

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# **The Church's Liturgy: God's Work through Human Hands**

## **Part I: Unity**

### **Reading 1: From *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963)**

14. It is very much the wish of the church that all the faithful should be led to take that full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Pet. 2:9; 4–5) have a right and to which they are bound by reason of their Baptism.

In the restoration and development of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the paramount concern, for it is the primary, indeed the indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. Therefore, in all their apostolic activity, pastors of souls should energetically set about achieving it through the requisite formation. (Chapter 1, Section II: "The Promotion of Liturgical Formation and Active Participation")

- Why does the Church, speaking at the Second Vatican Council, say that each person's full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy is a right and duty?
- Briefly describe what a congregation that is celebrating the Eucharist would look like if all present are fully, consciously, and actively participating.

### **Reading 2: From *Sacred Liturgy***

24. Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For from it are drawn the lessons which are read and which are explained in the homily; from it too come the psalms which are sung. It is from scripture that the petitions, prayers and hymns draw their inspiration and their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning. Hence, in order to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy it is essential to promote that warm and lively appreciation of sacred scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony. (Chapter 1, Section III: "The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy, General Norms")

- How does the Church propose to raise people's awareness of the importance of Sacred Scripture in the liturgy?
- Based on this excerpt from *Sacred Liturgy* and from other exercises in this unit, what can you do to improve your participation in the liturgy, especially in the Liturgy of the Word?

### **Reading 3: From *Sacred Liturgy***

28. In liturgical celebrations each person, whether ministers or members of the congregation, should do all that pertains to them, and no more, taking into account the rite and the liturgical norms.

29. Servers, readers, commentators, and members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical ministry. They ought, therefore, to carry out their functions with the sincere piety and decorum which is appropriate to so exalted a ministry and which God's people right expect.



Consequently, they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, each in their own measure, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner.

30. To develop active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times a reverent silence should be observed. (Chapter 1, Section III: "The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy, Norms Drawn from the Hierarchic and Communal Nature of the Liturgy")

- How does fully conscious and active participation promote unity in the Church?
- Based on the reading and your own experience, briefly describe an ideal server, lector, choir member, and Eucharistic minister.
- What should the rest of the people (the assembly) be doing?
- What difference do official teaching documents (such as the ones you've read) make to the Church? to you?

## Part 2: Diversity

### Reading 4: from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1200 From the first community of Jerusalem until the parousia, it is the same Paschal mystery that the Churches of God, faithful to the apostolic faith, celebrate in every place. The mystery celebrated in the liturgy is one, but the forms of its celebration are diverse.

1201 The mystery of Christ is so unfathomably rich that it cannot be exhausted by its expression in any single liturgical tradition. The history of the blossoming and development of these rites witnesses to a remarkable complementarity.<sup>1</sup>

1202 The diverse liturgical traditions have arisen by very reason of the Church's mission. . . . Through the liturgical life of a local church, Christ, the light and salvation of all peoples, is made manifest to the particular people and culture to which that Church is sent and in which she is rooted. The Church is catholic, capable of integrating into her unity, while purifying them, all the authentic riches of cultures.<sup>2</sup>

- Why does the Catholic Church permit adaptations in liturgy for different peoples and cultures?
- What is the value of having special liturgies such as those for wedding anniversaries, beginning a new school year, or World Youth Day? Can you think of other occasions on which a liturgy has special meaning?
- How can expressions of different liturgical and cultural traditions help to make liturgical celebrations more meaningful and the Church stronger?

(The excerpts from *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963], numbers 14, 24, 28, 29, and 30 are from [www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html). Copyright © LEV.)

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#### Endnotes Cited in Excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition

1. Cf. Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* 63–64.
2. Cf. *Lumen gentium* 23; *Unitatis redintegratio* 4.

