

THE MISSION OF THE ORDINARIATE

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The Ordinariate's Mission: Liturgy Msgr. Steven J. Lopes, STD

I am indeed grateful to Monsignor Jeffrey Steenson for the invitation to speak at this symposium on the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. It is a privilege for me to participate in the promotion of ecclesial communion through my work at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, particularly in the implementation of Pope Benedict's Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*.

However, I am beginning to question whether or not I have done something to offend my friend, Monsignor Steenson. Not only has he scheduled me to speak immediately after lunch, but has asked me to talk about liturgy—a topic which is, of course, *never* known to be controversial or elicit strong opinions...!

I speak to you today as an official of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and as one of the two secretaries coordinating the work of the *Anglicanae traditiones* Interdicasterial Working Group. This commission has been entrusted with the task of elaborating the liturgical provision for use by the Ordinariates by incorporating Anglican liturgical patrimony in Catholic worship. At the outset I should say that I do not intend to discuss here the workings of that commission or the “nuts and bolts” of liturgical texts or ceremonial. I propose, rather, to offer several principles which guide the work of the commission as well as support the understanding that the liturgical celebrations of the Ordinariate are an indispensable part of its mission.

The Catholic Liturgical Vision

In order to articulate the liturgical mission of the Personal Ordinariates, the “first principle” which must be observed is simply this: the liturgical vision of the Ordinariates is none other than the liturgical vision of the Universal Church. In this Year of Faith as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, it seems most opportune to look once again to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, for the broad strokes of that vision. After all, the renewal of the sacred liturgy desired by the Council Fathers has a profound goal indeed: the sanctification of souls and the manifestation of the Church through sacramental immersion into the saving mysteries of Christ.

The liturgical vision of the Council—and therefore the measure against which Ordinariate liturgical celebration must be measured—is articulated in chapter one of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. This vision can be expressed in a few short affirmations: the liturgy of the Church is the work of the Blessed Trinity; liturgy is the action of the whole ecclesial body, Head and members; liturgy has as its principal goal the intimate participation of the faithful in the saving mysteries; the liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life.

It is significant that, already in paragraph five of the Constitution, the reflection on the nature of the sacred liturgy and its importance in the life of the Church is situated in the initiative of the Father who “wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim. 2:4) and so sent his only-begotten Son, the Word made flesh, to accomplish this salvific will. The source of the Liturgy is the Father's initiative in sending forth the Son in order that we might be healed, forgiven, and restored to grace. This great work of our redemption in Christ which is the center of every liturgical celebration is accomplished in the Lord's blessed passion and death on the cross, in his resurrection from the dead, and in his glorious ascension into heaven where with the Father he

pours forth the Holy Spirit. The liturgy is therefore the great work of God in Christ who, through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, signifies and makes present his own Paschal Mystery.

The passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus happen in the space of history. But, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rather eloquently states: “All other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is—all that he did and suffered for all men—participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything towards life” (CCC #1085). That the liturgy in the fullest sense is the work of the Trinity means that all of our celebrations of the one liturgy have the character of *response*. Liturgy does not express our initiative, our creativity; much less an action over which we exercise control. In the Eucharistic celebration, Christ draws each of us to himself, transforming us in the Spirit to become part of himself, members of his ecclesial body. In this way, he permits us to share in the one acceptable sacrifice of love to the Father. Ours is therefore a movement return: through, with and in the Son, to the Father, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Paragraphs six and seven of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* go on to describe the participation of the ecclesial body of Christ, the Church, in the liturgical celebration. We are joined to Christ's sacrifice not haphazardly, as it were, but as members of his body, the Church. Christ Jesus himself established the college of apostles, sending them into the world that “they might accomplish the work of salvation which they had proclaimed, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves” (SC, 6). Again, the initiative is God's. Just as Christ was sent by the Father for the salvation of the world, so Christ sends the apostles and their successors, filled with the Holy Spirit, so that in every time and place the Paschal Mystery might be both *proclaimed* in the apostolic preaching and *made present* through the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

The implication here is that the liturgical celebration of the Church is not only a lively remembrance of the teaching and salvific mission of Jesus Christ, but it is the realization and actualization of that same mission. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Christ himself is present in the liturgical and sacramental celebrations of his Church: in the gathered liturgical assembly, in the person of the ordained minister, in the proclamation of the Word, and especially in the Eucharistic species. This association between Christ and the Church in the “great work” of the liturgy is so intimate that the Council described the liturgical celebration “as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ” wherein our sanctification is signified in sacramental signs and effected “in a way which corresponds with each of these signs.” By its very nature, the liturgy is a dynamic unity of action of the whole Christ, Head and members; “no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree” (SC, 7).

This unity—Christ our Head and we his Members—founds and sustains all other unity and communion in the Church and is therefore especially important for this discussion of the liturgical provision for communities who have entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. The very first paragraph of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* announcing the aims of the document highlight this perspective, nothing that the Council “desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful...to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church” (SC, 1).

Further, the unity of Head and members is the theological context in which we can consider one of the most-often cited passages of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, regarding the “full, conscious and active participation” of the faithful in the Church's liturgy (cf. SC, 14). A great deal of literature has appeared since the Constitution's publication concerning a right understanding of *actuosa participatio*, a term which has a long theological history, appearing in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* only after having received considerable attention by Pope St. Pius X (*Tra le sollecitudini*, 1903),

Pius XI (*Divini cultus*, 1928), and Pius XII (*Mystici corporis*, 1943, and *Mediator Dei*, 1947). I have no intention of revisiting the debate on active participation here! For our purposes, however, it is important to note that, when the Constitution addresses the issue in paragraph 14, it explicitly understands active participation not as a list of functions, but rather as a *demand* arising out of the nature of the liturgy itself.

The Holy Spirit works in the liturgy to make Christ present. As much as there is an objective aspect to this presence, so too is there a subjective element as the Spirit makes us present to Christ in his sacrificial offering to the Father. The Spirit conforms us to Christ, conforms our will to his will as he offers himself as the only acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world. St. Paul grasped this interior work of the Spirit and so declares of the Christian: “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). It is also the same conformity to Christ wrought by the Spirit that allows St. Paul to make that almost shocking confession: “In my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church” (Col. 1:24). That is *participatio actuosa* in the fullest, theological sense. Because of our baptismal immersion into the mystery of Christ, we are initiated into his Person and his mission in such a way so as to demand our participation in the sanctifying work of the mystical body. This is the reality to which we must attend interiorly during every liturgical celebration. And because we are human beings made up of body and soul, we give expression to that interior participation in the priestly office of Christ in all of our external liturgical actions—singing, kneeling, standing, professing, acclaiming. Theologically speaking, the demand of conscious, active participation is not so that we might “get something” out of the liturgy, but so that we might give ourselves all the more in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

The saving initiative of the Father realized in the loving response of the Son is continually made present through the action of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, poured out on the Church and the world at Pentecost and invoked during each and every sacramental celebration, effects our salvation in making present Christ's Paschal Mystery and drawing us into the blessed communion of the Father and the Son. The heart of the liturgical mystery is Jesus Christ and his paschal self-offering to the Father, a “return” to the Father for all the good things the Father has done (cf. Psalm 116). Contemplating this Christological heart of the liturgy, the Council Fathers can declare that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed” and “the font from which all her power flows” (SC, 10). In the action of his liturgical Body, Christ turns us back towards the Father...that is our sanctification. He allows us to participate in his “acceptable sacrifice” of worship to the Father...that is our glory.

In sketching the liturgical vision of the Second Vatican Council, I have not yet used the phrase “Anglican patrimony.” Our consideration of that specific expression will be all the more fruitful having founded it upon this prior reflection on the great Patrimony which Christ himself has left us. Indeed, the participation in his Paschal Mystery which he imparts to us through his Holy Spirit is our common inheritance of grace and must therefore be our first principle.

Patrimony and the Exercise of Primacy

Turning now to Anglican liturgical patrimony, I would observe that “patrimony” and “primacy” are certainly two of the key words that emerge from even a cursory reading of *Anglicanorum coetibus*. I would argue that the link between these two theological concepts in that context is not merely a matter of happenstance. Another principle for our reflection today, therefore, concerns the interrelationship of patrimony and primacy.

The very affirmation that there is such a thing as an Anglican liturgical and spiritual patrimony which enriches the whole Church as “a treasure to be shared” enters Catholic parlance in 1970. On October 25 of that year, Pope Paul VI canonized forty English and Welsh martyrs. During his homily, the Holy Father praised “the legitimate prestige and worthy patrimony of piety

and usage proper to the Anglican” Communion, words that were viewed both as a crucial validation of the special relationship between Catholics and Anglicans and as a confirmation of the existence of an Anglican patrimony worthy of preservation. By his authority, Pope Paul cut through the myriad questions of the “how and what” of patrimony’s expression in favor of articulating a key principle: for whatever other ecclesial deficits which result from the lack of full communion between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, the Catholic church acknowledges the work of the Holy Spirit in this body of separated brothers and sisters so as to be able to say that the manner in which the faith was nourished, proclaimed, and celebrated in the Anglican Communion these past 500 years adds to the vitality of the Church and enriches the body Catholic.

Jumping from 1970 to the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*, we see Pope Paul’s insight framed in Pope Benedict XVI’s concern “to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared” (Ap. Const. *Anglicanorum coetibus*, Art. III). This mandate, articulated and confirmed by papal “primacy,” becomes the task of the *Anglicanae traditiones* interdicasterial commission. The purpose of the commission, therefore, is not to compose a new liturgical text or to devise new liturgical forms, but rather to identify the patrimony from “the liturgical books proper to the Anglican tradition” (Ap. Const. *Anglicanorum coetibus*, Art. III).

Let me say just a brief word about those books to which the Apostolic Constitution refers. Given its use as an approved Catholic liturgical text, the *Book of Divine Worship* does enjoy a sort of “pride of place” in the selection of liturgical texts. In the second place, the classic Prayer Book heritage is to be considered (represented by England 1549, 1662 and 1928; USA, 1928; Scotland, 1929; South Africa, 1954; and Canada, 1962). *The English Missal* (1958) and *The Anglican Missal* (1961) come in next. If these sources do not provide the necessary material for liturgical celebration, then *Common Worship* or *The Roman Missal* may be consulted.

Some may ask the question: How is it that the identification of Anglican patrimony and the articulation of the liturgical provision for the Ordinariates comes from Rome? Should not these things arise or be suggested out of local experience rather than out of some opaque Vatican commission? The principle of the interrelationship between patrimony and primacy provides the response.

The stark and, for some of the members, surprising reality that confronted the commission in the early days of its work was the tremendous variety of liturgical forms in the Anglican world in general, and even within the three Ordinariates. This is not, however, the kind of variety that expresses vitality, but rather is the kind that produces a singularly disorienting effect. It seems to me a sad irony that the very moment in which the Catholic Church, in an unprecedented gesture of papal openness, turns to Anglican patrimony seeking enrichment corresponds with a movement in the Anglican Communion itself wherein the *Book of Common Prayer* is quickly disappearing as a daily feature of parish life. As the traditional Prayer Book fades and, in the Church of England at least, is replaced by *Common Worship*, what takes hold is a tremendous capacity for variation and adaptation in Anglican worship. Sure, it is possible to maintain Prayer Book elements and language alongside *Common Worship*. But with its multiple versions of even the Eucharistic words of institution, *Common Worship* assumes that each local community will “construct” worship as fits best its theological and ecclesiastical outlook. The situation in the Ordinariates is analogous. Although *Common Worship* is not at the center of the liturgical experience there, no less than six different liturgical books were being used by Ordinariate communities at the time the *Anglicanae traditiones* commission began its work.

The *Book of Common Prayer* not only formed and informed Anglican Worship for 500 years, it supplied its authority. In an Ecclesial Communion that eschewed both a Magisterium and the exercise of primacy, one can argue that it was the Prayer Book that ensured a *lex orandi*, the

systematic presentation through liturgical expression of the Christian faith. It is the unity of faith, faith nourished and preserved in the classical Prayer Books, which provides the sure foundation which makes possible a diversity of liturgical expression.

The optic through which to view the interrelationship of patrimony and primacy is authority. It is an exercise of Peter's authority over the Churches which *recognizes* the authentic faith of the Church expressed in Anglican forms of worship and which *confirms* that expression as a treasure or patrimony for the whole Church. In the movement into full communion, this liturgical treasure is further enriched by access to the Magisterium which authentically interprets the Word of God, preserving Christian teaching from error, and assisting the faithful and their pastors in the delicate task of expressing timeless truths in a way which is fresh, beautiful, and attractive.

In this context, it must be said that a constitutive element of this process of recognition and confirmation is the revision and, where necessary, correction of Anglican liturgical texts. This should not be seen as an imposition, but rather as an assurance that the core elements of the Church's faith are authentically expressed in her corporate worship. The veneration of the saints, for example, is present in the Prayer Books only in a rudimentary manner and the prayers those books contain lack a petition for the saints' intercession. In the adaptation of the funeral rites for the Ordinariates which have already been promulgated by the Holy See, the *Anglicanae traditiones* Commission had to ensure that the prayers included explicit prayers for the soul of the deceased which was lacking in the Anglican sources. This is not to impose a Roman perspective, but to draw out of these rich sources a fulsome and authentic expression of the faith so that they might continue to provide the *lex orandi* to the nourishment of this and future generations.

In the interrelationship between patrimony and primacy, there is a mutuality of enrichment which guarantees the authenticity of the faith, invests our liturgical expression with the sure authority of that faith, and which redounds to the glory of God, the source and focus of our sacramental worship.

Patrimony and the Divine Office

Another principle supporting the articulation patrimony is to be drawn out of the experience of the "robust" parochial liturgy—Mass and Office—that has long characterized Anglican worship. The reintroduction of the Divine Office into the daily experience of the faithful was deeply desired by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council. The fourth chapter of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* unfolds a vision of the Divine Office firmly rooted in the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the words of the Council, "Christ Jesus, high priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire community of mankind to Himself, associating it with His own singing of this canticle of divine praise. For he continues His priestly work through the agency of His Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world" (SC# 83).

All the baptized are sacramentally conformed to Christ, priest, prophet and king. The resonant hymn of praise and priestly supplication is sung by the *whole Christ*, Head and members, and is expressed in the daily liturgical prayer of the Church—the Eucharist and the Divine Office together. Although the Council clearly states that the Divine Office is the prayer of the whole Church and not just of its clerical or professed religious members, the translation of this into parish life is one area in which the liturgical vision of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has gone largely unfulfilled. I dare say that for a long time there has been almost a kind of holy envy among Catholics looking over the Anglican fence and seeing Mattins and Evensong such a regular feature of parish life.

In his seminal work on liturgical piety, the great Catholic theologian Father Louis Bouyer, himself a convert from Lutheranism, made an important observation about the work of the Caroline Divines and their efforts towards liturgical renewal in the Church of England. Boyer noted: “What was admirable about their work, and what had such a measure of success that it has endured even until our days...is a Divine office which is not a devotion of specialists but truly a public Office of the whole Christian people.”¹

This Office, a public sharing in the priestly office of Jesus Christ, is an invaluable expression of Anglican patrimony that offers enrichment to the universal Church. It is a *theological* enrichment, because the Church's own self-understanding is supported and deepened by this Divine office which is nothing less than “the voice of the bride addressed to her bridegroom; the very prayer which Christ Himself, together with His body, addresses to the Father” (SC #84). The Office is a *pastoral* enrichment contributing to the vitality of parish life and affording the faithful another means of expressing their relationship with the Lord in sanctifying their daily life and work. Additionally, the Office is an enrichment of *charity*. If it is truly a participation in the priestly office of Christ, then the Divine Office places on the lips of the gathered Church the prayer for those who cannot pray for themselves or know not how.

The principle, then, is that the liturgical participation in the priestly office of Christ is expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist and the Divine Office. This “robust” celebration is not the domain of the few, a clerical or professional caste within the Church, but rather finds its proper expression in the parochial life of the People of God. Ordinariate communities, mindful of this insight and privileged by the rich tradition of the Divine Office in Anglicanism, have a unique opportunity to contribute to the liturgical life of the whole Church and demonstrate by the regular prayer of Lauds and Evensong a felicitous path towards fulfilling the vision of the Second Vatican Council. Reciprocally, this example of patrimony is itself enhanced in full communion, since the Catholic Church has maintained a fuller tradition of all the canonical hours. This is important especially for the daily prayer of the clergy since the Anglican practice involves an unfortunate reduction or collapsing of the minor hours into Morning- and Evensong.

The challenge for Ordinariate communities and, indeed, for communities throughout the whole Church is how to make the Divine Office a daily staple of prayer parochially and personally. It is one thing to celebrate something like a “Cathedral office” on feasts and solemnities—Evensong with all the bells and whistles. An even more profound renewal awaits the Church when the priestly prayer of the Office is brought to bear as a regular and constitutive element of parish life.

I would be remiss if I did not mention too the rich English hymn tradition and the musical patrimony that grew up in Anglicanism precisely because of the Divine Office. But instead of reflecting at any length upon that rather obvious expression of patrimony, I would like to take a further step and say a word about a broader, perhaps less obvious example of patrimony of which the Divine Office is a particularly eloquent expression. There is something rather unique about the way in which Anglicans approach, use, and pray with Sacred Scripture.

The idea that there is a unique Anglican approach to Scripture was first proposed to me years ago during those first conversations that would eventually lead to the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*. I must confess, initially I found this idea puzzling, partly because the greater incorporation of Sacred Scripture in the liturgical life of the Church is one of the express desires of the Second Vatican Council and even more recently underscored by the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God and the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* of Pope Benedict XVI. And yet, consistently and from various sources both Anglican and Catholic, historical and contemporary, one finds the assertion that the Anglican liturgical tradition has been

¹ Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), p. 47.

distinguished by the prominence it gives to Scripture in the conduct of public worship and in the promotion of biblical piety.

There is a culture within Anglicanism wherein scriptural words, and images are almost a default starting position, a culture nourished and preserved in the parochial celebration of the Divine Office. This bears witness to the hallowed tradition of English monasticism which informs so much of Anglican worship. Additionally, the inclusion of the various scriptural “touchstones” throughout the Eucharistic liturgy (the Summary of the Law, the Comfortable Words, the Sentences, the fraction anthem “Christ our Passover”) is a distinctive Anglican feature which informs, underscores and punctuates the liturgical action. While the biblical intuition is present from the very beginning of Anglicanism when the insistence on the vernacular found expression in the beauty of the King James Bible and “Prayer Book English”, this approach to Scripture is more about reading the Bible liturgically, allowing the words and poetic cadences to linger, penetrate, and take root in the soul as a sustained, communal *lectio*.

Let us be mindful, though, that this approach to Holy Scripture is what one might call “less tangible” patrimony. One cannot point to it as demonstrably as one would point to, say, Evensong. As patrimony goes, its contours are much more subtle, defying both simple definition and replication. And yet, one need but read some of the *Pastoral and Plain Sermons* of John Henry Newman to see an eloquent example of this approach.

Conclusion

While much more can be said about specific examples of liturgical patrimony such as the Summary of the Law and Prayer of Humble Access, I have attempted to highlight some guiding principles that allow us to identify the patrimony of the Anglican liturgical expression and also to fulfill it by incorporating it into the fullness of authentic Catholic liturgy. Such principles are necessary if our conversation is to reflect the communion that the Divine Liturgy itself forges among the members of the Body of Christ. Without such a foundation, all dialogue would be frustrated and conversation reduced to individual, personal preference.

Sadly, such foundationless voices have attempted to insert themselves into our current dialogue. On the one hand, there are those who advocate for certain Anglican-inspired liturgical texts or practices without sufficient regard for the established sources and doctrinal principles out of which the liturgical life of the Church has grown. On the other hand, there are those who, forgetting the great diversity to be found in the family of the Catholic Church, maintain that an Anglican liturgical patrimony does not properly exist and that full communion with the Roman Catholic Church is expressed only in the usage of the Roman Rite.

Nevertheless, the continuing dialogue about liturgical patrimony is essential because, ultimately, it is an acknowledgement of the power and working of the Holy Spirit in the Church. It is this very Spirit who has led communities of Anglican Christians with their pastors to seek full communion with the Catholic Church. It is this very Spirit who inspired the Successor of St. Peter to promulgate *Anglicanorum coetibus* for the good of gathering together the one flock of Christ. It is this very Spirit who must have been at work during nearly 500 years of ecclesial separation to prepare the way for reconciliation. And it is this very Spirit who continues to nourish the flame of faith in our hearts and make present Christ's Paschal Mystery in the liturgy we celebrate.

In *Anglicanorum coetibus*, our Holy Father encourages us to acknowledge that the Anglican liturgy did not develop in a vacuum, cut off from its Catholic roots. Rather, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, there was preserved a “faithful remnant” of Catholic liturgy that found new expression—even eloquence—in Anglican worship. This, then, is the patrimony we strive to identify and preserve in the communion of the Church Universal, not as a museum piece but as a valid expression of our participation in the Sacrifice of Christ. For that is what we are: participants

in the one Sacrifice and the one Supper of the Lamb that reconciles us to the Father and to each other.

Ultimately, at this juncture we stand before a mystery much greater than ourselves. The Church herself, not invented by human ingenuity, is of divine origin and, therefore, her liturgy has God as its Author. Certainly, we are invited into this mystery, but only as its ministers and servants, and this, far from being the architects of unity ourselves, we receive the gift of communion as the first fruits of those who believe. It is the Spirit of the Living God who, through the sacramental liturgy of the Church, rouses faith in the hearts of believers, makes them to be disciples, and grafts them on to the Body of Christ. More than a homogenous gathering of people from a single cultural background who share similar interests, ideologies, and traditions, the Spirit of Pentecost has formed a Church that professes a single faith in a multitude of diverse languages. The Ordinariate, particularly through its liturgical patrimony, bears witness in the communion of the larger Church to the great diversity of the Spirit's gifts, demonstrating even today the vitality and variety still to be found in the Body of Christ for the good of all the members. This, then, is the liturgical mission of the Ordinariate and the truest expression of patrimony.