

THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE
OF THE MASS

By Sherridan Anderson

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Summary:

This paper outlines the development of the Mass. Included is an appendix that gives specific versions of a number of different historical versions of this rite. Also included is discussion around the influence of Vatican II.

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The Mass—a central expression of Christian worship for centuries—is a term which has been applied in the West since at least the fourth century to the whole service which includes the celebration of the Eucharist.¹ While “mass” is applicable to the liturgy of various Christian traditions, the focus of this discourse is to trace its development and practice as it unfolded from the early church, through Western expressions in what would ultimately become the rite of Roman Catholicism. The historical discussion will unfold in two sections: from the time of the New Testament to the Peace of Constantine in the fourth century; and the subsequent period of the Middle Ages through to the 16th-century Council of Trent. Within these time periods, a description of liturgical shape will be given, and the development of Eucharistic thought and its influence on liturgical practice highlighted. As a liturgy with deep historical roots, the impact of the Roman Catholic Mass on Christian worship will be noted and applications relevant to today’s contemporary worship scene drawn.

Before turning to the subject matter at hand, however, it is necessary to offer further parameters which will guide the discussion. From the outset, I acknowledge that my purpose is not to debate or refute the Roman viewpoint—I feel rather more like a distant relative, given the privilege of guiding a tour [albeit with only partial understanding] through the estate. The focus on the Western stream, as noted above, means that the Eastern expressions will not be addressed, despite the fact that the two were more or less united until the 1054 Schism. Other topics related to the subject not receiving attention include: several of the seemingly endless details surrounding the components and processes within the Mass; the development and influence of the liturgical year; apostolic succession and church government structure; system of penance; the role of martyrs, saints and the dead; the debate over images; and the mendicant orders of the Middle Ages. Also, the arena of Vatican II will not be entered into here—although the discourse

¹ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 697.

feels rather incomplete without it. Obviously, some of the details that receive only passing mention could engage an entire discussion in their own right, but enough... let the journey begin.

The development of what would become the Roman Mass begins with Christian worship as it unfolded in the New Testament and early church period. From Acts 2:42, a basic twofold form emerges, “centered around Word and Table”.² Many of the components for the first area can be understood as derived from Jewish synagogue worship, including reading and exposition of Scripture, singing or chanting of Psalms, confession of faith, and prayers.³ The Table was instituted by our Lord at the Last Supper. In the early church, this occurred as part of an evening meal. The meal-context disappeared sometime in the second or third century and Christians then gathered early Sunday morning for a weekly celebration of the Eucharist.⁴ Given the predominantly oral tradition of the era, many of the liturgical specifics beyond the basic twofold shape remain unknown; no liturgical books as such exist from this period.⁵ However, in the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers, further details of practice and theory may be deciphered.

One of the earliest descriptions of Christian worship is seen in Justin Martyr’s *First Apology* (ca. 150 AD) and outlines the following liturgical format: readings from the Scriptures (Justin refers to these as “the memoirs of the apostles” and “the writings of the prophets”); homily or sermon by the president; common prayers; kiss of peace; presentation of bread and wine; thanksgiving by the president with congregational “Amen”; distribution of the elements by the deacons;⁶ and collection for those in need.⁷ Between roughly 150 and 500, the order of worship took the form of a divided service, the division essentially separating the catechumens

² Robert E. Webber, *Ancient Future Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1999), 104.

³ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 30-34.

⁴ Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism Volume Two* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc., 1980), 760-761.

⁵ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 519.

⁶ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 20.

⁷ Ralph P. Martin, *Worship In The Early Church* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1964), 139.

from the faithful. The first part of the service—the Liturgy of the Word—was open to baptized, unbaptized and those under penance, and consisted of Scripture reading, preaching, singing and prayer.⁸ At this point, there would be a dismissal (“missa”) of the catechumens and penitents; hence the name applied to this section—the Mass of the Catechumens. The doors were closed and guarded!⁹ The second part—the Liturgy of the Eucharist or Mass of the Faithful—followed immediately. Participating in Communion was reserved for the baptized in right standing with the church. The components noted above in Justin’s account, starting with the kiss of peace, constituted this section.¹⁰ Tertullian offers a theory for the liturgical division—a “doctrine of a secret tradition for the esoteric”.¹¹ The so-called Secret Discipline which resulted for the higher doctrines, such as baptism and the Eucharist, was, according to several of the church fathers, an issue of “reverence and to avoid giving offence to the weak and the heathen”.¹² The essential cause though stems from the catechumenate system itself, employed by the church to develop disciples; this distinction between ‘half-’ and ‘full-Christians’ was simply reflected in the liturgy.¹³ With the church’s adoption of infant baptism, the Christianization of the Roman Empire, and consequent decline in adult catechumens, the divided service was phased out in the Latin Church by the sixth century.¹⁴

Further reflection on the understanding of the Eucharist within these early centuries is necessary. Two main themes emerge—the Eucharist as a sacrament and the Eucharist as a

⁸ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 20-21.

⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 232.

¹⁰ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 697.

¹¹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 232-233.

¹² *Ibid.*, 233.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 234-235.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 233, 235.

sacrifice.¹⁵ The sacramental understanding finds some support in the Pauline writings—as Hurtado analyzes: “...the cult-meal of the Christian congregation... is not merely a memorial feast for a dead hero. Jesus is portrayed as the living power who owns the meal and presides at it, and with whom believers have fellowship as with a god”.¹⁶ The early church fathers affirm the Eucharist as central to Christian worship, although there is no uniform understanding of the presence of Christ.¹⁷ Three different sacramental viewpoints can be identified. The realistic and mystic view—which allies itself most closely to the subsequent Roman rite—finds support in the second-century writings of Ignatius, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus who teach “a real presence of the body and blood of Christ”.¹⁸ The second is a somewhat more symbolic view, although still on a material or realistic basis, held by the African fathers, Tertullian and Cyprian (third century).¹⁹ A third position, more allegorical or spiritual in nature, was adopted by the Alexandrian fathers, Clement and Origen.²⁰ Among the ante-Nicene fathers, there was consensus that the Lord’s Supper was not only a sacrament, but also a sacrifice, “the true and eternal sacrifice of the new covenant”.²¹ Yet as Schaff notes, their concept of this Eucharistic sacrifice was:

not as an unbloody repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but simply as a commemoration and renewed appropriation of that atonement, and, above all, a thank-offering of the whole church for all the favors of God in creation and redemption. Hence the current name itself—*eucharist*; which denoted in the first place the prayer of thanksgiving, but afterwards the whole rite.²²

¹⁵ Ibid., 241, 245.

¹⁶ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 85.

¹⁷ Justo L. Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought Volume I* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970), 95.

¹⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 492-493.

¹⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 243-244.

²⁰ Ibid., 244.

²¹ Ibid., 245.

²² Ibid.

The idea of sacrifice in the consecrated elements was twofold. First, in connecting creation with redemption, they represented both ‘natural’ and ‘spiritual’ gifts from God, culminating in the self-sacrifice of Christ at his crucifixion. Second, in response to Christ’s sacrifice, the worshipper likewise offers a sacrifice—the consecration of self as well as in the offerings presented for the Eucharist and the needy.²³ A shift from the sacrifice as solely a congregational *thank-offering* can already be discerned in the writings of Cyprian (mid-third century), planting the seeds for the later Roman understanding of a *sin-offering*.²⁴

The Eucharistic prayer thus held great significance in the flow of the liturgy. The *Didache* (ca. late-first century)²⁵ contains the earliest examples of Eucharistic prayers, giving thanks for the cup, the broken bread, and general mercies and gifts of God.²⁶ The Eucharistic prayer developed to include three sections:

[F]irst, the general *thanksgiving* (the eucharist in the strictest sense of the word) for all the natural and spiritual gifts of God, commonly ending with the seraphic hymn, Isa. 6:3; secondly, the prayer of *consecration*, or the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the people and the elements, usually accompanied by the recital of the words of institution and the Lord’s Prayer; and finally, the general *intercessions*... on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the salvation of the world.²⁷

The order of the above was not yet standardized, but it is sufficient to note that the Eucharistic prayer included both anamnesis—remembering God’s great works—and epiclesis—an invocation for God to come, to continue his work in their midst.²⁸

With the conversion of Constantine to Christianity early in the fourth century, the status of Christianity within the Roman Empire underwent a cataclysmic shift—from illegal to legal in

²³ *Ibid.*, 245-246.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 246-247.

²⁵ Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 146.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

²⁷ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 237-238.

²⁸ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 45.

313, from a minority cloaked in secrecy to ultimately being declared the official religion in 380.²⁹ This transition naturally had a great impact on the development and practice of the Mass. Regarding this time period, Every notes that “the Roman church moved from the back streets to the neighbourhood of the great senatorial houses, and began to take over and use discarded public buildings”.³⁰ The new public arena for Christian worship meant larger gatherings of people in substantially bigger buildings. This necessitated a rethinking of worship practice on a considerably different scale.³¹ Enter a heightened dramatic approach, much of it assimilated from the surrounding imperial culture—more detailed choreography with the use of lights, incense, and so forth; the increasing hierarchical structure reflected in the introduction of special clothing for clergy;³² the employment of fine arts on a much grander scale³³—in sum, highly ceremonial. Particularly valuable to this discussion is the increase in written liturgical materials that began to be available at this time.

While the basic liturgical shape of the Mass, as outlined in the earlier period, was maintained, various liturgies existed, corresponding to different geographical centres. The following can be identified as the predominant Western liturgies. [For further perusal, the components of each of the following liturgies are listed in Appendix A—some translation required.] The North African Liturgy was the first to incorporate Latin. With Muslim conquest of the region, however, the church declined there by the eighth century.³⁴ Beginning in southern Gaul at the beginning of the sixth century, the Gallican Liturgy’s distinguishing feature was the

²⁹ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 42.

³⁰ George Every, *The Mass* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1978), 74.

³¹ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 42.

³² Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 41.

³³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 376.

³⁴ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 62.

“use of variable texts in the eucharistic prayer before and after the institution narrative”.³⁵ By the ninth century, it had been blended into the Roman liturgy.³⁶ The Spanish Liturgy, used in that region from the sixth to 11th centuries, is noteworthy for its attention to precise doctrinal detail as a means to communicate Christian truth through liturgy.³⁷ In the Ambrosian or Milanese Liturgy, with its strongly Christocentric character, an intersection of Western and Eastern rites can be found. Remarkably it has survived as the one non-Roman rite never officially suppressed by Roman authorities.³⁸ And finally, we come to the Roman Liturgy, originally celebrated only within the city of Rome and its surroundings.³⁹ With Roman expansion into Western Europe (ca. 700-1050),⁴⁰ the influence of the Church of Rome likewise spread and ultimately its rite was “adopted by other Western churches in an effort to introduce a fully organized and standardized liturgy”.⁴¹ Tradition maintains the source of this liturgy as the Apostle Peter; historically, however, it can only be traced back to the mid-fifth century.⁴² Its earliest recorded forms occur in three sacramentaries, named for three Popes: Leo I (r. 461); Gelasius (r. 492-496); and Gregory I (r. 590-604).⁴³ The latter is credited with streamlining the form of the Mass; with later minor modifications, Gregory’s order was adopted and sanctioned by the Council of Trent.⁴⁴

The unfolding of Eucharistic thought throughout the Middle Ages is responsible for several notable developments in the practice of the Mass; in particular, the shift in the sacrificial

³⁵ Ibid., 63-64.

³⁶ Ibid., 63.

³⁷ Ibid., 65.

³⁸ Ibid., 67.

³⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁰ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 42.

⁴¹ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 70.

⁴² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 534.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Michael Davies, *A Short History of the Roman Mass*

<<http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/5816/mhist6.html>> (accessed Jan. 3, 2004).

understanding of the Eucharist. Already present in the concept of the thank-offering was the understanding that “only in Christ are our offerings acceptable to God, and only through the continual showing forth and presenting of His merit can we expect our prayers and intercessions to be heard”.⁴⁵ From here, it was seemingly a short step to accept that “in a deep symbolical and ethical sense, Christ is offered to God the Father in every believing prayer, and above all in the holy Supper; i.e. as the sole ground of our reconciliation and acceptance”.⁴⁶ This led to the formulation of a doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass that may be stated as follows:

[T]he Eucharist is an unbloody repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the priesthood for the salvation of the living and the dead; so that the body of Christ is truly and literally offered every day and every hour, and upon innumerable altars at the same time.⁴⁷

This was not usually understood as re-sacrificing Christ, but rather the “participation in and a making present of the eternal and thus timeless sacrifice of Christ in which the priest represents Christ in terms drawn from Hebrews”.⁴⁸ The Mass then is the “application and the projection through time and space of the redemptive love of Christ on the Cross”.⁴⁹ In the Middle Ages, the *sacrament* of the Eucharist was increasingly overshadowed by the *sacrifice* of the Eucharist.⁵⁰ The prayers and services were almost completely oriented around the Eucharistic sacrifice; even the sermon was dispensed with at times.⁵¹ Yet there was no controversy surrounding the doctrine of the Eucharist until the ninth and 11th centuries when attempts were made to analyze the mystery in more concrete terms. This led to the adoption of *transubstantiation* in 1059,

⁴⁵ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 504.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 504-505.

⁴⁸ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 697.

⁴⁹ Henri Daniel-Rops, *This is the Mass*, trans. Alastair Guinan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1959), 16.

⁵⁰ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume III* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 511.

⁵¹ Ibid., 523.

although this term was not officially defined and used until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.⁵² The Schoolmen of the 12th and 13th centuries affirmed the doctrine, issuing, among other thoughts, the following three statements: 1. while the substance of the elements changes, the *virtue* of the substance is retained; 2. Christ is wholly in the sacrament—divinity and humanity—even though his body is not dimensionally present [doctrine of concomitance]; 3. Christ is fully present in *each* of the elements.⁵³

The shift in Eucharistic thought led to the understanding of the Mass as an act of petition, performed to receive a blessing from God. From this arose the practice of private or votive Masses between the fourth and sixth centuries—the priest would celebrate Mass outside the context of the congregation on behalf of one of the faithful.⁵⁴ As Jungmann points out, this was a development in the opposite direction of the pomp noted earlier.⁵⁵ Closely related to the emergence of the private Mass was the sheer increase of Mass celebrations after the sixth century.⁵⁶ That the votive Mass then became the prominent Latin mass, is reflected in the evolution of the usage of the word “missa” itself: from *dismissal* to *concluding prayer*, to the *service* and at this point to *blessing*.⁵⁷ In everyday speech, it became usual to indicate who the Mass was *for*;⁵⁸ people paid a stipend to have a Mass celebrated on their or someone else’s behalf.⁵⁹

⁵² Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 653.

⁵³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 716-717.

⁵⁴ Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism Volume Two* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc., 1980), 763.

⁵⁵ Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1976), 63.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

Several other practices arose from the Eucharistic developments noted above. Perhaps most significant was the introduction (ca. 12th century)⁶⁰ of the elevation and adoration of the host at the moment of consecration.⁶¹ In 1217, Honorius III instituted the ringing of a bell at the words of institution to signal the people to fall down in adoration before the elevated host.⁶² It became common in the 13th century to withhold the cup from the laity. Initially, this was out of fear that the consecrated blood of Christ would be spilled.⁶³ Very shortly, *communio sub una specie* (communion under one species) was also promoted to teach people that “the whole Christ is in each of the elements”.⁶⁴ The understanding of the priest as mediator between God and the people,⁶⁵ together with the strongly penitential attitude of the times, often restricted the reception of communion to the priest.⁶⁶ In short, people began to receive communion very infrequently,⁶⁷ opting rather for the so-called practice of “ocular communion”.⁶⁸ Given such a climate, superstitions abounded.⁶⁹ In an attempt to overcome some of these, the Fourth Lateran Council decreed that Holy Communion was to be received at least once a year by the faithful; this “in spite of the fact that Masses were being celebrated almost every hour of the day”.⁷⁰

The overall “trajectory”⁷¹ of the Medieval Mass was thus one of increasing remoteness for the laity. Besides the areas already described, architecturally, the altar was moved ever further

⁶⁰ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 723.

⁶¹ George Every, *The Mass* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1978), 105.

⁶² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 723.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 724.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 725.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 721.

⁶⁶ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 182.

⁶⁷ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 90.

⁶⁸ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 182.

⁶⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 726-728.

⁷⁰ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 99.

⁷¹ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 88.

out of sight, the action ultimately being blocked by a rood screen, so that the officiating priest could celebrate the Eucharist without distraction or interference.⁷² It is little wonder that the elevation of the host evoked such veneration as the only part of the Eucharistic action that might potentially be observed. Linguistically, the use of Latin throughout the mass similarly excluded participation by the people.⁷³ As the Roman liturgy spread throughout Western Europe, congregational responses were kept to a minimum as an allowance for people who were unfamiliar with Latin.⁷⁴ Altar servers often made the appropriate responses on behalf of the congregation.⁷⁵ Even for those who understood Latin, the high point of the mass could not be heard as the priest recited the canon silently or in very low tones, to heighten the sense of mystery and awe.⁷⁶ The musical components followed a similar trend. The simple, monophonic chants of the early Middle Ages—successfully balancing “liturgical function and musical accompaniment”⁷⁷—gave way to complex polyphony later in the period,⁷⁸ necessarily performed by professional musicians, often in the employ of the Church.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, worshipers were yet occupied by the various actions required of them throughout the Mass, as well as by the many visual stimuli which filled the worship space.⁸⁰ They also found meaningful spiritual connection in various “paraliturgical devotions”⁸¹—for example, the rosary, prayers and stations

⁷² Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 99.

⁷³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church. Volume IV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 399.

⁷⁴ George Every, *The Mass* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1978), 74.

⁷⁵ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 173.

⁷⁶ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 99.

⁷⁷ Albert Seay, *Music in the Medieval World* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), 39.

⁷⁸ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 100-101.

⁷⁹ Leeman L. Perkins, *Music in the Age of the Renaissance* (New York, NY: W.w. Norton & Co., 1999), 71.

⁸⁰ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 90.

⁸¹ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 100.

of the cross.⁸² It is not surprising, however, given the increasingly non-participatory role of the people, that pews were introduced in the 14th century.⁸³

The progression of the Mass through the Middle Ages is summarized well by Webber in the following excerpt:

There is an undeniable difference in the theology of the Eucharist, holy orders, and church between late antiquity when the Roman rite developed as a [sic] expression of the church of Rome gathered around its bishop and the Middle Ages with its piling up of Masses and its ordaining of priests to “offer the sacrifice for” a multitude of intentions. The liturgical forms and *formulae*, however, though suffocated by accretions, were maintained throughout the Middle Ages “as a treasured inheritance of the liturgy, guarded as the “tradition of the Apostles from the City of the Apostles”.”^{84 85}

It was obvious that reform was necessary. By the time the Council of Trent (1546-1552) commenced, however, the Protestant Reformation was already in full swing and the council was forced into a rather reactionary position.⁸⁶ The abuses requiring reform in the Mass were initially identified in three categories: first, the need for uniformity in both rites and ceremonies; second, abuses related to votive Masses; and third, the abuses related to the “histrionic and extravagant ceremonial gestures, especially at the elevations, and also in beating the breast in penitence”.⁸⁷ In the end, this agenda proved too large to be tackled in the time available and the actual decree on reforming abuses contained only the following three points: avoid any suggestion of avarice; prevent activities and policies that promote irreverence; and address matters of superstition.⁸⁸

[The last-named proved to be an especially challenging, almost impossible, task and continued to be a problem throughout the next couple of centuries.] Especially important in the Tridentine

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 101-102.

⁸⁴ Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to its Sources* (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1986), 158; quoted in Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 71-72.

⁸⁵ Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 71-72.

⁸⁶ George Every, *The Mass* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1978), 123.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 129-130.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 130-131.

Missal were the details provided for both speech and ceremonies for a variety of Masses.⁸⁹ The Order of Mass, as noted earlier, looked back to the earlier work of Pope Gregory the Great. [An outline of the Tridentine Mass is provided in Appendix B.] Unfortunately, however, the reforms did not go far enough at this point in the history of the Roman Mass. For example, the following liturgical practices were defended: the Canon of the Mass; withholding the cup from the laity; the use of Latin; and the practice of the private Mass.⁹⁰ Many of these and other issues would not be addressed for another 400 years until Vatican II.

What impact then has this period of the Roman Mass had on Christian worship? Some of the positive influences may be noted as follows. The basic liturgical shape unequivocally places the Christ-event at its centre. Throughout the centuries described, the Mass has left an enormous resource of written liturgies, available to enrich worship. The visual, ritual, and ceremonial aspects which developed in the Mass have provided a way of involving the whole person in worship; also an opportunity for corporate participation. While much controversy has surrounded the Eucharistic doctrine and practice which emerged, the Roman rite's contribution to Christian worship in this area has nevertheless been to uphold a profound sense of mystery and awe through the modern age of rationalism. Some of the negative features were already evident in the preceding discussion. There was a general progression of alienating the worshippers from participation through various factors, including language barriers and 'over-mystification'. This promoted individualism, in the process fragmenting the community and estranging liturgy from piety, a condition which yet plagues Christian worship.⁹¹ The private Masses, as well as the Eucharistic theory and practice which developed, established a mindset of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 131-132.

⁹⁰ Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1976), 86.

⁹¹ Frank Senn, *Christian Worship And Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 99-100.

deferring worship to the professionals; it also fertilized a cultural soil in which superstitions readily multiplied—these byproducts yet persist. That the Roman church spread its rite by virtue of imperial power regrettably established cultural dominance as the norm for Christian worship where it has entered new cultures. Nevertheless, it deserves mention at this point, that many of the issues left hanging were in fact addressed in Vatican II.

In considering how this may be relevant to today's Christian worship, a few thoughts have surfaced, some applicable to contemporary worship generally and some directly applicable within my church context. In general, the sense of mystery, awe and the transcendence of God prevalent in the Mass, offers a corrective to our often comfortable, 'buddy-mentality' mindset in worship. Likewise, the place of the visual, ritual and ceremony, so much a part of the Roman rite, leaves most of our contemporary evangelical expressions looking rather impoverished. It is not so much that I believe that we have to emulate all of the Roman details as to recognize the potential for meaningful worship in multi-sensory expressions... or at the very least to consider what our 'rituals' are conveying! Stemming from some of the more negative outcomes, several parallel questions arise for today's context. Are we promoting participation? Or are the professionals "doing the worship" on behalf of the people? In the area of music, for example, is it accessible or is it beyond the people's abilities, sidelining them to spectator status? Are we promoting individualism or community in times of worship? In our attempt to address deficiencies in our worship, are we careful to avoid alienating people or over-mystifying the issue? [My suspicion is that today we would often tend more toward *de*-mystifying than *over*-mystifying!] Where might we have superstitious tendencies—'magic' expectations—in our worship practice (preaching?)? How central is the Christ-event in our worship? In concluding these general observations, I believe it may be worthwhile for evangelicals to consider a little

more open-mindedly the idea of sacrament, especially as related to the Lord's Supper. My church context adheres to a sacramental understanding, but this sense is not really conveyed beyond a sentence or two during Communion. I am not looking for rood screens (!), but I think that here, and in other areas of our worship, it would be valuable to incorporate enriched visual and ceremonial expressions. I would also like to see us celebrate Communion more frequently. Other areas arising from this discussion that I think we need to consider include evaluating the accessibility of our "language" [i.e. speech, action, music, etc.] and maintaining the sense of community as we attempt to navigate along new paths of developing our worship.

On a personal level, this study was broached largely because of meaningful worship encounters in the context of a celebration of the Roman Mass. This process has been a valuable step in an ongoing journey of sensing a deep connection with the historical Church and continuing to open up new vistas of worship expression; it has also taken a significant chunk out of whatever "us-them" mentality yet remains. The whole area of sacrament is one that continues to challenge—and admittedly, confuse—me. In this, I keep returning to ponder Stookey's philosophy of time—past, present and future inextricably intertwined.⁹² More processing required!

⁹² Laurence Hull Stookey, *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 19-22.

Appendix A – Western Liturgy Outlines

Asterisk* – indicates chant by people or choir

Readings – CAPITAL LETTERS

The North African Liturgy [reconstructed from other sources]⁹³

- Entrance of the Clergy
- Greeting
- EPISTLE
- *PSALM (Augustine considered this a reading)
- GOSPEL
- Homily
- [announcements]
- Dismissal of the Catechumens
- Solemn Intercessions
- Offering with *Psalm singing
- Preface dialogue
- Improvised Preface without Sanctus
- Approved Eucharistic prayer
- “Amen”
- Fractio
- Lord’s Prayer
- Communion with *Psalm 33
- Final prayer
- Dismissal

⁹³ Reprinted from Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 62.

The Gallican Liturgy⁹⁴

- [Preparation of Offerings at side altar or in sacristy]
- *Antiphona ad praelegendum with Psalm
- Call for silence and Greeting
- *Trisagion and *Kyrie
- Prophetica (*Benedictus*; or a hymn in Lent)
- Collectio post Prophetiam
- LECTIO PROPHETICA
- *Responsorium (?)
- LECTIO EX APOSTOLO
- *Canticle from Daniel (*Benedictiones* on feasts; or ?)
- *Trisagion ante evangelium
- EVANGELIUM
- *Sanctus post evangelium
- Homilia
- Preces
- Collection post preces
- Dismissal of catechumens
- Solemn presentation of the Gifts with *Sonus
- Praefatio missae and collectio
- Names and collectio post nomina
- Collectia ad pacem and Pax
- Contestatio (Immolatio missae) and *Sanctus
- *Vere sanctus*—institution narrative—*post mysterium*
- Confractionem
- Lord's Prayer
- Episcopal Benediction

⁹⁴ Reprinted from Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 63-64.

- Communion and **Trecanum*
- Post Eucharisticam and Collectio post communionem
- Dismissal

The Spanish Liturgy⁹⁵

- *Prelegendum with psalm
- Trisagion
- Greeting
- LESSON (PROPHETIC)
- *Psallendum/Psallmo (Trenos in Lent)
- [**Clamor* on certain days]
- EPISTLE
- GOSPEL
- *Laudes
- Dismissal of catechumens
- **Sacrificium* with verses for offertory procession
- *Missa* (bidding)
- Alia oratio
- Nomina Offerentium
- Diptychs
- Post Nomina
- Ad Pacem
- Pax
- Preface Dialogue (“Aures ad dominum”... “Sursum corda”... “Deo ac Domino nostro, Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, dignas laudes et gratias referamus”...)
- *Inlatio* and *Sanctus
- Post Sanctus
- *Missa Secreta* (Institution Narrative)
- Post Pridie
- *Laudes ad Confractionem
- [Creed on Sundays and Feasts]

⁹⁵ Reprinted from Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 66-67.

- Ad orationem Dominicam
- Lord's Prayer and variable embolism
- Commixtio and Trisagion
- *Benedictio* (Three-fold Blessing of the people)
- Invitation to communion
- **Ad Accedentes* (variable, often beginning with Pss. 33-34)
- Communion of all with both species
- *Completoria* post-communion prayer (after 10th century)
- Dismissal

The Ambrosian Liturgy⁹⁶

- *Ingressa no psalm
- *Kyrie
- Oration super populum—collect
- PROPHETIC LESSON
- Psalmellus
- EPISTLE
- *Alleluia with verse (*Cantus* during Lent)
- GOSPEL
- Homily
- Dismissal of Catechumens
- *Kyrie and *Antiphona post Evangelium
- Pax
- Oratio super sindonem
- Offertory procession: **Offerenda* with verses
- Proper Preface and Sanctus
- Invariable Canon
- Fraction and Commixtio; **Confractorium*
- Lord's Prayer and embolism
- Communion: **Transitorium* no psalm
- Oratio post communionem
- *Kyrie and Dismissal

⁹⁶ Reprinted from Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 68.

The Roman Liturgy⁹⁷

- Entrance of ministers: **Introit* with psalm
- *Kyrie
- [Gloria; at first at presbyteral masses on Easter only]
- Collecta
- APOSTOLUS
- *Gradual (Alleluia in Easter)
- *Alleluia (Tractus in Lent)
- EVANGELIUM
- OFFERTORY PROCESSION; **Offertorium* with psalm
- Super oblate (Secreta)
- Preface Dialogue
- Praefatio and **Sanctus*
- Canon missae
- Lord's Prayer and embolism
- Pax
- [Announcements/Dismissals]
- Fractio; **Agnus Dei*
- Communion with both kinds; **Communio* with psalm
- Ad completa (post communionem)
- Dismissal

⁹⁷ Reprinted from Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume Two: Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 71.

Appendix B – Tridentine High Mass Outline⁹⁸

Introductory Rites

- Entrance Hymn
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- Kyrie
- Gloria
- Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading: Old Testament
- Second Reading: Epistles or Acts of the Apostles
- Gospel Acclamation
- Alleluia
- Gospel Reading
- Homily or sermon
- Credo - either the Nicene or Apostles Creed
- Prayers of Intercession

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of Altar and Gifts
- Sursum Corda: “Lift up your hearts”
- Preface
- Sanctus
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Mystery of Faith: “Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again”

Communion

- “Pater Noster” – The Lord’s Prayer
- Doxology
- Sign of Peace
- Breaking of the Bread
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

Dismissal

⁹⁸ Reprinted from Encyclopedia, *Roman Mass* <<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Roman-Mass>> (January 3, 2004).

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