

NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS:
TO US ALSO, THOUGH SINNERS



ANGELO RIODIQUE



Juan Carreño de Miranda, *Mass of St John of Matha*, c. mid-1600's.

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Philippe de Champaigne, *The Good Shepherd*, c. 1650-1660.

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Short-form presentation, given August 28, 2025

Traditions are one of the ways we not only hold onto the past, but also continually live out the way our ancestors lived. For us as Catholics, Tradition, Scripture, and Magisterium are the ways we are secured in our practice of Catholicism.

However, Catholics, especially in the 21st Century, have mistaken traditions for being the faith, rather than an encounter with the Risen Lord. To address the faith of the Church regarding the rituals practiced by the faithful, the CDF (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), in conjunction with his holiness, the late Pope Francis, released what is known as *Traditiones Custodes*. While this presentation will not go over the contents and the effects of the document, this document addresses the division in the church brought about by a specific desire for the practice of certain liturgical practices.

The purpose of this presentation is to address the liturgy as such and why a proper understanding of the Liturgy can avoid divisions in the church. In this presentation, we will be looking over,

- (1) Ratzinger and Spirit of the Liturgy
- (2) The division in the Church, as an image for the cultural shifts in our church
- (3) *Gaudium et Spes* and the giving of self
- (4) The Eschaton and the *Reditus*
- (5) Kneeling and Walking with the Lord
- (6) the Ascension of Christ as the charge to baptize all nations

For us to start with the divisions in the church, we ought to first look at Liturgical Theology as a whole, and see what the Liturgy is in its fullest sense.

Pope Benedict XVI, formerly known as Joseph Ratzinger, wrote his work *The Spirit of the Liturgy* as “an aid to the understanding of the faith and to the right

way to give the faith its central form of expression in the Liturgy.”¹ The aim of Spirit of the Liturgy for this presentation will be the same goal that Ratzinger had. The liturgy requires: a relationship with the other, as Ratzinger says, which is Christ the Good Shepherd. Christ, in his role as shepherd, brings us into the fold of his flock through our encounter with him in the Liturgy. But how do we explain, or even come to know and have a relationship with God in the Liturgy?

This relationship with God that we achieve through the Liturgy goes as far back as the covenant between Adam and Eve. However, the covenant with Moses is the starting basis for the Theology of Liturgy. In Exodus 12, we read about the instructions for the night known as Passover, and how the angel of death would pass over the houses marked with the blood of the sacrificed lamb. After the Passover, their travel to the promised land is marked by God’s meeting with Moses for proper worship. This is the starting place for Liturgical Theology, as it outlines the way that the tent of meeting was to be constructed. Ratzinger says, “This means that the earthly Temple is only a replica, not the true Temple. It is an image and likeness, which points beyond itself.”² This not only points to the typology of the tent of meeting, but characterizes the eschaton, which we will discuss later. This typology is later made with the construction of magnificent Gothic Cathedrals, Baroque art, and sacred music.

Something that we can also look at is the question regarding God’s eternity and how we are brought before his presence at Mass. Aquinas answers this question regarding God’s eternity, saying, “Hence, as God is supremely immutable, it supremely belongs to Him to be eternal. Nor is He eternal only, but He is His eternity.”³ What we are left with is figuring out how we participate in the liturgy given his Eternity. What Ratzinger points out, are the terms:

¹ Ratzinger, Joseph, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 4.

² Ibid., 24. See further, his above citation of Acts 7:44, and Exodus 23:40 on the same page.

³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-I, Q. 10, Art. 2. co.

- (1) Shadow
- (2) Image
- (3) Reality

These terms are ways in which Theologians have developed the process by which God acts in salvation history and how we meet with God at every liturgy. Essentially, shadow is represented by the Old Testament, and the Image of the New Testament. Reality is something we will look at later in this presentation, but reality represents the Eschaton. The eschaton refers to the End of Times, where the Church teaches the fruition of the new heaven and the new earth, which is found in John's Book of Revelation.

Ratzinger further elaborates on the meaning of the Shadow by saying, "that is why in the prayers of the Roman Canon, we unite ourselves with the great men who offered sacrifice at the dawn of history: Abel, Melchizedek, and Abraham. They set their hearts towards Christ who was to come."⁴ Even outside of the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer 1), we find that the Church expresses how the Old Testament figures looked to Christ in his perfect sacrifice in the various Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Missal. Mar Ephrem, a Father of the Syriac Tradition beautifully writes in his hymn for Sunday Morning Prayer, saying,

Jesus Christ, our sovereign Lord dawning from the Father's Womb, came and brought us out of darkness, bright'ning us with his radiant Light!

*Day has dawned upon mankind, and the power of darkness fled; Brightness dawning from his radiant Light has brightened our darkened eyes.*⁵

Ephrem shows us that Christ in his radiant light illuminated the darkened eyes not only the righteous of the New Testament, but also of us the Faithful in our worship at Mass.

With our understanding of Liturgical Theology, we can look to differences in our faith, and see how much of a division has been created. This all goes back to Adam and Eve in the Garden, eating of the forbidden fruit by which we they were tricked into thinking they could be like God. This points to how Man in his application of knowledge, can bring about destruction. The cultural influences of our time, brought about by politics and media, have influenced the psyche of the human person in the 21st Century, which all leads back to the garden.

St. Augustine writes in the City of God, saying,

*We see then that the two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God, the Heavenly City by the love of God carried as far as contempt of self.*⁶

What Augustine wrote about hundreds of years ago could not be emphasized enough with the current climate of the Church. What we are presented with in the current church environment is the stark difference between the conservative and progressive movements found in the church. On the conservative side, we can see extremes such as Sedevacantism or the belief that the seat of Peter is vacant, and on the progressive side, we see authors writing on the possibility of gay Saints.

An article written by an ultraconservative group known as VaticanCatholic, expresses that the church after Vatican II is not the true Church. That,

*The arrival of this post-Vatican II counterfeit 'Catholic' sect in Rome in the last days proves, rather than disproves, the authenticity of the traditional Catholic Faith, as this website shows.*⁷

⁴ Ibid., 35. See also the Roman Canon, after the consecration of the Precious Body and Blood. The priest, elevating his hands, he says, *Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justus Abel, et sacrificum Patriarchiae nostri Abrahae: et quod tibi obtulit summus Sacerdos Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificum immaculatum hostiam.* (Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as Thou wert graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest Melchizedek offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, and unspotted victim.)

⁵ Andrew Younan, *The Liturgy of the Hours of the Church of the East*, "The Book of Before and After," Andrew Younan ed. and trans. (Washington, D.C.; The Catholic University of America

Press, 2024), 55. This is prayed at Sunday Morning Prayer, where the Antiphon, *Light has dawned upon the Just, and joy to the upright of heart*, is sung by the *Shamasha* (Subdeacons) in the sanctuary. After the antiphon, all gathered in the church, then sang the Hymn of Mar Ephrem as shown above. The hymn is also sung in a particular tone, and the Hymn expresses the beauty of Christ's resurrection.

⁶ St. Augustine, "Concerning the City of God against the Pagans", Henry Bettenson ed. (London, England; Penguin Books, 1972), 593.

⁷ Diamond, Michael, and Peter Diamond. "About This Website." *Vatican Catholic*. Most Holy Family Monastery, August 3rd, 2025. <https://vaticancatholic.com/about-website/>.

While practicing the Traditional Faith is not a bad thing in itself, we ought to be reminded of the garden and the earthly city, and be mindful of how we apply our knowledge.

On the ultraprogressive side, an article written by Francis DeBernardo on the possibility of St. John Henry Newman being gay is another example of how application of knowledge can be destructive. DeBernardo writes,

Although there are no statistics available, my experience – and that of many Catholics – tells me that the large majority of Catholic priests are gay, and that a heterosexual orientation is the exception to the rule. This should not be a surprise as the Catholic Priesthood is a beautiful life for gay men, and has been for centuries.⁸

This not only creates confusion, but also perpetuates a false image of what the Saint had written about regarding his personal life.

With these examples, one shouldn't call these extremes Catholic by nature because, as the Catechism says, "The word 'Catholic' means 'universal', in the sense of 'according to the totality' or 'in keeping with the whole.'"⁹ These stark examples do nothing but divide, and we are left with a split Catholicism. To bring about a unity in the church, to make the heavenly city become our home here on earth, is by an understanding of the Liturgy as such.

The preface to the constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, says, "Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending spirit."¹⁰ What we find with these examples is that these groups and or subgroups found within Conservatives and Progressives

are not led by the spirit. For example, the group VaticanCatholic writes, "the Catholic Church is the true Church, but the post-Vatican II 'Catholic' Church is not the real Catholic Church. It's the Counter Church of the last days."¹¹ Another example by DeBernardo, misquotes Ian Ker, a Newman scholar by saying,

Ian Ker, one of the foremost Newman scholars, claims that Newman was not gay because he was expressively affectionate in relationships with both men and women. He tries to explain away Newman's love for St. John by saying it was how he treated everyone. But, of course, he did not treat Ambrose St. John the way he treated everyone.¹²

I think that *Gaudium et Spes*, expresses the dangers mentioned earlier of wrongful application of knowledge in such a way that man also loses his identity as being created in the image and likeness of God. *Gaudium et Spes* goes on to say,

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, 'that all may be one ... as we are one' (John 17:21 – 22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth that God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of himself.¹³

This quote that expresses the nature of the human person shows how we are meant to live communally, that we are made for the completion of the heavenly city, not by individualism but by a communal effort that is found in the liturgy. Before we go on to that communal aspect, let us first return to the question of defining (3) Reality.

⁸ DeBernardo, Francis. "The Question Is Not 'Was Cardinal John Henry Newman Gay' But 'Was He Straight'" *New Ways Ministries*. New Ways Ministry, August 3rd 2025.

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2021/10/09/the-question-is-not-was-cardinal-john-henry-newman-gay-but-was-he-straight/>.

⁹ Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican.va., accessed on August 3rd 2025, *Catechism of the Catholic Church - IntraText*, 830.

¹⁰ Holy See, "*Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 217.

¹¹ Diamond, Michael, and Peter Diamond. "Vatican II 'Catholic' Church Exposed." *Vatican Catholic*. Most Holy Family Monastery, August 3rd 2025, https://vaticancatholic.com/vatican-ii-exposed/#disqus_thread. I would caution readers who are familiar with the Traditional Latin Mass to read any of the content on this site. Their videos are prevalent on YouTube, and many of their sources

rightfully claim the truths of what the Council of Trent has said regarding the abuses that happened after Vatican II. The content on said videos, as well as other content on their website, follows a Hermeneutic of Rupture, rather than that of Continuity, which I would advise with caution for readers who may be scrupulous. Furthermore, people of scrupulous conditions can question whether even the Pope himself is truly the successor of St. Peter. This is the heresy known as Sedevacantism, or the belief that the seat of St. Peter is vacant. See this article, *The Errors of Sedevacantism | Catholic Answers Video*, written by Jimmy Akin from Catholic Answers, about what Sedevacantism is.

¹² DeBernardo, "The Question Is Not 'Was Cardinal John Henry Newman Gay' But 'Was He Straight'"

¹³ Holy See, "*Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 241.

Ratzinger writes on the communal nature of Catholicism through the liturgy, by saying,

It seems to me that the real, albeit misunderstood and for the most part unrecognized, driving force behind the restlessness of today's leisure time activities, behind the escape from everyday life and the pursuit of something completely different, is the yearning for that which the martyrs called Dominicus, that is, the longing for an encounter that makes life arise in us; it is the pursuit of what Christians received and are receiving on Sunday.¹⁴

If we read Ratzinger's quote in light of *Gaudium et Spes*' "giving of self", we can find that in giving ourselves to God, we are more able to give ourselves fully to our fellow brothers and sisters. This process is known as *Reditus*, which is a Metaphysical term for our return to God. Norris Clarke, a Jesuit who wrote a book on Metaphysics titled *The One and the Many*, writes on *Reditus*, saying,

The Journey of the Many back again towards re-union with the One, their source, drawn by this same Source through the pull of the Good built in to the very nature of every being through the mediation of final causality, which draws each being toward the fulfillment of its nature, as far as it can, as towards its good.¹⁵

We find here that in giving of ourselves, we essentially return back to God. This metaphysical concept is seen most especially in the concept of Reality, because the Eschaton has yet to happen. In the mass, when we refer to the unbloody sacrifice of Christ at Mass, Ratzinger says that we are "in a time in between." This in-betweenness shows how our participation in the Liturgy is linked to our ultimate end, and that is a return to God. Ratzinger goes on to say,

We are incorporated into the great historical process by which the world moves towards the fulfillment of God being 'all in all'. In this sense, what at first seems like a dimension is at the same time the eschatological dynamism of the liturgy.¹⁶

Another quote we can look at, is by Mar Narsai another Father of the Syriac Rite, who says,

Our Lord even compared morning to his preaching's start, and the evening to the ending, when the world will rest from its work.

In his day all creatures rest, who had once been crushed in sin, and the world begins to ponder the meaning of the world to come...

With his promised paradise, He made fast the course of man, and behold, on earth and heaven all await his coming again.¹⁷

Mar Narsai expresses the beauty of the Eschaton, and how Christ's unveiling at mass, and how we await the coming of the Lord, that the Reality is being made present at mass and that the glimpse of it is the way in which we bring about this return to God.

The communal aspect of this *Reditus* is further emphasized in Ratzinger's homily on *Corpus Christi*. Essentially, this can be seen metaphorically in light of the Liturgy as a whole and how our communal interaction of the *Reditus* brings about a unity in the Church. Ratzinger starts with standing before the Lord, by saying,

From the beginning, its representatives emphasized having in each city just one bishop, only one altar. This was supposed to express the unity brought by the one Lord ... thus the Eucharist is the public worship of all those whom the Lord calls, irrespective of their makeup.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ratzinger, Joseph, *The Resurrection as the Foundation of Christian Liturgy – On the Meaning of Sunday for Christian Prayer and Christian Life*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*, (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 189.

¹⁵ Clarke, W. Norris, *The One and the Many*, (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2001), 304.

¹⁶ Ratzinger, Joseph, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*, (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 4. One should not overlook, firstly the bread of life discourse that Christ gives us in John 6, as well as the institution narratives in Luke 22:19, Mark 14:22, and in Matthew 26:26-29. These institution narratives form the basis of our understanding of the New Covenant, as well as the call by Christ to offer this new covenant continually.

¹⁷ *The Liturgy of the Hours of the Church of the East*, "The Book

of Before and After," 55. This hymn is preceded by Mar Ephrem's hymn, which was shown above in footnote 21. For further reading, or if one is considering a Devotion to the Eastern Liturgy of the Hours, and/or the Hymns of the Fathers of the East, this book is the first of its kind with a new English translation from the original Aramaic. There are fewer hours than those of the Roman Rite found in this Hudra (the term proper for the Church of the East's Liturgy of the Hours), which can help the devotee with a more straightforward approach to starting his or her devotion to the Church's treasure of the Liturgy of the Hours. For more information, visit Chorbishop Andrew Younan's video here: (The Book of Before & After) for how to use this book.

¹⁸ Ratzinger, Joseph, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the*

This not only expresses a oneness in the leader of the bishop, but emphasizes the *Statio* or the walking together as one and standing as one. Ratzinger says that we meet each other in our standing before the Lord, because we are brought together by one unifying factor, namely Christ. He goes on to say, that by kneeling before the Lord can only be brought about if we are met in *Statio* or place, and are joined together in *processio*. It is in this *processio*, that we are challenged to move forward as one, given our different cultural backgrounds and personal convictions. It is rather in this meeting and walking to the Lord that we are unified as one.¹⁹

Christ in his ascension, told us to baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This charge given by Christ is echoed in the Liturgy, “Go forth, the Mass is ended.”²⁰ The original term coming from Latin meaning, to send is the basis for the word Mass. We are sent out. Therefore, if we have walked with Christ and kneel before him, we can confidently leave the church knowing that we are united to him and to our brothers and sisters as we go out and bring Christ to others, thereby giving a *Reditus* for the whole world!

Liturgy, Henry Taylor trans, (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 405 – 406.

¹⁹ Ibid., 407-408.

²⁰ Juergens, Sylvester P., *The New Marian Missal*, (Mary Immaculate Queen Center, Spokane, 2005), 664.

Nobis quoque peccatoribus

To us also, though sinners

Angelo Riodique

Expanded treatise, submitted August 25, 2025

The word tradition is seen throughout the scriptures, primarily in Saint Paul's writing, as seen in his letter to the Thessalonians: "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."¹ The three pillars of the Catholic faith — Tradition, Scripture, and Magisterium — are the basis by which the faith is safeguarded and protected from error. But as Catholics, we can fall into the danger of being too secure and can fall into pride. In the past few years, this pride has infected not only the morality of the Church as a whole, but also the Liturgical traditions held by Catholics. This is an unfortunate circumstance, since the liturgy "is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed."²

Christ said, "And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."³ The answer to the Unity of the Church can only be found in a proper understanding of the Liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*⁴ in its introduction, says, "while the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord ... it marvelously strengthens their power to preach Christ, and thus shows forth the church to those who are outside as a sign lifted up among the nations."⁵ If we are to be united as one, we need to step away from any worldly influence, whether political or cultural, and return to the essence of the Liturgy. We

can first look to Ratzinger's works on the Liturgy, as well as other documents of the Second Vatican Council, to find how the Liturgy can bring us together.

Pope Benedict XVI, formerly known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his preface to his work *The Spirit of the Liturgy*,⁶ wrote, "I am simply offering an aid to the understanding of the faith and to the right way to give the faith its central form of expression in the liturgy."⁷ It continually inspires those enamored by the Church's Liturgical tradition to immerse themselves in their faith. Ratzinger points to the Liturgy by saying, "It cannot spring from imagination, our creativity – then it would remain just a cry in the dark or mere self-affirmation. Liturgy implies a real relationship with Another, who reveals himself to us and gives us our existence a new direction."⁸ The Church often uses the image of Christ being the Good Shepherd,⁹ from which our relationship with God emanates. But how does Christ lead his flock towards himself? One need not look far to find the answer in the Old Testament.

As we read about in Exodus, Moses was commanded by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but this command was fulfilled only after the night known as Passover. This is the night on which the angel of death passed over the houses marked with the blood of the lamb.¹⁰ After the Exodus, we learn about God's

¹ Thessalonians 2:15, RSV used throughout.

² Holy See, "Sacrosanctum Concilium, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 160.

³ Mark 3:25.

⁴ Hereafter, SC.

⁵ Holy See, "Sacrosanctum Concilium, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 156.

⁶ Hereafter, SL.

⁷ Ratzinger, Joseph, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*, (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 4.

⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁹ Ibid., 19. For further reading on Christ as Shepherd, look to

CCC 796, which states, "The Unity of Christ and his Church, head and members of one body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship" Furthermore, one can look to the *Exultet* of the Easter Vigil and read "O happy fault, that merited to possess such and so great a Redeemer!" One can finally look at the Fourth responsory after the fourth lesson of the Tenebrae of the 1962 Holy Saturday, and read, "Our Shepherd, even the Fountain of living waters, is gone from us; He passed away, and the sun was darkened. For now hath our Savior bound him captive, which bound the first man captive; this day hath He burst the gates and bars of death." Finally, the most obvious case one can find of Christ as the good shepherd is in John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

¹⁰ Exodus 12 and 24:4. Furthermore, reading on page 22 of the above citation of Ratzinger's *Spirit of the Liturgy*. Ratzinger says,

instructions for proper worship, which are found in Exodus 24, which says, “And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain.”¹¹ Ratzinger points out that the meeting place between God and his people was seen in Moses’ building of the tent. “This means that the earthly Temple is only a replica, not the true Temple. It is an image and likeness, which points beyond itself.”¹² If one refers to Typology,¹³ we can find that magnificent Gothic Cathedrals, Baroque art, and Architecture manifest the Old Testament image of the tent. Another point in Liturgical Theology that we must face is how we meet with God, given his Eternity and our mortality.

If we look at simple Catholic Metaphysics, Aquinas points out in his *Summa*, “Hence, as God is supremely immutable, it supremely belongs to Him to be eternal. Nor is He eternal only, but He is His eternity.”¹⁴ What Ratzinger points out is the mystery known as Shadow, Image, and Reality.¹⁵ These three Theological terms are the language used to understand God’s role within salvation history, and how we are brought to God’s “time” in the Liturgy. Essentially, Shadow refers to the Old Testament, Image refers to the New Testament, and Reality refers to the Eschaton.¹⁶ Ratzinger points out in his second chapter of SL, on the relation between the New Testament, which is this bridge between both the Old Testament and the Eschaton:

In the Church of the New Testament, the shadow has been scattered by the image: ‘[T]he night is far gone, the day is at hand’ (Rom 13:12). But as St. Gregory the Great puts it, it is still only the time of dawn, when darkness and light are intermingled. The sun is rising, but it has still not reached its zenith. Thus, the time of the New

*Testament is a peculiar kind of ‘in between’, a mixture of “already and not yet.”*¹⁷

Now, the reason for this distinction is to show how Christ’s sacrifice at Mass is an “in between”. Our mass participation is something that ties us not only to the Old Testament but to the second coming of Christ. We will return to the question of Reality and the Eschaton later in the paper, but let us continue to expound upon Shadow and Image.

We should especially look at Ratzinger’s quote on Eucharistic Prayer one, saying,

*That is why in the prayers of the Roman Canon, we unite ourselves with the great men who offered sacrifice at the dawn of history: Abel, Melchizedek, and Abraham. They set their hearts towards Christ who was to come.*¹⁸

This shows the Theology behind the sacrifices of the Old Testament Fathers, and how Christ fulfilled them all by his act on the cross.¹⁹ Ratzinger goes on to say, “He has opened a way that we could not have pioneered, because our powers do not extend to building a bridge to God. He became that bridge.”²⁰ This bridge helps us to visualize the act of the Liturgy, whereby we can make an act of adoration. When we see with our eyes the Body and Blood of Christ raised during the elevation, we ought to say the same prayer that the doubting St. Thomas made: *My Lord and my God!*²¹ Let us also turn our attention to Mar Ephrem the Syrian, one of the Fathers of the Syriac Tradition in the Church. He wrote the following hymn, which expresses the depth of Christ’s Incarnation.

“Here the rules are laid down for the sacrifice of the Passover lamb as the center of the Liturgical year and of Israel’s memorial of faith, which is at the same time an everlasting foundation of faith.”

¹¹ Exodus 24:4.

¹² Ratzinger, Joseph, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 24. See further, his above citation of Acts 7:44, and Exodus 23:40 on the same page.

¹³ Typology: when a person, event, thing, etc.—usually from Old Testament times—foreshadows someone or something or event, etc., in the New Testament/New Covenant era. For example, in the Old Testament, Jonah’s three days in the belly of a whale prefigure Jesus Christ’s three days in the tomb (Matt. 12:38–42). See this article: A Primer on Biblical Typology | Catholic Answers Q&A for more information on Typology.

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-I, Q. 10, Art. 2. co.

¹⁵ Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 32.

¹⁶ Eschaton (Gk.) refers to the end times. See this article Eschatology | Catholic Answers Encyclopedia written by P.J. Toner on the basics of Eschatology. One should also look over CCC 1020 – 1065 for the Church’s teaching on the belief of the end of times.

¹⁷ Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., 35. See also the *Roman Canon*, after the consecration of the Precious Body and Blood. The priest, elevating his hands, he says, *Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui iusti Abel, et sacrificum Patriarchiae nostri Abrahae: et quod tibi obtulit summus Sacerdos Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificum immaculatum hostiam.* (Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as Thou wert graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest Melchizedek offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, and unspotted victim.)

¹⁹ Matthew 5:17.

²⁰ Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 35. One can also look again to the Exultet of the Easter Vigil, especially from the 1962 Holy Saturday liturgy and read: “This is the night in which, destroying the chains of death, Christ arose victorious from the grave. For it would have profited us nothing to have been born, unless redemption had also been bestowed upon us!”

²¹ John 20:28.

Jesus Christ, our sovereign Lord dawning from the Father's Womb, came and brought us out of darkness, bright'ning us with his radiant Light!

*Day has dawned upon mankind, and the power of darkness fled; Brightness dawning from his radiant Light has brightened our darkened eyes.*²²

The Syriac tradition²³ beautifully expresses not only the beauty of Christ's Incarnation but also a summary of Salvation History. We can liken the second stanza of Mar Ephrem's hymn to Ratzinger's quote on the men who offered sacrifice in the Old Testament, because their eyes were brightened.²⁴ This hymn calls to mind Christ being the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Let us return to the problem addressed at the beginning of this paper, and that is, the problem of Ecclesial divisions in the Church. As with all sin, we trace it back to the fall in the Garden of Eden. As Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the garden, Satan told him, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God."²⁵ This is not to say that knowledge in its proper sense is evil; rather, it is the end by which man uses Knowledge with which we must take caution. One can look at Adam and Eve and find that their desire to be like God is the sin in which Knowledge was tainted. As Augustine says in *The City of God*,

*We see then that the two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God, the Heavenly City by the love of God carried as far as contempt of self.*²⁶

How does the Earthly and Heavenly city have anything to do with the current state of the church? The two divisions found concurrently in the Catholic Church: the Progressive movement and the Traditionalist movement, are the ones we will address. We can see in Traditionalist groups, such as the Vatican Catholic, "The Catholic Church is the true Church, but the post-Vatican II 'Catholic' Church is not the real Catholic Church. It's the Counter Church of the last days."²⁷ On the other side of this extreme is the Progressive movement. Examples of this are the Pro LGBT+ "Theology" that has grown out of either Catholic Universities, or even by clergy in the church. In a recent blog written by Francis DeBernardo about the newly created Doctor of the Church, St. John Henry Newman, he misinterprets the Catholic Priesthood:

*Although there are no statistics available, my experience – and that of many Catholics – tells me that the large majority of Catholic priests are gay, and that a heterosexual orientation is the exception to the rule. This should not be a surprise as the Catholic Priesthood is a beautiful life for gay men, and has been for centuries.*²⁸

²² Andrew Younan, *The Liturgy of the Hours of the Church of the East*, "The Book of Before and After," Andrew Younan ed. and trans. (Washington, D.C.; The Catholic University of America Press, 2024), 55. This is prayed at Sunday Morning Prayer, where the Antiphon, *Light has dawned upon the Just, and joy to the up-right of heart*, is sung by the *Shamasha* (Subdeacons) in the sanctuary. After the antiphon, all gathered in the church, then sang the Hymn of Mar Ephrem as shown above. The hymn is also sung in a particular tone, and the Hymn expresses the beauty of Christ's resurrection.

²³ The Chaldean Catholic Church (the Church of the East) prays this hymn just before the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. The Eastern Rites of the Church, especially the Church of the East, use the term *The Divine Mysteries* [Taksa, dRaza Alaha (transliteration of the Aramaic)] to refer to the Mass. The term *mysteries* can be made synonymous with the term *Mystical*. In this way, the *mysteries* of God's act of salvation are beautifully expressed in the notion of Christ's unveiling during the Liturgy.

²⁴ Artistically speaking, the Eastern icons of the Resurrection often show Christ triumphing over the doors of *Sheol*. Theologians usually use the word *Sheol* because there is a distinction between the hell of the damned and the "Hell" of the righteous of the Old Testament. This is to show that the righteous were saved from Hell, but not until Christ who was to come that sin itself is truly destroyed. He is depicted saving the righteous of the Old Testament, especially Adam and Eve, by standing on the doors of *Sheol*, extending his

arms to reach for Adam and Eve, as well as Abraham and other righteous of the Old Testament.

²⁵ Genesis 3:5.

²⁶ St. Augustine, "Concerning the City of God against the Pagans", Henry Bettenson ed. (London, England; Penguin Books, 1972), 593.

²⁷ Diamond, Michael, and Peter Diamond. "Vatican II 'Catholic' Church Exposed." Vatican Catholic. Most Holy Family Monastery, August 3rd 2025, https://vaticancatholic.com/vatican-ii-exposed/#disqus_thread. I would caution readers who are familiar with the Traditional Latin Mass to read any of the content on this site. Their videos are prevalent on YouTube, and many of their sources rightfully claim the truths of what the Council of Trent has said regarding the abuses that happened after Vatican II. The content on said videos, as well as other content on their website, follows a Hermeneutic of Rupture, rather than that of Continuity, which I would advise with caution for readers who may be scrupulous. Furthermore, people of scrupulous conditions can question whether even the Pope himself is truly the successor of St. Peter. This is the heresy known as Sedevacantism, or the belief that the seat of St. Peter is vacant. See this article, *The Errors of Sedevacantism* | Catholic Answers Video, written by Jimmy Akin from Catholic Answers, about what Sedevacantism is.

²⁸ DeBernardo, Francis. "The Question Is Not 'Was Cardinal John Henry Newman Gay' But 'Was He Straight.'" New Ways Ministries. New Ways Ministry, August 3rd 2025. <https://www.newwaysministry.org/2021/10/09/the-question-is-not-was-cardinal-john-henry-newman-gay-but-was-he-straight/>.

If we return to the quote by Augustine, we deduce that these two extremes found in the church can be categorized as the Earthly city. We ought to avoid even calling these different extremes “Catholic” because of their divisive nature as a whole. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The word ‘Catholic’ means ‘universal’, in the sense of ‘according to the totality’ or ‘in keeping with the whole.’”²⁹ It is evident that these two extremes do nothing but divide, and now we are left with a divided church. The question remains, how do we as Catholics cultivate and make the Heavenly city present in our lives in the 21st Century? Let us look at *Gaudium et Spes* and see how the Council Fathers reconcile the church with a changing world.

The preface of *Gaudium et Spes*³⁰ states, “Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending spirit.”³¹ As we saw earlier with the two extremes found in the Church, it is clear that there was no intention to follow the spirit; instead, they took it upon themselves to regulate the church by earthly means. For example, the article written by DeBernado on St. John Henry Newman outright misinterprets the Catholic Priesthood again,

*More importantly, in Catholic imagination, priesthood and religious life are often thought of as a sort of spiritual marriage with the Godhead, which in the Christian Church has traditionally been thought of as male and whose human incarnation, Jesus Christ, was male. So in terms of religious imagination and spirituality, the men who would be most attracted to this kind of union are men whose emotional, personal, and sexual attractions are oriented toward other males.*³²

Another example is when VaticanCatholic.com states on their About Us page, saying, “The arrival of this post-Vatican II counterfeit ‘Catholic’ sect in Rome in the last days proves, rather than disproves, the authenticity of the traditional Catholic Faith, as this website shows.”³³ What we find is not following the befriending spirit as GS talks about, but a complete reversal –

a turning away from the truths of the faith and a turning away from the love of God. GS, on speaking of the advances of man in the 20th Century, says, “Thus, while man extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his welfare. Striving to probe more profoundly into the deeper recesses of his mind, he frequently appears more unsure of himself.”³⁴ With these two extremes, one is not only far from the Catholicity that the Church possesses, but also far from the meaning of man’s nature as a whole. If the church is to be united in such a divide, then the human person needs fulfillment. GS beautifully expresses the gift of man’s humanity by saying,

*Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one ... as we are one’ (John 17:21 – 22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth that God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of himself.*³⁵

This quote forms the basis of what man is meant to be, and that is a gift. A gift not only to man, but to God himself. This concept of being a gift to God can be found in Metaphysics, in a concept known as *Exitus* and *Reditus*. This concept of *Reditus* is a Metaphysical concept that encompasses the coming away from, and returning to God – i.e., *Exitus* – *Reditus*. Norris Clarke, a Jesuit who wrote *The One and the Many*, touches on the concept of *Exitus* and *Reditus* by saying,

*The Journey of the Many back again towards reunion with the One, their source, drawn by this same Source through the pull of the Good built in to the very nature of every being through the mediation of final causality, which draws each being toward the fulfillment of its nature, as far as it can, as towards its good.*³⁶

Ratzinger, in his writing on the meaning of Sunday for Christian Prayer, addresses the state of the Church,

²⁹ Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican.va., accessed on August 3rd 2025, *Catechism of the Catholic Church - IntraText*, 830.

³⁰ Hereafter, GS.

³¹ Holy See, “*Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 217.

³² DeBernado, Francis. “The Question Is Not ‘Was Cardinal John Henry Newman Gay’ But ‘Was He Straight.’”

³³ Diamond, Michael, and Peter Diamond. “About This

Website.” Vatican Catholic. Most Holy Family Monastery, August 3rd, 2025. <https://vaticancatholic.com/about-website/>.

³⁴ Holy See, “*Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican II Collection: Constitutions*, Matthew Levering ed. (Park Ridge, Illinois; Word on Fire, 2021), 217.

³⁵ Ibid., 241.

³⁶ Clarke, W. Norris, *The One and the Many*, (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2001), 304.

regarding the Christian's response to Sunday as a whole. He says,

It seems to me that the real, albeit misunderstood and for the most part unrecognized, driving force behind the restlessness of today's leisure time activities, behind the escape from everyday life and the pursuit of something completely different, is the yearning for that which the martyrs called Dominicus, that is, the longing for an encounter that makes life arise in us; it is the pursuit of what Christians received and are receiving on Sunday.³⁷

What we find here is that Martyrs having died for the faith is an image of a continual going to the Lord, a *Reditus*. Through the acts of Liturgy, one brings about the fullness of oneself. This exactly is what Ratzinger refers to, in terms of that longing for encounter. Let us continue to expand upon the concept of Reality,³⁸ as the way in which our participation in the Liturgy is a bridge between our present time and the time to come.

Ratzinger, after speaking on Christ being the bridge between the Old and New Testaments and the Eschaton, says:

He, the Holy One, hallows us with his holiness that none of us could ever give ourselves. We are incorporated into the great historical process by which the world moves towards the fulfillment of God being 'all in all'. In this sense, what at first seems like a dimension is at the same time the eschatological dynamism of the liturgy. The fullness of Christ, of which the Captivity Epistles of St. Paul speak, becomes a reality, and only thus is the Paschal event completed throughout history. The 'today' of Christ lasts right to the end.³⁹

Ratzinger points to our participation in that Eternity, not only by mere existence but by participation in the Liturgy. The *Reditus*, back to the Father, is accomplished and perfected in the Liturgy. The Liturgy then

is not just the moment Christ comes to us under the veil of bread and wine, but it is also our *Reditus* back to God. Christ is our leader not only as our Lord and Savior, but as our guide and example of what proper *Reditus* is supposed to look like. Ratzinger, in SL, expresses Christ's wish of unification, saying:

Christian liturgy is never just an event organized by a particular group or set of people or even by a specific local Church. Mankind's movements towards Christ meet Christ's movement towards men. He wants to unite mankind and bring about the one Church, the one divine assembly, of all men.⁴⁰

We also ought to emphasize Mar Narsai, another Father of the Syriac Tradition, who wrote this hymn, said at every Sunday Morning Prayer in the Chaldean Rite:

Our Lord even compared morning to his preaching's start, and the evening to the ending, when the world will rest from its work.

In his day all creatures rest, who had once been crushed in sin, and the world begins to ponder the meaning of the world to come...

With his promised paradise, He made fast the course of man, and behold, on earth and heaven all await his coming again.⁴¹

Mar Narsai expresses to us devotees and readers the "meaning of the world to come". This reveals to us the importance of our relationship with the Liturgy and our encounter with Christ, as he gives us a glimpse of the world to come through the reception of his body under the veil of bread and wine. While we've discussed the meaning of man's gift to God, we have yet to discuss the meaning of the communal aspect of the Mass, which we can analogize through Ratzinger's homily on Corpus Christi.

³⁷ Ratzinger, Joseph, *The Resurrection as the Foundation of Christian Liturgy – On the Meaning of Sunday for Christian Prayer and Christian Life*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*. (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 189.

³⁸ Cf. footnote 16, as well as the paragraph talking about Time in the Liturgy.

³⁹ Ratzinger, Joseph, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 4. One should not overlook, firstly the bread of life discourse that Christ gives us in John 6, as well as the institution narratives in Luke 22:19, Mark 14:22, and in Matthew 26:26-29. These institution narratives form the basis of our understanding of the New Covenant, as well as the call by Christ to offer this new covenant continually.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁴¹ Younan, *The Liturgy of the Hours of the Church of the East*, 55. This hymn is preceded by Mar Ephrem's hymn, which was shown above in footnote 21. For further reading, or if one is considering a Devotion to the Eastern Liturgy of the Hours, and/or the Hymns of the Fathers of the East, this book is the first of its kind with a new English translation from the original Aramaic. There are fewer hours than those of the Roman Rite found in this Hudra (the term proper for the Church of the East's Liturgy of the Hours), which can help the devotee with a more straightforward approach to starting his or her devotion to the Church's treasure of the Liturgy of the Hours. For more information, visit Chorbishop Andrew Younan's video here: (The Book of Before & After) for how to use this book.

Ratzinger concludes that there are three parts to the Liturgy of Corpus Christi, two of which will be discussed in this portion of the essay. The first part of the Liturgy he writes is known as “Standing before the Lord”, and proceeds to “Walking with the Lord”. He first discusses “Standing before the Lord”, saying:

*From the beginning, its representatives emphasized having in each city just one bishop, only one altar. This was supposed to express the unity brought by the one Lord ... thus the Eucharist is the public worship of all those whom the Lord calls, irrespective of their makeup.*⁴²

The aspect of standing together, *Statio*, is what Ratzinger says is the root of Corpus Christi. *Statio*, defined ecclesiastically, is known as station, or place.⁴³ There is a connection made between the Ecclesiastical definition and his quote on “Standing before the Lord”. He goes on to say, “That means that the pope, as the one bishop of Rome, especially in the course of Lent, leads the worship for the whole of Rome and goes right through each of the titular churches.”⁴⁴ Moreover, he says, “And this is the essential thing, that the Lord has brought us together, that he leads us to meet each other.”⁴⁵ This first aspect of “Standing before the Lord”, helps us to not only visualize the oneness of the Church, but it also expresses the wishes of Christ when he said in John 17:11: “And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” The second aspect of Corpus Christi that he writes on is known as “Kneeling before the Lord.” “For we are not automatically side by side. This is why *statio* could happen only if people gathered

beforehand and went to each other in the *processio*. We can stand side by side only if, first of all, under the guidance of the Lord, we go to each other.”⁴⁶ This expresses not only GS’s notion of the gift of self, but of man’s communal *Reditus* back to God. We cannot do this alone. We need not only God but the unity of the Church. He goes on to say, “*Processio, precedere*, should challenge us to move forward again, to go ahead towards him, and to subject ourselves to his measure and in our common belief in him who became man.”⁴⁷ There is this continual giving of self, not only to Christ, but also to those around us. As the Fathers said in GS, that the befriending spirit leads us; it is through the Liturgy, by standing and walking with the Lord, that the Oneness of the Church comes to fruition.

At the Tridentine Rite, the words chanted by the deacon or the priest after Mass are *Ite Missa Est*.⁴⁸ The word *Missa*, would not be translated as Mass in English, but rather as “to be sent forth.” We can attribute this to Christ’s Ascension,⁴⁹ as being sent forth to preach the gospel to all nations. Lumen Gentium expresses the wishes of the missionary nature of man, “For the Church is compelled by the Holy Spirit to do her part that God’s plan may be fully realized, whereby He has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world.”⁵⁰ Therefore, with these words in mind, we must go from Christ and give Him to those around us. It is through our continual giving of self to God and man that we bring about the fullness of ourselves and can unite the Church. It is through the Church’s liturgy that heaven and earth are brought into the fullness of His glory and by which our *Reditus* to God is accomplished, completed, and perfected.

⁴² Ratzinger, Joseph, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, in *Joseph Ratzinger Collected Works Theology of the Liturgy*, Henry Taylor trans, (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2014), 405 – 406.

⁴³ Stelten, Leo F., *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin*, (Henrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1995), 253.

⁴⁴ Ratzinger, Joseph, *God is Near Us*, 406. If one also looks at Traditional Proper’ of the Times, one can find *Station at Saint Mary Major or St. Paul Outside the Walls*.

Traditionally, these *Statio*s informed the devotee that the Mass of

that day was celebrated at that particular Basilica in Rome presided by the Pope. See Ratzinger’ quote on the meaning of “Standing Before the Lord” for how these two concepts relate.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 407.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 408.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Juergens, Sylvester P., *The New Marian Missal*, (Mary Immaculate Queen Center, Spokane, 2005), 664.

⁴⁹ Matthew 28:19.

⁵⁰ LG, 68.