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CONTEMPORARY ROMAN CATHOLIC REACTIONS
TO THE LUTHERAN LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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June 1951

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FOREWORD

The fundamental reason why this topic was chosen is a rather deep rooted curiosity possessed by the majority of Lutheran liturgiologists as to Rome's views and reactions to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. This liturgical curiosity is whetted and agitated by the present liturgical movement being carried on in the Roman Church under the influence of the German Benedictines and the Austrian Augustinians. Such names as Ellard, Reinhold, and Hellriegel immediately bring to mind the vast task of restoring meaning to the liturgy for the Roman laity which these men are undertaking in this country.

Also, the Lutheran liturgiologist cannot forget that in Rome today lie many of the same basic traditions which comprise his own liturgical background and thesaurus. Although he must differ radically in doctrine from the Roman Church, the Lutheran liturgiologist, nevertheless, is ever aware of the vast storehouse of liturgical tradition which is present in the Roman See.

But a reason more immediate is an article which appeared in a recent Roman Catholic periodical in which its author tried to convey to his readers the impression that Lutheran Liturgies were slowly bringing the Lutheran Church back to

Rome.¹ The desire was created, therefore, to know the general consensus of Roman Catholic thought on this matter.

Unfortunately Rome has never issued, to my knowledge, a decretal or encyclical dealing with the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. Therefore a rather round-about means had to be employed.

Letters were sent out to various seminaries, universities, abbeys, priories, monasteries, convents, and parishes asking for honest reactions on this matter. The answers which were received were then culled and the most clear and concise were set aside, excerpted, and organized. It must be made clear that no authoritative statements are herewith quoted. None of the letters came with the Nihil Obstat of a diocesan reviewer or the Imprimatur of a Bishop. However, the material gathered from these letters can, for all practical purposes, be presented as a general consensus of contemporary Roman Catholic thought. It is with this thought borne in mind that this material is herewith reviewed.

¹"Lutheran High Church Described," The St. Louis Register, August 18, 1950.

CHAPTER I

WHY WERE LITURGICALS DROPPED

In looking at the Lutheran Liturgical Revival as it manifests itself in this present era, the Roman Catholic Church gazes upon it as one would, in a sense, examine a scientific specimen, applying to it the various rules and propositions within the realm of certain knowledge. In the very title itself, "Lutheran Liturgical Revival," there lies the cause for a bit of eye-brow lifting on the part of the Roman Church.

In the very title lies a cause for contention on their part. The point is maintained that an investigation ought to be ensued on our part as to why there is the need for this liturgical revival, or "Liturgical Movement."

I am sure that you will agree that the only way to revive something in the liturgy, as in anything else, and revive it properly, is to find out why it was dropped in the first place.¹

The purpose of such an investigation is comparatively obvious. For if one would place on the same plane adiaphora and inviolate dogmas, then the apparent discarding of certain adiaphoral practices would make the observer suspicious of the security and authority of teaching of such a Church body.

¹Letter (No. 33) to author from the Rev. John B. Quinn, S.S., November 9, 1950.

If I were a member of your Church, such a movement would immediately give rise to the following questions:

- 1) Why were the rites and ceremonies of the Mass originally discarded by the Lutheran Church?
- 2) If the reasons for discarding them were valid in the sixteenth century, why try to reintroduce them in the twentieth century?
- 3) If the reasons for discarding them were not valid, thereby admitting an error in judgment on the part of the Lutheran Founders, is it not probable and possible that they made other mistakes in judgment in discarding other teachings of the Catholic Church from which they separated?²

Naturally such an investigation on our part would prove less meaningful than it would to the Roman communion. For it is not our practice to place the arbitrary on the same level as the absolute, to equate ritual and dogma. Yet in view of the fact that such is their position regarding ritual and ceremony, and, in view of their teachings (to be discussed in a later chapter), it is understandable to the Lutheran liturgiologist why such a contention on their part is both natural and to be expected.

²Letter (No. 18) to author from the Rev. Joseph X. Strenkert, O.P., November 20, 1950.

CHAPTER II

LITURGICS

General Coverage

To comprehend to the fullest the Roman reaction to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, it is required for the liturgically curious that they first investigate and attempt to understand the Roman viewpoint of this field of theology. Too often we are wont to read the Roman conclusions in the light of our own major and minor premises. Yet exactly what is the fundamental difference between the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches?

. . . I have often explained the fundamental difference between the Catholic and Protestant outlook in this way: The Protestant mind celebrates the memory of the Lord by doing something now, (reading scripture accounts, singing, preaching) that will cause the memory to go back to the past and remember what the good Lord has done, much as a patriotic celebration by the same means brings back the memory of one of the national heroes, but that the Catholic way of celebrating the Lord's memory is to take the saving act out of the past and by the vehicle of an outward visible ceremony makes it present to the celebrating assembly. This is the way the Church has always looked upon it from the beginning and found herself, in this way of bringing divine things into the presence of the people in perfect agreement with the good pagans because this is the way corresponding to human nature, (body and soul and social being). This must all be so, because religion is not a philosophical system, not a well devised moral system, but it is life and truth, it is being.

¹Letter (No. 29) to author from the Very Rev. Anthony Wortmann, M.S.C., November 13, 1950, p. 2.

The center, therefore, of Catholic worship is bound up tightly in the framework of liturgics, for the heart of their devotional acts is the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, as presented by means of certain definite and distinct outward visible ceremonies. But to the Catholic these ceremonies must not take on the characteristic of individuality or be assembled in accordance to the whim and will of the celebrant. For even as the truths they express are objectively true, so, too, the ceremonies which express these truths must be objectively assembled and uniformly practiced, for therein lies the unity of the Church revealed.

We might mention that there are two very notable characteristics which adorn all liturgical services, and that is sacredness, which abhors any profane influence, and universality, which, while safeguarding local and legitimate customs, reveals the Catholic unity of the Church.²

The ceremonies of the Liturgy of Rome are marked by sacredness and universality. The sacredness of liturgical services is necessary because the service is an act of the worshiper to his God Who is the All-Holy target of our devotion and adoration. The ceremonies require the mark of universality because God Himself is universal, is all embracing and is the Author of the service of worship. This is His service; this is the service of His desire and command. Therefore the service must take on His mark of

²Letter (No. 5) to author from the Rev. R. G. Heck, November 30, 1950, p. 1.

universality. And even as God never changes but is always the same, so too must the liturgical practices of the Church be as stable as possible.

We know that liturgy is a service. It is not something which is meant to please or displease us, nor is it a subjective act which we may watch or listen to with complete sympathy or apathy, depending on our mood. It is a matter of duty. The important thing is not whether a man is in the right mood for the liturgy, but that he fulfill his duty to God, as St. Benedict says, "that God may be glorified."

We may go further and say the liturgy is the service of God. It is that service or worship which God desires and can demand as Lord, Creator, and Judge of mankind. The Lord, and not the servant, determines how this service must be rendered, what must be done, and when and where it is to be done. As Christians we are in the happy position of having God Himself actually determine our way of worship. The only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, came down to earth from heaven to show us what we owe to God. Through His holy life, His suffering, sacrifice, and death, He offered that service to God which our first parents in their pride and disobedience denied Him.

Because this divine service of Christ was all powerful in bringing salvation to the world, the Church in her liturgy has added nothing new to it. She merely continues the redemptive activity of Christ, her Divine Founder, for the honor of God and the salvation of souls. And she does this principally in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass because it is the sacrifice of Christ, the center and starting point of all liturgy. In the Mass the Church prays, teaches and offers as Christ has taught her to do; and in her other liturgical acts, particularly the sacraments, instituted and entrusted to her by Christ, she continues the work of our Redeemer. For that reason we can rightly say that in the Catholic Church Christ continues to live.³

In a sense, therefore, liturgics are the objective

³Letter (No. 13) to author from the Rev. Richard Tomek, O.F.M. Conv., December 7, 1950, p. 1.

ceremonies wherein are represented and symbolized the objective truths of God. Liturgies are the visible aids whereby the dogmas of the Church, though clear in themselves, are nevertheless made more discernable to the faithful. Also these ceremonies satisfy the desire of man to shower the Almighty with his love and adoration. It is the natural instinct of man to bestow gifts upon those whom he loves. So it is also in the manifestation of man's love and devotion to God.

The liturgy is meant to dress the bare metaphysical truths of religion - not that our associations with God Almighty are necessarily cold and barren; but because the aspirations of the Soul express, though weakly, some beauty of the divine exuberance and seek to display the soul's inexpressible sentiments by the most beautiful and fitting representations which rational talent and nature can afford.

For us who believe in God, there is the attempt to garnish him with riches. Although He intimates, "I am Who Am," still He does not disdain our good will. But what, after all can we add to God? Rather, we were created by Him, in order to offer a higher "liturgy" than that of unintelligible, yet harmonious nature. And as co-heirs with His crucified Son, we are called by Our Heavenly Father to a supernatural participation of His Infinite Perfection.⁴

In the light of these two facts, that liturgies makes the objective truths of the Church more intelligible and that in their beauty and splendor they enable man to worship his God more aptly (a point to be discussed under a separate heading), we can come to a positive conclusion, namely, that

⁴Letter (No. 16) to author from Friar Anthanasius Zak, O.F.M. Conv., December 8, 1950, p. 1.

for the Roman Church, the liturgy enhances the worship life. But in being a visual aid to theology and worship, ceremonies take on the prime mark of difficulty common to all such aids. For like all visual aids, liturgics are completely meaningless unless they are accompanied with meaning and understanding.

. . . its richness and beauty cannot but bring you closer to God if you always keep liturgy in its place. It enhances, dignifies, beautifies the great sacrifice of the Mass, and the dispensation of the sacraments while without the latter it would be merely a pleasing show like a concert, a play or a visit to the art gallery.⁵

But even as the ceremonies of the Mass serve to enhance the beauty and meaning of the central part of the worship life of the Catholic people, so too it is a most influential factor in the doctrine of Sanctification as presented by the Roman See. In living the liturgical life of the Church, the Catholic realizes and accomplishes his duty to lead a sanctified life. Herein is the grace which shall enable him to do that which is necessary for his salvation. Here in this point of "Liturgy and Sanctification" we find one of the prime considerations to be taken into account when one would investigate the Roman Catholic reactions to any liturgical movement outside of her own communion.

As to the Sacramental life, we may say that the life of every Christian is to be a sanctified life, for such

⁵Letter (No. 42) to author from the Rev. J. F. Quinn, S.J., October 13, 1950.

is the will of God: "Be holy because I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). Each call to divine service is an admonition: "Walk before me and be perfect" (Gen. 17:1). But especially by her liturgy, with the Eucharist as its center, the Church constantly reminds us to lead a holy life. Not only does she urge us to do so, but she also shows us the way. She supplies us with the grace to sanctify each hour, each week, each year, in fact, our whole lives from the cradle to the grave.

Every Christian who is conscientious about his baptismal promises and who wishes to attain his eternal goal realizes that it is his duty to lead a sanctified life. This means living the liturgical life of the Church with the Church, which entails above all an earnest and devout participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice. It means, too, the reception of the other sacraments according to his state of life and daily steadfastness in carrying out whatever particular work or duty God has entrusted to him.⁶

The liturgy serves, therefore, to enable man to do that which is pleasing to his God and therefore perform that which is meritorious of salvation. Since the Sacraments are the means whereby the grace to do this is passed on to man, we conclude that liturgics therefore serve to make for a better active and intelligent and understanding use of these salvation-enabling sacraments.

And a liturgical movement can be nothing else than an effort to make over better use (active and intelligent participation) of the sacraments: to make one's spiritual life correspond to the divine gifts, e.g., because by baptism we have become one with Christ and have become members of the Body of Christ, a more intense realization of this fact should lead to a more Christ-like living, a more fraternal bond with our fellow Christians. The divine gift becomes an ethical responsibility. Agere sequitur esse. In other words, sacraments are not just of the bene esse of Christian life, but of the esse itself. The sacraments are the

⁶R. Tomek, op. cit., p. 2.

chief means by which Christ the High Priest continues, or realizes, His redemptive activity among men. The Sacraments are signs, effective signs, signs that accomplish what they signify: because they are the instruments by which Christ Himself has willed to work among men. As St. Augustine was to put it: it is not Paul who baptizes. Beauty of ceremonies and ritual is the external inner core: but it is no more than that.⁷

The liturgy serves for a more noble participation in the sacraments. It is a garment, so to speak, wherein stands the heart of the Church, her sacraments. Here is God-given power to make God-pleasing men. But even as it is difficult to conceive of these two, liturgies and sacraments, as being mutually exclusive, especially after so many centuries of intimate union, so too one can not and dare not conceive of them as being mutually independent. For although the sacraments are absolute in themselves, the ceremonies surrounding them are absolute only in so far as is the core.

However, in the matter of liturgical observances, the outward forms are meaningless unless the real substance lies beneath and pervades all our rites. Our liturgy is built around the seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. The center is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which places Christ bodily in our midst and perpetuates His Presence in the tabernacles of our Churches. If Christ were not bodily present at Mass and in our tabernacles, we would immediately discard our elaborate ritual and the greatest and most meaningful ceremonies of our liturgy.⁸

⁷Anonymous letter (No. 11) to author, September 27, 1950, p. 1.

⁸Letter (No. 2) to author from the Rev. Venance Zink, O.F.M., January 19, 1951, p. 1.

The objective independence and validity of ceremony, therefore, relies completely and totally on the objective reality and validity of the sacraments therein expressed. To the Roman Church, therefore, in viewing and commenting on any Lutheran liturgical act, be it progressive or regressive, the underlying thought on which will be patterned their critique is the assumption that for ceremonies to be valid, the sacraments which they assist must be valid, otherwise you merely have an empty shell. And since they deny the validity of our sacraments (to be discussed in a later chapter), it is not surprising to find their reaction to a "Lutheran" liturgy as being rather charitable in expression but intolerant in opinion.

Is it unkind to say that the ceremonies without the reality of the Mass seem rather like an empty shell, a very beautiful empty shell perhaps, but with a sadness about it like the sadness that clings about the English cathedrals which were built to house the wonder of the Mass, and in which the Mass is no longer offered?⁹

⁹Letter (No. 8) to author from the Rev. L. Keyes, R.S.C.J., November 28, 1950.

CHAPTER III

LITURGY AND MAN

In a previous chapter we mentioned the relationship existing between man and liturgics. The opinion was presented that liturgics, comprised of ceremony and rite over the firm layer of truth, draws man by his senses to worship his Creator. This opinion is maintained by the Roman Church as an a priori judgment based on an empirical investigation into the nature of man. Even in his daily living man takes recourse to rite and ceremony. In view of this fact it is but natural that the Church which must be all things to all men must take into consideration the drives and dynamics operative and inherent in man.

We know that God wills that men render Him public worship, that as a corporate body society owes Him homage. If this is so some ritual is necessary. This is so true that almost all men have recognized it instinctively. They may have perverted such worship, but their nature told them that some such worship was called for. Now from the earliest beginnings of Biblical religion we find rite and liturgy. God wills it so to satisfy our nature. How the human heart reaches out for external expression by word and gesture and group action we see in every public function around us. Even our baseball and football games have parallels to the "rites of religion," many that started spontaneously. Our ritual dealing with the national flag is another example. All of these practices strengthen the human heart and spirit. In the realm of religion the same can be true.

In Biblical religion we see external rite approved and practiced constantly. The Old Testament is full of it. In the New Testament our Redeemer willed that His redemptive work should be carried out in the

framework of the great rite of the Old Testament, the Passover. How unbiblical, then, are those who would do away with external rite.

And it is precisely the rite of the Eucharist that has been the center and heart of the liturgy throughout Christian tradition. That we should introduce the central act of this liturgy with ritual and mark our thanksgiving by further ritual is in keeping with the Eucharistic sacrifice. Our Lord surrounded the first Eucharist meal with a ritual.¹

In view of the maintained a priori judgment that man by nature has need of and inclines toward ritual and pagantry, the Roman Church finds it difficult to understand the why and wherefore of the general Protestant attitude in this respect.

Surely anything that will enhance the splendor of divine worship is to be commended. I have never been able to understand the attitude of many of the Protestant Churches in this respect. We are men and men are made up of body and soul and both should have their part in the worship of God. Why should not the fine arts be used by man to help him to express, even in a sensible manner, his utter dependence upon God.²

In the study of man from the Roman viewpoint we can come to a valid and certain conclusion, namely that man as we know him is comprised of body, soul, mind, and senses. Religion is not a segmentary act of a segmented creation, but is the total devotion of the total man. In appealing to man, therefore, the Church should and must appeal to the

¹Letter (No. 23) to author from the Rev. J. E. Coleran, S.J., November 14, 1950.

²Letter (No. 6) to author from the Rev. Jerome G. Lemmer, S.J., November 29, 1950, p. 1.

total man, and assist this total man in total worship. God, therefore, constructed His religion on the natural make-up of man, taking His creation into consideration and formulating the ritual of His desire in accordance with this nature. Ceremonies are natural to man, meet his needs, and serve to raise him aloft to the spirituality of God.

Those who ignore ceremony and ritual in their social, corporate worship of God seem to us amazingly oblivious of the example of great servants of God in the past, the God-inspired practices of the Jews and of the early Christians, and, above all, of fundamental religious psychology.

The history of religions shows that men instinctively, as a creature of body as well as of soul, and as a social being, worships God with ceremony and ritual. A developed religion is not merely a creed and a code: it is a cult, or way of worshipping God that expresses externally and socially the creed and the code.

When our Lord founded His religion He built the supernatural on man's natural tendencies; He accommodated it to the natural religious instincts of men which everywhere moved them to seek union with God in a decorous, and dignified, and sacred ceremonial way. For instance, in instituting the Eucharist He Himself set the ceremonial by taking bread into His hands, blessing it, breaking it, and giving it to His disciples. The Gospels, moreover, show that He knelt or prostrated Himself in prayer, raised His eyes to Heaven in giving thanks, breathed upon the apostles, and blessed them. What are all these actions if not a dramatization, a symbolic externalization, of his inner prayers and sentiments?

Ceremony is natural to man: when we want to express our sentiments, we lay wreaths at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, for example, or stand at attention, and salute the flag; or, if we happen to be French, we gently and reverently embrace and kiss.

Why should we make an exception of God, and exclude

him from our human esteem, love, reverence, and affection by approaching Him in a non-human way? If God wanted merely angelic worship from us, He would have made us angels, not men. Only proud and foolish men try to worship God as though they were angels, as a proud and foolish devil once insisted on paying his respects to God as an equal.

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity Himself - Pure Spirit in His own nature - established the Sacramental Principle in Christianity, by assuming and sanctifying our flesh in the Incarnation. He used His Sacred Human Body as a means of sanctifying us. He also used other visible, material realities as instruments of sanctification, as for example, the water of Baptism. He made matter the point of contact and external symbol of union between God and man, knowing as He did, that even man's ideas of God are ultimately derived from God's visible effects; and that the spiritual soul of man uses matter as a staircase in its ascent to the spirituality of God.³

In view of this ability of man, his sensual perceptive nature, he is instinctively drawn to beauty. And this trait in man, this appreciation of beauty, a priori present in man by the very nature of man, enables him to worship in beauty and truth.

Since he must serve God "with all his strength," man must use his senses and his physical being as well as his mind in religious worship. The approach to the spirit is through the given senses. Man is made to appreciate beauty as well as truth. Hence the ceremonies if properly performed can raise man to heavenly knowledge and heavenly desires.⁴

This love of beauty, which is asserted as an innate mark of man's nature has both purpose and end. For the

³Letter (No. 50) to author from the Rev. Eugene Gallagher, S.J., September 29, 1950, p. 2.

⁴Letter (No. 3) to author from the Rev. Ernest P. Ament, December 4, 1950.

purpose of the love of beauty is to lead man to the end which is the Beauty which is God.

The love of beautiful things is good. God is beauty. The love of the beautiful should lead us by degrees to Beauty's Self.

Beauty is also to be found there (in the Roman Catholic Church) though not always. You can also find aesthetic horrors in Catholic churches. But even in the churches where you find the horrors you will find Beauty; and in the churches where you find beauty you find Beauty. The beauty reveals to us the Beauty that dwells in light inaccessible, reflects Its light to us, and would be unmeaningful without Its light.⁵

It has been pointed out that certain considerations must be pondered upon in viewing any liturgical action in a non-Catholic communion.

In the first place liturgics (ceremonies and rites), regardless of its form, is and can only be an outer shell for an inner core of truth.

The need for such a ceremonious sheath is attested to by the very nature of man, a rational creation of God who in his daily life lives a life of ritual and so too, in worshipping his Creator, strives to attain in his devotion the beauty like unto the Beauty.

But this aesthetical aid needs a heart of stable truth. For the liturgy and man can only become a reality when it is an outgrowth of the liturgy and dogma.

⁵Letter (No. 8) to author from the Rev. L. Keyes, S.J., November 28, 1950.

CHAPTER IV

LITURGY AND DOGMA

The intimate union between liturgics and sacraments in the eyes of the Roman Church has been examined. It has been stated that there is a direct relationship existing between man and liturgics which has its basis in the very nature of man. Moreover, the Roman liturgiologist declares, as we have seen, that the proper relationship between man and liturgy depends for its survival on the proper relationship between liturgy and sacraments. Rome now presents a third relationship upon which each of the two former rest and depend. This is the relationship between liturgy and dogma.

A thorough understanding of the Roman view of these two concepts as they are co-relative is necessary for a precise comprehension of the Roman reaction to any Lutheran liturgical movement. In judging any liturgical movement extra ecclesiam catholicam et apostolicam, she beholds it and examines it most fastidiously in the light of her own dogmatic assertions.

Dogma is that which is believed to be true. Dogma requires authority. Authority to the Roman Catholics requires Peter, and so, therefore, it can be asserted that the fundamental trouble with the liturgical movement is its source - an act of open rebellion against authority.

The trouble with liturgical movements outside the fold of Peter is their starting point.

How can you reform a Church that has as its origin an act of wilful rebellion against authority? What is there to stop its members from going on reforming, once they are cut loose and are adrift in the currents and counter-currents of period after period? Unless you canonize the founder and make him a Rock - like Peter, or even our Lord Himself - how can you show that he was the ne-plus-ultra of insight into the Spirit of Christ, His one and only chosen prophet?

If, however, the reformer himself was a person like Luther or Calvin who thundered against the See of Peter as a piece of human arrogance and a mockery of Christ's real intention, then you must allow every Tom, Dick, and Harry to go ahead with his own version of Christ's gospel; because who are you to stop them?¹

Luther's rebellion negated Rome's certainty of sure knowledge and valid dogma. This presents an insurmountable difficulty, since liturgy, in the "true" sense of the word, demands and necessitates and makes compulsive a faith in the Real Presence.

In your studies, however, you must not overlook the fact or rather the purpose or reason of these rites and ceremonies. They are not merely a custom or practice to make the service beautiful and please the esthetic taste of the worshipper. The rites and ceremonies of the liturgy have as their purpose that we may perform in a manner as perfectly and reverently and beautifully as we can the same thing our Lord Jesus did and commanded us to do at the last supper: "Do this in commemoration of me." . . . If there is no belief in the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist... then the rites and ceremonies of the liturgy have lost their meaning and purpose of existence, for they were only introduced in the course of the years by the Church to reverence and honor the

¹H. A. Reinhold, "Extramural Liturgical Movements," Orate Fratres, XX (October 6, 1946), 503.

Son of God present in the Eucharist.²

The assertion that liturgy as such demands faith in the Real Presence can, however, be misunderstood and therefore must of necessity be more definitely presented. If liturgy demanded merely faith in the "real presence" (whatever the definition thereof might be), then one could proclaim the soundness of Lutheran dogma and liturgy in Roman eyes. However, such is not the case, for by the term "real presence" Rome means the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation. Liturgy is the thread that binds us to history, and history demands historical universal faith, and this, says Rome, in turn demands belief in transubstantiation rather than in the new creation of consubstantiation which they firmly believe is maintained in the confessional doctrine of Lutheranism.

. . . it would seem rather pointless to adopt a liturgy you are also prepared to accept all its theological implications. Again I quote from Luther's Small Catechism on the Sacrament of the Altar, Page #193, Question #254 (Luther's Small Catechism by J. A. Dell, D.D.).

Q. What do we receive in this Sacrament?

A. Bread and wine; and in, with, and under the bread and wine we receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This reply indicates a compenetration of matter or a consubstantiation. However, since Apostolic times until the Sixteenth Century, the orthodox interpretation of the words of Christ in instituting this

²Letter (No. 21) to author from the Rev. Lambert Brockmann, O.F.M., November 22, 1950.

Sacrament have always been understood in the sense of transubstantiation. During the very early centuries of Christianity there were some few people who expressed contrary opinions but they were condemned by the totality of the Church. It is true that the word Transubstantiation will not be found until later centuries nevertheless the early Fathers and Doctors of the Church always explained the Holy Eucharist in the sense of Transubstantiation by which the substance of bread and wine is changed into the substance of the Body of Christ, with only the accidents of bread and wine remaining after the words of consecration.³

It is obvious therefore that, in the viewpoint of the Roman Church, ceremony and ritual are of little or no effect without the fundamental doctrine of transubstantiation. Any other theory or doctrine of the Real Presence is null and void for the truth of the Sacraments is hinged to concept as well as to the concept of gratia infusa and not to the evangelical concept of fides confirmans.

The ceremonies and rituals of the mass are but a hollow husk without the Mass itself, i.e. without Transubstantiation without the Sacrifice. Neither can there be sacramental life without life-giving sacraments, i.e. visible signs which actually give grace and not merely "awaken and confirm faith in those who use them." And to have sacraments it is necessary to have those who have had transmitted to them in unbroken succession from the Apostles, the authority and the power to give the sacraments.⁴

Liturgy and dogma are joined together by the bar of truth and one cannot rightly assert having the one without the other. One may have liturgy in specie sed non in

³Letter (No. 18) to author from the Rev. Joseph X. Strenkert, O.P., November 20, 1950, p. 2.

⁴Letter (No. 22) to author from the Rev. Aloys H. Dirksen, G.P.P.S., November 19, 1950.

veritate. Purity of liturgy demands and cannot rightly exist without purity of dogma. And purity of dogma, purity of teaching requires an absolute authority by which the dogma may be retained in its pristine purity, and in turn the liturgy in like manner may be retained.

Liturgy is inseparably bound up with Dogma. Our liturgy is magnificent only because our Dogma is full and rich. It had to be so; for Christ built it upon a rock, called Peter, to whom He said:

"I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . Feed My Lambs, feed My Sheep . . . I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being converted, strengthen thy brethren . . ."

To His official representatives our Lord said: "Do this in commemoration of Me . . . Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven . . . He that heareth you heareth me . . . Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

Purity of teaching demands a supreme living authority. Evidence the contrary and conflicting teaching within the countless sects which have departed from the Unity which Christ established and for which He prayed and provided when He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church."

To accept Christ is to accept the whole Christ. If He had slipped up on one single point, He would deserve to be ignored entirely. God cannot err. Therefore, if the Catholic Church has been in error regarding matters of faith or morals, obviously Christ has not kept His promise to remain with the Church till the consummation of the world.⁵

In view of this, therefore, the Church of Rome has appropriated as its own personal, private, non-trespassable property the centuries of liturgical traditions which

⁵Letter (No. 2) to author from the Rev. Venance Zink, O.F.M., January 19, 1951, p. 2.

comprise the so-called Western Rite. The Lutheran liturgiologist, in the course of his research, finds himself studying in effect the same traditions as the Roman liturgiologist. That this is so is neither startling nor surprising since both churches are basically Western Rite. However, the Roman Church, in viewing such research, in believing the western traditions to be hers alone, and in viewing liturgy and dogma as inseparable, must be amazed at the one-sidedness of the Lutheran liturgiologist. For here is a man steeped in western tradition, who, nevertheless, rejects many Roman doctrines.

May I respectfully suggest that instead of studying the ceremonies of the Church which have been retained throughout the centuries, that you make a serious study of the doctrines of the Church which will remain the same until the end of time, since they are founded on the infallible word of God. Many modern Lutherans admit the error of their founder in his cardinal doctrine, "justification by faith alone," but are unwilling to admit that he was wrong when he separated himself and his followers from the Church founded by Christ . . . for the Mass and sacraments to be effective, they must be validly administered. All the good will in the world will not supply for the lack of validly ordained priests to celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments.⁶

This renewed interest on the part of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement in the western traditions which they believe to be their heritage as well as the heritage of the Roman Church must needs bring a question to the front on

⁶Letter (No. 38) to author from the Rev. Ronald Murray, G.P., October 11, 1950, p. 2.

part of the Romans. "Where will it end?" "Why accept our traditions and not our dogmas?" "Why?"

Because it views itself, as was said, as the rightful possessor of these rites and views in turn rites and dogmas as inseparable, it is understandable why such questions are asked on their part.

And so there can be no doubt in our mind of the deep-seated need and of the salutary effects of a fully developed liturgical life both in ourselves and in our people. And we feel that what is good for Catholics in this matter is - and I speak frankly - perhaps even better for Lutherans.

Why it is good for Lutherans is self-evident. But why I say that it is perhaps better for Lutherans than for Catholics will need explanation. There can be no hen-and-the-egg question about it; belief came first, and ritual followed after, as an apt exteriorization of it. With this fact taken for granted, the theological axiom legem credendi lex statuat suppli-
candi is used to indicate how liturgy might be resorted to as a confirmatory source of revelation in matters of faith.

Should any religious body, therefore, repudiate or relinquish liturgy likewise? For then liturgy no longer has any real significance. And should any religious body reassume liturgy it must also reaffirm dogma; otherwise such liturgy is nonsense. Hence it seems to me, a Catholic, that the development of the Lutheran Liturgical Revival is an especially good thing because it seems to indicate a rebirth of belief in dogma - not any dogma at all, but in certain Catholic ones, such as the existence of Purgatory, the perduring Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar, and perhaps others as well. Or am I misunderstanding completely what I read? In any case, I think I may safely say this, that any existing Catholic interest in the Lutheran Liturgical Revival is prompted chiefly by implications such as these. That there be one fold and one shepherd was the will of Him Who redeemed us all; and we Catholics can neither disregard that ideal nor be indifferent to any non-Catholic movement which - to our eyes, at least - seems to be bringing Protestants closer to what they once were, Catholics.

Hence it seems to me that "let the rule for prayer determine the rule of belief" is an axiom which, in your case, is being carried out literally and in fact, i.e. Liturgy is actually determining (or re-determining), not merely confirming, Creed. And the cardinal reason why I consider that a good thing is because the lex credendi herein involved seems really to be a part of the lex Catholica credendi. The questions in my mind, however, are these: when and where is the Lutheran Liturgical movement going to call a halt: where is it going to draw the line. Only with "the use of the rosary, the Corpus Christi procession, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament?" - if I may use some words of the Una Sancta. And why should it stop at these??

That these questions are asked is due to the fact that Lutheranism is regarded as a piece of truth that cut itself off from the source of truth but is blindly striving for truth. In the so viewed one-sided liturgical movement extant in Protestantism and especially in Lutheranism, which seemingly strives after the rites of Rome without the dogmatical requisites of Rome, Rome can only hope that this rather illogical progression will one day be replaced by one more logical and pleasing to her.

Pius XI said on one occasion that the pieces chipped off this Rock still contained some of the veins of precious ore they had in common with us. It is therefore a great joy to see that the Lutheran Church in this country has now a small group of ministers and faithful who do not take twentieth century Protestantism for granted and begin to search for a richer version of their faith and life. It is only natural to look back to the "heroic age" of their Church. But what a Catholic sees here is exactly what was said above: Where are they going to stop and what is to constitute the brakes which will make them stop just

⁷Letter (No. 34) to author from the Rev. Ernest Tyler, S.J., November 3, 1950, p. 3.

outside the gates of Rome?⁸

⁸Reinhold, op. cit., p. 504.

CHAPTER V

LUTHER AND THE SACRAMENTS

In examining the Roman Catholic reactions to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, it has been pointed out that there are some prime and fundamental considerations to be taken into account before an objective presentation of such a subjective opinion can be set forth. The first fundamental consideration is the nature and purpose of liturgics. In accord with this are the nature and purpose of man in the light of liturgics, and the interrelation of liturgy and dogma with the existence of one determining the validity of the other. Yet two more points are in need of consideration. The first of these is the consideration of Blessed Martin Luther and the sacraments.

Again must it be stressed that the Roman Church looks upon liturgy and dogma as a wedding which man must not put asunder. Therefore, the Lutheran Liturgy must be and is viewed by the Romans in the light of the proximity of its adherence to the Latin Rite, and in the light of its adherence to Roman dogma. In view of the fact that the Lutheran Liturgy is wedded to Lutheran dogma, it becomes necessary to investigate Rome's view of Luther and the sacraments.

The initial point then to be considered is the view

that Luther removed his followers from the Church.

Looking at the beautifully bound copies of Una Sancta, published by the Lutheran Una Sancta Press . . . I cannot help feeling sad. You cannot avoid feeling sad, because you see how much our Church lost in the sixteenth century when Luther took all northern Europe out of the fold of Peter. It makes you sad to see how this new communion lost substance and was drained pale by all the subsequent movements and ravaged by pietism, puritanism and finally bourgeois rationalism. There seem to be underground connections with the Mother Church of Rome, as it were by a system of communicating tubes or a kind of spiritual osmosis.¹

Luther took his followers out of the Church when he himself left the Church. This is the initial consideration. But what, in the Roman view, is this "Church?" It is the Church founded by Jesus Christ upon the rock of St. Peter. Since the sub-apostolic period of history, the Church has been invisioned and figured by various and sundry forms. One of these is the figure of a ship. Like all ships, the Church too must, in the course of history, pass through storms and galls of dispute and conflagration. But, Rome claims, the fundamental fault with Luther was that he deserted the ship, leaped from it never to return.

The Catholic Church is founded by our Divine Lord, on St. Peter . . . "Thou Peter and upon this rock . . ." And the actual Pope is the 262nd successor of Peter . . . without any missing link, enjoying the same authority and privileges, because succeeding at the head of the same body or Church as established by Christ.

The Lutheran Church was historically started by Luther . . . a Catholic priest married to a Nun; and this

¹H. A. Reinhold, "Extramural Liturgical Activities," Orate Fratres, XX (October 6, 1946), 504.

Founder was right in some way to thunder against the then prevailing abuses. In the course of centuries there are naturally ups and downs among the disciples of Christ, and the Ship of the Church is often tempest-beaten by immorality or unbelief or rebellions; but the Ship is always carrying the Lord and the Ship cannot flounder; after the storm and destruction and victims comes tranquility up to the following disturbance, such is the lot of the Church during the crossing up to eternity. During the storm of the 16th century, Luther went out of the Ship. He should, like the Disciples, on the lake of Genesareth, have fallen at the feet of the Saviour and cried out: "Lord, save us, we are being drowned."²

Another symbol for the Church of Christ is that of the vine and branches. Christ is the true vine and believers in Him are the branches. Here is a unity and oneness which can only and does only exist when faithful and firm adherence to the true is maintained. If then there is only one true vine, then a vine developed by a branch broken from the true vine and divorced from it cannot be valid. For if validity is one, validity cannot be two. Luther and Henry VIII broke from the true vine. But though this new vine might resemble and be as large as and of the same cloth as the true vine, it can be no more than a resemblance.

Luther, besides depriving his followers of the Mass and the sacramental system, broke the bond of unity with the Church of Christ and condemned his followers to live an artificial life, separated from the true Vine. To enjoy the supernatural life of the Church it is necessary that Lutherans admit the folly of their founder and return to that Unity of Faith

²Letter (No. 4) to author from the Rev. Guy Beaudoin, December 1, 1950, p. 1.

which he left.

Henry VIII did exactly the same thing and members of the "High Church" have restored many of the rites of the Church. But, they are as separated from the true Church in our day as they were in the time of their founder. This is exactly what will happen to Lutheranism, if they adopt the rites and ceremonies of the Church and refuse submission to the successor of Peter, the Pope of Rome.³

Two vines then exist. This must be borne in mind as an underlying thought of the Roman Church as it comments on the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. There are two vines. One is true and one is false. Both are similar. Yet there is an essential difference.

Here is the essential difference between Lutheranism and Catholicism - the notion of how our Redemption was effected. Our Catholic liturgy is animated by the idea of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For us the Mass is a Sacrifice of infinite value, offered by the Son of God through the priest. By this sacrifice man is regenerated; it is not merely an imputation of justifying grace. Even the Protestant theologian Martin Chemnitz admits that Christian antiquity, "constantly expressed it with such nouns as sacrificium, immolatio, oblatio, hostia, victima, and such verbs as offere, sacrificare, immolare" (Examen Concilii Tridentini Vo. II, p. 782).⁴

In denying the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass, says Rome, Luther discarded the very center of Roman sacramental theology. It is not surprising then that they gaze at the Lutheran Mass with wonder, doubt, and perhaps with a bit

³Letter (No. 38) to author from the Rev. Ronald Murray, C.P., October 11, 1950, p. 1.

⁴Letter (No. 47) to author from Confrater Edmund Hanlon, C.P., October 19, 1950, p. 2.

of amusement.

Luther denied the sacrificial character of the Mass, and therefore omitted the Offertory and the Sacret. The ancient Canon was omitted also. Since this is so, I cannot but help wonder just what Lutheran liturgists mean when they speak of the Sacrifice of the Mass? If they intend to receive the old Catholic notion of sacrifice, they are no longer Lutherans; and if they retain the Lutheran notion, there is no sacrifice.⁵

But one may not dwell on the Eucharist alone, for consideration is demanded of Luther's treatment of the remaining six sacraments of the Medieval Church.

Luther, in The Babylonian Captivity rejected the sacraments of confirmation, marriage, ordination, penance, and extreme unction, and said that there is no such thing as the priesthood in the traditional sense, because any believer can do what the priest does, if he is commissioned to do so by the people of his congregation, and he held that every Christian was a priest.⁶

Thus, in the Babylonian Captivity Luther rejected the Roman sacraments. But primarily he denied, in the Roman view, the heart of worship, the canon of the Mass and the doctrine of the Real Presence. Luther, they insist, did not believe in the Real Presence, and since this is the core of all liturgical action, the question begins to take form as to the "why" of the entire Liturgical Movement existing today in the Lutheran Church. Though every Lutheran will challenge the contention that Luther did not believe

⁵Ibid.

⁶Letter (No. 1) to author from the Rev. George J. Ziskovsky, January 4, 1951, p. 1.

in the Real Presence, nevertheless, from the Roman point of view this is a statement of truth and can be agreed upon if one is willing to equate Real Presence and transubstantiation.

As for the Mass, for Luther it was not a repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross and Christ is not sacrificed in an unbloody manner, as the Roman Church holds - in fact for Luther there is no Real Presence. He wished to change every word in the Canon of the Mass which savored in any way of "offering," "sacrifice," etc. and his words in this connection, in The Babylonian Captivity, are: "The phrases which are used in the Canon are clear; but the words of the Scriptures are also plain, and since there is a contradiction between the two, the Canon must give way to the Gospel" - I am not sure of the exact wording, but I recall that that is the sense of Luther's words in this connection.⁷

The accusation that Martin Luther abolished the Mass, dispensed with the Sacraments, lacked faith in the Real Presence, and therefore, for all practical purposes, dispensed with a sacramental liturgy, we shall let stand. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with these accusations is neither relevant nor material to the purpose of this paper. These views regarding Luther and the sacraments are the underlying thought patterns forming the foundation for the reaction of Rome to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. If all these accusations are true, then one is faced with a dilemma. If one remains within the Lutheran system, one cannot have a "Sacramental Liturgy," and if one would

⁷Ibid., p. 2.

have this "Sacramental Liturgy," then one cannot remain within the Lutheran Church. Whether the two are mutually exclusive shall not herewith be discussed. However, for point of observation it must be noted that for the Roman this is a true dilemma, two mutually exclusive propositions for which there can be no synthesis.

This liturgical dilemma which the Roman Church sees in the Lutheran Liturgical Movement does have smaller facets to be considered and viewed for proper understanding. To restate the dilemma itself: if you desire to "restore" the sacramental liturgical way of worship and life, you will not be in Lutheranism; if you desire to remain in Lutheranism, you cannot have or "restore" the liturgical way of worship and life. This is the dilemma. But there is a hypothetical facet which Rome makes comment upon.

Though there cannot be a valid synthesis in dealing with the two propositions of this dilemma, one can, nevertheless, conceive of an apparent synthesis, namely the adding of the ritual of "right" to the dogma of "wrong." In doing this one may appear to have found a synthesis, but one must examine what actually has been done. The accidents of worship may have been added, but not the reality thereof. The service, it is claimed, may look more interesting, more eye-pleasing, but that is all. The service is still "shadow instead of substance."

The ceremonies and ritual of the Mass, sacramental life, liturgical living, are all very wonderful - just what is needed in our day. But it seems to me that they cannot accomplish much unless they emanate from the substance, the complete sacrifice of the Mass and the doctrine of transubstantiation, as promised in the sixth chapter of St. John and fulfilled at the last supper.

Have not Lutherans abolished part of the Mass: the Offertory, the Canon, and all forms of sacrifice? Do they not defend consubstantiation, rather than transubstantiation? And whence have their ministers the power to celebrate Mass, to consecrate the bread and wine? Unless your movement has for its goal the complete sacrifice of the Mass, I am afraid it will not achieve much; you will be accidentally embellishing your public worship, but will still be dealing with shadow instead of substance.⁸

Rome's theologians insist that the relation between Luther and the sacraments, and therefore between the Lutheran Church and the sacraments, is such as to negate even the possibility of a Lutheran Liturgical Revival in the true sense of the word. To have a proper and valid revival necessitates the restoration of the seven Roman sacraments as well as the acceptance of the total doctrine of the "total Church," the Roman system of dogmatics. If the Lutheran liturgical system develops itself around the three sacraments of its own system, then, in the eyes of Rome, it is yet incomplete and invalid and therefore no system in reality.

Furthermore, by no means can the Lutherans aspire to

⁸Letter (No. 9) to author from the Rev. Albert A. Ruetz, G.R., November 26, 1950, p. 1.

reality without sacerdotal succession.

Since Luther (a Friar like myself) broke away from the Church, according to his own testimony, not only because of the abuses existing among its members as private individuals (and they began back with Peter and Judas), but also because of definite errors taught by the Church, I can hardly see how you hope to return to the full sacramental life and still remain a good Lutheran. In his Apologia, in the Chapter De Numero Sacramentorum, he wrote: "Vere igitur sunt sacramenta baptismus, coena Domini, absolutio, quae est sacramentum poenitentiae." If you retain his teaching in this matter, you can't resurrect what we consider the full Sacramental Life. If you're referring only to the Eucharist, you're still on a different plane than we are, for we maintain that the sacerdotal succession was broken by the Protestant dissidents shortly after the beginning of the Reformation. Consequently (and I admit, Irvin, that I might be considered rather prejudiced in this matter) I can't see how you can have a true Lutheran Revival beyond the time of Luther. To do so you'd have to join the Church of Rome, which never departed.⁹

. . . the so called Reformation: a truly sad event when Luther threw out the very Mass, Sacraments and Priesthood which constitute the very core and heart of the Sacred Liturgy.¹⁰

In view of the intimate union between liturgy and dogma, and in view of Luther's own position in regard to the sacraments, it is really impossible for the reflecting Roman to conceive of a liturgical restoration in the Lutheran Church. Liturgy is the dress of a reality. To restore liturgy implies the a priori possession of that

⁹Letter (No. 7) to author from the Rev. Terence O'Connor, O.S.M., November 28, 1950, p. 1.

¹⁰Letter (No. 43) to author from the Rev. John Molnar, C.S.S.R., October 21, 1950.

dogmatic reality. But since the reality itself is missing from the Lutheran Church, it cannot restore liturgy but can merely appropriate it. Thus, though the dress be present, the core remains absent.

You speak of restoring to your Church the ceremonies and rituals of the Mass. Should you not have said "appropriate" since the ceremonies and rituals of the Mass were never possessions of your Church? It seems that Luther finally repudiated the Mass and all its ritual and ceremonies very emphatically.¹¹

¹¹Letter (No. 22) to author from the Rev. Aloys H. Dirksen, C.P.P.S., November 19, 1950.

CHAPTER VI

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

The final facet to be investigated in order to comprehend realistically the Roman Catholic reaction to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement or to any non-Catholic liturgical movement is the concept of the term "sacrament."

What are sacraments? What constitutes the material of a sacrament? What determines the validity of a sacrament? What role do the sacraments play in the worship life and action of the Church of Jesus Christ? All these are questions which must be answered, not in order to establish dogmatic antitheses and syntheses, but in order that the general pattern of Roman thought might become evident to the investigator.

To the Roman mind there is a firm line of faith which unites the concept of Church with the concept of Sacrament. They regard the communion of saints as a communion of sacraments. To separate and divorce the one from the other is to present an untenable and impossible conclusion, for the sacraments are indispensable for the very existence of the Church and for the effecting of man's salvation.

The Church as instituted by Christ is essentially a "communio Sacramentorum" (for that is the connotation of the "communio sanctorum" in the Creed). She was founded in the Sacrament of the Eucharist at the Last Supper ("This is the New Covenant in my blood"); she lives and grows by sacraments. It is by means of

sacrament (fulfilling the foundation of faith) that a person becomes a member of the Mystical Body of Christ; by sacraments (which presuppose active cooperation) he partakes of the life of that Body ever more fully. Or, to speak in traditional theological terminology, sacraments are the chief instrumental causes of salvation.¹

The Church and the sacraments can not be separated.

Where the true Church is, there are the sacraments. Conversely, therefore, it may be asserted that where the sacraments are there is the Church. If the actuality of the one is dependent upon the reality of the other, then if one of the points is absent, then the other point also is absent or non-existent. This bit of verbiage is most relevant to the study of Rome's reactions to non-Catholic liturgical movements and to non-Catholic churches in general.

To place this into a concrete situation: True sacraments demand the reality of the true Church and the converse is also true. Since the Lutheran Church is not the true Church, its sacraments are not true. That its sacraments are not true (and therefore the Church not true) is evident from the fact that in spite of all ceremony, Lutheranism lacks a valid priesthood.

However, as you doubtless know, the Catholic Church after careful, historical studies has stated that the various Protestant sects have no priests or bishops. I say, this, not to hurt your feelings, but simply to be honest. This being so, it follows that certain sacraments cannot be administered. Thus you might have all the externals without the actual communica-

¹Anonymous Letter (No. 11) to author, September 27, 1951, p. 1.

tion of grace to the souls of the worshippers. "This is my body," "this is my blood" to be effective must be said by one to whom the power has been given. The true Church of Christ can alone confer this power. To her alone was it given 1900 years ago by Christ.²

In a previous chapter it was pointed out that Rome views the worth of any ceremony and rite in accordance with the reality which the rite and ceremony seeks to dress and adorn. If the ceremonies are employed to adorn unreal or invalid sacraments, then these same ceremonies are of no real value but are merely vain show and pageantry.

This, Rome asserts, must be borne in mind as you view the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, for, due to the broken line in the Lutheran priesthood from apostolic times, it is improper to speak of Lutheranism as having valid sacraments.

But ceremonies have worth and meaning only insofar as they are based on spiritual truth and divine realities. They are but show and pageantry unless they are the setting for true sacraments, instituted by Christ and performed by priests having the power committed to them by the Son of God: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." (John 20:21) That is why the Church has always placed paramount importance upon the continuity of that transmission of power. This is the crucial question of who may administer the sacraments and officiate at the liturgical functions. Unless there be an unbroken line in the priesthood from apostolic times to the present, Christ's promise to be with His Church "all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20) would be but empty words.³

Here we have the climax of Rome's thinking processes.

²Letter (No. 19) to author from Brother S. Gerald, November 23, 1950, p. 2.

³Letter (No. 3) to author from the Rev. Ernest P. Ament, December 4, 1950.

This is the final point of consideration, the question of the determining factor of a sacrament's validity. Not all the sacraments, however, depend on valid orders for their own validity.

Of the seven Sacraments which we have, the Church has always held that Baptism can be performed by laymen in case of necessity; and in the case of Matrimony too, the sacrament is effected by the man and woman who are entering the contract. With regard to the others (Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation, Extreme Unction and Orders) the Church has always required the ministration of an authorized person, i. e., a priest or bishop.⁴

Therefore, in view of this, in order to have a valid Eucharist, the central sacrament of Christian faith and action, it is necessary to have valid orders. Rome prides itself on its possession of "apostolic succession." Only in this sacerdotal procession through the centuries, united by apostolic authority, is it possible for one to confect a valid Eucharist. By and large there is no Protestant church which possesses in Rome's view this historical succession. The Eastern Rite, Rome admits, does have apostolic orders, and this, as we shall see, leads to a rather significant problem in casuistry. But as for the Lutheran Church in general, its orders are invalid and therefore so are its "orders-demanding" sacraments.

I believe of course - you will forgive me for speaking frankly - that the power to confect and to dispense the Great Sacrament of the Eucharist (which is at the

⁴Letter (No. 40) to author from the Rev. Francis J. Guentner, S.J., October 12, 1950.

same time Sacrifice) can be conferred only by the sacrament of Holy Orders, which is derived by apostolic succession from Christ Himself, by the laying on of hands. This power, it is my Catholic belief, the Lutheran Church no longer possesses; and accordingly, it is not within the power of the Lutheran Church to confer and Sacrifice-Sacrament (as, e.g., it is within the power of the Orthodox Eastern Churches, in which the apostolic succession was not interrupted). Such is the belief of Catholics.⁵

Until fairly recently Rome has merely presented this bi-categorical statement. There are Churches with valid orders (Rome, Eastern Rite, Uniat, etc.) and there are those without valid orders (all of Protestantism). However, of late there have been various instances in Protestantism, especially in Anglicanism, where Protestants have been ordained by Orthodox Bishops. Naturally such an action presents to Rome an acute problem. She recognizes the validity of Orthodox orders. She believes that Orthodox Bishops are properly consecrated and therefore can properly and validly impart apostolic orders. In accordance with her own teaching she must, therefore, accept as valid and effective, the orders of such Protestants as are ordained by Orthodox Bishops. As stated, such a situation presented a problem to the Church of Rome until an answer was found. Now Rome indeed recognizes such orders as valid, but she declares them to be dishonest and declares that one possessing such orders is in danger of losing his own soul.

⁵Anonymous, op. cit., p. 2.

You have heard, no doubt, that some of the Protestant Ministers who believe in Liturgy try to overcome this lack of ordination by presenting themselves to some Orthodox Bishop for ordination. Although we must say that in such a case his ordination would be valid and therefore his consecration of the Sacred Species in Mass also valid and effective, yet, as St. Augustine says: he is a thief and doing something to which he has no right and therefore endangering his soul to eternal punishment.⁶

But what of the Lutheran Church which, in Rome's view, has no valid orders and yet firmly believes in the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion? Rome views the sincerity and fervent devotion of Lutheranism and suggests a unique dogmatic - the "Eucharist of desire."

But it is also my personal conviction that many of you who are interested in the liturgical movement are subjectively convinced that your ministers can and do consecrate the sacrament of the Eucharist; and that you wish to receive it. And just as there can be a "baptism of desire" so also there can be something similar with regard to the Eucharist; a "Eucharist of desire" for those of good will and good faith. And God will not fail to bless such a desire. Moreover, since according to the whole of tradition, the effect of the Eucharist is "unity of the Mystical Body," such a "Eucharist of desire" will, unless we place hindrances, help to achieve that end towards which we all strive: unity in charity, as a necessary preliminary to unity in faith.⁷

The validity of ceremony depends on the validity of the sacrament it adorns. The validity of the sacrament, moreover, is dependent upon a possession of valid authority (apostolic authority). There is, therefore, a direct

⁶Letter (No. 29) to author from the Very Rev. Anthony Wortmann, M.S.G., November 13, 1950, p. 2.

⁷Anonymous, op. cit.

connection between liturgy (ceremony and rite) and valid orders. In view of Rome's stand on these points, she can, to her own way of thinking, condemn the Reformation as an "anti-liturgical heresy." The result of this "heresy" is the presence, at the most, of a Eucharist of desire in the Lutheran communion.

European Catholic commentators have long been insisting that an essential identical liturgy furnished the most hopeful medium of eventual reunion between Oriental schismatic Churches and Rome. The case is, obviously, otherwise with Christian bodies that cannot lay claim to valid priesthood and the full sacramental life. Abbot Gueranger used to characterize the Reformation by calling it an anti-liturgical heresy. Any advance therefore towards a theological acceptance of the necessity of such a priesthood and system of sacraments already represents a not inconsiderable advance towards the actual achievement of that unity for which we are all bound to work and pray. And from the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, especially if offered by us in the spirit of charity, there no doubt emanates a great magnetic power of grace for the many of good will who are not yet in the one sheepfold. Perhaps we could even speak of the non-Catholic liturgical movements as affecting a sort of baptism or rather "communion of desire." At any rate, we interpret our obligation to lie in sympathetic welcome to these kindred movements among our separated brethren - and to pray that through the instrumentality of external forms spiritual fellowship both internal and external may be ultimately achieved.⁸

Before examining the reactions proper to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, let us briefly survey this background material which has thus far been presented.

Certain a priori judgments have been maintained by the

⁸"Liturgical Briefs," Orate Fratres, XXI (June 15, 1947), 378.

Roman Church. In the first place it has been asserted that liturgy enhances in matters of worship and religious action. It has been maintained that there is a definite "natural" connection between liturgy and man because of the very character and nature of man. Especially, Rome asserts, is there a connection, an indivisible bond, uniting liturgy and dogma. Because of this bond it is impossible to have a valid liturgy without the reality of valid dogma. Luther, because of his subjective objections, threw out the sacraments, and especially the basic doctrines involved in these sacraments. Because of this, they claim, Lutheranism has not true sacraments. However, because of its faith and devotion, one may conceive of them as having a "Eucharist of desire."

These a priori judgments constitute the foundation on which Rome builds her thoughts when judging or commenting upon the Lutheran Liturgical Movement or any non-Catholic liturgical action. The resultant conclusions to these judgments remain yet to be examined.

CHAPTER VII

VIEWS UNFAVORABLE

In view of these underlying concepts which make up the general thinking pattern of the Roman Catholic Church, it is not surprising when the Lutheran liturgiologist meets with adverse criticism in regard to the general field of liturgies.

The Lutheran Church is regarded, as was mentioned in a previous chapter, as a branch which cut itself away from the true Vine. In keeping with this simile, therefore, the Lutheran Liturgical Movement is regarded as an attempt, and an "inadequate" attempt at that, to attach to the divorced branch of heresy the leaves and appearance of orthodoxy.

Your desire to worship God in a more fitting manner is indeed laudable, but the method by which you intend to bring about the fulfillment of this desire is, in my opinion, inadequate. For once a branch is broken away from the tree, we cannot make it live again by putting leaves on it to give it the appearance of being alive. So too when once a group has broken away from the True Vine, which is Christ, with Whom we, as members of His Church, are one, the group separated is no longer a part of Him, no matter how closely it resembles the other in externals.

Examine your beliefs. See if they correspond to all the beliefs of the ancient Church. Then and only then, start to restore your liturgy with a reasonable dogmatic foundation.¹

¹Letter (No. 55) to author from Friar Garry, O.F.M. Conv., Feria V post Dominicam I Adventus, 1950, p. 1.

Liturgy and dogma are inseparable. They are a unity dedicated to God which serve to proclaim to the world the truth of God. If a church lacks doctrinal security, the very foundation and strength of all rite and ceremony, how can such a church have a liturgy in the proper sense of the word? The doctrinal variances which exist in Lutheranism prove the lack of catholicity in its dogma. A lack of catholicity in dogma means a lack of catholicity in liturgy. Since it has been pointed out that the validity of the one depends on the reality of the other, and that one of the essential marks of any liturgy is its catholicity or universality, therefore, in view of all this, Lutheranism can merely strive for a liturgy but can never articulate its desire in a true liturgy.

. . . and in all sincerity, I can't see how you can hope to start anything more than a limited, local, fallible, movement without any control, infallible authority - what would you do, for instance with the German Lutherans who question the certainty of the Real Presence? . . . Such a movement can only be valid and useful if it is based on truth; and truth should be objective and therefore only one.²

Therefore, Mr. Arkin, I as a Catholic look upon the Lutheran Liturgical movement with reference to whatever dogmatic revivals it may bring about. And I do not think it will bring about any. It is of itself not a strong enough force, not powerful enough, to effect a unity within your belief or a coordination of dogma. I think that diversity of your religion

²Letter (No. 7) to author from the Rev. Terence O'Connor, O.S.M., November 28, 1950, p. 2.

will doom it to failure.³

One of the fundamental faults of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement or of any non-Catholic liturgical movement, Rome insists, is its approach. The very fact that many Lutherans and sectarians are becoming engaged in liturgical research is indicative of a genuine conscientious spirit of searching for that which is right and proper. However, to the Roman mind, this zeal is manifesting itself in an improper approach. Instead of becoming involved in ceremonial or peripheral research, it would be more profitable to such intellectually curious if they would rather begin by honestly re-studying their dogmas and those of the Roman Church. In doing this with sincerity of intent the inevitable result will be the effecting of a dogmatic substance around which a liturgical sheath can be validly constructed. Naturally such a dogmatic foundation would be the return to "the fold of Peter" of all those who broke away, a return to the authority of the Vicar of Christ.

Personally your efforts seem vain and worthless to me. If you are honestly looking for the truth, you are going about it in the wrong way. It would be better to get the facts, another - pray for the grace of faith.⁴

While I realize that something of as little signifi-

³Letter (No. 14) to author from Friar Knute Pulcher, O.F.M. Conv., December 8, 1950.

⁴Letter (No. 30) to author from the Rev. Edward M. Gallagher, November 13, 1950, p. 1.

cance, religiously speaking, as the writings of Sir Walter Scott can arouse an interest momentous enough to result in the Oxford Movement, I nevertheless feel that your approach is misdirected. No matter how many accidents you have, and no matter how important they are, you cannot with these alone ever constitute a substance. Whereas, if you establish your substance first, some accidents will necessarily ensue, and you can add as many as will serve your purpose. Unless you do this, no matter what the result of your experiment will be, it must of necessity always be ersatz.⁵

Unless this approach is taken, therefore, of striving to restore the reality of dogma and then to restore ritual and ceremony, all is rather purposeless. Dogma, Rome declares, must first be restored. To insist that one has the Mass is to insist on what is confessionally impossible. To have the Mass is to have transubstantiation. Yet this very fundamental requirement is virtually impossible, not because of divine teaching or prescription, but because a mere man, Martin Luther, on the basis of fallible human reason, discarded this basic dogma. Because it is built on the sand of uncertainty, therefore, the Lutheran Liturgical Movement is doomed to failure. Any success which it might have would be purely accidental, incidental, and apparent. Its success cannot be real because reality itself is discarded. It may increase the devotion of its adherents to its own false doctrines, but such can not be called true success.

If it be permitted to me to make one observation, I must confess that I am quite puzzled by the anomaly of

⁵Letter (No. 9) to author from the Rev. Albert A. Ruetz, G.R., November 26, 1950, p. 2.

an endeavor to restore to your Church the ceremonies and rituals of the Mass without the Mass.⁶

I cannot see anything but failure in the long run, although one could count on the stimulation of devotion as an incidental and partial success.⁷

It comes down to this: Liturgical ceremonies are meaningless unless we accept the teaching of Christ in its entirety. We feel, that, despite your best intentions, your efforts will forever be lacking in what is undoubtedly essential. Not that you are in any way at fault; but because a mere man stole something from you about 400 years ago.⁸

⁶Letter (No. 44) to author from the Rev. J. B. Walker, O.P., October 20, 1950.

⁷Letter (No. 24) to author from the Rev. Robert F. McNamara, November 17, 1950, p. 2.

⁸Letter (No. 2) to author from the Rev. Venance Zink, O.F.M., January 19, 1951, p. 2.

CHAPTER VIII

POSITIVE REFLECTIONS

It neither surprises nor startles the Lutheran liturgiologist that Rome presents some adverse criticism as she views the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. In view of the various a priori considerations which form the foundation for Roman thought, it would be more startling and surprising if there were a complete absence of opposing thought. However, "in omnibus veritas." To say that Rome can find no merit at all in the Lutheran Liturgical Movement would be to do an injustice to Rome. In spite of her traditional legalistic dogmatism, one must not, in all honesty, ascribe to her only an attitude of sheer negativism. In her reflections on the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, she at times fosters a relatively positive opinion. Such an opinion, however, never takes on the character of absolute positivism. That this is so is rather obvious and cannot, naturally, be conceived of as otherwise. Rome's positivism must be interpreted as relative to, or in the light of, her a priori judgments.

Therefore, the positive reflections of Rome shall be viewed under three separate categories: general positivism, "temporal" positivism, and relative or narrow positivism. Under these three categories it can be made rather evident

the exact nature of Rome's "pro" thinking.

The general positive reflections of Rome to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement take on the nature of several a posteriori conclusions which must not be read into to the extent that they are made to say more than they intend to say. That this is so will clearly be seen when we discuss the relative or narrow positivism of Rome.

The first general reflection is one which exhibits a note of understanding. There is a common link, Rome asserts, between herself and Lutheranism, and that is a liturgy similar in many ways and alike in many respects. Such a common thread of antiquity effects a type of brotherhood or kinship. Also, it effects favorable reactions and the hope on Rome's part that the Lutheran Liturgical Movement will serve its people to the fulfillment of its proper intent.

I am wholly in favor of your endeavors to restore to your Church the ceremonies and rituals of the Mass and lead your people to live the liturgical life.

Indeed, we have much in common, as far as the external pomp and ceremonies of the Mass are concerned.

I pray earnestly that the good Lord compensate your zeal amply and grant you the attainment of your noble aim.¹

I can assure you I am in deep sympathy with your hope and efforts towards a liturgical rejuvenation within the body of your Church . . . I feel a deep kinship

¹Letter (No. 53) to author from the Rev. Mother Vitalina, C.S.J.B., October 2, 1950, p. 1.

to you in your own efforts and in your work.²

This "kinship," so to speak, exists because of the very nature of liturgics, namely, their catholicity or universality. However, though this kinship exists, an awareness of it can only be brought about through a study of the liturgy. Therefore, Rome asserts, since this kinship does exist, and since an awareness of it is good, therefore the study of the liturgy wherein this awareness is effected is also good. This, in part, answers the "cui bono" of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. However there lies in any liturgical movement a much larger and far reaching "why," and that is the praise and worship of God.

My own thoughts turned to Pope Pius XII's encyclical "Mediator Dei."

What could be more commendable than your study (of the liturgy)? "Assuredly it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the sacred Liturgy." For the Liturgy is the complexus of public worship given to God. The duty of giving public worship "is incumbent, first of all, on men as individuals. But it also binds the whole community of human beings, grouped together by mutual social ties: mankind, too, depends on the sovereign authority of God." Even apart from reasoned obligation to give such worship the heart demands that man praise God and worship him with his fellow-men. "Every impulse of the human heart besides, expresses itself naturally through the senses; and the worship of God, being the concern not merely of individuals but of the whole community of mankind, must therefore be social as well."³

²Letter (No. 41) to author from the Rev. Wilfrid Tunink, O.S.B., September 29, 1950.

³Letter (No. 24) to author from the Rev. Robert F. McNamara, November 17, 1950, p. 1.

The liturgy effects a kinship between liturgiologists and believers as a whole. But what is more, it effects a closer unity between God and man. In view of this Rome declares admiration for any liturgical movement which purposes to bring man closer to his God. In the chapter dealing with the problem of liturgics and man, it was pointed out that because of the very nature of man, a creature of body, soul, and spirit, liturgy serves to bring home, to make more palatable and digestible, the dogmatic truths of the Church. Therefore, Rome rejoices in every effort, every attempt to make this possible. Again let it be pointed out that such a reflection falls into the category of "general" positivism. Because of such favorable reactions one must not thereby deduce any dogmatic conclusions as to the "relative" positive reactions of Rome. This will be made clear when these "relative reactions are discussed." But in this general sphere which we are now discussing there are very definite positive reactions.

Let me begin by saying that the Catholic priest has nothing but admiration for anything so noble and worthy as interest in the liturgy. The Priest, who is engaged in bringing men to God, rejoices in every effort aimed in that direction.

In our Church, the Holy Fathers have repeatedly enjoined a renewal of the liturgical spirit. Cf: the "Motu Proprio" of Pius X (1903), the "Divini Cultus Sanctitatem" of Pius XI (1928) and the "Mediator Dei" of Pius XII (1947).

To quote from the "Motu Proprio" referred to:

"Filled as we are with a most ardent desire to see the

true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, we deem it necessary to provide before aught else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church."

In his Encyclical letter on the Kingship of Christ (1925), Pius XI pointed out that people are instructed in the truths of faith, and brought to appreciate the inner joys of religion far more effectually by the annual celebration of our sacred mysteries than by any pronouncement, however weighty, of the teaching of the Church . . . The Church's teaching affects the mind primarily; her feasts affect both mind and heart, and have a salutary effect upon the whole of man's nature.⁴

Rome makes another general reflection. The Lutheran Liturgical Movement is to be commended since it has come to the realization that the Mass is the heart and center of corporate Christian worship. She commends the Lutheran Liturgical Movement for its "spiritual wisdom." All liturgy, in the historical sense, has evolved itself from an attempt by man to beautify this sacrament. Without this core all liturgy, all rite and ceremony, would be fruitless and purposeless. In general, therefore, Rome nods its head in approval at the sacramental awakening in the Lutheran Liturgical Movement.

Surely you are to be commended for your spiritual wisdom . . . The Mass which wondrously makes Christ really present, Body, Soul and Divinity . . . under the appearance of bread and wine, is the very center

⁴Letter (No. 2) to author from the Rev. Venance Zink, O.F.M., January 19, 1951, p. 1.

and heart of our devotion and worship . . . Ritual and ceremony revolving around the Mass and the Sacraments are beautifully designed to give external expression to inward realities of grace which they contain and give.⁵

This spirit of kinship which Rome in her general reflections seems to feel is not too surprising to the Lutheran liturgiologist when he takes into consideration the fact that Rome herself is, at present, in the midst of a tremendous liturgical revival, an attempt on her part to make the Liturgy understandable to her people, so that they too might partake of the joy of the liturgical life.

Therefore, in viewing a somewhat parallel action in the Lutheran Church, she can but applaud such an action and hope that it will achieve its purpose. She can hope that such a movement will help lead Lutherans to "practice their faith." She, in her own way, is trying to do the same thing, namely lead the laity, the mystical body of Christ to a closer devotion to Christ. If such a Lutheran Liturgical Movement should prove to be a "means of grace" for its people, then what more can Rome say than what in her general reflections she does say, "It has served a wonderful purpose."

When your liturgical revival was first brought to general attention in the pages of "Una Sancta" a few years ago, more than one Catholic rejoiced to find that outside the Catholic Church there is a movement closely parallel to one taking place even now within Catholicism, to make the average Catholic realize more vividly the priceless heritage he has in the Church's

⁵Letter (No. 10) to author from the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Henry E. Donnelly, November 27, 1950.

liturgy.

My first reaction, and I think the typically Catholic outlook, is to applaud and encourage whatever helps sincere Lutheran people to practice their faith, to live as they believe God wants them to live. External common worship is part of our debt to God as social beings. If a liturgy helps your people to fulfill this obligation, I congratulate those who work for its revival.⁶

If the revival of the Liturgy in your Church will be a means of grace for its people, it has served a wonderful purpose.⁷

Rome compliments the Lutheran Liturgical Movement for more than its commendable effects on man. Liturgy is a means whereby God is glorified and the Lord of the Church is magnified. It is good that man be drawn closer to God. It is fine that the dogmas of the Church be made more understandable to the layman. It is commendable that the unity of man and God be made strong and secure. But liturgy is to be commended in the final analysis in this that God is glorified. In leading man to God He is glorified. In making His teachings understandable by the visual aid of liturgies He is glorified. Because of this, because homage is therein paid to God and to Him alone the Lutheran Liturgical Movement is to be complimented.

Your zeal is to be complimented. Thus you are doubtless advancing the great cause of God's honor and glory, as well as that of His divine Son, our Lord

⁶Letter (No. 32) to author from Frater Joseph Connors, S.V.D., November 12, 1950.

⁷Letter (No. 12) to author from Friar Warren Sullivan, O.F.M. Conv., December 8, 1950.

Jesus Christ. Truly the liturgy is a beautiful manner of teaching the sublime truths of faith . . . Your attempt to realize these aims will certainly bring down upon you God's blessings and entitle you to our Lord's promise, "If any man serve me, my Father will glorify him." Also "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the one true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."⁸

The spirit of kinship pervades the general reflections of the Roman Church on the Lutheran Liturgical Movement. We have much in common because of our similar rites and ceremonies. This is asserted by Rome. We have much in common because we have a sacramental heart in our philosophy of corporate worship. We have much in common because we are men and the very nature of man demands a liturgical form of worship. We have much in common because we have realized the place of liturgies in the concepts of man and liturgies, man and God, and of God Himself.

This spirit of kinship through the medium of the liturgy is finally asserted by Rome's desire that we all be one, united in Him, on the last day.

I want, then, to let you know, Irvin, that I sincerely wish the best of success to you in your undertaking. I will pray for you daily that our Lord may draw you closer to Himself now, in order that you may some day enter into eternal bliss with Him. May our daily motto be "Quid est hoc ad aeternitatem?"⁹

The second category of positive reflections presented

⁸Letter (No. 19) to author from Brother S. Gerald, November 23, 1950, p. 1.

⁹Letter (No. 15) to author from the Rev. Sem. Berard Riegert, December 7, 1950.

by the Roman Catholic Church on the Lutheran Liturgical Movement falls into the category of "temporal" positivism. In presenting her positive reactions to this movement, Rome has asserted her applause and commendation for the movement especially in view of the present times in which the Church finds itself. Because of their nature, therefore, they here are presented under the title of "temporal" positive reactions, or reactions based on the present times and situations of the world.

For the first time in centuries, the Church has been faced with the thread of dire and severe persecutions. The world is in a chaotic state and lives under the threat of war and destruction.

Especially in these times, therefore, there is a need for a strengthening of faith and of spirit in the Christian truths. This can most effectively be accomplished via the liturgy. In view of this one finds a definite positive reaction on the part of Rome.

The joy is the very one felt by John the Baptist who according to the Gospel of St. John said: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy, because of the bridegroom's voice." This is my joy.

The vision is that of the very close contact with the Heart of Jesus given to all those complying with the liturgical way of living:

The hope flowing from my joy and my vision aims at the real and concrete restoration of Christian life we all so badly need in these times of proofs and trials. Somebody already said, "Liturgy is the first spring of

Christian life and spirit.¹⁰

But along with the secular evils which try the faith of the Church, there are also the evils which creep into the Church and try to rob it of its very heart and soul. In keeping with the general concept of "temporal" positivism, therefore, Rome expresses its delight in the Lutheran Liturgical Movement as a bulwark against the two evils of pietism and excessive individualism, both of which had their harmful effects on the Church in the eighteenth century.

I first became aware of the Movement (Lutheran Liturgical Movement) in 1946; and the news of it came to me as a thing of great joy. Worship, after all is at the very heart of life; and any effort to restore worship to its fulness, saving it from the modern inroads of pietism and excessive individualism, ought to be met with warm applause. So keep up the good work.¹¹

A liturgical Church, because of the very nature and essence of liturgy, presents itself as a defender against the twin forces of pietism and excessive individualism. But what is more, and of greater concern to both Rome and Wittenberg, it presents a rather strong force to combat the inroads of Calvinism with its iconoclastic intent. Rome admits the liturgy of Luther as being of a positive liturgical nature and content, but frowns on the result of the Reformed

¹⁰Letter (No. 27) to author from the Rev. Adrien M. Malo, O.F.M., Feria III infra Dom. 24. post Pentecost, 1950.

¹¹Letter (No. 31) to author from Fra William, O.C.D., November 13, 1950.

influence on liturgical thinking in the world. That the Lutheran Church, nominally a Protestant Church, should strive to restore liturgical worship presents to Rome a heartwarming sight.

In its psychological, or subjective effects on the Christian life, I believe that the liturgical movement will have most profound effects both within the Lutheran Church and outside of it. Always provided, of course, that it be carefully kept from degenerating into mere Ritualism - ceremonies, lights and incense for their own sake.

I think you will agree that Evangelical Protestantism in its search for a "pure" religion tended to minimize the legitimate role of the body and its faculties in worship. It took an unrealistic view of men, and tried to make him act as a disembodied spirit in his religious life. This was especially true of Calvinism. And although Luther himself prescribed a liturgy which bore great external resemblance to the Roman Catholic, in the course of time, and through various influences, a more Puritan spirit crept in which frowned upon such things as relics of "Popery!" Therefore it is heartening to know that a movement is on foot to restore to Lutherans a deeper supernatural life. It is fitting, is it not, that our senses, which so often lead us away from God be given the opportunity of leading us back to Him?¹²

Pietism, individualism, and iconoclastic Calvinism have deprived man of an essential part of his worship life, the liturgical or ritualistic part. This Rome asserts is most necessary in view of man's very nature. And now in these times of trial and distress, when the need for a closer union of man and God, when the need is present for a firmer, surer faith in God, Rome rejoices that Lutheranism is

¹²Letter (No. 47) to author from Confrater Edmund Hanlon, C.P., October 19, 1950, p. 1.

striving to restore to man what is rightfully his. Man needs today a deep spiritual life and Rome feels that one of the best ways of imparting that life is through the maintenance of the liturgical life and way of worship.

It was most gratifying for us here to learn of your efforts to revive Liturgical practice in your Church. We are all aware of the world wide need of spiritual life and we feel that Liturgy is a great help in the maintenance and development of this spirit.

We hope and wish that your endeavors meet with the cooperation of your people and the approval and help of your leaders.¹³

If the good Lord said that not even a cup of cold water given in His name would lose its reward, how much more will He be pleased with those who try to make prayer to Him more sacred and beautiful.¹⁴

The third category of Rome's positive reactions to the Lutheran Liturgical Movement we have classed under the general heading of "relative or narrow positivism." It is positive in the sense that it encourages further progress in the liturgical field. It is positive in that it rejoices in the work which has been done by the Lutheran liturgiologist. However, its positivism is relative in the sense that it is stated in the light of the formerly stated a priori judgments. In brief they are stated in the light of the requirement, in Rome's view, for a valid liturgy, a

¹³Letter (No. 37) to author from the Rev. Ph. Cornellier, O.M.I., October 7, 1950.

¹⁴Letter (No. 54) to author from the Rev. Benj. F. Bowling, C.S.P., September 27, 1950.

valid sacrament, a valid authority.

She maintains that she applauds any liturgical research on the part of the Lutherans. She does not begrudge the Lutheran liturgiologist the joy of studying the liturgy. After all it is her liturgy that he is studying for she is its rightful owner. Furthermore she firmly believes that such a study will result in the inevitable result of, not only a return to the traditional liturgy of Rome, but of a return to the traditional theology of Rome.

Now, what does the Roman Catholic Church think of the Lutheran Liturgical revival? I would say, speaking for myself, as a theological student that she applauds any such honest endeavour by anyone outside of the fold. She fears nothing; has nothing to lose; has hopes of gain; and knows that those who seek, will find.¹⁵

Thus, without in any way ascribing their own favored position of the divinely-guaranteed possession of Christ's revelation to any merits of their own, Catholics cannot but rejoice to see non-Catholic Christians possessing a fuller share of that Life and Light Christ came on earth to impart.¹⁶

That the Lutheran Liturgical Movement can and will effect for its adherents a "sacramental" and devotional life (Eucharist of desire), the Roman Catholic Church is only too willing to admit. The possibility of its leading men to eternal life with the Son of God she is also willing

¹⁵Letter (No. 16) to author from Friar Athanasius Zak, O.F.M. Conv., December 8, 1950, p. 2.

¹⁶Letter (No. 45) to author from the Rev. Gerald Ellard, S.J., September 26, 1950.

to admit.

However, truth cannot stand with error, and, on the basis of her a priori judgments, she stated that only can one have a truly valid liturgy if one is firmly built on the rock of Peter, with the authority of the Church of Rome, with her theology as the core for the liturgy.

Lutheranism may be sincere, and if so then her sincerity shall be rewarded. But one cannot expect to live the full liturgical life in the true sense of the word when one is completely divorced from the life-spring of that life, the Roman See.

First of all, a general principle: As Jesuits we are men dedicated by vows of religion to seek the greater glory of God. As a consequence we are quite prepared to rejoice and to be edified whenever and wherever we see God being served and loved, even though we cannot condone the expressly non-Catholic beliefs that may prompt such love and service. If our eye be simple, therefore, as it should be - looking really and truly only to God's greater glory - it will hardly please us less when a Lutheran loves God with his whole heart and his whole soul and his whole mind than when a Catholic does so. At the same time we maintain the principle that error cannot take its stand beside truth and hope to be considered, by thinking men, the equal of truth. A pious and sincere Lutheran will certainly be more likely to reach Heaven than a poor Catholic; despite this, it is our belief, as you know, that Lutheranism is error still.

The general reflection that comes to mind is that the movement is a wholesome and encouraging one. It is a good thing, a step decidedly in the right direction. Liturgy, really liturgy, is, in the final analysis exterior and interior worship of God: it is an integration of sacramental and devotional life and as such is the form of worship most perfectly suited to our human nature, composed as it is, of body and soul. More than this, an integral liturgy is the answer to the modern need of corporate, communal worship - a

fact often stressed by Pope Pius XI. Thus, on one occasion, he spoke as follows: "In our day there is need of social, or communal, praying, to be voiced under the guidance of pastors in enacting the solemn functions of the liturgy. Such an alternation of prayers will be of the greatest assistance in banishing the evils which disturb the minds of the faithful of our age."¹⁷

¹⁷Letter (No. 34) to author from the Rev. Ernest Tyler, S.J., November 3, 1950, p. 1.

CHAPTER IX

RETURN HOME

Whether the Roman Catholic extends a pro or a con opinion of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, one finds that the ultimate reaction and ultimate hope of the Roman Catholic Church is the hope and desire of union, of an end to the schism between East and West and the healing of the wounds caused by the "heretic" Luther. That this should be the final and ultimate desire of Rome is completely in accord with the various a priori judgments which she presents as the foundation for the judging and examining of any non-Catholic liturgical movement. However, in expressing this desire, the Lutheran liturgiologist discovers that Rome presents them in a three-fold manner. The first is the simple expression of the desire of union "that all may be one." In this view she frankly confesses her share of guilt in the split which now divides the Body of Christ. However, in the light of her other proclamations on the same subject, one comes to the realization that, in Rome's view, there is only one cure for the split and that is a return to Rome.

ORATE FRATRES has from its beginnings had a number of non-Catholic subscribers, chiefly Anglican clergymen; in recent years, Lutheran ministers have also begun to show an increasing interest. We are happy that they find O.F. worthwhile and that we can be of help to them in acquiring a better understanding of the sacramental life of the Church. We are convinced that the majority of them are not mere "ritualists;" that they sincerely

accept the traditional Christian principle of sacraments as effective signs of divine grace. Whether their belief is consonant with the realities of their own Church or the tenets of their founder is another matter. But inasmuch as they approach the Catholic doctrine and desire the Catholic practice of sacrificial and sacramental worship, we feel we have the Christian obligation of assisting them to the utmost of our ability, and in the spirit of fraternal charity to unite with them in prayer for a healing of the scandalous wounds of division. We Catholics share the guilt of that division; and we believe that a united spirit of worship, which means a humble effort to recognize and to put on the mind and will of God, must rank first among the means to ultimate reunion.¹

Unity is hoped for both by the Romans and by the Orthodox Christians. That there is a split in the Church of Jesus Christ is a picture of which neither is too well proud. The basis of unity must be doctrinal and yet the means of procuring that doctrinal unity may, in their point of view, very well be liturgical, for a common liturgical heritage and system of worship is a strong ecumenical factor.

Your efforts for the revival of the sacred Liturgy in the Lutheran Church are more praiseworthy and, I am sure, pleasing to God. We, all of us, should labor for the Ecumenic Unity of all the Churches and the sacred Liturgy is the only proper and best suited ground on which we all can most profitably promote it.²

Rome recognizes the need for unity. And, furthermore, she realizes the basic cause for disunity as being vain foolish pride. However, rather than seeing the error of her

¹"Liturgical Briefs," Orate Fratres, XX (October 6, 1946), 524.

²Letter (No. 46B) to author from the Rev. Chrysostom Tarasevitch, O.S.B., November 3, 1950, p. 1.

own ways and the false contents of her own dogmatic system, she, in looking at the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, proclaims that if pride could be overcome (and she means Lutheran pride) then unity could be accomplished.

Christ's gift of Himself is perfect. Ours is spoilt through pride, selfishness and want of charity. Because of this, there lacks that Unity for which our Divine Shepherd prayed on the eve of His Sacred Passion. "That they may be one in us, Father, as Thou and I are one." A clearer understanding of the Liturgy will no doubt bring about some day that Unity imposed upon us by the fact of a public revelation.³

The first school of thought on the union question presents both the need and the "cure" for the disruption of the Christian Church as a visible organization.

Rome, furthermore, looks upon the Lutheran Liturgical Movement as a step, a progressive movement in the right direction and that direction is Rome. In the desire of the Lutheran liturgiologist to restore to his Church the sacramental core of worship and religious action and life she sees the initial step "homeward."

I find it (the Lutheran Liturgical Movement) something to rejoice in, because I believe it will lead Lutherans closer to Christ and to Christ's Vicar, Peter. I believe that it will necessitate going over your dogmatic position once more, in the light of Christian tradition.⁴

It is therefore with no little joy that we look upon your zealous efforts to restore the rituals and cere-

³Letter (No. 49) to author from the Rev. Paul L. Gallens, S.J., September 29, 1950.

⁴Letter (No. 47) to author from Confrater Edmund Hanlon, C.P., October 19, 1950, p. 2.

monies of the Mass and to lead your people into the Sacramental life. Indeed, we think your effort is the first step toward returning to the union with the traditions of the past twenty centuries. And we ardently hope that your persevering efforts will lead you and your devoted people to embrace in their absolute entirety the sacred rites and doctrine Luther rejected: so that you may help towards realizing our divine Savior's prayer "so that there may be one flock and one Shepherd."⁵

I feel sure that my brethren of the priesthood would voice these same sentiments, and also add the hope that this Revival is a real step on the homeward journey of the Lutheran Church of the Mother Church of Christendom from which you separated some 400 years ago.⁶

Rome looks upon the Lutheran Liturgical Movement as a step toward Rome. But why? Look again at the various a priori judgments of Rome. Liturgy, it has been stated by Rome, enhances the worship of the Triune God. Liturgy satisfied the need of man who is made up of body and soul and spirit. Liturgy is a covering for pure doctrine. Without this pure doctrine and authority there can be no true liturgy. In the desire of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement for a liturgical sacramental way of life, they must ultimately realize that only by returning to Rome can this goal be accomplished. Therefore, in the apparent striving of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement Rome concludes that the long awaited and long hoped for return has begun.

⁵Letter (No. 43) to author from the Rev. John Molnar, C.S.S.R., October 21, 1950.

⁶Letter (No. 26) to author from the Rev. G. J. Callan, O.P., November 15, 1950.

Such an interest might draw you closer to the Mother Church from which Martin Luther broke in the sixteenth century.

I hope and pray that some day our Lutheran brethren, for whose beliefs I have the greatest respect, may re-join the Catholic Church exchanging the shadow for the substance and helping to realize our Savior's prayer, "ut omnes unum sint."⁷

The Church naturally hopes that this interest (in liturgics) will grow and grow until it ultimately brings you into the fold.⁸

However, until this return back to Rome has been accomplished, Rome shall continue to maintain that there shall always be something lacking in Lutheranism and that the Lutheran clergy shall continue to deprive their people of their rightful inheritance of the true doctrine of Christ and the grace infusing sacraments.

From the above thoughts, you may gather that in the liturgical movement you speak of in your letter, there is, in our opinion, bound to be something wanting. Believing as we do, we cannot think otherwise. And we pray God, as we always have since the Reformation, to restore to sincere and devout people of your Church . . . their rightful inheritance of the full revelation of God, together with the riches of His divine help in the Sacramental life of the Church.⁹

If the Lutheran Liturgical Movement, Rome declares, truly wants to return to the sacramental way of life, cen-

⁷Letter (No. 28) to author from the Rt. Rev. Henry M. Hald, November 16, 1950.

⁸Letter (No. 36) to author from the Very Rev. Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., October 7, 1950.

⁹Letter (No. 51) to author from the Rev. C. M. Reinert, S.J., October 3, 1950.

tered around the Eucharist, then the Lutheran Liturgical Movement must make sure that this Eucharist is the true "sacrifice" of the Mass conected by a validly ordained clergy. (And since no man can be ordained validly in the Lutheran Church, there is only one alternative, according to Rome, and that is the return "home.")

Make certain that your liturgical Revival is modeled on the sacrifice which Christ offered at the Last Supper. Be even more certain that you belong to the body of men who have continued in an unbroken manner the line of priestly power down to our year of 1950.¹⁰

May almighty God direct your efforts and guide your steps towards the undivided Church over which the successor of St. Peter rules . . . "Ut sint unum."¹¹

What is Rome's view of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement?

That is a question which we have tried to answer. To fully understand her reaction and reflections, we have stated the various a priori judgments which must be taken into consideration for they make up the foundation of thinking of the Roman Catholic Church. Basically her view is this: the Lutheran Liturgical Movement can do no more than increase the devotion of its people to its own peculiar set of doctrines. It cannot accomplish in the true sense of the word a sacramental way of life nor a liturgical way of living.

¹⁰Letter (No. 17) to author from Friar Hilary Wasilewski, December 7, 1950, p. 3.

¹¹Letter (No. 39) to author from the Rev. Edwin Favier, October 11, 1950.

The Lutheran Liturgical Movement is faced, according to Rome, with two equally distasteful eventualities. Either it will result in sheer formalism (since pure content, she maintains, is impossible), or else it will result in a return to "Mother Rome." This is the final hope of the Roman Church as she examines the Lutheran Liturgical Movement.

Accordingly, I would think that the Lutheran Liturgical Revival with which you are so earnestly taken up can lead eventually to either of two goals: 1) a mere formalism, a congeries of symbols without the reality, like a flag without a country; or 2) a reunion of the individuals concerned with the Church which has retained the Reality, the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, wherein lies the center and "meat" of the whole liturgical system. For sincere inquirers like yourself, it seems to me, that in the Providence of God, the second alternative is to be the final result.¹²

With this Sympathy (for the Lutheran Liturgical Movement) there is also a sincere desire, a deep yearning, which the Church teaches us to express each time we offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the first of the three prayers before Communion:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst say to Thine apostles: Peace I leave you, My peace I give to you: look not upon my sins but upon the faith of Thy Church; and vouchsafe to grant her peace and unity according to Thy Will: Who livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen."

So shall I pray daily that your liturgical movement may continue until its only true and complete terminus in the full Body-unity of the Mystical Christ.¹³

¹²Letter (No. 25) to author from the Rev. Bede Ernsdorff, O.S.B., November 13, 1950.

¹³Letter (No. 35) to author from the Rev. Owen Bennett, O.F.M. Conv., Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, 1950, p. 1.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rome looks and beholds. She examines in detail and finally she concludes. She sees the Lutheran liturgiologist handling things which she views as her own personal private property. Ritual, ceremony, vestments, terminology, all fall under the discerning eye of the Lutheran Liturgical Movement and under the critical eye of Rome.

Rome has presented a series of a priori judgments on which must be based all liturgical thinking and action. The Lutheran liturgiologist agrees with many of these judgments as such and disagrees with merely a few of their extensions.

Liturgy, Rome declares, is merely the outward sign of an inner reality. With this the Lutheran liturgiologist can completely concur. For the Church of the Augsburg Confession, in its approach to liturgies, has always stressed their value as a teaching aid, an approach which presupposes the presence of a doctrinal core.

But here Rome poses the crucial question. She sees the Lutheran Liturgical Movement but fails to comprehend it. It is illogical, she maintains, to continue on the path you are now following. If liturgies have a purpose and also a need, and if that need is doctrinal truth and purity, then

what will keep you from returning to Rome, the source and dispenser of all truth and wisdom.

On this the Lutheran liturgiologist must take a firm stand and voice his objection.

This may also serve as an answer to the question . . . "Where are they going to stop and what is to constitute the brakes which will make them stop just outside the gates of Rome?" If by Rome is meant the Western Church prior to the unhappy divisions of the sixteenth century, the answer is that we have not stopped. We are bound by the Augsburg Confessions, which summarizes, in Article XXI: "Haec fere summa est doctrina apud nos, in qua cerni potest nihil inesse quod discrepet a Scripturis vel ab ecclesia catholica vel ab ecclesia Romana, quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est." If by Rome is meant the modern Roman Catholic Church, the answer to where we are going to stop is "Where we stand," and the answer to what constitutes the brakes which will make us stop outside the gates of Rome is the Council of Trent and the later Vatican Councils.¹

Why this position? Rome wants the Lutheran liturgiologist to return to her. Yet the Lutheran liturgiologist must make a like request. He must ask and pray that Rome return to the true teaching of Christ and cast off her anthropocentric heresy of justification by faith and works, of salvation by the personal merit of man via gratia infusa.

Liturgy, it is true, needs doctrinal truth for survival; however, that doctrinal purity can never exist in the Roman See as long as she holds to her false teachings.

Liturgy expresses truth, and truth is that truth which rests in the hope which is in Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself

¹Letter to H. A. R. from the Rev. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, October 29, 1946, p. 1.

for us that He might redeem us from our sins. Justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law is, and ever must remain, the core of every liturgical action. It is this which determines a rite's validity and true reality.

On this the Lutheran Church must stand. On this the Lutheran liturgiologist must base all his liturgical thinking. For on this, and only on this, can one build truth. Rome in her a priori judgments on liturgics has voiced the opinion that any ritual system, unless it is based on truth, is null, void, vain, and worthless. In this very precept she has condemned herself and her entire liturgical set-up.

Rome views the Lutheran Liturgical Movement and must, of necessity, condemn it, for she has a false conception of the core of liturgics. To her the core is the vast web and mesh of work-righteousness which comprises her theological system. If Rome condemns the Lutheran Liturgical Movement because it is based on justification by faith alone, then the Lutheran liturgiologist must welcome this condemnation, for then he is being condemned for believing what is right and true and not for what is false and displeasing to God.

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