

THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 4 December, 1963

INTRODUCTION

1. The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all mankind into the Church's fold. Accordingly it sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.

2. For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, "the work of our redemption is accomplished,"¹ and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. The Church is essentially both human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation, present in the world, but as a pilgrim, so constituted that in her the human is directed toward and subordinated to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, the object of our quest.² The liturgy daily builds up those who are in the Church, making of them a holy temple of the Lord, a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit,³ to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ.⁴ At the same time it marvelously increases their power to preach Christ and thus show forth the Church, a sign lifted up among the nations,⁵ to those who are outside, a sign under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together⁶ until there is one fold and one shepherd.⁷

1. Secret prayer of 9th Sunday after Pentecost

2. Cf. Heb. 13:14.

3. Cf. Eph. 2:21-22.

4. Cf. Eph. 4:13.

5. Cf. Jn. 11:12.

6. Cf. Jn. 11:52.

7. Cf. Jn. 10:16.

3. That is why the sacred Council judges that the following principles concerning the promotion and reform of the liturgy should be called to mind, and that practical norms should be established.

Among these principles and norms there are some which can and should be applied both to the Roman rite and also to all the other rites. The practical norms which follow, however, should be taken as applying only to the Roman rite except for those which, in the very nature of things, affect other rites as well.

4. Finally, in faithful obedience to tradition, the sacred Council declares that Holy Mother Church holds all lawfully recognized rites to be of equal right and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way. The Council also desires that, where necessary, the rites be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet present-day circumstances and needs.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESTORATION AND PROMOTION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

THE NATURE OF THE SACRED LITURGY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

5. God who "wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), "who in many times and various ways spoke of old to the fathers through the prophets" (Heb. 1:1), when the fullness of time had come sent his Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart,⁸ to be a bodily and spiritual medicine:⁹ the Mediator between God and man.¹⁰ For his humanity united with the Person of the Word was the instrument of our salvation. Therefore, "in Christ the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth and the fullness of divine worship was given to us."¹¹

The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ Our Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved his task principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death, and rising, restored our life."¹² For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth "the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church."¹³

8. Cf. Is. 61:1; Lk. 4-18.

9. Cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch: Ad Ephesios, 7:2

10. Cf. 1 Tim. 2:5.

11. Sacramentarium Veronese (Leonianum).

12. Easter Preface of the Roman Missal.

13. Prayer before Second Lesson of Holy Saturday (Roman Missal, before restoration).

6. Accordingly, just as Christ was sent by the Father so also he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. this he did so that they might preach the Gospel to every creature¹⁴ and proclaim that the Son of God by his death and resurrection had freed us from the power of Satan¹⁵ and from death, and brought us into the Kingdom of his Father. But he also willed that the work of salvation which they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. Thus by Baptism men are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ; they die with him, are buried with him and rise with him.¹⁶ They receive the spirit of adoption as sons "in which we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15) and thus become true adorers such as the Father seeks.¹⁷ In like manner as often as they eat the Supper of the Lord they proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.¹⁸ That was why on the very day of Pentecost when the Church appeared before the world those "who received the word" of Peter "were baptized" And "they continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread and in prayers ... praising God and being in favor with all the people" (Acts 2:41-47). From that time onward the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery, reading those things "which were in all the scriptures concerning him" (Lk. 24:27), celebrating the Eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present,"¹⁹ and at the same time "giving thanks to God for his inexpressible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "in praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12) through the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. To accomplish so great a work Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,"²⁰ but especially in the eucharistic species. by his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes.²¹ He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). Christ, indeed, always associates the Church with himself in this great work in which God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. the Church is his beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through him offers worship to the eternal Father.

The liturgy, then, is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man's sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In it full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members.

14. Cf. Mk. 16:15.

15. Cf. Acts 26:18.

16. Cf. Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:11.

17. Cf. Jn 4-23

18. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:26.

19. Council of Trent, Session 23: Decree on the Holy Eucharist, ch. 5.

20. Council of Trent, Session 22: Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, ch. 2.

21. Cf. St. Augustine, Tractatus in Ioannem VI, ch. 1, n. 7.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.

8. In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle.²² With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until he our life shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory.³

9. The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion. "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15).

Therefore the Church announces the good tidings of salvation to those who do not believe, so that all men may know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent and may be converted from their ways, doing penance.⁴ To believers also the Church must ever preach faith and penance; she must prepare them for the sacraments, teach them to observe all that Christ has commanded,⁵ and encourage them to engage in all the works of charity, piety and the apostolate, thus making it clear that Christ's faithful, though not of this world, are to be the lights of the world and are to glorify the Father before men.

10. Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows. for the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper. The liturgy, in its turn, moves the faithful filled with "the paschal sacraments" to be "one in holiness";⁶ it prays that "they hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith."⁷ The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful and sets them aflame with Christ's insistent love. From the liturgy therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain, and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God to which all other activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, are achieved with maximum effectiveness.

11. But 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 be attuned to their voices, and that

²² Cf. Apoc. 21:2; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:2.

²³ Cf. Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4.

⁴ Cf. Jn. 17:3; Lk. 24:27; Acts 2:38.

⁵ Cf. Mt. 28:20.

⁶ Postcommunion for both Masses of Easter Week.

⁷ Collect for Mass of Tuesday of Easter Week.

they cooperate with heavenly grace lest they receive it in vain.⁸ Pastors of souls must therefore, realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the laws governing valid and lawful celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite and enriched by it.

12. The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with others, but he must also enter into his bedroom to pray to his Father in secret;⁹ furthermore, according to the teaching of the apostle, he must pray without ceasing.¹⁰ We also learn from the same apostle that we must always carry around in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal Flesh.¹¹ That is why we beg the Lord in the Sacrifice of the Mass that "receiving the offering of the Spiritual Victim" he may fashion us for himself "as an eternal gift."¹²

13. Popular devotions of the Christian people, provided they conform to the laws and norms of the Church, are to be highly recommended, especially where they are ordered by the Apostolic See.

Devotions proper to individual churches also have a special dignity if they are undertaken by order of the bishops according to customs or books lawfully approved.

But such devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them.

II. THE PROMOTION OF LITURGICAL INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

14. Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation 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 obligation by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and 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 pedagogy.

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hope of realizing this unless pastors of souls, in the first place, themselves become fully imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy and capable of

⁸ Cf. 2 Cor. 6:1.

⁹ Cf. Mt. 6:6.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Th. 5:17

¹¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-11

¹² Secret for Monday of Pentecost Week.

giving instruction about it. Thus it is absolutely essential, first of all, that steps be taken to ensure the liturgical training of the clergy. for that reason the sacred Council has decided on the following enactments:

15. Professors who are appointed to teach liturgy in seminaries, religious houses of studies, and theological faculties, must be properly trained for their work in institutes which specialize in this subject.

16. The study of sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of studies. In theological faculties is it to rank among the principal courses. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects. In addition, those who teach other subjects, especially dogmatic theology, sacred scripture, spiritual and pastoral theology, should—each of them submitting to the exigencies of his own discipline—expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation in a manner that will clearly set forth the connection between their subjects and the liturgy, and the unity which underlies all priestly training.

17. In seminaries and religious houses, clerics shall be given a liturgical formation in their spiritual lives. For this they will need a proper initiation, enabling them to understand the sacred rites and participate in them wholeheartedly. They will also need to celebrate the sacred mysteries and popular devotions which are imbued with the spirit of the sacred liturgy. Likewise they must learn to observe the liturgical laws so that life in seminaries and religious institutes may be thoroughly influenced by the liturgical spirit.

18. Priests, both secular and religious, who are already working in the Lord's vineyard, are to be helped by every suitable means to a fuller understanding of what they are about when they perform sacred rites, to live the liturgical life and to share it with the faithful entrusted to their care.

19. With zeal and patience pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation, both internal and external, taking into account their age, condition, way of life and standard of religious culture. By so doing pastors will be fulfilling one of the chief duties of a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of god, and in this matter they must lead their flock not only by word by also by example.

20. Transmission of the sacred rites by radio and television, especially in the case of Mass, shall be done with delicacy and dignity. A suitable person, appointed by the bishops, should direct it and have the responsibility for it.

III THE REFORM OF THE SACRED LITURGY

21. In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. for the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the

inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable. In this restoration both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as a community.

Therefore, the sacred Council establishes the following general norms:

A. General Norms

22. (1) Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See, and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.

(2) In virtue of power conceded by law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of bishops' conferences, legitimately established, with competence in given territories.

(3) Therefore no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

23. In order that sound tradition be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress, a careful investigation --theological, historical, and pastoral -- should always be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. Furthermore the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults granted to various places.

Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.

As far as possible, notable differences between the rites used in adjacent regions should be avoided.

24. Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from it that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung. It is from the scriptures that the prayers, collects, 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 sweet and living love for sacred scripture to which the venerable tradition of Eastern and Western rites gives testimony.

25. The liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible. Experts are to be employed on this task, and bishops from various parts of the world are to be consulted.

B. Norms Drawn from the Hierarchic and Communal Nature of the Liturgy

26. Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church which is "the sacrament of unity," namely, "the holy people united and arranged under their bishops."¹³

Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole Body of the Church. They manifest it, and have effects upon it. But they also touch individual members of the Church in different ways, depending on their orders, their role in liturgical services, and their actual participation in them.

27. It must be emphasized that rites which are meant to be celebrated in common, with the faithful present and actively participating, should as far as possible be celebrated in that way rather than by an individual and quasi-privately.

This applies with special force to the celebration of Mass (even though every Mass has of itself a public and social nature) and to the administration of the sacraments.

28. In liturgical celebrations each person, minister, or layman who has an office to perform, should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy.

29. Servers, readers, commentators, and members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their offices with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people.

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

30. To promote 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 time a reverent silence should be observed.

31. When the liturgical books are being revised, the people's parts must be carefully indicated by the rubrics.

32. In the liturgy, apart from the distinctions arising from liturgical function or sacred orders and apart from the honors due to civil authorities in accordance with liturgical law, no special exception is to be made for any private persons or classes of persons whether in the ceremonies or by external display.

C. Norms Based on the Educative and Pastoral Nature of the Liturgy.

33. Although the sacred liturgy is principally the worship of the divine majesty it likewise contains much instruction for the faithful.¹⁴ For in the liturgy God speaks to his people, and Christ is still proclaiming his Gospel. And the people reply to God both by song and prayer.

¹³ St. Ciprian, "On the Unity of the Catholic Church," 7; cf. Letter 66, n. 8, 3.

¹⁴ Cf. Council of Trent, Session 22: Doctrine on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, ch. 8.

Moreover the prayers addressed to God by the priest who, in the person of Christ, presides over the assembly, are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present. And the visible signs which the sacred liturgy uses to signify invisible divine things have been chosen by Christ or the Church. Thus not only when things are read "which were written for our instruction" (Rom. 15:4), but also when the Church prays or sings or acts, the faith of those taking part is nourished, and their minds are raised to God so that they may offer him their spiritual homage and receive his grace more abundantly.

Therefore in the revision of the liturgy the following general norms should be observed:

34. The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity. They should be short, clear, and free from useless repetitions. They should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.

35. That the intimate connection between rite and words may be apparent in the liturgy:

(1) In sacred celebrations a more ample, more varied, and more suitable reading from sacred scripture should be restored.

(2) The most suitable place for a sermon ought to be indicated in the rubrics, for a sermon is part of the liturgical action whenever a rite involves one. The ministry of preaching is to be fulfilled most faithfully and carefully. The sermon, moreover, should draw its content mainly from scriptural and liturgical sources, for it is the proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, which is the mystery of Christ ever made present and active in us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy.

(3) Instruction which is more explicitly liturgical should also be given in a variety of ways. If necessary, short directives to be spoken by the priest or competent minister should be provided within the rites themselves. But they should be given only at suitable moments and in prescribed words or their equivalent.

(4) Bible services should be encouraged, especially on the vigils of the more solemn feasts, on some weekdays of Advent and Lent, and on Sundays and holidays, especially in places where no priest is available. In this case a deacon or some other person authorized by the bishop should preside over the celebration.

36. (1) The use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites. (2) But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants. Regulations governing this will be given separately in subsequent chapters.

(3) These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is

to be used. Its decrees have to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. Where circumstances warrant it, it is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.

(4) Translations from the Latin for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority already mentioned.

D. NORMS FOR ADAPTING THE LITURGY TO THE TEMPERAMENT AND TRADITIONS OF PEOPLES

37. Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. Anything in these people's way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the liturgy itself, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

38. Provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved, provision shall be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries. This should be borne in mind when drawing up the rite and determining rubrics.

39. Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2, to specify adaptations, especially as regards the administration of the sacraments, sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music and the arts, according, however, to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution.

40. In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties. For this reason:

(1) The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2, must in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship. Adaptations which are considered useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Holy See, by whose consent they may be introduced.

(2) To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection necessary, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and direct, as the case requires, the necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suitable for the purpose.

(3) Because liturgical laws usually involve special difficulties with respect to adaptation, especially in mission lands, men who are experts in the matters in question must be employed to formulate them.

E. PROMOTION OF THE LITURGICAL LIFE IN DIOCESE AND PARISH

41. The bishop is to be considered as the High Priest of his flock from whom the life in Christ of his faithful is in some way derived and upon whom it in some way depends. Therefore all should hold in the greatest esteem the liturgical life of the dioceses centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church. They must be convinced that the principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop resides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers.¹⁵

42 But as it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his church, he must of necessity establish groupings of the faithful; and, among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important, for in some way they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world.

Therefore the liturgical life of the parish and its relation to the bishop must be fostered in the spirit and practice of the laity and clergy. Efforts must also be made to encouraged a sense of community with the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass.

F. PROMOTION OF PASTORAL LITURGICAL ACTION

43. Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the sacred liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, and as a movement of the Holy Spirit in his Church. It is today a distinguishing mark of the life of the Church, and, indeed, of the whole tenor of contemporary religious thought and action.

Therefore, so that this pastoral liturgical action may become still more vigorous in the Church the sacred Council decrees:

44. It is desirable that the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2 set up a liturgical commission to be assisted by experts in liturgical science, sacred music, art and pastoral practice. As far as possible the commission should be aided by some kind of Institute for Pastoral Liturgy, consisting of people who are eminent in these matters, not excluding laymen, if circumstances so demand. It will be the task of this commission, under the direction of the above-mentioned competent territorial ecclesiastical authority (see Article 22:2), to regulate pastoral liturgical action throughout the territory, and to promote studies and necessary experiments whenever there is a question of adaptations to be proposed to the Holy See.

45. For the Same reason every Diocese is to have a commission on the sacred liturgy, under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate. Sometimes it may be expedient that several dioceses should form between them one single commission which will be able to promote the liturgy by common consultation.

¹⁵ Cf. St Ignatius of Antioch: Magnesians, 7; Philadelphians, 4; Smyrnaens, 8.

46. In addition to the commission on sacred liturgy, every dioceses, as far as possible, should have commissions for sacred music and sacred art. These three commissions must work in the closest collaboration. Indeed it will often be best to fuse the three of them into one single commission.

CHAPTER II

THE MOST SACRED MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

47. At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity,¹ a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.²

48. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word, and be nourished at the table of the Lord's Body. They should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they should learn to offer themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator,³ they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

49. For this reason the sacred Council having in mind those Masses which are celebrated with the faithful assisting, especially on Sundays and holidays of obligation, has made the following decrees so that the sacrifice of the Mass, even in the ritual forms (of its celebration) have full pastoral efficacy.

DECREES

50. The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance. Parts which with the passage of time came to be duplicated, or were added with little advantage, are to be omitted. Other parts which suffered loss through accidents of history are to be restored to the vigor they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary.

51. The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative part of the sacred scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.

¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *Tractatus in Ioannis Evangelium*, ch. 6 n. 13

² Roman Breviary: Feast of Corpus Christi, Second Vespers, Antiphon to Magnificat.

³ Cf. St. Cyril of Alexandria: "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John," Book 11, ch. 11-12.

52. By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year. The homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself. In fact at those Masses which are celebrated on Sundays and holidays of obligation, with the people assisting, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason.

53. The "common prayer" or "prayer of the faithful" is to be restored after the gospel and homily, especially on Sundays and holidays of obligation. By this prayer in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world.⁴

54. A suitable place may be allotted to the vernacular in Masses which are celebrated with the people, especially in the readings and "the common prayer," and also, as local conditions may warrant, in those parts which pertain to the people, according to the rules laid down in Article 36 of this Constitution. Nevertheless care must be taken to ensure that the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them. Wherever a more extended use of the vernacular in the Mass seems desirable, the regulation laid down in Article 40 of this Constitution is to be observed.

55. The more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's Body from the same sacrifice, is warmly recommended. The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact,⁵ communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See. For example,

To the Newly ordained in the Mass of their ordination;

To the newly professed in the mass of their religious profession;

To the newly baptized in the Mass which follows their baptism.

56. The two parts which in a sense go to make up the Mass, viz. the liturgy of the word and the and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship. Accordingly this sacred Synod strongly urges pastors of souls that, when instructing the faithful, they insistently teach them to take their part in the entire Mass, especially on Sundays and holidays of obligation.

57.(1) Concelebration whereby the unity of the priesthood is appropriately manifested has remained in use to this day in the Church both in the East and in the West. For this reason it has seemed good to the Council to extend permission for celebration to the following cases:

1. (a) On the Thursday of the Lord's Supper (not only at the Mass of the Chrism, but also at the evening Mass.

⁴ Cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

⁵ Council of Trent, Session 21: On Communion under Both Species, ch. 1-3.

(b) At Masses during Councils, Bishops' Conferences and Synods.

(c) At the Mass for the Blessing of an Abbot.

2. Also with permission of the Ordinary, to whom it belongs to decide whether concelebration is opportune:

(a) at conventual Mass, and at the principal Mass in churches, when the needs of the faithful do not require that all the priests available should celebrate individually;

(b) at Mass celebrated at any kind of priests' meetings whether the priests be secular or religious.

(2) 1. The regulation, however, of the discipline of concelebration in the diocese pertains to the bishop.

2. Each priest shall always retain his right to celebrate Mass individually, though not at the same time in the same church as a concelebrated Mass nor on the Thursday of the Lord's Supper.

58. A new rite for Concelebration is to be drawn up and inserted into the Pontifical and into the Roman Missal.

CHAPTER III

THE OTHER SACRAMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTALS

59. The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it. That is why they are called "sacraments of faith." They do, indeed, confer grace but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace to their profit, to worship God duly, and to practice charity.

It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the faithful should easily understand the sacramental signs, and should eagerly frequent those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life.

60. Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the Church's intercession. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.

61. Thus for well-disposed members of the faithful the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the paschal mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot thus be directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God.

62. With the passage of time, however, there have crept into the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals certain features which have rendered their nature and purpose far from clear to the people of today. Hence some changes are necessary to adapt them to present-day needs. For that reason the sacred Council decrees as follows concerning their revision:

63. Because the use of the vernacular in the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals can often be of very great help to the people, this use is to be extended according to the following norms:

(a) In the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals the vernacular may be used according to the norm of Article 36.

(b) The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority designated in Article 22:2 of this Constitution shall forthwith prepare, in accordance with the new edition of the Roman Ritual, local rituals adapted linguistically and otherwise to the needs of the different regions. These rituals, on authentication by the Apostolic See, are to be followed in the regions in question. But in drawing up those rituals or particular collections of rites, the instructions prefixed to the individual rites in the Roman Ritual, whether they be pastoral and rubrical or whether they have a special social import, shall not be omitted.

64. The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and brought into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.

65. In mission countries, in addition to what is furnished by the Christian tradition, those elements of initiation rites may be admitted which are already in use among some peoples insofar as they can be adapted to the Christian ritual in accordance with Articles 37-40 of this Constitution.

66. Both rites for the baptism of adults are to be revised, not only the simpler rite but also, taking into consideration the restored catechumenate, the more solemn rite. A special Mass "For the conferring of Baptism" is to be inserted into the Roman Missal.

67. The rite for the baptism of infants is to be revised, its revision taking into account the fact that those to be baptized are infants. The roles of parents and godparents, and also their duties, should be brought out more clearly in the rite itself.

68. The baptismal rite should contain variants, to be used at the discretion of the local ordinary when a large number are to be baptized. Likewise a shorter rite is to be drawn up, especially for mission countries which catechists, and also the faithful in general, may use when there is danger of death and neither priest nor deacon is available.

69. In place of the rite called "Rite for supplying what was omitted in the baptism of an infant" a new rite is to be drawn up. This rite should indicate more fittingly and clearly that the infant baptized by the short rite has already been received into the Church. So also a new rite is to be drawn up for converts who have already been validly baptized. It should indicate that they are now admitted to communion with the Church.

70. Baptismal water, outside of paschal time, may be blessed within the rite of Baptism itself by an approved shorter formula.

71. The rite of Confirmation is to be revised also so that the intimate connection of this sacrament with the whole of the Christian initiation may more clearly appear. For this reason the renewal of baptismal promises should fittingly precede the reception of this sacrament. Confirmation may be conferred within Mass when convenient. For conferring outside Mass, a formula introducing the rite should be drawn up.

72. The rite and formulae of Penance are to be revised so that they more clearly express both the nature and effect of the sacrament.

73. "Extreme Unction," which may also and more fittingly be called "Anointing of the Sick," is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive the sacrament has certainly already arrived.

74. In addition to the separate rites for Anointing of the Sick and the Viaticum, a continuous rite shall be prepared in which a sick man is anointed after he has made his confession and before he receives Viaticum.

75. The number of the anointings is to be adapted to the occasion, and the prayers which belong to the rite of Anointing are to be revised so as to correspond to the varying conditions of the sick who receive the sacrament.

76. Both the ceremonies and texts of the Ordination rites are to be revised. The addresses given by the bishop at the beginning of each ordination or consecration may be in the vernacular. In the consecration of a bishop the laying on of hands may be done by all the bishops present.

77. The Marriage rite now found in the Roman Ritual is to be revised and enriched so that it will more clearly signify the grace of the sacrament and will emphasize the spouses' duties.

"If any regions use other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies when celebrating the sacrament of Matrimony the sacred Synod earnestly desires that these by all means be retained."¹

Moreover, an ecclesiastical authority having the territorial competence described in Article 22:2 of this Constitution is free to draw up its own rite suited to its people and region, according to the provisions of Article 63, but on the express condition that the priest assisting at the marriage ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties.

78. Matrimony is normally to be celebrated within the mass after the reading of the gospel and the homily and before "the prayer of the faithful." The prayer for the bride, duly amended to remind both spouses of their equal obligation of mutual fidelity, may be said in the vernacular. But if the sacrament of Matrimony is celebrated apart from Mass, the epistle and gospel from the nuptial Mass are to be read at the beginning of the rite, and the blessing should always be given to the spouses.

79. The sacramentals are to be revised, account being taken of the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily. The circumstances of our times must also be considered. When rituals are being revised as laid down in Article 63, new sacramentals may also be added as necessity requires.

Reserved blessings shall be very few. Reservations shall be in favor only of bishops and ordinaries.

Provision should be made for the administration of some sacramentals, at least in special circumstances and at the discretion of the ordinary, by qualified lay persons.

80. The rite of the Consecration of Virgins contained in the Roman Pontifical is to be revised. Moreover a rite of religious profession and renewal of vows shall be drawn in order to achieve greater unity, sobriety, and dignity. Apart from special exceptions granted by law, this rite

¹ Council of Trent, Session 24: On Reform, ch. 1. Cf. Roman Ritual, Title 8, ch. 2, n. 6.

should be adopted by those who make their profession or renewal of vows within the Mass. It is recommended that religious profession be made within the Mass.

81. Funeral rites should express more clearly the paschal character of Christian death, and should correspond more closely to the circumstances and traditions found in various regions. This also applies to the liturgical color to be used.

82. The rite for the Burial of Infants is to be revised, and a special Mass for the occasion should be provided.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

83. Jesus Christ, 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 attaches to himself the entire community of mankind and has them join him in singing his divine song of praise.

For he continues his priestly work through his Church. The Church, by celebrating the Eucharist and by other means, especially—the celebration of the divine office—is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the entire world.

84. The divine office, in keeping with ancient Christian tradition, is so devised that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God. Therefore, when this wonderful song of praise is correctly celebrated by priests and others deputed to it by the Church, or by the faithful praying together with a priest in the approved form, then it is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father.

85. Hence all who take part in the divine office are not only performing a duty for the Church, they are also sharing in what is the greatest honor for Christ's Bride; for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church, their Mother.

86. Priest who are engaged in the sacred pastoral ministry will pray the divine office the more fervently, the more alive they are to the need to heed St. Paul's exhortation, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th. 5:17). For only the Lord, who said, "Without me you can do nothing," can make their work effective and fruitful. That is why the apostles when instituting deacons said, "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

87. In order that the divine office may be better and more perfectly prayed, whether by priests or by other members of the Church, in existing circumstances, the sacred Council, continuing the restoration so happily begun by the Apostolic See, decrees as follows concerning the office of the Roman rite:

88. Since the purpose of the office is to sanctify the day, the traditional sequence of the hours is to be restored so that, as far as possible, they may again become also in fact what they have been

in name. At the same time account must be taken of the conditions of modern life in which those who are engaged in apostolic work must live.

89. Therefore, in the revision of the office these norms are to be observed:

(a) By the venerable tradition of the universal Church, Lauds as morning prayer, and vespers as evening prayer, are the two hinges on which the daily office turns. They must be considered as the chief hours and are to be celebrated as such.

(b) Compline is to be drawn up so as suitably to mark the close of the day.

(c) The hour called Matins, although it should retain the character of nocturnal prayer when recited in choir, shall be so adapted that it may be recite at any hour of the day, and it shall be made up of fewer psalms and longer readings.

(d) The hour of Prime is to be suppressed.

(e) In choir the minor hours of Terce, Sext, and None are to be observed. Outside of choir it will be lawful to select any one of the three most suited to the time of the day.

90. The divine office, because it is the public prayer of the Church, is a source of piety and a nourishment for personal prayer. For this reason, priest and others who take part in the divine office are earnestly exhorted in the Lord to attune their minds to their voices when praying it. To achieve this more fully, they should take steps to improve their understanding of the liturgy and of the Bible, especially of the psalms. When the Roman office is being revised, its venerable centuries-old treasures are to be so adapted that those to whom it is handed on may profit from it more fully and more easily.

91. So that it may be possible in practice to observe the course of the hours proposed in Article 89, the psalms are no longer to be distributed throughout one week but through a longer period of time. The task of revising the psalter, already happily begun, is to be finished as soon as possible. It shall take into account the style of Christian Latin, the liturgical use of the psalms—including the singing of the psalms—and the entire tradition of the Latin Church.

92. As regards the readings, the following points shall be observed:

(a) Readings from sacred scripture shall be so arranged that the riches of the divine word may be easily accessible in more abundant measure;

(b) Readings taken from the works of the fathers, doctors, and ecclesiastical writers shall be better selected;

(c) The accounts of the martyrdom or lives of the saints are to be made historically accurate.

93. Hymns are to be restored to their original form, as far as may be desirable. They are to be purged of whatever smacks of mythology or accords ill with Christian piety. Also, as occasion

may warrant, other selections are to be made from the treasury of hymns.

94. So that the day may be truly sanctified and that the hours themselves may be recited with spiritual advantage, it is best that each of them be prayed at the time which corresponds most closely with its true canonical time.

95. Communities obliged to choral office are bound to celebrate the office in choir every day in addition to the conventual Mass. In particular:

(a) Orders of canons, monks, and nuns, and of other regulars bound by law or constitutions to choral office, must say the entire office;

(b) Cathedral or collegiate chapters are bound to recite those parts of the office imposed on them by general or particular law;

(c) All members of the above communities who are in major orders or who are solemnly professed, except for lay brothers, are bound to recite individually those canonical hours which they do not pray in choir.

96. Clerics not bound to office in choir, but who are in major orders, are bound to pray the entire office every day, either in common or individually, as laid down in Article 89.

97. The rubrics shall determine when it is appropriate to substitute a liturgical service for the divine office.

In particular cases, and for adequate reasons, ordinaries may dispense their subjects, wholly or in part, from the obligation of reciting the divine office, or they may change it to another obligation.

98. Any religious who in virtue of their constitutions recite parts of the divine office, are thereby joining in the public prayer of the Church. The same can be said of those who, in virtue of their constitutions, recite any "little office", provided it be drawn up after the patten of the divine office, and be duly approved.

99. Since the divine office is the voice of the Church, that is, of the whole mystical body publicly praising God, it is recommended that clerics who are not obliged to attend office in choir, especially priests who live together or who assemble for any purpose, should pray at least some part of the divine office in common. All who pray the divine office, whether in choir or in common, should fulfill the task entrusted to them as perfectly as possible. This refers not only to the internal devotion of mind but also to the external manner of celebration. It is, moreover, fitting that whenever possible the office be sung, both in choir and in common.

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

101.(1) In accordance with the age old tradition of the Latin rite, the Latin language is to be retained by clerics in the divine office. But in individual cases the ordinary has the power to grant the use of a vernacular translation to those clerics for whom the use of Latin constitutes a grave obstacle to their praying the office properly. The vernacular version, however, must be one that is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of article 36.

(2) The competent superior has the power to grant the use of the vernacular for the divine office, even in choir, to religious, including men who are not clerics. The vernacular version, however, must be one that is approved.

(3) Any cleric bound to the divine office fulfills his obligation if he prays the office in the vernacular together with a group of the faithful or with those mentioned in par. 2, above, provided that the text used has been approved.

CHAPTER V

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

102. Holy Mother Church believes that it is for her to celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection. She also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts. In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.

Thus recalling the mysteries of the redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits so that these are in some way made present for all time; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace.

103. In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably linked with her son's saving work. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.

104. The Church has also included in the annual cycle memorial days of the martyrs and other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold grace of God and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God's perfect praise in heaven and pray for us. By celebrating their anniversaries the Church proclaims achievement of the paschal mystery in the saints who have suffered and have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs for God's favors.

105. Finally, in the various seasons of the year and in keeping with her traditional discipline, 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 mercy.

Accordingly the sacred Council has decided to decree as follows:

106. By a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place. They should listen to the word of God and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus, and giving thanks to God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). The Lord's Day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of the greatest importance, shall not have precedence over Sunday, which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.

107. The liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times. Their specific character is to be retained so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of the Christian redemption and, above all, the paschal mystery. If certain adaptations are necessary because of local conditions, they are to be made in accordance with the provisions of Articles 39 and 40.

108. the minds of the faithful should be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the mysteries of salvation are celebrated throughout the year. For this reason, the Proper of the Time shall be given due preference over the feasts of the saints so that the entire cycle of the mysteries of salvation may be suitably recalled.

109. The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent—the the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance—should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer.

(a) More use is to be made of the baptismal features which are proper to the Lenten liturgy. Some of them which were part of an earlier tradition are to be restored where opportune.

(b) The same may be said of the penitential elements. But catechesis, as well as pointing out the social consequences of sin, must impress on the minds of the faithful the distinctive character of penance as a detestation of sin because it is an offense against God. The role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be passed over and the need to pray for sinners should be emphasized.

110. During Lent, penance should be not only internal and individual but also external and social. The practice of penance should be encouraged in ways suited to the present day, to different regions, and to individual circumstances. It should also be recommended by the authorities mentioned in Article 22.

But the paschal fast must be kept sacred. It should be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday, and where possible should be prolonged throughout Holy Saturday so that the faithful may attain the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection with uplifted and responsive minds.

111. 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 offer to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation. Lest the feasts of the saints should take precedence over the feasts which commemorate the very mysteries of salvation, many of them should be left to be celebrated by a particular Church, or nation, or family of religious. Only those should be extended to the universal Church which commemorate saints who are truly of universal importance.

CHAPTER VI

SACRED MUSIC

12. 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 a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.

Sacred scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song.¹ So have the Fathers of the Church and the Roman pontiffs who in more recent times, led by St. Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial functions exercised by sacred music in the service of the Lord.

Therefore sacred music is to be considered the more holy, the more closely connected it is with the liturgical action, whether making prayer more pleasing, promoting unity of minds, or conferring greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. The Church, indeed, approves of all forms of true art which have the requisite qualities, and admits them into divine worship.

Accordingly, the sacred Council, 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, decrees as follows:

113. Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people.

As regards the language to be used, the provisions of Article 36 are to be observed; for the Mass, Article 54; for the sacraments, Article 63; for the divine office, Article 101.

114. The treasury of sacred music is to be preserved and cultivated with great care. Choirs must be assiduously developed, especially in cathedral churches. Bishops and other pastors of souls must take great care to ensure that whenever the sacred action is to be accompanied by chant, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs, as laid down in Articles 28 and 30.

115. Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of studies of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools. To impart this instruction teachers are to be carefully trained and put in charge of the teaching of sacred music.

It is desirable also that higher institutes of sacred music be established whenever possible.

Composers and singers, especially boys, must also be given a genuine liturgical training.

116. The Church recognizes Gregorian chant as being specially suited to the Roman liturgy. Therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.

¹ Cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

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 as laid down in Article 30.

117. The typical edition of the books of Gregorian chant is to be completed. In addition a more critical edition is to be prepared of those books already published since the restoration by St. Pius X. It is desirable also that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies for use in smaller churches.

118. Religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises as well as in liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may be heard, in conformity with the norms and requirements of the rubrics.

119. In certain countries, especially in mission lands there are people who have their own musical tradition, and this plays a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason their music should be held in proper esteem and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their religious sense but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in Articles 39 and 40.

Therefore, in the musical training of missionaries, great care should be taken to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of those peoples both in the schools and in sacred services, as far as may be practicable.

120. The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Latin Church, for it is the traditional musical instrument, the sound of which can add a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up men's minds to God and higher things.

But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, in the judgment and with the consent of the competent territorial authority as laid down in Articles 22: 2, 37 and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use; that they accord with the dignity of the temple, and that they truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

121. Composers, animated by the Christian spirit, should accept that it pertains to their vocation to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.

Let them produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, and which can be sung not only by large choirs but also by smaller choirs, and which make possible the active participation of the whole congregation.

The texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine. Indeed, they should be drawn chiefly from the sacred scripture and from liturgical sources.

CHAPTER VII

SACRED ART AND SACRED FURNISHINGS

122. The fine arts are rightly classed among the noblest activities of man's genius; this is especially true of religious art and of its highest manifestation, sacred art. Of their nature the arts are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands. Their dedication to the increase of God's praise and of his glory is more complete, the more exclusively they are devoted to turning men's minds devoutly toward God.

For that reason holy Mother Church has always been the patron of the fine arts and has ever sought their noble ministry, to the end especially that all things set apart for use in divine worship should be worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of things supernatural. And to this end she has trained artists. In fact the Church has, with good reason, always claimed the right to pass judgment on the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and the laws religiously handed down, and are to be considered suitable for sacred use.

The Church has been particularly careful to see that sacred furnishings should worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship. She has admitted changes in material, style, or ornamentation prompted by the progress of technical arts with the passage of time.

Wherefore it has pleased the Fathers to issue the following decrees on these matters:

123. The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her own. She has admitted styles from every period, in keeping with the natural characteristics and conditions of peoples and the needs of the various rites. Thus in the course of the centuries she has brought into existence a treasury of art which must be preserved with every care. The art of our own times from every race and country shall also be given free scope in the Church, provided it bring to the task the reverence and honor due to the sacred buildings and rites. Thus it is enabled to join its voice to that wonderful chorus of praise in honor of the Catholic faith sung by great men in past ages.

124. Ordinaries are to take care that in encouraging and favoring truly sacred art, they should seek for noble beauty rather than sumptuous display. The same principle applies also to sacred vestments and ornaments.

Bishops should be careful to ensure that works of art which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or through lack of artistic merit or because of mediocrity or pretense, be removed from the house of God and from other sacred places.

And 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.

125. The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions

should reflect right order. For otherwise the Christian people may find them incongruous and they may foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.

126. When passing judgment on works of art, local ordinaries should ask the opinion of the diocesan commission on sacred art and—when occasion demands—the opinions of others who are experts, and the commissions mentioned in Articles 44, 45 and 46.

Ordinaries should ensure that sacred furnishings and works of value are not disposed of or destroyed, for they are ornaments in God's house.

127. Bishops, either personally or through suitable priests who are gifted with a knowledge and love of art, should have a special concern for artists, so as to imbue them with the spirit of sacred art and of the sacred liturgy.

It is also desirable that schools or academies of sacred art should be established in those parts of the world where they would be useful for the training of artists.

All artists who, prompted by their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church should ever remember that they are engaged in a kind of holy imitation of God the Creator: that they are concerned with works destined to be used in Catholic worship, for the edification of the faithful and to foster their piety and religious formation.

128. The canons and ecclesiastical statutes which govern the provision of external things which pertain to sacred worship should be revised as soon as possible, together with the liturgical books, as laid down in Article 25. These laws refer especially to the worthy and well-planned construction of sacred buildings, the shape and construction of altars, the nobility, placing, and security of the eucharistic tabernacle, the suitability and dignity of the bapistry, the proper ordering of sacred images, and the scheme of decoration and embellishment. Laws which seem less suited to the reformed liturgy should be amended or abolished. Those which are helpful are to be retained, or introduced if lacking.

In this matter, especially as regards the material and form of sacred furnishing and vestments, in accordance with Article 22 of this Constitution, powers are given territorial episcopal conferences to adapt such things to the needs and customs of their different regions.

129. During their philosophical and theological studies, clerics are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art, and about the basic principles which govern the production of its works. Thus they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's ancient monuments, and be able to aid by good advice artists who are engaged in producing works of art.

130. It is fitting that the use of pontificals be reserved to those ecclesiastical persons who have episcopal rank or some particular jurisdiction.

APPENDIX

A DECLARATION OF THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ON REVISION OF THE CALENDAR

The Sacred Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, recognizing the importance of the wishes expressed by many concerning the assignment of the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday and concerning an unchanging calendar, having carefully considered the results that could follow from the introduction of a new calendar, declares as follows:

1. The sacred Council is not opposed to assigning the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday in the Gregorian Calendar, provided those whom it may concern give their assent, especially the brethren who are not in communion with the Apostolic See.

2. The sacred Council likewise declares that it does not oppose efforts designed to introduce a perpetual calendar into civil society.

But among the various systems which are being devised with a view to establishing a perpetual calendar and introducing it into civil life, those and only those are unopposed by the Church which retain and safeguard a seven-day week, with Sunday, without the introduction of any days outside the week, so that the succession of weeks may be left intact, unless in the judgment of the Apostolic See there are extremely weighty reasons to the contrary.