



Life & Liturgy: Introduction to a Liturgical Spirituality

Thursday 30 June 2020

Session III: Liturgy & the Life of the Christian

I. The Christian and the Liturgical Life of the Church

- ☞ The Christian does not exist in isolation.
- ☞ Insertion into the life of the Church = into the liturgy.
- ☞ Authentic spiritual life is the liturgical life = union with God.
- ☞ Discipline of the spiritual life is a liturgical discipline. →
- ☞ Personal spirituality is necessarily an ecclesial spirituality.

SC 11: "In order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain."

Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*: "The liturgy creates a universe brimming with fruitful spiritual life, and allows the soul to wander about in it at will and to develop itself there. The abundance of prayers, ideas, and actions, and the whole arrangement of the calendar are incomprehensible when they are measured by the objective standard of strict suitability for a purpose. The liturgy has no purpose, or, at least, it cannot be considered from the standpoint of purpose. It is not a means which is adapted to attain a certain end—it is an end in itself."

2. Opportunities and Demands of Liturgical Spirituality

- ☞ Liturgy is "cross-shaped"; liturgical spirituality demands sacrifice.
- ☞ Liturgy is oriented toward beatitude; liturgical sp. offers hope.
- ☞ Participation in the liturgical life of the Church:
 - ☞ — attending Mass;
 - ☞ — proximate and immediate preparation for Mass;
 - ☞ — liturgical character to spiritual practices;
 - ☞ — liturgical prayer at home: divine office, rosary, grace &c.
- ☞ Seek out examples of liturgical excellence:
 - ☞ — worship that expresses the fullness of liturgical worship;
 - ☞ — read, watch things online, attend retreats and conferences.

Benedict XVI: "I would like to renew my call to everyone to pray the Psalms, to become accustomed to using the Liturgy of the Hours, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline. Our relationship with God can only be enriched by our journeying towards Him day after day."

SC 100: "Pastors of souls should see to it that the chief hours, especially Vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and the more solemn feasts. And the laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually."

Was ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacles of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to fetich because the yams had faded; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the settlement of a strike; for a son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so, wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheater; on the beach at Dunkirk; while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faintly through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the fiftieth anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonization of Saint Joan of Arc—one could fill many pages with the reasons why men have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to make the *plebs sancta Dei*—the holy common people of God." — **Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.**