

Queen of Angels study of Second Vatican Council
Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Introduction

Purpose of Vatican II: (SC,1)

- To impart growing vigor to Christian life
- To adapt what can be changed to modern needs
- To foster christian unity
- To strengthen what can bring more souls to the Church

The Liturgy: (SC,2)

- Through it Christ redeems us
- Through it we express & show others
 - The mystery of Christ
 - The nature of the Church (human & divine)
- Builds us up (as temples of the Holy Spirit)
- Enables us to preach Christ

Revision of rites (SC,4)

- Where necessary
- In light of sound tradition
- Give new vigor to meet modern needs/circumstances

Ch.1 - General Principles to Restore & Promote the Sacred Liturgy

I. Nature of the Sacred Liturgy and Its Importance in the Church's Life

How we are saved: Christ, in the union of humanity & divinity (reverse original sin) (SC,5)

- Perfect reconciliation
- Fullness of divine worship

Paschal Mystery: passion, resurrection & ascension

Jesus sent Apostles to preach the Gospel (Good News)

Jesus wants to save us “through the sacrifice and sacraments” (SC,6)

- Baptism & Eucharist

Christ is present in his Church, especially in the liturgy, for this reason (SC,7)

- Salvation is reason Church exists & reason for liturgy

*“The Church is (Christ’s) beloved Bride who **calls to her Lord**, and through Him offers **worship to the Eternal Father.**”*

- Liturgy is exercise of Christ’s priesthood
 - Signifies our sanctification in signs
 - Sanctifies us accordingly

Liturgy is foretaste of heavenly liturgy (SC,8)

Faith & conversion must precede participation in liturgy (SC,9)

(There’s more to the Church than the liturgy)

- Preach Gospel to nonbelievers
- Preach faith & penance to believers
 - Prepare them for sacraments
 - Teach them to live Christian life well
 - Encourage works of charity, piety & the apostolate

Liturgy is **source** of Church’s power & **summit** of her activity (SC,10)

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Goal of apostolate:

- Praise of God by all his Children
- Participation in his Sacrifice
- Reception of Holy Communion (Eucharist)

Liturgy:

- Unites us in holiness
- Prays for perseverance in faith
- Renews covenant between God & man
(*Eucharist consummates our baptism*)
- “draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire”
- Sanctifies man & glorifies God

We must be properly disposed for the liturgy to have all these effects (SC,11)

We must be **properly disposed** for the liturgy to have all these effects (SC,11)

- The faithful are to be **fully aware of, actively engaged in, & enriched** by liturgy

Spiritual life is MORE than just liturgy (SC,12)

- **Prayer** to Father in secret
- Prayer without ceasing

Thus, we pray at Mass that the Father would receive the Sacrifice of Christ and make us an eternal gift to Himself

Devotions are highly recommended (and should harmonize with the liturgical seasons, finding their source in the liturgy and leading the faithful back to it) (SC,13)

II. Promotion of Liturgical Instruction and Active Participation

Full, conscious & active participation of all the faithful is desired (SC,14)

- “Primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.”

Seminary professors teaching liturgy: well trained (SC,15)

Sacred liturgy study among most important theological seminary courses (SC,16)

- Clear connection emphasized between liturgy and other subjects
(e.g. “dogmatic theology, sacred scripture, spiritual and pastoral theology”)

Liturgical formation as part of seminary spiritual training & practice (SC,17)

Priests in active ministry “are to be **helped** by every suitable means **to understand** ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites; they are to be aided **to live** the liturgical life **and to share** it with the faithful entrusted to their care” (SC,18)

“With zeal and patience, pastors of souls must promote the **liturgical instruction of the faithful**, and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally” (SC,19)

Transmission of the sacred rites by radio and television shall be done with discretion and dignity (SC,20)

III. Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

General restoration of the liturgy for the sake of an abundance of graces for the faithful (SC,21)

- Only some elements are **subject to change**, to **express more clearly** the holy things they signify
 - Should be **easily understood** by the faithful

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

- Others are *divinely instituted and unchangeable*

A. General Norms

Sacred liturgy is **regulated by Church** in Rome (& sometimes Bishop's conferences) (SC,22)

Sound **tradition** must be retained (in accord with structure & meaning of liturgy) (SC,23)

- "no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them"
- "new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing"

Sacred scripture of "greatest importance" in celebration of liturgy

- inspires and gives strength to "prayers, collects, and hymns" (SC,24)

B. Norms from Hierarchic & Communal Nature of Liturgy

No private liturgies - pertain to whole Church, which is "the sacrament of unity" (SC,26)

Mass and sacraments should be **celebrated in common**, with the faithful present and actively participating" as far as possible (SC,27)

Nothing extra is to be done in the liturgy (SC,28)

Liturgical ministers must exercise "sincere piety and decorum" (SC,29)

Active participation includes: "acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs... actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes; (and) reverent silence." (SC,30)

People's parts are indicated by liturgical books (SC,31)

All are equal in the liturgy, apart from distinction of liturgical function or sacred orders (SC,32)

C. Norms from Educative & Pastoral Nature of Liturgy

"Sacred liturgy is principally the **worship** of the divine majesty" (SC,33)

- Liturgy also "contains much **instruction** for the faithful"
- "**God speaks** to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His gospel"
- "**People reply** to God both by song and prayer"

Noble simplicity should distinguish the rites (SC,34)

- "short, clear, and free from useless repetitions"
- Able to be understood without lengthy explanation

"intimate connection between words and rites" should be apparent in liturgy (SC,35)

- Restoration of **more ample, varied & suitable sacred scripture** readings
- **Sermon** mainly on scripture & liturgy, as a "proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ, ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy"
- More explicit **liturgical instruction** (only at suitable moments & in prescribed words when necessary in liturgy)
- **Bible services** encouraged (esp. on vigils, in Advent & Lent, and on Sundays and Feasts)

"the use of the **Latin** language is to be preserved in the Latin rites" (SC,36)

- Wider use of **vernacular** permitted when greatly advantageous to the faithful ("especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants" - *more to follow*)

D. Norms for Adapting Liturgy to Temperament & Traditions of Peoples

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Liturgy is **not uniformly rigid** except in “the *faith* or the *good of the whole community*”
(SC,37)

- Church seeks to **sympathize** with all **cultures**,
preserving whatever “is not indissolubly bound up with *superstition and error*”
- Sometimes things are even brought into the liturgy,
if “they harmonize with its *true and authentic spirit*”

Substantial Unity of Roman Rite preserved, with legitimate variation/adaptation allowed
(SC,38)

E. Promotion of Liturgical Life in Diocese & Parish

Bishop is High Priest of his flock (SC,41)

- Faithful derive their life in Christ from him (*not completely but in a way*)
- Life in Christ of the faithful depends (*partially*) on the Bishop

The **principle manifestation of the Church** is the Bishop celebrating the Mass with his
priests and the with all the people in full, active participation

As this isn't always possible, **parishes** are set up where a pastor represents the Bishop
(SC,42)

- “the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered
theoretically and practically among the faithful and clergy”
- **Parish community** must be fostered
“above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass”

F. Promotion of Pastoral Liturgical Action

Zeal to promote & restore the sacred liturgy is sign of God's providence & Holy Spirit in
Church (SC,43)

Liturgical commission called for among bishop's conferences (SC,44)

- With experts in liturgy, sacred music, art & pastoral practice

Diocesan liturgical commission called for (SC,45)

Diocesan commissions on sacred music & sacred art called for (SC,46)

Ch.2 - The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist

“The Eucharistic Sacrifice ... perpetuate(s) the sacrifice of the Cross” (SC,47)

- In it, Christ entrusted ... a memorial of His death and resurrection to the Church as his
spouse
- The Mass is: “a **sacrament of love**, a **sign of unity**, a **bond of charity**, a **paschal
banquet** in which *Christ is eaten*, the *mind is filled with grace*, and a **pledge of future
glory** is given to us”

The faithful should understand “the rites and prayers (and) **take part** in the sacred action
conscious of what they are doing, with **devotion** and **full collaboration**.” (SC,48)

- “be instructed by God's word”
- “be nourished at the table of the Lord's body”
- “give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim” with the priest
- “learn to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator”
- “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”

Nature & purpose of Mass & its parts to be preserved in simplified revision (SC,50)

* For sake of devout & active participation:

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

- take out repetitious & unhelpful
- restore what had been lost

More scripture: “more representative portion” read (SC,51)

Homily highly esteemed (expounds mysteries of faith & guiding principles of Christian life”) (SC,52)

Restore prayer of the faithful: for Church, civil authorities, oppressed, all, & salvation of world (SC,53)

Vernacular, esp. in readings & intercessions (and perhaps peoples’ parts) (SC,54)

- Faithful should be taught to say/sing their parts in Latin

Communion of the people “strongly commended” (SC,55)

Communion under both kinds can be permitted by Bishop when fitting
(e.g. newly ordained/professed/baptized)

- Dogmatic principles of Trent remain intact (*session 21*):
 - *Only necessary for priest celebrating Mass*
 - *Church “may determine or change whatever she may judge to be more expedient for the benefit of those who receive” the sacraments*
 - *Communion under either species is sufficient: “Christ whole and entire and a true sacrament is received even under either species alone ... those who receive only one species are not to be deprived of any grace which is necessary for salvation ”*

Liturgies of Word & Eucharist form “one single act of worship” (SC,56)

Concelebration appropriately manifests the unity of the priesthood (SC,57)

- Permitted on Holy Thursday, at “councils, bishops' conferences, and synods” & for abbot's blessing
- Bishop can allow: conventual/principal Mass & priest meetings
- “each priest shall always retain his right to celebrate Mass individually” except Holy Thursday

New rite for concelebration called for (SC,58)

Ch.3 - Other Sacraments & Sacramentals

Purpose of the sacraments: **sanctify** men, **build up** the body of Christ, & give **worship** to God (SC,59)

- Signs that instruct (nourish, strengthen & express faith)
- Impart grace & “act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to **receive** this grace in a fruitful manner, to **worship** God duly, and to practice **charity**”

“of the highest importance that the faithful should easily **understand** the sacramental signs, and should **frequent** with great **eagerness** those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life.”

Sacramentals: “sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments” (SC,60)

- Dispose us to receive grace of the sacraments & make holy different occasions in life

Practically constant grace (SC,61)

Nature & purpose must be made clear today (SC,62)

Vernacular permitted (SC,63)

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Adult catechumenate restored (SC,64)

Initiation rites may include local custom in mission lands when fitting (SC,65)

Adult baptism rites revised & new Mass for conferring baptism created (SC,66)

Infant baptism rite revised: clarify role & duties of parents & godparents in rite (SC,67)

Include variants for large number of baptisms & short rite for laity in danger of death (SC,68)

Replace “supplied rites” rite & new rite for validly baptized converts (SC,69)

Water may be blessed in the rite outside of Easter time (SC,70)

Confirmation rite revised: connection with Baptism clarified, permitted within Mass (SC,71)

Penance rite revised to more clearly express nature & effect (SC,72)

Anointing not only for those “at the point of death” (SC,73)

- fitting when one “begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age”

Continuous rite of confession, anointing & viaticum (SC,74)

Prayers & number of anointings adapted to circumstance (SC,75)

Ordination rite revised: vernacular permitted for beginning address (SC,76)

- All bishops may lay hands on new bishop

Marriage rite revised & enriched: more clearly signify grace of sacrament & teach duties of spouses (SC,77)

- Praiseworthy local customs to be retained
- Local Bishop conference may adapt rite, but “priest assisting at the marriage must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties”

Matrimony normally in Mass, between homily & intercessions (SC,78)

- “The prayer for the bride, duly amended to remind both spouses of their equal obligation to remain faithful to each other, may be said in the mother tongue.”
- Epistle, Gospel & blessing retained in matrimony outside of Mass

Sacramentals revised “enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily” (SC,79)

- “new sacramentals may also be added as the need for these becomes apparent”
- Few reserved blessings, mainly for ordinary
- Some, at least at certain times & with permission, permitted to qualified laity

Consecration of virgin rite revised (SC,80)

- new “rite of religious profession and renewal of vows (for) greater unity, sobriety, and dignity”
- Preferred within Mass

Burial rite “should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian death” (SC,81)

- Rite & liturgical color should correspond to local tradition

Burial of infants revised, with special Mass (SC,82)

Ch.4 - Divine Office

Christ’s priesthood, in the Church, praises the Father & intercedes for the salvation of the world (SC,83)

“the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God” (SC,84)

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

- “the voice of the bride addressed to her bridegroom”
- “the very prayer which Christ Himself, together with His body, addresses to the Father”

“standing before God's throne in the name of the Church their Mother” (SC,85)

Prayer necessary for fruitful priestly ministry (SC,86)

Restore traditional sequence of hours, heeding conditions of modern life (SC,88)

- Morning & Evening prayer are chief hours (SC,89)
- Compline made suitable to end day
- Matins: movable hour, less psalms, longer readings
- No more prime. Only 1 daytime hour if not in choir

Source of piety & nourishment for personal prayer: better understand liturgy & bible (esp. Psalms) (SC,90)

- Made easier for all to profit by them

Longer than one-week psalter (SC,91)

Arrange readings so “riches of God's word may be easily accessible in more abundant measure” (SC,92)

- Better selection of readings from fathers, doctors & others
- Accounts of martyrs must be historically accurate

“hymns are to be restored to their original form” as desirable (SC,93)

- “whatever smacks of mythology or ill accords with Christian piety is to be removed or changed”

Some communities must pray office in choir (SC,95)

Clerics must pray whole office, in common or individually (SC,96)

Rubrics will indicate when another liturgy takes the place of the office (SC,97)

- Ordinary (i.e. Bishop) may dispense or commute obligation

Clerics living together urged to pray some of the office in common (SC,99)

- All should pray as perfectly as possible, internally & externally
- Should be sung when possible

Chief hours, esp. Vespers, should be celebrated in common on Sundays & solemnities when possible (SC,100)

“the Latin language is to be retained by clerics in the divine office” (SC,101)

Ch.5 - Liturgical Year

celebrate the saving work of Christ by recalling it on certain days throughout the year. (SC,102)

- Lord's day: memory of resurrection (annually *w/ passion* at Easter)
- Whole mystery of Christ: incarnation, birth, ascension, Pentecost & second coming

“Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace.”

Special honor to Mary, “joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son.” (SC,103)

- Fruit of redemption
- Image of our perfect goal

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

Martyrs & saints remembered (SC,104)

- Proclaim paschal mystery
- Example for us to follow

“The Church completes the formation of the faithful by means of pious practices for soul and body,

by instruction, prayer, and works of penance and of mercy.” (SC,105)

Lord’s Day: *“Christ’s faithful are bound to come together into one place so that; by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who “has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (SC,106)

- original feast day *“should be proposed to the piety of the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work.”*
- *“foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year”*

traditional customs and discipline *“preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times”* (SC,107)

- specific character retained to *“nourish the piety of the faithful”*

Proper of time given preference over saints (SC,108)

- *“minds of the faithful must be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the mysteries of salvation are celebrated”*

Twofold character of Lent: *“primarily by **recalling or preparing for baptism** and by **penance**, it **disposes the faithful**, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery”* (SC,109)

- *“virtue of penance ... leads to the detestation of sin as an offence against God”*

Penance: both internal/individual & external/social (SC,110)

- Fostered in ways possible for our time & according to circumstances of faithful
- *“Nevertheless, let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind.”*

“The saints have been traditionally honored in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration. For the feasts of the saints proclaim the wonderful works of Christ in His servants, and display to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation.” (SC,111)

- Many taken off universal calendar, left to particular regions
- Only those *“truly of universal importance”* kept

Ch.6 - Sacred Music

*“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a **treasure of inestimable value**, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as **sacred song united to the words**, it forms a **necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.**”* (SC,112)

- *“ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord”*
- *“more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action”*
 - adds delight to prayer
 - fosters unity of minds

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

- confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.
- all true art approved for worship if needed qualities are present
- *“keeping to the norms and precepts of ecclesiastical tradition and discipline, and having regard to the purpose of sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful...”*

Divine office is more noble when sung with the people (SC,113)

“The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care.” (SC,114)

- *“Choirs must be diligently promoted”*
- *“whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful (should) be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs.”*

Music to be taught & practiced in seminaries (SC,115)

- higher institutes of sacred music to be founded
- *“Composers and singers, especially boys, must also be given a genuine liturgical training”*

Gregorian chant “specially suited to the Roman liturgy” and given pride of place (SC,116)

- *“other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action”*

“Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that ... the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.” (SC,118)

Local musical traditions, especially in mission lands, given due importance & suitable place (SC,119)

Pipe organ *“held in high esteem (as) the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.”* (SC,120)

- *“other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship”*
 - *“with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority”*
 - Only if **suitable for sacred use**, if they *“accord with the **dignity of the temple**, and truly contribute to the **edification of the faithful.**”*

Composers called *“to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.”* (SC,121)

- *“The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.”*

Ch.7 - Sacred Art & Sacred Furnishings

*“the **fine arts** are considered to rank among the noblest activities of man's genius, and this applies especially to **religious art** and to its highest achievement, which is **sacred art.**”* (SC,122)

- *“oriented toward the **infinite beauty of God** which they attempt in some way to portray”*
- *“single aim of **turning men's minds devoutly toward God.**”*
- *“all things set apart for use in divine worship should be **truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful**, signs and symbols of the **supernatural world**”*
- *“the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the **right to pass judgment** upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are **in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws**, and thereby fitted for sacred use”*

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Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sacrosanctum Concilium

- “sacred furnishings should worthily and beautifully serve the **dignity of worship**”

No particular style. Treasury of art through time must be preserved. (SC,123)

- “provided that it adorns the sacred buildings and holy rites with due reverence and honor”
“strive after noble beauty rather than mere sumptuous display” (SC,124)

- Remove what is “*repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity and pretense.*”
- “when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful.”

Sacred images to be kept for veneration of the faithful (SC,125)

- In moderate number, and in appropriate locations
- Avoid confusion & “devotion of doubtful orthodoxy”

Bishops to consult diocesan commission on sacred art and other experts (SC,126)

- Don’t get rid of “sacred furnishings and works of value” - they are ornaments of God’s house

Artists should be imbued “with the spirit of sacred art and of the sacred liturgy” (SC,127)

- schools or academies of sacred art called for to train artists
- Artists imitate God’s sacred act of creation

Revise laws for material things in sacred worship (SC,128)

- worthy and well planned construction of sacred buildings,
- the shape and construction of altars,
- the nobility, placing, and safety of the eucharistic tabernacle,
- the dignity and suitability of the baptistery,
- the proper ordering of sacred images, embellishments, and vestments

Clerical training in “history and development of sacred art” & “the sound principles governing the production of its works” to be “able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments, and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art.” (SC,129)

Appendix on Calendar

- Question of Easter on fixed Sunday (Church open if all including separated brethren agree)
- Open to perpetual calendar if 7-day week with Sunday retained for cycle of weeks (no adding days)