

MARK JOSEPH ZAMMIT

THE CHANGE IN ECCLESIOLOGY IN VATICAN COUNCIL II AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE LITURGY

Abstract. This article will explain how the liturgical renewal was a direct consequence of Vatican Council II's ecclesiology found in *Lumen Gentium*. The article presents and describes the renewed ecclesiology brought about by the Council. The liturgical renewal will be analyzed as a consequence of this renewal in ecclesiology. Finally, the article looks into practical ways of how the Church may continue to apply the ecclesiological and liturgical conciliar spirit.

Keywords: Ecclesiology; Liturgy; Vatican Council II; liturgical assembly; evangelization.

INTRODUCTION

Today, fully experiencing the spirit of the liturgy is a struggle. Numbers are diminishing from our assemblies and contemporary culture has a significant influence on the community. The liturgical spirit is being challenged by individualism, a consumeristic mentality that picks and chooses what to keep or make redundant. Secularization also makes religion a private reality, where beliefs are challenged and feelings and aptitudes take over. Moreover, another challenge today is that the older generations fail to transmit faith to the younger ones. Hence, religious traditions are being lost from one generation to the next. Within ecclesial communities, many follow religious beliefs that are, unfortunately, void of serious study or practice.¹ Hence, this is converting the liturgical experience into a very superficial experience. These challenges do not tend to eliminate religion from the community but rather tend to diminish the effect that cults

Rev. Dr MARK JOSEPH ZAMMIT is a diocesan priest in the Archdiocese of Malta. He is a lecturer and Head of the Department of Fundamental and Dogmatic Theology at the University of Malta; e-mail: mark.j.zammit@um.edu.mt; ORCID 0000-0002-0065-0359.

¹ Cf. Timothy P. O'Malley, *Liturgy and the New Evangelization* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 43.

and practices should ideally have on the community. How can the spirit of Vatican Council II shed light on these challenges and help understand society, the relevance of the faith and the liturgical experience? Without entering into the specificity of these challenges, this article delves into the renewed ecclesiology and liturgy of Vatican II to propose some areas of growth that may help communities accept the liturgy as a crucial element in one's personal life and that of a community.

This article shall expound on how the renewed ecclesiology of Vatican Council II promulgated in *Lumen Gentium* [LG] influenced the way the liturgical renewal was perceived and promulgated. In the first subsection, the change in ecclesiology introduced by the Council is presented and the main elements will be discussed. Next, its influence on liturgical renewal will be analyzed in the next sub-section. Finally, we will evaluate practical ways that can contribute to help apply the conciliar spirit of the liturgy in the life of the Church.

CONCILIAR ECCLESIOLOGY AT A GLANCE

The period before Vatican II was characterised by several movements and initiatives that paved the way for the renewal of the Church in all its aspects. It was a time of great Church visionaries uniting with forces that contradicted changes in favour of an outdated ecclesiology that did not meet the needs of the Church and society. The Church was still conceiving herself as the *societas perfecta* equal in power as any other State, yet unequal on the *ad intra* level since the various ecclesial roles and ministries were clearly defined. The movements for change were evidently promoting a vision of the Church that united the human and divine elements and promoted her as a living organism rather than an institution relying on her own power. The way forward was recognised to be a move from ecclesio-centrism and hierarchy-centredness to the reality of a mystery and communion of all the faithful.

Was the Council innovative? Oscar Cullman, the Council's Lutheran observer, noted how at the end of the Council everything had changed while everything had remained the same. The substance of the ecclesiological dogma remained the same, while the ways of expressing this dogma changed profoundly. In other words, the deposit of the faith remained intact while its expression needed renewal.

The conciliar reflection involved a reconsideration of the Church and her existence in the world. The Church did not break from the past but rather rediscovered a new ecclesial conscience that must undergo constant reform to reach its fullness

in Christ. The conciliar understanding of reform refers to a renewal in light of her mystery together with a renewed commitment to her mission.

Even though the Council was pastoral, it also renovated the Church on a doctrinal level. This occurred not through the introduction of radical changes or ruptures with the past but rather on returning to the sources of theology, concretely Holy Scriptures and Apostolic Tradition.

The first major ecclesiological theme of Vatican II is the mystery of the Church, in particular the principle of unity between the *mysterium Christi* and the *mysterium ecclesiae*. Both dogmatic constitutions on revelation and the Church adopt this centre of unity: Christ-ecclesiology. The Church originates from this mystery and is the sacrament of Christ. Within the *historia salutis*, the Church as the community of salvation is the prolongation of the mystery of Christ.

A major point of renewal for the Church was the ecclesiology of communion. The invitation for communion derives from God himself who calls upon humanity to enter into an intimate relationship with him and with others. Communion was a crucial theme in the Council, especially when discussing the themes of the people of God, collegiality, the particular churches, ecumenism and mission. The people of God hold priority in LG over the hierarchy, showing how belonging to the people is more important than specific functions within these people. The Church started from the foundation rather than the top of the ecclesial structure. This was the *Copernican change* that Congar speaks of about the Church: from mystery-hierarchy-people to mystery-people-hierarchy.² It implies co-responsibility and the participation of all the faithful. The Church as a mystery of communion becomes present and is fully realised in the liturgical assembly in which the unity of the people of God is celebrated as a participation in the life of God and the community.³ Regarding the hierarchy, the Council favoured the idea of collegiality to highlight the shared responsibility in Church governance and a more collaborative and consultative approach to ecclesial decision-making.

This reality of communion is closely linked to the doctrine of the Church as a people of God, a biblical image with strong significance for today's Church. The Church is not only directed towards the spiritual dimension of reality but also includes humanity's historical and experiential journey.⁴ Both the theme of communion and that of the image of the people of God find their realisation in the theology of the Eucharist, the theology of the local Church, various ministries,

² Cf. Santiago Madrigal Terrazas, *Vaticano II: Remembranza y Actualización* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2002), 250.

³ Cf. Eloy Bueno de la Fuente, *Eclesiología* (Madrid: BAC, 2017), 78.

⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 27.

collegiality, the reality of the pilgrim people, the doctrine of the common priesthood and the mission of encountering and serving the world. This image implies the involvement, responsibility and subjectivity of all the faithful in Church life. The image of the people of God is central when understanding the theme of the divine economy in which the salvific initiative of the Father is directed not only to individuals but also to all people together as a community (cf. LG 9).⁵ The Christian community, being the heir of the gifts of God's old Covenant, continues to live them in the novelty brought about by Christ. Hence, the new people of God are both Christological and universal.⁶

Moreover, being a people refers to the communion of faith and life; it implies the equality of all and denotes their historical journey on earth directed towards eternity.⁷ It entails being owners of the Church's journey towards salvation and being its protagonists. "We are the Church," affirmed Karl Rahner in a conference in 1966 basing his thoughts on communion, the common priesthood and the *sensus fidelium*.⁸

The Church lives from, in and for the communion that the Trinity established in history.⁹ This communion of God becomes sacramentally visible in the life of the Church in the world. Vatican II presented the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation and unity (cf. LG 59). Mission is described as constituting the Church's nature and is the way she concretely continues the work of Jesus. This implies encompassing all situations, all cultures and all ethnic groups so that God's Spirit reaches every corner of the world. In Vatican II, the mission in the world acquires a greater theological density, going from a territorial perspective to one that imbues the whole life of the Church in accomplishing the mission of the Trinity.¹⁰ Moreover, all the people of God are now responsible for the mission in the world, where the protagonist is always the Spirit. Mission is contextualised through inculturation, and special attention is to be given to the realities of suffering and poverty. The Church finds her place among those in need in the world to fulfil her Catholicity and salvific plan.

In Vatican II, we encounter the roots of today's concept of synodality. Even though this idea had always been present in the Church's history, today it has received added attention as a result of the spirit of Vatican II. Within the vision

⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 30.

⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*, 36.

⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, 39-40.

⁸ Cf. Santiago Madrigal Terrazas, *El giro eclesiológico en la recepción del Vaticano II* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2017), 89.

⁹ Cf. Bueno de la Fuente, *Eclesiológia*, 80.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibidem*, 264.

of synodality, we encounter two important themes: the role of local churches and the vocation of the laity.

Vatican II exalts the role of particular churches that nourish the Universal Church. The particularities of these churches influence liturgical expressions, mission and ecumenism. Culture, which shapes every particular church, becomes an integral part of grace and ecclesiology. The Church now values the differences that exist between ecclesial communities and their expressions of faith, encouraging local churches to help each other. In the post-conciliar period spanning until today, the peripheries have given important contributions to the universal Church. Every Church exists in communion with the rest and it is in this communion that we encounter the one and unique Church of Christ.

Moreover, the theology of the laity was exalted during the period of Vatican II. If before there existed a clear distinction between the laity and clergy, Vatican II highlighted the crucial role and vocation of the laity in the people of God through the doctrine of the common priesthood of all the baptised. The vocation, mission, participation and responsibility of the laity in the Church are all essential elements for the goal of synodality and communion.

Ecumenism was not only one of the goals of Vatican II but also a theme that influenced the way the conciliar documents were written and promulgated. The Church includes the reality of ecumenism in her conciliar documents when presenting themes such as the *subsistit in*, salvation, revelation, Scriptures and Tradition, incorporation through baptism, the common priesthood of all the baptised, dialogue in the world, missionary cooperation and liturgical reform based on openness. These themes were all important steps towards greater ecumenical understanding and cooperation.

THE CHANGES IN LITURGICAL THOUGHT AS A RESULT OF ECCLESIOLOGICAL RENEWAL

The liturgical movement before Vatican II tried to define the liturgy according to aesthetical, juridical and theological elements. Hence, the liturgy was defined as an exterior and sensible form of cult, as a public cult regulated by the Church's authority and as a cult primarily dealing with the ordained ministry without omitting its characteristic of mystery.¹¹ The encyclical *Mediator Dei* places the liturgy in light of Christ's priesthood (cf. MD 22). Here the liturgy is defined as:

¹¹ Cf. Julián López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia* (Madrid: BAC, 2020), 43.

public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members (MD 20).

The relationship between the presence of Christ in the liturgy and salvation history is not yet incorporated into the reflections of the Church.

In Vatican II, the concept of the liturgy is situated within the life of the Church, which determines the reality of the people of God. John Paul II affirms, in the apostolic letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* (1988), that “the Council saw in the Liturgy an epiphany of the Church: it is the Church at prayer” (VQA 9). The link between Christ’s priesthood and his body, the Church, is strongly emphasized in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) because the exercise of his priesthood is made visible in the Church. Therefore, the Council exalts the liturgical dimension of Christ’s redemption taking place in history related to humanity’s historical circumstances.¹²

Giuseppe Dossetti, Cardinal Lercaro’s Bolognese theologian, reflected upon SC and highlighted how this constitution not only refers to the liturgy but rather to the plenitude of the Christian experience, thus including the spirit of all the other documents. Hence, at its core, this document promotes the totality of the Christian life.¹³ This totality is formed by a personal encounter with Christ and the life of the Church.

The idea of the liturgy as found in the Council is not detached from its past; the Church had to relearn its origins and liturgical traditions by studying history. The fact that this constitution begins by situating the liturgical document within the Council’s goals shows that liturgical reform is closely linked to the Church’s reform. The liturgy always presents the Church’s authentic identity and the living experience of what it means to live as a Church. We can affirm that SC presents the vision of the Church in LG; nevertheless, since it was promulgated before LG, it is still influenced by *Mediator Dei*.¹⁴ In this light, what were the Council’s renewed liturgical themes?

Just like LG, we encounter the central theme of mystery. The document does not begin with rituals but rather describes the liturgy as participating in the mystery of salvation history. Vatican II *peritus* Cipriano Vagaggini writes: *The liturgy*

¹² Cf. *Ibidem*, 45.

¹³ Cf. Giuseppe Dossetti, “Per una valutazione globale del magistero del Vaticano II,” quote by Santiago Madrigal Terrezas, *Protagonistas del Vaticano II* (Madrid: BAC, 2016), 568.

¹⁴ Cf. Yves Congar, “La Ecclesia o la Comunidad Cristiana, sujeto integral de la acción litúrgica,” in: Yves Congar et al, *La liturgia después del Vaticano II* (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1969), 323.

cannot be understood unless seen against the background of sacred history, mystery, [the] mystery of Christ, [the] mystery of the Church.¹⁵ In particular, SC focuses on the Paschal Mystery. The redemption achieved by Christ at a particular moment in time becomes available to people in every epoch through the liturgy. Therefore, the liturgy is how we enter into this mystery. The Church finds its identity in this mystery, where every person discovers his or her identity before God and the faithful discover their active role in the liturgy itself and the life of the Church. In the Paschal Mystery, every person participates in this transforming event from death to life. The liturgy, bringing together the past, present and future, presents itself as the moment of synthesis for the whole of salvific history and configures the time of the Church as the last and definitive stage of salvation.¹⁶ The words of Vagaggini, *the Church finds herself in the liturgy*,¹⁷ depict the important role of the liturgy in the mystery of the Church journeying towards the *parousia*.

Moreover, since the liturgy deals with this profound mystery of our faith, it is described as the source and summit of the Church's life since, in it, we find the action of Christ and the Holy Spirit sanctifying humans and giving glory to God. This strengthens the Church to continue the mission of Christ in view of the kingdom of God. The liturgy is consequently described as the work of the whole Christ, primarily Christ himself and the Church by association.¹⁸

SC gives importance to the whole Church in the liturgy. This document clearly presented the ecclesiology of communion and the importance given to all the faithful due to the common dignity they have all received in baptism as found in chapter II of LG. This renewed ecclesiology and the rediscovery of the baptismal call¹⁹ influenced the way the liturgical celebrations are to be perceived and organised as participative celebrations in the Paschal Mystery. Participation is both external and internal, physically engaging the faithful and producing in people *an internal moral harmony with the liturgical reality as sanctification in Christ and worship of God in Christ*.²⁰ The liturgy, hence, belongs to all the people of God due to the common priesthood. Liturgical actions are not private ones but belong to the entire liturgical assembly. Rediscovering the dignity of baptism also led to recognizing liturgical ministries embraced by the laity.

¹⁵ Cipriano Vagaggini, *Il senso teologico della liturgia* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1965), 32.

¹⁶ Cf. López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia*, 26.

¹⁷ Cipriano Vagaggini, "La Chiesa si ritrova nella liturgia," *Rivista Liturgica* 51 (1964): 343-354.

¹⁸ Cf. López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia*, 45.

¹⁹ In these last decades, one of the most important reforms to promote the baptismal call was the RCIA program that focuses on Christian discipleship and the sacraments of initiation. Cf. John F. Baldwin, "Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Reform of the Liturgy: Forty-Five Years Later," *Studia Liturgica* 39 (2009): 153.

²⁰ Vagaggini, *Il senso teologico della liturgia*, 784.

Moreover, while the constitution exalts the role of all the people of God, it respects the hierarchical structure of the Church by placing a bishop's role as the focal point of the community's communion, a theme that LG III describes as fundamental. By asserting that the liturgy is a communal action involving the entire diversified and organised congregation, and always an action of the Church as a whole, the document firmly grounds the liturgical renewal in the concept of the Church as the people of God.

Just as the Church values its relationship to the world to enter into dialogue with it and learn from it, the liturgy also considers the values that the world has to offer. Through inculturation, the Council favoured enfleshing the liturgy into the world's different cultures, exalting her Catholicity.²¹ The Council opted for substantial unity and not formal unity or uniformity. Hence, the liturgy may not look the same in every place, and this gives the possibility to develop practices corresponding to unique cultural contexts.

Just as the Church embarked on a continuous journey of reforming itself, the liturgy also forms part of this journey. The Council presented the spirit in which such a renewal must be carried out (cf. SC 22-25): respecting the authority of the Church and liturgical experts, guiding itself by a sound tradition and being imbued with Sacred Scriptures (cf. LG 15). Vatican II expert Pierre-Marie Gy highlighted how *the liturgical reform had to be a reception, not only of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, but also of the whole Vatican II, which includes a deep sense both of Tradition and of the Christian East.*²² Reform is also conducted through the formation of the faithful in liturgical matters since a renewal of texts and rites does not involve all the people of God and their formation becomes futile. Every liturgical renovation must look for its basis in the profundity of faith and the world's contexts.²³

Moreover, in the aftermath of SC, Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, who was responsible for applying the conciliar spirit in the reform of the liturgy, in a conference given in Beirut in 1964 spoke about the link between liturgy and ecumenism. He insisted that, amid the plurality of ethnic groups and beliefs, liturgical reform must also consider this reality and adapt itself to local cultures while respecting the essential nucleus of the Christian cult.²⁴

²¹ For more information on the relationship between liturgy and culture cf. Carmine di Sante, "Cultura e Liturgia," in: *Nuovo Dizionario di Liturgia*, eds. Domenico Sartore & Achille Triacca (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1983), 341-351.

²² Pierre-Marie Gy, *Reception of Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Life of the Church* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003), 36.

²³ Cf. Marie-Dominique Chenu, "Antropología de la Liturgia," in: Congar et al, *La liturgia después del Vaticano II*, 178.

²⁴ Cf. Madrigal Terrezas, *Protagonistas del Vaticano II*, 300.

AREAS OF GROWTH
FOR THE CONCILIAR LITURGICAL SPIRIT TODAY

At the end of the Council, German theologian Karl Rahner affirmed that the Council was *of* the Church and *about* the Church, but now the beautiful words written down in the documents had to be lived; they had to be made the Church's own. He describes the Council as the "beginning of the beginning."²⁵ The documents had to become the task of the future Church. In this last part of the article, some liturgical areas of growth are discussed to fulfil the conciliar vision of the Church's renewed liturgy.

First, the **liturgical assembly** must always be given its proper importance to show how the people gathered together is the initiative of God who calls his people to be together. Therefore, the assembly not only represents itself, but also personifies God who is in the community, invites it to be united and accompanies it. Moreover, the liturgical assembly is also the hermeneutical place of understanding the Scriptures, since the assembly listens to the Word and discerns it as a Church.²⁶ Hence, there is an intimate union between the liturgical assembly and transmitting the Word. This also shows that understanding the Bible occurs primarily within the liturgical assembly that is listening, accepting, living and receiving the Word of God in its life, language and culture.²⁷ Furthermore, God keeps his promises of salvation with his people in the liturgical assembly.²⁸

Second, the Council tried to recuperate the Church's **spiritual dimension**. After decades of ecclesiological ideas grounded on the temporal level, the Church recuperated her mystical level as a foundational focus. She understood how her *ad extra* level must be nourished by a renewed identity on the *ad intra* level. Being Church implies an ecclesial spirituality based on the mystery of God and a communal lifestyle.

Hence, importance is to be given to a person's and the community's **spiritual life**. The mystery celebrated in the liturgical actions is lived in the community's daily experience for the benefit of the faithful. Thus, the spirituality of the liturgy deals with salvation, not only celebrated in the liturgical actions, but also realised in people's interior lives. In fact, the scope of every liturgical action is the bestowal

²⁵ Karl Rahner, "Das neue Bild der Kirche" as quoted by Madrigal Terrezas, *Protagonistas del Vaticano II*, 544.

²⁶ Cf. Goffredo Boselli, *Il senso spirituale della liturgia* (Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2011), 122.

²⁷ Opening up to the vernacular facilitated the central role of the Word of God in the liturgical assembly. Cf. Gy, *Reception of Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Life of the Church*, 29.

²⁸ Cf. Boselli, *Il senso spirituale della liturgia*, 124.

of God's grace to humanity.²⁹ The liturgy is an encounter with God and one's interior life prepares, accompanies and prolongs the attitudes being experienced in the liturgy.³⁰ The liturgy, the Church's spirituality, is a school of prayer that helps the faithful grow in prayer and faith. It is the "source and summit" not only of the life of the Church but, because of the role it has in the Church's spirituality, it serves as such for the whole Christian life of the faithful. God and humanity are both linguistic and hence, in the liturgy, God is speaking and a person is replying, and in this context, the word between the two parts becomes salvific.

Third, today the need to bring together **evangelization**, catechesis and liturgical pastoral ministry is felt to avoid unilateral thinking. Some favour the antagonism between evangelization and celebration making these two appear as relating to different Church eras. The relationship between evangelization and the liturgy is crucial in light of what constitutes the Church's mission (cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi* 14) and the meaning of evangelization.³¹ The nucleus of evangelization consists in proclaiming Christ and his salvation. In fact, *the liturgy is a matter of evangelization because it both signifies and makes real that unity of love, of self-gift, which is the destiny of all of humanity in Christ.*³² In the liturgy, the Church lives Christ's salvific actions and, strengthened by them, it goes forth in communion to be a gift to humanity. Hence, the proclamation of the Gospel and the liturgy are two moments of the Church's mission (cf. SC 6 & 9). Moreover, both catechesis and the liturgy orient the faithful towards the fullness of the Christian life in the mystery of salvation. Catechesis is oriented to faith education and its confession celebrated in the liturgy and, in turn, the liturgy nurtures catechesis since it actualises the personal and communal journey of conversion and incorporates the faithful into the mystery of Christ.³³

Linked to evangelization is **liturgical pastoral action**. What are we referring to when we talk about liturgical pastoral action? Looking closely at LG 17, one reads the following:

By the proclamation of the Gospel she prepares her hearers to receive and profess the faith. She gives them the dispositions necessary for baptism, snatches them from the slavery of error and of idols and incorporates them in Christ so that through charity they may grow up into full maturity in Christ.

²⁹ Cf. O'Malley, *Liturgy and the New Evangelization*, 31.

³⁰ Cf. López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia*, 398.

³¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, 387.

³² Cf. O'Malley, *Liturgy and the New Evangelization*, 29.

³³ Cf. López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia*, 388. For more information on the relationship between liturgy and catechesis, cf. Domenico Sartore, "Catechesi e Liturgia," in: *Nuovo Dizionario di Liturgia*, 219-231.

One can identify three important elements that form the Church's liturgical pastoral action:

- Proclaiming the Gospel (pastoral work of the Word),
- Baptism and incorporation in Christ (sacramental pastoral work),
- Charity (pastoral work of service).³⁴

These three are based on the triple office of Christ the Prophet, Priest and King/Shepherd. Liturgical pastoral action involves actions that help the people participate actively in the celebrations to achieve the desired spiritual growth, together with initiatives that help the faithful understand the signs and symbols of the liturgy to participate better, thus leading them to serve others.³⁵ Liturgical pastoral action nourishes the faithful with the reality of salvation and helps them embark upon the journey of conversion.

The realities of conversion and salvation must pass through **love of the poor**. There exists an intimate relationship between the liturgy, social justice and solidarity with those suffering. The liturgical assembly cannot adore the Lord without attending to persons in need.³⁶ In fact, “God does not fulfil the prayer of the person who does not listen to the cry of the poor, because there cannot exist an authentic cult if those who celebrate it are a cause of injustice.”³⁷ Being the “source and summit” of the Church also refers to the liturgy's role in the moral life of the Church such that no one is forgotten within the ecclesial community.

Furthermore, and linked to the above, **pastoral care** is not a matter of complicated strategies but a matter of listening to the Word of God and participating in the breaking of the bread (*Desiderio Desideravi*, 37). Pope Francis, in *Desiderio Desideravi*, 37, highlights how “a celebration that does not evangelise is not authentic.” To understand the mystery being lived in the liturgy implies transmitting its meaning and living its implications every day. The liturgy presents itself both as a school and a task.

As a school, the liturgy teaches the faithful the prayers through the celebration. The risk lies in perpetuating the error of separating the liturgy from prayer.³⁸ The liturgy should become the prayer of the faithful. The liturgy forms the faithful and, once the community has deeply understood the real sense of the liturgy, spontaneous and creative interventions can be done in order to make the liturgy a better experience for all the faithful. The role of the presbyter in the community,

³⁴ Cf. López Martín, *La liturgia de la Iglesia*, 408.

³⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, 410.

³⁶ Cf. Boselli, *Il senso spirituale della liturgia*, 184.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ Cf. Goffredo Boselli, “The priests trained by the liturgy,” in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.

who is the first to internalise the liturgical prayer, is to help the assembly enter into the mystery and make it their personal experience.³⁹

Being a task, it leads to sharing the experience of dining with Jesus with others. This involves both fraternity and conversion. The liturgy naturally builds the community through the communion of brothers and sisters. Moreover, the liturgy, in particular the Eucharist, is not just a sharing of lives in communion with Jesus, but it is the experience of the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”⁴⁰ The communal aspect of the liturgy is united with its sacrificial aspect. Hence, the experience of being together with the Lord also implies a new way of life as redeemed persons and as witnesses of this redemption. Therefore, the breaking of the bread is an experience and a task that the entire assembly must live. When the assembly has understood the profound meaning of the liturgy, that is, Christ’s actions in the Church, it becomes art, since the Lord is moulding us into better images of Himself.⁴¹

Finally, a rediscovery of the concepts of **gift and beauty** may help us re-appreciate the liturgy. That is what Vatican Council II sought to achieve through its documents: to rediscover the experience of God and the Church in the world as an experience of the beauty of faith and life. Beauty is given as a gift in order to appreciate reality in its wholeness. In fact, *liturgical beauty, if it is to participate in this logic of gift at the heart of the narrative of salvation, will seek to raise our desires to the living God as a gift of love.*⁴² Beauty in the liturgy is not simply a matter of aesthetics, but is even more closely related to the intensity of experiencing God who is being received as a gift and shared as a communion among the people of God. Liturgical beauty directs the person toward something greater than that which is grasped by the senses: *Beauty is sacramental, a sign that points us toward some spiritual reality, which is even more beautiful because it is divine.*⁴³

CONCLUSION

The liturgy today is not a problem to solve but rather a **resource**.⁴⁴ The Church and the way she deals with societal challenges depend on her capability of reaping

³⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Goffredo Boselli, “The gesture that celebrates the Passover of the Lord,” in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.

⁴¹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁴² O’Malley, *Liturgy and the New Evangelization*, 121.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 127.

⁴⁴ Cf. Boselli, *Il senso spirituale della liturgia*, 7.

fruit from the liturgy as nourishment for the faithful. The way the community lives the liturgy will influence the way the community lives its life. The more the liturgical event is interiorised and understood, the more it can nourish the life of faith because a person becomes more aware of what he or she is doing. In this way, the liturgy opens up the faithful to the mystery. The more the celebration is understood and appropriated, the better the mystery is celebrated and the more a person grows in faith from this liturgical fount.

In conclusion, the liturgy needs to maintain its **central role** in the Church since here we encounter the primacy of the action of God and the celebration of the Church's faith and its mission to transmit this experience. The journey of Emmaus helps the Church appreciate that the faith, the liturgical experience and human maturity are all a journey of growth.⁴⁵ Emmaus shows how the liturgy nourishes the journey of growth in faith and in this light, the liturgy forms an important role in today's synodal understanding of the Church. The liturgy must highlight this dimension of growth in light of present-day circumstances. The liturgy is to become an evangelizing reality to help interpret reality and accompany the believer.⁴⁶ The liturgy's role is not merely the celebration of beliefs but rather to relate those beliefs to the life of the believer by becoming more welcoming to accept, interpret and accompany growth and create communities of faith and love. Just like Emmaus, the liturgy is not the place to find answers but rather a place where the believer may question and confront one's life with the event of the mystery. It is the place to let oneself be evangelised by the Lord himself and to feel at home with him. In the liturgy, the Lord hosts us so that, in turn, our life may become the Lord's home and that we may share with humanity this experience of being God's dwelling.⁴⁷

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baldovin, John F. "Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Reform of the Liturgy: Forty-Five Years Later." *Studia Liturgica* 39 (2009): 145-157.
- Boselli, Goffredo. "Liturgy and Evangelization," in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.
- Boselli, Goffredo. "The gesture that celebrates the Passover of the Lord," in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.

⁴⁵ Cf. Goffredo Boselli, "Liturgy and Evangelization," in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ibidem,

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibidem.

- Boselli, Goffredo. *Il senso spirituale della liturgia*. Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2011.
- Bueno de la Fuente, Eloy. *Eclesiología*. Madrid: BAC, 2017.
- Congar, Yves. et al, *La liturgia después del Vaticano II*. Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1969.
- Goffredo Boselli. "The priests trained by the liturgy," in-service course for the Maltese clergy on the power of the liturgy in a secular society, Malta, 2023.
- Gy, Pierre-Marie. *Reception of Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Life of the Church*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003.
- López Martín, Julián. *La liturgia de la Iglesia*. Madrid: BAC, 2020.
- Madrigal Terrazas, Santiago. *El giro eclesiológico en la recepción del Vaticano II*. Santander: Sal Terrae, 2017.
- Madrigal Terrazas, Santiago. *Vaticano II: Remembranza y Actualización*. Santander: Sal Terrae, 2002.
- O'Malley, Timothy P. *Liturgy and the New Evangelization*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014.
- Sartore, Domenico & Achille Triacca, eds., *Nuovo Dizionario di Liturgia*. Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1983.
- Vagaggini, Cipriano. "La Chiesa si ritrova nella liturgia." *Rivista Liturgica* 51 (1964): 343-354.
- Vagaggini, Cipriano. *Il senso teologico della liturgia*. Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1965.

ZMIANY W EKLEZJOLOGII NA SOBORZE WATYKAŃSKIM II I ICH WPŁYW NA LITURGIĘ

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł wyjaśnia, w jaki sposób odnowa liturgiczna była bezpośrednią konsekwencją eklezjologii Soboru Watykańskiego II, którą znajdujemy w konstytucji *Lumen Gentium*. Artykuł rozpoczyna się od analizy odnowionej eklezjologii ukształtowanej przez Sobór. Liturgiczna odnowa zostanie przeanalizowana jako konsekwencja tej odnowy w eklezjologii. Na koniec zostanie dokonana analiza praktycznych sposobów, którymi Kościół może kontynuować kształtowanie eklezjologicznego i liturgicznego ducha soborowego.

Słowa kluczowe: eklezjologia; liturgia; Sobór Watykański II; zgromadzenie liturgiczne; ewangelizacja.