When we join with the Sacrifice of Christ at the altar of the Eucharist, we are compelled to live our lives differently. Although this is all at God's initiative, and it is not dependent on our faith but only quantified by God, the return-gift of a life lived in grace and mercy is a given. Chauvet goes so far as to say that if there is no return-gift, grace *as grace* from God is not received: "The reception of grace as grace (and not as something else which would be more or less magical) never goes without a task; it implies the ethical return-gift of justice and mercy."⁶³

Therefore, an understanding of participation as joining with the Sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist is an essential element of coming to a deeper understanding of participation. This will be a new level of learning for the workshop participants. Fully conscious and active participation in the liturgical act does not just *ask* that they follow the ways of Christ or *suggest* that they live according to their baptismal call as the Body of Christ in the world, living a life of justice and mercy is *required* by

⁶¹ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 123.

⁶² Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 124.

⁶³ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 138.

their participation. It is *required* in that the gift is not gift, and the grace is not grace, it is something else, if the return gift is not part of the exchange.

Conclusion

So far we have explored the mystagogical model of reflection that this project intends to use as an experiential element for the participants as well as the formational element of the meaning of participation. We also examined participation in the Sacrifice of Christ as an element of interior participation in the Eucharist that leads to the ultimate level of participation in the sacrament, namely, how we live in God's grace, justice, and mercy in the world. These three elements represent the theological basis for the formational aspects of the project presentation. In the next chapter we will examine the workshop itself, from the morning session through to the afternoon. We will consider the activities experienced by the participants, look at the discussions, both large group and small group, and delve into the materials that made up the day.

Chapter Three

The Workshop: Process and Progression

The workshop began with a short prayer service led by the candidate with assistance from those gathered. The prayer recalled the presence of Christ, the grace of God in the world, and our place as participants in that grace (See Appendix 1.2 for the complete *Opening Prayer Service*). The prayers and music chosen called on God's love in sending his Son to live among us and on God's wisdom found in the teachings and life of Christ on this earth. Our life-long work as followers of Jesus is to imitate him as much as possible. The opening prayer, from the candidate, led that direction:

Loving God,
Keep before us the wisdom and love
you have revealed in Christ.
Help us to follow Jesus
in word and deed,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

An indication of where we were headed as people in need of further formation and catechesis was found in the reading, chosen from the Chapter 13 of the First Letter to the Corinthians, verses 9 through 12:

We know partially and we prophesy partially,
but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
When I was a child, I used to talk as a child,
think as a child, reason as a child;
when I became a man, I put aside childish things.
At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face.
At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.

Following the prayer service, the candidate, as the leader of the workshop, gave an introduction to the day. The liturgical ministers gathered for this workshop knew that there have been changes in the liturgy. Various rubrical changes were implemented with the revision of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* in 2002. Most were also aware of the upcoming textual changes in the Order of Mass with the full implementation of the revised *Roman Missal*, set for the First Sunday of Advent 2011. But the type of catechesis needed was beyond merely teaching about these external changes. The aim of this workshop was to find something more meaningful and profound for the catechesis of these parish leaders.

Goal of the Workshop

In this day, our chief goal was to develop an understanding and integration of full participation in the liturgical celebration at a new and deeper level. This idea was presented by the candidate to the participants in these words:

The goal of this workshop is to foster deeper understanding of the liturgy leading to greater personal engagement in the event of the liturgy and a deeper commitment to the way of life we rehearse together when we gather for corporate prayer.⁶⁴

With this goal stated, all understood that we would be exploring a way to experience, reflect on, and define what we mean when we say that all are called to actively, fully, and consciously participate in the liturgy.

In order to get the participants involved in learning from the very start, a short group activity followed the introduction. It is essential to involve adult learners at the beginning of a workshop such as this because they want be

⁶⁴ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 7.

challenged by the process. “The adult learner wants to be involved, wants to participate, wants to be treated with respect and dignity, and wants to be challenged.”⁶⁵ The activity chosen was a *values assessment-consensus exercise*. It was described as “a good way to achieve instant interaction.”⁶⁶

The exercise involved asking each participant to examine a list of “liturgical values” culled from the usual ideas people consider as important to participation at the celebration of the Eucharist (see the entire list in Appendix 1.3). The instructions gave the following direction to each person:

Look at the following list of values based on the liturgy. Spend two minutes silently and drop three of them from the list. There is no order for the values, and no judgment placed on items left off the list. We will then look at them together.

The participants were pre-arranged into groups of six to eight in order to facilitate discussion. They were to look at the list for two minutes alone, then move into group discussion and consensus building as a table, and finally share their results with everyone. The conclusion was not as important as the exercise itself. “What is important is that the participants have an opportunity to get to know one another on more than a surface basis.”⁶⁷ The discussion that followed was lively and engaging, and all were involved in the consensus building and reporting process.

The reported results were interesting. In the group discussion, the liturgical values that placed high importance on exterior participation, such as “singing by everyone present” and “reception of Holy Communion,” were ranked highest

⁶⁵ Julius E. Eittington, *The Winning Trainer: Winning Ways to Involve People in Learning*, Fourth ed. (Boston: Butterworth Heinemann, 2002), xi.

⁶⁶ Eittington, *The Winning Trainer*, 5.

⁶⁷ Eittington, *The Winning Trainer*, 5.

because they were dropped from the list the least number of times. The liturgical values seen as more interior, such as “silence at key moments” and “joining in the sacrifice of Christ,” were ranked the lowest, as they were dropped off the list the most. So while the exercise achieved its intended goal of group interaction, it was clear that both as individuals and as groups, the higher priority was placed on the values seen as integral to exterior or external participation, as opposed to interior or internal participation.

The Connection to Baptism

Following the Opening Activity, the candidate continued to lead the workshop by introducing the morning session on understanding and integrating full participation. The purpose of this introduction was to help the participants recognize that taking an active part in the liturgy is about more than one hour together on Sunday morning. Fully conscious and active participation affects their whole lives. This begins with birth into the family of God.

We come to understand our role as participants in the liturgy because of our baptism. It is by reason of our baptism that we become a member of the Body of Christ, that we become a child of God, and that we are to participate actively in the liturgical life of the Church. To understand this, the presentation turned to the Rite of Baptism:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin,
given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,
and welcomed you into his holy people.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 98.

In baptism all are freed from sin, reborn in the Holy Spirit, and welcomed by the whole community of God's people. Ideally this takes place within a communal celebration. Again from the Rite of Baptism we read:

This child has been reborn in baptism.
He/she is now called the child of God,
for so indeed he/she is.⁶⁹

All who are baptized are members of God's holy people and as such have a right and duty to be involved in the liturgical life of the Church.

The participants were reminded that the foundation for the reform of the liturgy following the Second Vatican Council is in *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. It is here that we find partaking in the liturgy as a right and duty. Indeed, almost every discussion of full participation and the definition of *actuosa participatio* begins with paragraph 14:

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. 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 also 2:4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.⁷⁰

This paragraph was known to many of the experienced ministers because it serves as the base reference for regular formation sessions for those who become part of the various liturgical ministries in the parish. It has been central to much of the writing and preaching that has guided the liturgical reform and it has shaped the external participation that so many are used to today.

⁶⁹ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 103.

⁷⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

From here, the group examined the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini: On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy*. The Pope wrote on the meaning of the Sunday celebration in the life of the Church:

Sunday is the day above all other days which summons Christians to remember the salvation which was given to them in baptism and which has made them new in Christ. The liturgy underscores this baptismal dimension.⁷¹

This affirms the importance of baptism to the Sunday celebration of the liturgy, and the importance of the liturgy to baptism. As the day on which Christians remember salvation, the Sunday liturgy serves as a time for renewal of baptismal promises and a renewal of faith. It is an occasion to remember being welcomed into the Body of Christ for the first time. *Dies Domini* makes this connection clear by describing Sunday as a day for renewal of baptismal promises. The document highlights the unique qualities of recalling the baptismal waters found in the Sprinkling Rite as part of the Opening Rites at Mass. In addition, it points out that every Sunday we renew our faith through the common recitation of the Profession of Faith:

Sunday is the day of faith. This is stressed by the fact that the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy, like the liturgy of other solemnities, includes the Profession of Faith. Recited or sung, the Creed declares the baptismal and Paschal character of Sunday, making it the day on which in a special way the baptized renew their adherence to Christ and his Gospel in a rekindled awareness of their baptismal promises.⁷²

This presentation ended with a question. Given that active participation is central to the liturgy, and is based on the baptismal character common to all the members of the Body of Christ, and considering that Sunday is the day to remember

⁷¹ Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini, On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican, 1998), 25.

⁷² Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, 29.

and renew the faith that has been given in baptism, how do we actually define active participation? In other words, what does it mean to remember our baptism and take a rightful place at the Sunday celebration of the faith community?

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* describes some of the characteristics and qualities of active participation, such as the liturgy is the place for all the baptized, and that it is from this participation that the faithful “derive the Christian spirit.” Through the liturgy, the faithful are formed in the spirit of what it means to follow Christ and live life differently. However, the document never fully defines *actuosa participatio*. What we need now is further exploration and integration of active participation.

A discussion followed that centered on the “liturgical values” of the first short exercise. Attendees were invited to consider all of the liturgical values that were identified in that exercise, and ask themselves the question, how many of these values are *essential* to the celebration? Are they exterior or interior? Are they movements of the body or movements of the mind? Also, what is the difference between exterior and interior? In order to explore these questions further, the candidate referred to previous comments given by the participants.

Derived from the general comments found on the Pre-workshop Questionnaires (see Appendix 2.1 for the full questionnaire text), the candidate made observations about group members’ general definition and description of participating at Mass. Many of the participants listed activities from their childhood and early memories of being at Church. For some, this included references to the changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council. Many responded that liturgical

ministry is their main form of active participation in the liturgy, as if the only manner in which to participate in the liturgy is partaking in one of the specialized roles. This is not a surprise coming from those who are long-standing members of various liturgical ministries. There was a definite difference for some between being in the pews and being at the altar in an “active role,” and this difference was part of the discussion. In general, individual responses concluded that participation as active meant “doing” something as an outward and external action.

First Small Group Session

This led to the morning small group session on participation in the liturgy and its key elements. The format of the workshop included small group discussions in the morning and the afternoon as an easy and certain way to get everyone involved in the conversation and give the participants an opportunity to learn from one another. Group learning also helps combat the passive environment that can be experienced with large group presentations.⁷³

The groups considered three questions:

1. Given your thoughts about participation in the liturgy, name some of the key elements of participation in the liturgy.
2. Describe how being a liturgical minister affects your participation: how is your participation the same or different?
3. Articulate your ideas about how your level of participation in the liturgy affects the rest of your week. Is there a difference?

Following the principles of small group discussion and large group presentation, they were asked to allow two minutes of silence for individual contemplation, and then begin discussion at their table. A discussion leader was

⁷³ Eittington, *The Winning Trainer*, 25-26.

identified arbitrarily (for example, the one whose birthday was closest to that day)⁷⁴ and was given two tasks. First, the leader was to keep the discussion on topic, and second, he or she had to make sure that everyone at the table had a chance to speak. The group was also to identify a willing member to take notes and present the consensus of the table to the large group after the twenty-five minute discussion period (See Appendix 1.4 for complete *Morning Session Group Questions* handout).

After a good period of lively discussion around the room, each small group reported to the large group. The purpose of the exercise was to identify internal and external characteristics of the liturgy and the importance those present placed on each. As each table reported their essential components, the candidate arranged them together on the whiteboard and rated each according to how often they were discussed. They are reported below from highest to lowest. Please note in this list that a “+” symbol stands for each time one of the groups discussed that particular factor of participation.

- Greeting, Gathering – intention, connection, and welcome+++++
- Music – singing makes us community+++++
- Word (participation from the pews and as readers)+++++
- Homily+++++
- Active as liturgical ministers – internalize, stronger++++
- Community – Body of Christ, expressed by common prayers and responses++++
- Eucharistic Prayer and Reception of Communion and reflection on it +++
- Ministries “done well” – excellence +++
- Participation in any language (ritual participation, understanding – based on vernacular)++
- Sign of Peace++
- Giving and receiving++
- When not there? Missing something++
- Transformed and energized and informed++

⁷⁴ Eittington, *The Winning Trainer*, 34.

The top of the list consists of those places where the assembly is involved in *doing* something. They describe singing, speaking, responding, moving, and gathering together. Again, most of the discussion centered on external, physical activities and motions. The one exception that was mentioned was the time when the assembly is listening to the homily. This exception could be due to the generally shared impression that homilies at Holy Trinity are above average, and the fact that the liturgical ministers present at this workshop share this information with others often.

Many centered their exterior participation on their involvement in a liturgical ministry. The prayfulness of serving others as extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, lector, choir member, or usher was pervasive in the discussion. A few commented that when they are not involved in liturgical ministry, they do not feel that they are fully participating. In other words, they prefer to be doing one of the ministries in order to feel the connection to the liturgy more concretely.

Finally, other participants spoke of the joy and comfort they feel when attending the liturgy at the parish. Hospitality and warmth among current parishioners and for new people and visitors was highly valued. Also, group cohesion was identified as very important. The liturgical elements identified often led to this kind of strong external participation in the communal elements of the liturgy.

Active Participation Defined

After a short break, the candidate continued the workshop by giving a definition of active participation based on the work of Kathleen Hughes:

Active participation in the liturgy is primarily internal...Active participation has to do with a kind of mindful engagement in the rites, an attending to the words and gestures, the symbols, the choreography, the space, the season. Without interior participation the rites are empty formalism.⁷⁵

After so much discussion about the exterior aspects of participation, this statement came as somewhat of a shock to the participants. How could liturgy be active and internal? Is it not supposed to be all about the external expressions, especially since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council? Some replied that they were already active in so many ways at the liturgy, how could something internal be part of the definition or even be required?

The workshop then took a turn toward the meaning of internal participation. As the workshop leader, the candidate gave a presentation intended to move those gathered to a new and deeper level. The participants were reminded of two important aspects of the celebration of the liturgy: the action of God and the sacrifice of Christ.

First, it must be remembered that the liturgy is God's action, not primarily the actions of the people who are gathered. In words given to the workshop members, Keith Pecklers wrote this about the liturgy as the action of God:

Christian worship is ultimately about praising and thanking God as we recall God's mighty deeds and as we come to re-discover our own identity as Christ's body in this world...Worship is never just about *us*. It is about God's work in the world and this particular community. Through this communion

⁷⁵ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 18.

with God and one another, worship, in fact, defines the community, reminding it of both its identity and its destiny.⁷⁶

The assembly participates in the action of Christ at the celebration. This is done as a gift from God, and at God's initiative. The liturgical assembly does not gather itself together, as if by their own invitation, but they are called by Christ and gathered in Jesus' name.⁷⁷ God's initiative draws all together with the whole Body of Christ. "Liturgy is the action of God inviting our participation in the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and transforming us in a single hymn of praise, surrender, and thanksgiving. It requires our response."⁷⁸

Second, a crucial component of active participation is participation in the sacrifice of Christ. Most do not consider this as part of active participation. Introduction of this concept by the candidate at this point was intended to help the participants move to that deeper, interior level of participation. This deeper level of participation in the sacrifice of Christ at the liturgy would help them understand what interior participation is all about. The workshop then turned to an exploration of how we participate in Jesus' saving action.

Sacrifice involves a giving of self. Christ gives of himself to God the Father as gift, out of pure love. This gift of Christ is the "true sacrifice," that is, according to Edward Kilmartin, grounded in the action of God:

The death of Jesus is ultimately the expression of the turning of God to us. The love of the Father is the origin of the self-offering of Jesus. The classical Eucharistic Prayers were constructed with this background in mind, and

⁷⁶ Keith Pecklers, SJ, *Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 30-31.

⁷⁷ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 27.

⁷⁸ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 18-19.

represent the response of the sacrifice of praise to the Father to what the Father has done in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world.⁷⁹

Once again, there is the reminder that the action of God comes first, in the gift of Jesus for the salvation of the world. To that gift, Christ responds in his self-offering to God. Jesus did this once and for all on the cross at Calvary, and in the liturgy that action is *re-presented*. "The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is represented to the liturgical assembly in the action by which the sacrament of Christ's somatic real presence is constituted."⁸⁰ God the Father gave Christ to the world, Christ returned that gift to the Father on the cross, and in the liturgy that sacrifice is present in a real way.

At that same celebration of the liturgy, we who are gathered together in praise and thanksgiving join in with the self-gift of Jesus. We respond to the love that we have been given in Christ and give freely of ourselves, as Jesus did. Louis-Marie Chauvet calls this the "Gift – Reception – Return-gift" symbolic exchange. The gift of grace is given by God, received by people, and the only return gift possible is to give to others. Chauvet says: "The reception of God's grace *as* grace, and not as anything else, requires (relation of implication) the *return-gift* of faith, love, and conversion of heart, witness by one's life."⁸¹

Interior participation, then, is found in uniting with Jesus' gift of himself, and in turn giving to others. This is what we celebrate in the Eucharist and it leads to real change in the hearts of people in their daily lives. This gifting is found in how each

⁷⁹ Edward Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly, SJ (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 197.

⁸⁰ Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West*, 187.

⁸¹ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 124.

person lives after they leave Mass. It is a way of carrying the Eucharist beyond the walls of the Church. It is this type of participation that goes beyond the Church on Sunday mornings and into everyday life.

The candidate followed this explanation by making points about what this gift means, for this is participation in the salvation of Christ. "Liturgy is the salvific relationship between God and us. Our liturgies embody and express that relationship."⁸² It is through the liturgical celebration that the relationship of salvation is made real and present. The sacrifice of Christ on the altar is present at the celebration of the Mass. Called together by God, we celebrate the reality of the salvation given to us in Christ, and to that we respond in giving of our selves. In support of this, Robert Taft gives a number of principles, including several that were shared with the participants at the workshop:

- Christ gives to us, not us to him. He does this through the Spirit indwelling.
- The liturgical assembly is convocation, a calling together by God. God's action is first. We do not come together on our own initiative.
- In liturgy we do not celebrate a past event but a present reality. Christ's saving action is eternal. Christ is eternal saving action.
- Jesus giving and our receiving are both required.⁸³

Most liturgical ministers do not think much or hear much about the sacrifice of Christ and what it means to them or how they participate in it. They do not hear much talk about liturgy as the celebration of Christ's "gift of self" in sacrifice to the Father. The people of God need to hear and understand more about how we join with that by giving of ourselves with Christ in that return gift. Many do not

⁸² Robert Taft, SJ, "What Does Liturgy Do? Toward a Soteriology of Liturgical Celebration: Some Theses," in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Second ed. (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2001), 240.

⁸³ Taft, "What Does Liturgy Do," 241.

recognize that this interior participation is the source of how we live out the liturgy in the rest of life outside of Mass.⁸⁴ As Robert Daly, SJ, says:

Christian sacrifice is not some object that we manipulate, nor is it something that we do or give up. It is first and foremost, a mutually self-giving event that takes place between persons. It is, in fact, the most profound personal and interpersonal event that we can conceive or imagine.⁸⁵

This was the central theme of this session of the workshop in order to help the attendees come to a new appreciation of sacrifice and interior participation. To make the point clear, the participants were given a quote from Edward Kilmartin, SJ, as a concise summation of this view of sacrifice for Christians today:

Sacrifice in the New Testament understanding — and thus in the Christian understanding — is, in the first place, the self-offering of the Father in the gift of his Son, and in the second place the unique response of the Son in his humanity to the Father, and in the third place, the self-offering of believers in union with Christ by which they share in his covenant relation with the Father.⁸⁶

Sacrifice as active participation in the liturgy means that a response of self-gift to others is, in a manner of speaking, required. This response “explicitly commits Christians to emulate and to make their own the virtuous dispositions of the human Jesus in his response to the Father.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ In the pre-workshop research, only one respondent listed *how we live out our lives* as a way of participation in ritual. None mentioned taking part in Christ’s sacrifice. In contrast, most responses included participation in Holy Communion, the music, and as a liturgical minister.

⁸⁵ Robert J. Daly, SJ, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2009), 5.

⁸⁶ Kilmartin, SJ, *Liturgy in the West*, 381.

⁸⁷ Robert J. Daly, SJ, “Sacrifice Unveiled or Sacrifice Revisited: Trinitarian and Liturgical Perspectives,” *Theological Studies* Vol. 64:1 (March, 2003): 31.

The workshop continued with a quote from Pope John Paul II in *Dies*

Domini on the nature of this sacrifice:

The Mass in fact *truly makes present the sacrifice of the Cross*. Under the species of bread and wine, upon which has been invoked the outpouring of the Spirit who works with absolutely unique power in the words of consecration, Christ offers himself to the Father in the same act of sacrifice by which he offered himself on the cross... To this sacrifice, Christ unites the sacrifice of the Church.⁸⁸

The sacrifice we make is joined with Christ's sacrifice, and this is done at Jesus' action and initiation, not our own. As Pope John Paul II reminds us, "the truth that the whole community shares in Christ's sacrifice is especially evident in the Sunday gathering."⁸⁹ Thus, this type of interior participation is active participation in the Sunday celebration of the liturgy.

The candidate closed this session of the workshop with a review. The liturgy is the work of the people, but our work is to join in with the work of God. The work of the people is not just to pray and sing, listen and read, give and receive the Eucharist, but also to participate in the interior actions of the celebration. They give thanks and praise to God for having invited us to this banquet and we join with Christ in his gift to the Father. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* says this:

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Dies Domini*, 43.

⁸⁹ *Dies Domini*, 43b.

⁹⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

This is the source of our strength to live lives that are changed after we leave the celebration. This view of participation is not just external in terms of our actions and the things that we see, and it is not just internal in terms of personal prayer and how we give praise and thanks to God for the gift of Jesus. What it is? It is both.

A New View of Participation

The question then became, how do we respond? What do we do to renew our sharing in the liturgy with this new understanding of interior and exterior participation? This is where the mystagogical model of reflection entered into the program. The candidate concluded the morning of the workshop by offering a definition of mystagogy. In this way, the attendees could have an actual experience of mystagogical reflection following lunch.

The reflection model begins with attending or paying attention. Kathleen Hughes delineates two crucial kinds of attending when developing the model. The first is attending to the movement of the liturgical act as it unfolds, as we take part in it. The second is attending to the movements of our hearts before, during, and after the celebration.

We need to be reflective about what we are doing at the liturgy. We need to pay attention to the many languages of our prayer — the words, the movements, the objects, even the languages of space and time...[The] second kind of attending in every day life is what Karl Rahner described as the “liturgy of the world.” We need to be mindful of the griefs and the joys of our daily lives, the longings, the half-met expectations, the dreams that are dying and being born in us...all of human experience.⁹¹

⁹¹ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 19.

Our next task was to develop a model of contemplation that would incorporate this type of attending to experience. The first piece of this model will allow reflective attention on experience as it is happening. What are the symbols, sights, sounds, and movements? The second piece of the model asks the question, where am I at in my daily life when I come to this liturgy? What are my fears, hopes, dreams, and ambitions? Our hope is that such a model will allow for this deeper level of participation to become a reality for these liturgical ministers when they go to Mass. However, before doing all that, it was time for lunch break.

Developing the Model

The candidate began the afternoon session with a presentation on the meaning of mystagogy, as it applies to a mystagogical reflection. This included a briefing on the root of the word in the “mysteries” celebrated by the Church, and how those mysteries were revealed in the experience of them, particularly through baptism and anointing in the Holy Spirit. For example, those who were becoming Christian during the fourth century went through a process of conversion on which the current *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is based. At the Easter Vigil, those called to become new members of the Church went through the initiation rites without having heard a description of them in advance. Thus the rites came to be known as the “mysteries.” It was not until after these early Christians had experienced the mysteries that they heard an explanation. In writings of the great mystagogical preachers of this time that survive to this day, this explanation often took the form of a reflection on the experience that the new Christians had just gone

through. A mystagogical model, then, is one based on reflection and enlightenment of experience.

Ritual

It was also important for the members present at the workshop to grasp a common awareness of the character of ritual. Ritual is repetitious by its nature and something that we enter into through the actual “performance” of it. This is not a performance in the way we think of a performance on a stage, where one group of people is “entertaining” another. It is performance in all gathered together by God carry out the actions of the liturgy in praise and worship. In the celebration of the liturgy, we take part in this common “performance” again and again, and in the process of our participation we are changed. To use an example from the celebration of the Mass, when we come to the liturgy we are not required to feel a certain way, or be in a certain frame of thinking. By our participation in the ritual of the liturgy, we become a people renewed by Christ. We become the Body of Christ through our sharing in the ritual and our reception of the Body of Christ.

The Model of Mystagogical Reflection

With this straightforward understanding of ritual in mind, and in order to engage the ritual in a new way, an outline of the mystagogical model was next on the agenda. Kathleen Hughes proposes four stages that serve as the basis for the model⁹² (See appendix 1.6 for the complete handout).

⁹² Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 28-30.

First is awareness. This involves a watchfulness, through which we open our whole being to the sights and sounds around us. This happens at the sensory level, not the mental or cerebral level. The one who reflects is mindful of bodies and their responses because of a watchfulness of movement. We give our attention and increased awareness to the physical choreography of prayer, trying to watch gestures and responses with new eyes.

Second is the stage of reflection. In this stage we let the symbols and language of the liturgy speak to our experience. This is where we let the symbols speak, where we discover the meaning behind all that we do, hear, see, sing, pray, and speak. We are encouraged to reflect more deeply on what is behind this action and movement and ask what is each word, movement, symbol, and experience telling us. This may look different for different seasons of the year, but each time we reflect on the experience of the liturgy it says something about who we are as a people assembled, and who we are as people of God.

The third stage involves receiving our reflections into our hearts. In this stage, the one who has reflected on experience is to let the reflections speak to the heart. We give the self over to the power of the symbol or the movement or the word. This is where we try to find the inspiration behind the meaning, and identify the ways in which we join with Christ in that gift to God the Father. That inspiration is ultimately God's very self, God's love, and Christ's gift of self. This stage is more about recognizing the action of God in the liturgy. The reception is not so much the welcoming of the insight behind the symbol, word, movement, but of welcoming God who inspired it.

Finally, the last stage is transformation. This stage happens at the liturgy itself, after we have become aware, are reflective and have been receptive to our experience of the liturgy. Celebration of the liturgy with attention will change us because it is at the liturgy itself where we see the transformation. It is in the liturgical act itself that Christ is recognized⁹³ and our reflections on it lead us back to that same Christ.

Our consciousness of what we are doing begins to work a transformation because we recognize that there are consequences to taking the liturgy seriously. Those consequences are found in living what we have become. In giving of ourselves with Christ, we give to others. There are many questions to ask at this point. Are we aware of how we treat the poor, the homeless, and those in need? Do we act differently toward our neighbors and co-workers and everyone we meet? Do we live the “consequences” of the taking the liturgy seriously, or do we simply let the experience go without realizing the transformation that takes place within? As Kathleen Hughes says, “contemplative engagement...is a process that moves from sense to intellect to heart to feet.”⁹⁴

Practicing the Model of Contemplation

The final session for this workshop, then, was to practice this model of mystagogy with a real prayer experience and reflection. The prayer experience consisted of an opening song and reading followed by a ritual Signing of the Senses (see appendix 1.6 for the complete service). The reading from the First Letter of John,

⁹³ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 26.

⁹⁴ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 32.

chapter 4, verses 7 through 10, continued the theme of the afternoon input session and set the context for the reflection on the experience:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God;
everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.
Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.
In this way the love of God was revealed to us:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might have life through him.
In this is love:
not that we have loved God,
but that he loved us
and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

After the silent reflective period that followed the reading, each workshop member was invited to stand and face one other for the ritual experience. The ritual was modeled after the signing of the senses from Rite of Welcoming at the RCIA. Each participant was encouraged to make a big, bold sign of the cross as each sense was prayed over. The ritual action included the sung response. As a ritual experience of a liturgical act for all to have in common, they were urged to be aware of the actions, words, and movements throughout, and to be fully present to the whole experience. The short service ended with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing.

Afterward, when all were seated, each person was given time to reflect silently on their experience. They used the Mystagogical Model hand out as a guide to their reflection. How were they aware of the experience and all that was happening on the sensory level? How can they reflect on that experience and what each part of it is saying to them as a people in communion? How are these reflections speaking to the heart, and where is God moving in this experience? Were they able to see beyond the actions and symbols themselves to the meaning behind

them or even to the one who inspired them? Finally, did they have any consciousness that what they were doing was bringing about transformation?

The participants were given a set of questions for the afternoon discussion:

1. Talk about what we just did and said. What was a significant moment for you?
2. What was your experience of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of others around you?
3. Think about how the various symbols of the liturgy image God for us.
4. Describe the ultimate reality of this liturgical experience.
5. How does prayer, through ritual, text, and word, express what we believe?

After spending time discussing their reflections in small groups, the candidate continued his leadership of the workshop by facilitating a conversation on the model and the reflection questions with the large group. During the discussion, it was clear that this mystagogical reflection led to many deeper level responses, especially compared to the first session on participation experiences at the liturgy. Because of what they had been through in this day, the liturgical ministers present were open to a much richer experience and reflection on it. Some spoke of God blessing them through this action, and the importance of touch as a symbol within the community. Many reflected on the experience as a communal connection of intimacy. The signing itself had a great power to it, they commented. This represents a strong awareness of the sensory level in their experience.

Others commented on the internal process that happened. It was identified as a process of transformation, and it was identified with the day's learnings about internal participation. While it is too much to expect all to take on the entire model the first time, in one practice session, the awareness that transformation happens

through the liturgical act was heightened in the participants because of the emphasis on the true meaning of active participation as both internal and external.

Throughout the reflection, there was a sense that symbols connect us to the mystery that is celebrated. A symbol helps us to see the reality that is beyond itself. In a manner of speaking, symbols reveal the mystery. There also was a clear idea that we experience Christ through others in liturgical experiences like the one we just had. Ritual is a doorway through which we journey together to become a new people who do onto others as followers of Christ.

Of course, no one expects this type of transformation in thinking to happen immediately. Many of these responses came because of the events of the whole day. Only time will tell for these liturgical ministers, if they are able to integrate a model of reflection on their experiences that will lead them back to the experience of Christ in the same liturgical act again.

Conclusion

In this workshop we were open to a developing a new appreciation of participation that would foster deeper understanding of the liturgy and lead to greater personal engagement in the event of the liturgy. We explored engagement in the liturgy that is both exterior and interior. The attendees came to a new awareness of taking part in the sacrifice of Christ and the power this partaking has to truly transform. The long-term hope is that all those who took part in this workshop day

will develop “a deeper commitment to the way of life we rehearse together when we gather for corporate prayer.”⁹⁵

And so the workshop closed with a reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 18

All of us, with unveiled faces,
seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,
are being transformed into the same image
from one degree of glory to another,
for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

When the liturgy is well celebrated, attentively reflected on, and more deeply understood, it leads to a change in heart and faithful and truthful discipleship.

⁹⁵ Hughes, *Saying Amen*, 7.

Chapter Four

Evaluation of the Workshop and Results

The stated goal of the workshop was to cultivate a deeper understanding of the liturgy, leading to a greater commitment from the participations to living out their Baptismal call as the Body of Christ in the world. But how do we measure this commitment to a way of life that is “rehearsed” in the liturgy? Evaluation and response tools may be employed in order to understand the perceived impact of the workshop presentations and materials. Questions can be designed to measure changes in the attitudes and behaviors of those who attended the workshop. This perceived impact is measured by the participants themselves, in terms of what they took away from the workshop both immediately afterward, and three months later. Therefore, the candidate, utilized two different survey tools in order to collect data from the participants after the workshop ended: one a short evaluation, the other a longer survey/questionnaire.

The participants at the workshop were given the short evaluation sheet approximately one week later (see Appendix 2.2 for complete evaluation). In the short evaluation, the participants were asked to rate the workshop experience, the candidate’s presentations during the workshop, the objectives, and the content. These items were presented with questions and ratings based on a number system. The design of this short assessment sheet was based on the course evaluation forms used by students in classes at The Catholic University of America. At the end of the form, attendees were invited to add their own comments.

Three months later, the participants were given a more detailed Post-Workshop Questionnaire (see Appendix 2.3 for the complete questionnaire). The questionnaire was intended to examine changes in behavior both during the Mass and after Mass. Answers to these in-depth questions may reflect a deeper knowledge of the meaning of participation and how the liturgy affects all of life.⁹⁶

This longer survey focused on three main areas. First, did the workshop attendee perceive changes in participation at the celebration of the liturgy itself? Second, was there an increased awareness of taking part in the sacrifice of Christ since attendance at the workshop? Third, how did the participant view the connection between liturgy and the rest of life, in particular with an example from life, if possible, since they completed the workshop? Findings from both of these tools was interesting and helpful feedback. We shall begin our examination of them with the Workshop Evaluation.

Workshop Evaluation

The overall experience of the workshop was very positive. For example, one of the strongest responses came from the session on “defining active participation.” The initial reaction of the participants to hearing that “active participation is primarily internal” led one to believe that eyes were definitely opened to a new way of thinking. Active ministers are not used to hearing that their participation is geared more toward the internal than toward the external. It can easily be argued

⁹⁶ The Pre- and Post-Workshop Questionnaires were designed with the assistance of Ted Tschudy, Ph.D. (organizational development), a member of the faculty of the American University in Washington, DC, and the spouse of a parishioner at Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

that since the end of the Second Vatican Council their liturgical leaders have only emphasized the “externals” as true, active participation in the liturgical act.

However, as it is one of the goals of this workshop, it is good for these liturgical ministers to begin to integrate both interior and exterior levels of participation.

For purposes of the evaluation, the ratings were mostly high. The candidate as workshop leader has been an employee of the parish for several years, so those in attendance knew of and supported his work. Overall, 92% of respondents rated the workshop and the candidate at “nine” or “ten” (on a scale of one to ten). After the general overall rating of the candidate and workshop, there was a series of statements focused on two specific areas: the goal of the workshop and the content of the workshop. The respondents were to rate each of the statements on either a one to five scale or a one to ten scale, depending on how strongly they agreed with each statement.

The statements related to the goal of the workshop concentrated on whether or not the stated aspiration of the day had been achieved. This statement was rated on a scale of one to five. Seventy-five percent of the attendants gave the highest rating of “five” to this question. The next rating of “four” was given by 20% of attendants. Five percent of the respondents give the rating of “three” to this question.

The statements on workshop content converged on two areas of the presentation: understanding and interest. These statements, like the general overall rating, used a scale of one to ten. In regard to understanding, 45% of respondents rated the statement “the presentation helped me understand the subject matter,” at a

“ten” while another 20% rated it at a “nine.” Thirty percent of respondents to this question rated it an “eight,” and five percent rated it at “seven.” This is a very positive impact on the way that many of the workshop attendees grew in their understanding of active participation. Some of the responses to the longer survey form show similar results in regard to the understanding and integration of participation in the sacrifice of Christ.

The statement on interest in the content of the workshop left noteworthy results, as it was intended to measure the workshop attendants desire to learn more about this topic. The statement was “this workshop increased my interest in the subject matter.” Thirty-three percent of those in the survey gave this statement a rating of “ten,” while another 25% gave it a rating of “nine.” Twenty-eight percent rated this statement an “eight” and two percent rated it a “seven.” Rounding out the ratings of this statement, five percent rated it at a “six” while seven percent rated it as a “five.” This increase in interest in an expanded definition of how they participate at the liturgy is another positive result for future formational experiences.

The bottom of the Workshop Evaluation left room for individual comments. Many supportive evaluation respondents wrote in extra notes here. While some of these remarks were about procedures of the workshop or the presentation, such as whether or not there was an effective use of a handout containing the slides of the PowerPoint presentation, some of them were directed at the goal of the project. Here we shall explore several of the Workshop Evaluation form comments that were helpful and informative:

We personally experienced the power of the liturgy within a prayerful setting, through individual and group reflection and sharing and the presenter's commentary. Everyone was involved.

The Signing of the Senses was a good way to open up deeper reflection on how we respond to ritual.

There was enough balance to the workshop, that is, hymn singing, reflection, and group discussion. The workshop did achieve goals two and three — an appreciation of ritual and a practical experience of mystagogical reflection.

All three of these comments were on the use of ritual and prayer throughout the workshop. The purpose of this use of ritual prayer was to build an experience on which the participants could reflect. These comments highlight the fact that using an actual exercise of mystagogical reflection is essential to coming to a deeper understanding of what mystagogy is all about. This is especially true when compared to simply 'talking about' the type of reflection being considered.

The only thing that holds me back from giving this workshop higher marks is that I don't think it fully resolved the tension between two ways of evaluating liturgy: as something measured by how it changes us internally and by the operation of grace; or, as something we 'produce' as a parish, and as ministers on behalf of the parish. Obviously, there's a connection between the two... The way the presenter waited until each of the small groups had given its views of what was most/least important in a liturgical celebration, and then said that if you are only focusing on the external you risk 'empty formalism,' was certainly an attention getter. But it left me with the impression of the rules of the game having been changed in midstream.

This quotation is given in its entirety because it is significant to note that this participant is exactly right, and one of the goals of the workshop was achieved. The presentation got this person to begin to think differently. Clearly, he or she thought of participation in the liturgy only as the externals before coming to this workshop, and now had a new thought. It is an insight so strong that it is 'changing the rules' for him or her. That is a good thing.

I became acutely aware of exactly how successful the workshop was the next morning as I entered the church for liturgy. I found my internal prayer/preparation to be deep and profound, I paid closer attention to all of the details than usual.

This comment indicates an increased awareness of the experience of the liturgy. Hughes refers to this as “attending to experience.” It demonstrates that the participant was able to integrate a new way of looking at the experience of the liturgical act with more attention. As we have seen, this is a major step in mystagogical catechesis, provided that the liturgy itself is well-done and thoughtfully prepared so that one may have a strong experience on which to reflect.

I attended the liturgy the next day, and it was a different experience — such a fresh appreciation. I could really appreciate aspects of the liturgy in a totally new way — especially the fact that I was there as a response to an invitation, rather than ‘checking the box’.

The invitation spoken of here is the invitation of Christ to come to the banquet, to the feast of life. Often those who consider themselves the main actors in the liturgy, who do not focus on the internal or the presence of Christ or the sacrifice, feel that they are doing their duty, their service, or some task in order to earn their salvation. In parish ministry in general, many people need to be consistently reminded that the invitation to new life, to eternal life, is from God, not from us. We do not ask God if we can join him, God has already invited us, and the victory has already been won. As St. Paul wrote in the Second Letter to Timothy, chapter 4, verses 6 through 8:

For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.

The good fight that is fought and the faith that is kept only happens at the invitation of Christ, because of what Jesus has done for us, not because of what we do for ourselves. The focus is always on Jesus, as he is the head of the liturgy, and the liturgy is the action of Christ. We join in with that sacrifice at the celebration of the Eucharist.

So often we as human beings tend to get it backwards; we ask, what can I do so that I can assure my place in heaven? The answer to that question, of course, is we can do nothing. Jesus has already won the victory! However, one of the goals of the workshop was to help people see participation in a new way. Therefore it is still important to fight the good fight, but the reason to do it is in response to the great love that has been given by God through Christ, not in order to earn that love. If more people understood interior participation as joining in with the sacrifice of Christ at the celebration of the Eucharist, they would understand that the invitation of love comes first, and it is from that invitation that the beloved are compelled to live life differently. As one participant in the workshop wrote:

Each time I have been to Mass since [the workshop] what we talked about has come to mind...I have a clearer understanding of what it means to receive the Body and Blood of Christ and how my participation in the mass involves in a mysterious way my participation in Christ's saving act. Jesus is a gift to us from God. When we receive him in the Eucharist we are then somehow giving back the gift to God in thanksgiving.

This comment makes further reference to participation in the sacrifice of Christ, and the fact that we receive this gift of Christ from God. It is a gift freely given, and one that Christ freely returns to the Father. The "giving back" is not stated quite right in this comment in that we give of ourselves with Christ because of the gift that has been given. However, the comment itself is an exciting result, as it

shows a real appreciation and understanding of what it means to return the gift to God by doing as Jesus did and freely giving of our very lives. We do that by giving to others. As was explored earlier, Louis-Marie Chauvet highlights symbolic exchange: “the reception of grace as grace (and not as something else which would be more or less magical) never goes without a task; it implies the ethical return-gift of justice and mercy.”⁹⁷ The return gift to God is demonstrated in how a person acts toward others after the liturgy. The “task” is to act with mercy and justice toward others because there is nothing else that can be done. To put it simply, any other response to this gift would make it something other than what it is. If the response is not the free self-gift, then the grace has not been received; it is something else indeed.

Post-Workshop Questionnaire

The second tool for evaluation was the Post-Workshop Questionnaire. This was sent out to all workshop attendees approximately three months after the workshops were complete (see Appendix 2.3 for complete questionnaire). The time period was to allow results of the workshop goals to sink in. Did the attendants experience any real change in their understanding, participation, or even in the way they live their lives in response to God’s love as a result of what they learned in this daylong presentation? Here again we will examine the basic answers in three different areas of questions, and then look at some of the specific comments that

⁹⁷ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 138.

were made by the respondents. The three areas were participation, sacrifice, and connection to life.

Interior and Exterior Participation

First, we consider questions on participation. These two questions asked for comments describing their experience of interior and exterior participation. They also sought further comments about participation in general since the time of the workshop. The questions did not imply that there must be change, as if there were right and wrong answers, but simply asked them to describe it.

Of the answers given, 46% described their current experience of participation at the liturgy as in some way different from participation in the past. The remaining 54% indicated that their experience is the same, pre and post workshop. This indicates a fairly even split between those who felt the new understanding they gained from the workshop gave them a different way of looking at their participation and those who did not. The written comments were more insightful.

On the side of a positive change since the workshop, one respondent wrote that thinking of active participation as interior was new because only external participation was stressed over the years since the Second Vatican Council. Thinking this way about external only participation, she says, "has been influenced by the strong emphasis over the years that participation builds community and the liturgy is a communal event. But, now I would add, it is also private/personal." While saying the liturgy has an inner dimension as well as outer dimension would be more

accurate, the intent of this comment is clear. It is a new way of thinking about how we take part in the liturgy.

Two other respondents indicated an increasing awareness of how their participation is different in particular. One said, "Interior includes reflecting on the readings and the psalm as they are being proclaimed." This is a matter of attending, as outlined in the Model of Contemplation. Another minister, who is an usher, wrote of a marked change in attention to the liturgy while carrying on the duties of her liturgical ministry. "Despite distractions while ushering, I have tried to be more aware during the Eucharistic sacrifice at the Mass, and how I am a participant in that sacrifice."

Other comments came from those who indicated there was not much change in terms of interior and exterior participation. Some continue to think of being active in the liturgy only as being part of a specialized liturgical ministry. In their comments, these workshop attendees viewed their participation in the same manner because it is centered in their role as lector or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. One attendee wrote: "[My participation] has not changed materially...I do not feel connectedness with my fellow attendees." One more attendee wrote, "I am just becoming aware that my participation is not as full as it should be." This is a good sign that these parishioners are aware that there is something deeper in terms of participation at the liturgy, and the need for it may become clearer to them in the future.

These results indicate a positive reception of the ideas that were discussed in the workshop. Since the survey was given three months after the workshop, and

there was no other follow-up between the survey and the presentation, this shows that almost half of those who were present had some kind of positive change in their view of participation at the liturgy. Clearly there are those who still view their participation as only being external or ministerial, and there probably always will be. But the significant movement toward an awareness of what is going on around them, called attentiveness in the presentation, as well as a growing appreciation for the ways in which members of the assembly participate in the internal and the external are both of consequence.

Understanding Sacrifice

The second set of questions focused on the understanding of sacrifice and the emphasis of the workshop on how we participate in that sacrifice. One of the goals was to provide a new understanding of participation, and it was clear that consideration of active participation as joining in with the sacrifice of Christ was a new way of thinking for the attendees. They also came to a new appreciation for who is giving at the liturgy; we do not give to God, but God gives to us. The workshop was a reaffirmation of the Christ-centeredness of the liturgical act, and the fact that it is Christ's sacrifice that we join in at the celebration, in response to the love that has been received from God.

Since this is a renewed way of looking at the Sacrifice of Christ, it is significant that this way of understanding interior participation at the liturgy is at least being talked about at the parish. Of the responses given to the questions about sacrifice, 38% indicated a change. One respondent put it directly: "I am more aware

of how I can be a fuller participant...I can offer myself to God along with Christ at the liturgy." Another attendee wrote, "I give more attention to offering myself. To be aware of the importance of actively saying, I am here as a member of your Body." This type of response was not found in the Pre-Workshop Questionnaire responses.

Two other comments on the positive side of change indicate a deeper level of impact. First, another direct response to participation in the sacrifice: "My participation is more in the complete self-giving of Christ to His Father and how I can unite my giving of self with His." The final respondent to note a change in this area did not stress sacrifice as such, but clearly there is a change in thinking here: "I think the 'eye opener' for me was the emphasis that this is not a celebration of the past, but the eternal reality of Christ in our life today. Also, the pre-Vatican world seemed to stress 'perfect attendance' where as your message [in this workshop] highlighted 'freely giving' by the individual and the community."

The remaining 62% of the respondents, while not making the same direct connection as these, are engaging the concept of internal participation and taking part in the sacrifice of Christ in a new way. Both of these are positive steps in reaching the goals of the workshop. Some struggle with understanding, saying simply that they have difficulty putting it together. One attendee wrote: "It has taken me forty years to realize my connection to other people in the church...but I am somehow at a loss as to what our 'participation in the sacrifice of Christ' really means. I mean that, though it seems logical enough, I don't 'feel' it as I do the association with other worshippers." Other attendees were more direct in their struggles with developing a new understanding of sacrifice. "My view of sacrifice is

singular,” one attendee wrote. Expressing their struggle even more directly, another wrote, “I have never liked the term ‘sacrifice of the Mass.’ It just doesn’t connect with me.”

Clearly there is a need for more catechesis on the understanding of sacrifice, self-gift, and the fact that Christ is the head and ‘principle actor’ at the liturgy. Nevertheless, this workshop has helped people begin to understand and appreciate those concepts at a deeper level. It is clear that the material presented at this workshop challenged their views on sacrifice and interior participation. The fact that many responses indicate some level of integration of this understanding is very hopeful. As one attendee wrote in her evaluation, “I reflect both during the liturgy as well as in my daily prayers on the meaning of the Eucharist and its centrality not only in the Mass but also in spiritual life in general. In fact, my prayer in my heart today was ‘Lord, help me to better understand the meaning of the Eucharist and your sacrifice.’”

Connection to life

The final question was on the connection to the rest of life. The ultimate expression of participation in the liturgy is living what we have become. This was clearly expressed at the end of the workshop, drawing from Kathleen Hughes’ views on the movement from the action to the heart to the mind and finally to the feet. To put it simply, what difference does it make? This question was looking for any possible change in understanding the connection between liturgy and life. Each

attendant was asked to consider a recent example, if possible, of how their participation in the liturgy directly affected them during the week.

On this question, as with others, the results were mixed. The responses to this question indicated that 50% of the participants experienced this connection differently from their understanding of it before the workshop and 50% experienced the relationship of liturgy to life in the same way. This even divide is significant in that people continue to struggle with making the connection between what happens on Sunday morning and what happens after they leave. One respondent articulated what I believe many of them think: "I am certain the Spirit is working within me for the good of the church but I cannot point to a specific act arising from my participation in the liturgy."

Two other responses were noteworthy. First, similar to the one above, one respondent wrote of feeling that their prayer and participation at the liturgy does have an effect in a general way, but sometimes it expresses itself more directly. "Often, especially after daily mass, I will experience some clarity from something that was read or sung. Sometimes my interaction with a person will be very graced. Sometimes I find myself singing a verse from the psalm or suddenly realize how relevant it is to a certain situation in my life." This indicates a deeper level of awareness on the part of this workshop attendee that there is indeed a connection to grace that comes from her participation in the liturgical act.

This final quotation from another respondent indicates the same kind of connection to life, but on the level of the community. This is significant, as it shows an awareness of the movement of God in the liturgy, and how that movement

affects everyday life. It could be a sign of transformation, the final step of the Model of Contemplation on the liturgy given at the workshop.

As we gathered as a parish community following the horrors experienced in Tucson, the sameness of the ritual was a comfort in light of the recent expression of senseless evil in the world. Knowing that around our country and beyond, so many of us were gathering in our own places of worship, praying with one voice in our own manners, greatly affected me. I was reminded that we are the Body of Christ, and ours is not to question why. We who continue to live must continue to love as Christ loves. I felt strength through our prayers as they were joined with so many others that day.

The seed has been planted in these parishioners that there is another way to look at participation in the liturgy. There is a connection between the gift that is given by God to us, and our response to it. Living according to the way of Christ is a response of giving of self, back to God with Christ. The seed needs to be nurtured and grow for a new appreciation and understanding of it to develop fully, but the process has begun.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of the assessment tools employed by this project are encouraging. While numbers and responses on a form cannot tell the whole story, and an objective measurement is impossible when we are examining the workings of the Holy Spirit in people's lives, the goal of helping people think differently has been achieved. This is indicated by the level of struggle with understanding what was presented, and the appreciation shown for plunging deeper into the meaning of the celebration of the liturgy for them.

The overall results also point out that the participants in the workshop generally continue to struggle with their understanding of how they participate in

the great gift of Christ that we have been given by God. The good news is that they are struggling. It is good news because the struggle to integrate participation in the liturgy into the rest of life is essential to living the Christian life. The Church spells out what this means, to live as a follower of Christ in the world, in the document on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. This document states that the laity share in the mission of the Church because of their baptism, and they do this “by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel.”⁹⁸ It is through the work of evangelizing the world and working within the “temporal order” that the laity spread the Gospel of Christ. It is their specific job, and the power to do this work comes from Christ in the liturgy:

Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ, in keeping with the Lord's words, "He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual aids which are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy.⁹⁹

Active participation, the participants in this project have learned, has many faces and many levels. It is hoped that the project will continue to inspire the attendees to open their eyes to the depth of the liturgy.

In the final chapter, we will examine the overall conclusions from the project and explore the contribution this project can make to ministry.

⁹⁸ Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965), 2.

⁹⁹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: The Contribution to Ministry

Now we turn to the final analysis of this project in ministry. Recalling the original problem identified as the focus for this work, we ask: did this endeavor add to the overall understanding of “fully conscious and active participation” at the liturgy? Is there anything that has been learned here that can improve the ministerial situation in the parish or to help others? The same question can be asked in this way: what is the contribution to ministry of this project? What conclusions can be drawn from the research and results of this undertaking that may assist those who work in ministry with similar issues? Ultimately, a Doctor of Ministry project should provide some useful information for those who work in professional ministry in the church, and in this case, for those who are involved in liturgical ministry. I believe there are several conclusions that may contribute to ministry.

First Conclusion: Definition

The first conclusion is that there is a need for a broader definition of “fully conscious and active participation” that goes deeper than participation in the “externals” of the worship act. This definition should include both internal and external participation, and encompass an understanding of participation in the sacrifice of Christ as essential to involvement in the liturgy.

Through a sample of people involved in ministry and through the experience of the project itself, it is clear that since the Second Vatican Council, the emphasis of

efforts in liturgical catechesis and formation has been mostly on the externals.

Most catechesis concentrates on what the assembly is to “do,” how the liturgical act “works,” and the history of liturgical “activity.” The result is that congregations are more active now and members of the assembly take their rightful place in the ritual and actions through the singing, speaking, standing, sitting, processing, and taking part in the Body of Christ. This is a laudable consequence of these labors. However, more is needed.

The majority of catechesis that goes beyond the external actions of the worshipping assembly has been geared toward those involved in “special” liturgical roles, and their formation and training for fulfilling those roles. This type of formation is limited to lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, choir members, and other liturgical ministries who function throughout the celebration. Many of those involved in these ministries within the parish receive and welcome special training and formation. While this also is commendable, more emphasis needs to be placed on a complete description of the elements of participation that are essential.

Therefore, a definition of active participation that includes involvement in the interior participation inherent in the liturgy is crucial. I propose that active participation be defined as fully taking part in the exterior dimensions of the liturgical celebration, as well as the interior dimensions. The exterior dimensions include not only such outward signs as gesture, procession, singing, and speaking during the celebration, but it also includes responding to the gift of love that has been given by God through giving of self to others outside of the celebration itself.

The interior dimensions include not only silence and reflection during the liturgy, but the joining in with the sacrifice of Christ at the celebration of the Eucharist in gift to God the Father. A definition such as this opens up the complete meaning of “fully conscious and active” participation on a new level.

Second Conclusion: Participation in Sacrifice

In addition to the need for a broader understanding of interior and exterior participation, there is a need for a deeper awareness of and appreciation for participation in the sacrifice of Christ. This participation is an essential element of active participation at the liturgy. An emphasis on being part of this sacrifice of Christ can open a completely new awareness of the connection between the liturgical act and daily living.

The true meaning of the sacrifice of Christ is found in the gift exchange between the Father and the Son in the unity of the Spirit, and humanity’s place within that relationship. That gift, given at God’s initiative, is the gift of his Son Jesus. Christ returns that gift of love to God the Father by giving his very life. We are called to do the same and join in the sacrifice with Christ. Upon receiving the grace of God, we give back because of the nature of that grace and the nature of the love that is given by God. As Louis-Marie Chauvet wrote, “The reception of God’s grace *as* grace, and not as anything else, requires the *return-gift* of faith, love, conversion of heart, [and] witness by one’s life.”¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 124.

This description of participation is at the core of the celebration of the Eucharist, though it is rarely understood as an essential element of active participation. An increase of emphasis and formation on this fundamental aspect of interior participation would solidify the correlation between liturgy and life because the return gift, in a manner of speaking, *requires* and even *compels* one to action for the Gospel in the world. One is compelled to care for the poor, shelter the homeless, and live as Jesus lived because of what has been given. After all, grace *as grace* is not received if that is not the case.

Third Conclusion: Catechesis

The need for catechesis on these issues is great. The question is, for whom is this renewed understanding intended? Who should be the object of the catechesis? The scope of this project included only those who were experienced liturgical ministers. While this was a practical aspect of managing the project itself, it was also geared for those ministers who feel they have “learned it all” when really there is much more to be learned. Those who have a surface level understanding of participation in the liturgy are often more willing to go deeper than those who are just beginning to scratch the surface.

On the other hand, should not this level of formation be for all those who live the Christian life? Since Christ gave of his very self out of love, it is reasonable that one of the *first* precepts of the liturgy should be an imitation of that giving of self, and how it happens during the liturgical act. Still, one must ask, can that be

understood outside the context of participation as active in the externals at the Liturgy without going to the interior?

Catechesis is defined as various kinds of instruction in matters religious; in this case in matters about the liturgy. Therefore, a whole picture of catechesis on the liturgy should include both interior and exterior participation. If it begins with the externals, it must always eventually come around to the internal, to the action of Christ in the liturgy and our part in that. After all, it is at God's invitation that we come to the celebration of the liturgy from the start.

Fourth Conclusion: Mystagogy

In order to develop this catechesis, the project utilized a mystagogical model. This exploration of the meaning of mystagogy and experience of the model in the project itself demonstrated the worthiness of a mystagogical model as an approach to developing this deeper understanding. The model worked well with small groups and in the larger group, even though there were relatively small numbers of people in each workshop session. The model proved itself in that even though the number of respondents who identified changes in their understanding and appreciation for active participation was smaller, it was still significant. This small but significant number of people can serve as leaven to introduce these concepts to others.

Can this model serve as a catechetical tool with larger groups of parishioners to help them develop their comprehension of the interior and exterior actions of the liturgy? Can a mystagogical and reflective approach serve the goal of a more mature spiritual life and deeper love for the liturgy within the whole community? Is it

possible to teach an entire assembly to reflect on their experience of the liturgical act? Can a Sunday morning Mass congregation experience attention, reflection, reception, and transformation along the lines of the model of mystagogia developed by Kathleen Hughes? Or some derivative of it? This approach needs further exploration, outside the scope of this paper, but it would be a meaningful study.

Final Conclusion: Liturgical Ministers

This fifth conclusion is drawn from the identification of the Problem in Ministry. That problem focused on those who have already shown their commitment to the liturgical life of the parish. My conclusion is that those who are experienced liturgical ministers in the parish are a good starting point for this mystagogical catechesis. These ministers are committed to participation in the liturgy, have some level of understanding of the ritual in which they partake, and have demonstrated openness to formation on the principles of the liturgy. Many experienced liturgical ministers are also in positions of leadership within the parish community, and their example and influence, as they become imbued with this deeper understanding of participation, may have a stronger effect on other members of the community.

The final conclusion of this project is that the workshop itself and this approach to formation as leaven for further growth should be expanded to more of those involved in liturgical ministry. It may be used for formation into a deeper level of participation because many of those with experience in ministry are looking for

some formation and spirituality with more depth. Often, they simply need to be pushed to go a little deeper.

This does not mean that others would not benefit from this approach to understanding interior and exterior participation. There is no doubt that all who gather for worship, whether they consider themselves active or inactive, ministers or persons in the pew, are in need of catechesis on this deeper understanding of participation.

Therefore, this conclusion holds that the project as it is outlined and presented in this paper is a successful start toward helping experienced liturgical ministers move to a deeper level in their formation that instills a more thorough understanding of participation, so that they may “take part [in the liturgy] fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 11.

Appendix One

This appendix contains all items and handouts from the Workshop for this Project. They were given to the participants at the workshop, in a folder set out for each one.

1.1	Outline of the Workshop for the Day	95-96
1.2	Liturgical Ministers Workshop Opening Prayer	97-98
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Appendix 1.1

**Liturgical Ministers Workshop:
Understanding and Integrating Full Participation
14 and 21 August 2010**

Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate, The Catholic University of America

The purpose of this project in ministry is to design, implement and evaluate a workshop for liturgical ministers on the meaning of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, as called for by Baptism. It will provide the ministers with (1) an overview of participation as understood in the documents of the Church, (2) an appreciation of ritual and how it works in the celebration of the liturgy, and (3) a practical experience of mystagogical reflection on the liturgy which they can use to process their own participation.

Workshop Outline

8:30am: Coffee, snacks, social interaction to begin the project

9:00: Opening Prayer

9:15: Opening Activity: Liturgical values list

9:30: Introduction to Morning Group Discussion

*Discussion of the understanding of participation and ritual will take place.
Goal of the exercise will be to examine the liturgical and ritual experience of the participants, and to examine what the participants take with them when they leave Mass.*

10:00: Morning Session Small Group Questions

10:20: Reports from small groups with recording of responses on paper

10:30: Break

10:45: Presentation by candidate

Candidate will give a presentation on full, conscious and active participation in liturgical ritual. This will include the following:

- *An understanding of participation using the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and writings of John Paul II on the Sunday Mass.*
- *An exploration of a theology of participation in ritual that engages the heart and the mind because of the action of Christ in the liturgy and our participation in that action.*

11:45: Lunch Break

12:30: Presentation by candidate

From the work on mystagogy of Kathleen Hughes, an examination of the actual experience of prayer at the liturgy which is "first theology". A method of reflection will be given, to help the participants see something familiar with new eyes.

1:00: Prayer Experience: Signing of the Senses

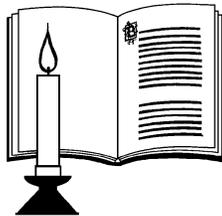
The final part of the workshop will consist of a ritual experience with mystagogical reflection. The prayer is adapted from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

1:30: Mystagogical Reflection

Participants will be asked to reflect on the liturgy itself, using a mystagogical model

2:00: Conclusion

Thank you for your assistance and participation in this Project!



Saint Sophia, Holy Wisdom, Pray for Us

Appendix 1.2

Liturgical Ministers Workshop Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate 14 and 21 August 2010 Opening Prayer

Opening Song *all stand*

Lord of All Hopefulness



1. Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2. Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3. Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4. Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



Whose trust, e - ver child - like, no cares can de - stroy,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace,
Whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm,



Be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
Be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Text: Jan Struther, 1901-1953, © Oxford University Press
Tune: SLANE, 10 11 11 12; Gaelic; harm. by Erik Routley, 1917-1982

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

All pause for short silence, praying silently

After the silence, the leader collects our prayers together in one voice

Loving God,

Keep before us the wisdom and love
you have revealed in Christ.

Help us to be like Jesus

in word and deed,

for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 9-12 *all are seated*

Silent Reflection

Lord's Prayer *all stand*

Appendix 1.3

Liturgical Ministers Workshop
Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate
14 and 21 August 2010
Opening Activity

Look at the following list of values based on the liturgy. Spend two minutes silently and drop three of them from the list. There is no order for the values, and no judgment placed on items left off the list. We will then look at them together.

- Singing by everyone present
- Music which is well executed and sung
- A homily that gives me something to take home and think about
- Personal fulfillment in my relationship with God
- Private prayer time
- Joining in the sacrifice of Christ
- Reception of Holy Communion
- Silence at key moments
- Listening to the readings from Scripture
- Praying the Eucharistic Prayer

Appendix 1.4

Liturgical Ministers Workshop
Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate
14 and 21 August 2010
Morning Session Group Questions

The following questions are for discussion in your small groups. Please allow two minutes of silence before beginning the discussion — time for all to think before speaking.

Thank you for completing your pre-workshop questionnaires. You have already given much thought to participation and what difference your participation in the liturgy makes for the rest of your week.

- Given your thoughts about participation in the liturgy, name some key elements of participation in the liturgy. In other words, what is essential. (*Many things are essential — there is no right and wrong answer*)
- Describe how being liturgical minister effects your participation: how is your participation the same or different?
- Articulate your ideas about how your level of participation in the liturgy affects the rest of your week. Is there a difference?

Appendix 1.5

Liturgical Ministers Workshop Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate 14 and 21 August 2010 Model of Mystagogy

This model is presented as a method for a mystagogical reflection on the liturgy. It can be used in an ongoing basis or as a reflection on a particular liturgical experience. This model is adapted from the work of Sr. Kathleen Hughes as described in pages 25 through 33 of Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament

Awareness

- Watchfulness
- Open our whole being to sights and sounds around us
- Sensory level, not mental or cerebral level
- Watchful of gestures and movements, mindful of our bodies and their responses
- Attention to the physical choreography of prayer

Reflection

- Let the symbols and language of the liturgy speak to our experience
- What is each word, movement, symbol, experience telling us
- Question and reflect more deeply on what is behind this action and movement
- What do these say about us as a community, as a people assembled
- How do they look in different seasons of the year

Reception

- Let our reflections speak to our hearts
- Meditate on the meaning of the sign or symbol
- Give self over to the power of the symbol or movement or word
- We experience the action of God
- This reception is not so much the welcoming of the insight behind the symbol, word, movement, but of the One who inspired it

Transformation

- Happens during the liturgy, so we must be open before God in the celebration
- Celebration of the liturgy with attention will change us
- Our consciousness of what we are doing begins to work a transformation
- As we become aware, reflective, receptive, we recognize that there are consequences to taking the liturgy seriously

Appendix 1.6

Liturgical Ministers Workshop
Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate
14 and 21 August 2010
Afternoon Prayer

Gathering Song *all stand*

As a Fire Is Meant for Burning



1. As a fire is meant for burn - ing With a
2. We are learn - ers; we are teach - ers; We are
3. As a green bud in the spring - time Is a



bright and warm-ing flame, So the church is meant for
pil - grims on the way. We are seek - ers; we are
sign of life re - newed, So may we be signs of



mis - sion, Giv - ing glo - ry to God's name.
giv - ers; We are ves - sels made of clay.
one - ness 'Mid earth's peo - ples, man - y hued.



Not to preach our creeds or cust - oms, But to
By our gen - tle, lov - ing ac - tions, We would
As a rain - bow lights the heav - ens When a



build a bridge of care, We join hands a - cross the
show that Christ is light. In a hum - ble, lis - t'ning
storm is past and gone, May our lives re - flect the



na - tions, Find - ing neigh - bors ev - 'ry - where.
Spir - it, We would live to God's de - light.
ra - diance Of God's new and glor - ious dawn.

Text: Ruth Duck, b.1947, © 1992, GIA Publications, Inc.
Tune: BEACH SPRING, 8 7 8 7 D; *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; harm. by Marty Haugen, b.1950

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

All pause for short silence, praying silently

After the silence, the leader collects our prayers together in one voice

...through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading: 1 John 4: 7-10 *all are seated*

Silent Reflection

Signing of the Senses *all stand*

Petitions

Our Father

Blessing:

Leader: Let us bless the Lord

All: And give God thanks

Appendix 1.7

Liturgical Ministers Workshop
Jim Wickman, DMin Candidate
14 and 21 August 2010
Afternoon Session Group Questions

The following questions are for discussion in your small groups. Please allow two minutes of silence before beginning the discussion — time for all to think before speaking.

We have examined the definition of mystagogy as an opening up of the mysteries of the liturgy. Through our reflection on the liturgy, we bring ourselves to love the liturgy, understand how it works, and commit ourselves to live the vision embodied there.

- Talk about what we just did and said? What was a significant moment for you?
- What was your experience of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of others around you?
- Think about how the various symbols of the liturgy such as word, fire, cross, candle, water, oil, etc., might image God for us.
- Describe the ultimate reality of this liturgical experience?
- How does the prayer, through ritual, text, and word, express what we believe? Does it lead us to faith or is faith presupposed in the “performance” of the ritual?

Appendix Two

This appendix contains blank copies of the Pre-Workshop Questionnaire and the Post-Workshop Questionnaire.

All were given copies of the pre-workshop questions one month before the workshop, and asked to email the answers to the website or the website email address set up for the project.

Two months after completion of the project, all were given copies of the post-workshop questions and again asked to email the answers to the website or website email address set up for the project.

2.1	Pre-Workshop Questionnaire	106-108
2.2	Workshop Evaluation	109
2.3	Post-Workshop Questionnaire	110-111

Appendix 2.1

James A. Wickman
Doctor of Ministry Project Research
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Pre-Workshop Questionnaire
Summer 2010

Purpose of this questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. Your input and presence at the workshop is a valued part of the process, and important to my research. The central elements are this pre-workshop questionnaire, the workshop itself, and the follow up questions. This first questionnaire is intended to measure participants' understanding what will be presented and discussed at the workshop.

This research project and workshop is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry at the Catholic University of America. I plan to complete this degree in December. I am asking you and others to participate because I am interested and curious about your experiences and understandings of participation and ritual. This information will be collated and used as part of the dissertation paper. All data will remain anonymous in the dissertation paper itself. Finally, I hope the experience will be beneficial to you as you explore the meaning of participation in the liturgy and grow in your faith.

Please fill in all questions as much as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer honestly. All responses will be confidential and will only be reviewed by me. It will be helpful to me to identify your questionnaire, as I try to understand your input and experience, and when I ask you to fill out the follow up questionnaire. However, feel free to send the completed form anonymously if you prefer. Instructions for submission are below.

James A. Wickman
Doctor of Ministry Project Research
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Pre-Workshop Questionnaire
Summer 2010

Instructions for filling out and return the Pre-Workshop Questionnaire

The questionnaire may be downloaded from the web site
www.jimwickman.com/pre-workshop_question.pdf

You may also email me directly for an electronic copy
jim@jimwickman.com

Finally, feel free to call if you need a printed copy
202-903-2804

Completed forms may be returned to this email address
research@jimwickman.com

Completed forms in print may be mailed to this address.
Use this option if you wish to return your form anonymously

Jim Wickman
Holy Trinity Church
3513 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007

Thank you for your participation in this project

Participation

Participation in the liturgy is central to our identity as Catholic Christians. In this project, I am interested in learning how people experience participation in the liturgy. Please respond to the questions below that describe the nature of your participation.

1. What has been your history of participation in the liturgy? For how long? What typical roles have you had? How would you describe your current involvement in the liturgy?
2. How would you describe the meaning of your participation in the liturgy?
3. Describe a particularly meaningful time of participation at the liturgy by you or others around you.
4. Have you participated as a Liturgical Minister? If yes, please describe the meaning of that experience.

Ritual

Ritual is key to participation in the liturgy. For this reason, I am interested in your experience of ritual in life and in the liturgy, and the meaning that you give to it. Please as best you are able to these questions about the meaning of ritual.

1. Describe some examples of ritual in your own daily life? What role do these ritual experiences play, if any?
2. Please describe your experience of ritual in your participation in the liturgy.

Connection to life

The ultimate expression of our participation in the liturgy is how we live out the rest of the week, away from the Church. These questions address my interest in the relationship between participation in the liturgy and how you live your life day to day. Please describe each as best you are able.

1. Suppose a coworker or friend asked why you attend Church — what would be your response?
2. Describe an example of how your participation in the liturgy directly affected your behavior during a given week following that Mass?
3. Does your level of participation in the liturgy affect your overall spirit when leaving the liturgy or your reflections on Mass during the next week? If so, please describe as best you can how you are affected.

Appendix 2.2

James A. Wickman
Doctor of Ministry Project Research
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Workshop Evaluation for 14 and 21 August 2010

Thank you for your attendance at these workshops. Please answer these questions and return this form to research@jimwickman.com. You may also bring it to Church and give it to me there. I appreciate your assistance.

On a scale of 1-10 please rate the following on the overall workshop experience:

(1 lowest...10 highest)

Overall evaluation of the workshop:

Overall evaluation of the workshop presenter (the candidate):

On a scale of 1-5 please rate the following on the goal or objective of the workshop:

(1 lowest...5 highest)

The goal of the workshop was clear:

The goal of the workshop was achieved:

I learned a lot from this workshop:

On a scale of 1-10 please rate the content of the workshop:

(1 lowest...10 highest)

The presentation helped me better understand the subject matter:

The group discussions promoted greater understanding of the subject:

The workshop increased my interest in the subject matter:

The candidate gave helpful feedback on the discussion reports:

The candidate was open for questions throughout the workshop:

The workshop was well organized:

I would recommend this workshop to other parishioners/ministers:

Feel free to add your comments of your own to this evaluation.

Return form to research@jimwickman.com

Appendix 2.3

James A. Wickman
Doctor of Ministry Project Research
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Post-Workshop Questionnaire
Fall 2010

Purpose

Thank you once again for your participation in my project. Your input is important to my research. The final element is this post-workshop questionnaire. It is intended to gauge any perceived changes in understanding.

Please fill in all questions as much as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer honestly. All responses are confidential and only reviewed by me. It is helpful to identify your questionnaire, but not required.

Finally, if you are not comfortable submitting the responses in an electronic format, please bring it to Church on Sunday, or leave it for me in an envelope on the table in the Sacristy.

Instructions

You may also email me for an electronic copy of the questionnaire
research@jimwickman.com

Completed forms may be returned to this email address
research@jimwickman.com

Completed forms in print may be mailed to this address.
You may also leave a sealed envelope in the Sacristy.

Jim Wickman
Holy Trinity Church
3513 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007

This research project and workshop is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry at the Catholic University of America. This information will be collated and used as part of the dissertation paper. All data will remain anonymous in the dissertation paper itself.

James A. Wickman
Doctor of Ministry Project Research
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Post-Workshop Questionnaire
Fall 2010

Participation

Participation is both interior and exterior, as we explored at the workshop.

1. What is your experience of interior and exterior participation?
2. Describe your participation at the liturgy in the time since the workshop.

Ritual

We attend to the ritual of the liturgy in various ways, as we explored a mystagogical process of “unpacking” a ritual experience at the workshop.

3. Describe the attention that you give to the ritual of the liturgy? Is there anything different?
4. How do you view participation in the sacrifice of Christ at the liturgy?

Connection to life

The ultimate expression of participation is living life according to the call of Christ.

5. Describe a recent example (since the workshop if possible) of how your participation in the liturgy directly affected you during the week.

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