

SACROSANCTUM CONCILIIUM, THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

The Second Vatican Council exploded on the historical scene with its first document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) issued on December 4, 1963. Fifty years after the Council, we go deeper unpacking the ramifications of the liturgical reform unleashed by this document.

Fundamental Starting Point

SC 10 reminds us “that the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows.” Many have appreciated this principle, but there is a pressing need to evangelize our non-practicing Catholics on the importance of the Eucharist as a source of meaning and purpose for their lives.

Full, Conscious and Active Participation

SC 14 states: “Mother Church earnestly desires all the faithful to be led to the full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Peter 2:9; cf. 2:4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.” The ongoing realization of this goal requires personal prayer, preparation for the Scripture readings and moments of silence. This will produce a greater reverence and devotion at the liturgical celebration.

Our Baptismal Dignity Manifested in Lay Liturgical Roles

A renewed appreciation of Baptism has led to the participation of the lay faithful in a variety of different ministries. We are powerfully aware of the truth that the faithful are indeed offering with and through the priest the sacrifice that gives worship and praise to God, our Father. The ongoing challenge today is the theological,

liturgical, and spiritual formation of the various ministries.

Deeper Appreciation of the Scriptures

SC, no. 7 notes: “The Church is nourished on the word of God as it is written down in the books of the Old and New Testament.” A reformed Lectionary has exposed Catholics to a broader diversity of scripture readings. This has awakened within the people a desire to learn more about the scriptures. This desire needs to be nourished and people should discover the power of daily scripture reading.

Translation, Adaptation and Enculturation

While retaining Latin as the language in the Latin rite, the Council introduced the vernacular into the liturgy. (Cf. SC, no.36). We are now praying the newest translation of the Latin liturgical texts. The study and praying of these prayers will bring great spiritual riches. Inculturation is an ongoing future task. Provided that the substance of the Latin rite is respected, the liturgical books allow for adaptations to different regions and peoples. The National Bishops’ Conferences and the Holy See will explore the needs to be met.

Blessings and Challenges

Blessed with past joys and achievements, the future calls us to listen carefully to the movement of the Holy Spirit as we continue to implement and appreciate the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Rev. Msgr. Anthony Sherman

Additional Resources

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/>

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Time Warner Channel 97 ♦ Cablevision Channel 30 ♦ Verizon Fios On Demand (no cost)

February 28, March 3 and 5 at 8:30 pm; March 7 at 10 am, 2 pm, and 8 pm