

THE CATHOLIC MASS IN A SECULAR WORLD

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1. Introduction

This article forms a part of the research project “The Roman Missal as an Episodic Structure of Communications among Those Present.” This research examines the use that is given to the protocol text of the Catholic Church for the performance of Mass, and has three objectives: (i) to give context to the publication of the missal in 1570 (Council of Trent), (ii) to describe the structure of worship (liturgy of the mass) incorporating the modifications made 400 years later during the Vatican Council II (1962-1965), and (iii) to outline the importance of rhetoric and of sacred oratory for the homily or sermon.

What follows is the main part of this research, that which describes the structure of the cult or the liturgy of the Mass. To start with it is necessary to establish the theoretical parameters that make it possible to study the Catholic Mass as a system of religious communications. A new analytical perspective is used to reflect the general theory of social systems and sociology of religion developed by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann. The first section of this article establishes the theory used to interpret the Catholic Mass. It also includes a reflection on the place of the Mass in the light of a contemporary secular world.

The second section deals with general aspects of the liturgy and of the book which contains the detailed format for its celebration: The Roman Missal. The third section deals with the main non-Orthodox oriental liturgies and the theological options that differentiate them. Finally, the last section describes and compares between the Tridentine and the Pauline Masses. The creed is one of the elements of the Latin Rite that stands out as strongly dogmatized; in comparison with the Oriental churches, there are also remarkable differences in the Eucharist sacrifice, in particular in

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the form of the Eucharistic Prayer and in the participation of the assemblies during the celebration of Eucharist.

2. Theoretical Considerations: A New Perspective on Secularism

According to the theoretical frame of reference used in this research, religions are communications systems. So, the Catholic Mass represents both a system of interaction and the symbiotic symbol of Catholic communications.¹ What is a system of interaction? It refers to a particular way in which communications re-produce: through bodily co-presence, that is to say, of “those who are present.” What is a symbiotic symbol? Symbiotic symbols determine the ways in which communications may be interfered or “irritated” by the bodies.² Examples of these are sensorial perception for scientific communications, physical restraint for political communications, sexuality for communications of intimacy, bodily wants for economic communications, and ritual for religious communications.

The Latin rite of the mass, then, may be defined as a particular blend of rites and dogmas – the two communication forms that shape religions – that requires the permanent iteration under conditions of bodily co-presence, in order to interpenetrate human beings with Catholic communications. In much the same manner, a sweat lodge or “*Temazcal*” interpenetrates the organic/conscious faculties of individuals with Native American religious communications; “*japa*” (the practice of *mantra* repetition) interpenetrates human beings with Shaivite communications, and meditation interpenetrates human beings with Buddhist communications.

The rites and dogmas that constitute the Catholic Mass accomplish the social function attributed by this theory to religions in general: to achieve successful communication or, simply, to circumscribe or guide expectations.³ In particular, the communicative form of the ritual shows a remarkable resemblance to the communicative form of societies with rhetorical primacy: they both overflow with expressivity (complicated ritual/rhetorical forms) even though they convey very little or no information.⁴ It should be noted that the homily or sermon is the moment

¹Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems: Outline for a General Theory*, Spain: Anthropos/UIA/CEJA, 1998, 199 ff., 363 ff.

²Niklas Luhmann, *Society of Society*, México: Herder/UIA, 2007, 295.

³Luhmann, *Society of Society*, 181-182.

⁴Niklas Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, Madrid: Trotta, 2007, 165-166; Alfonso Mendiola, *Communication, Rhetoric and Reality: The Rhetorical Construction of*

in Mass where prevailing communicative expectations are created (related to a particular moment and communicative circumstance). The sermon will achieve this by means of the technical-communicative device specific for speech, i.e., rhetoric.

The Catholic Mass that is observed today is a highly dogmatized ritual. The Catholic Mass finds increasing difficulties in reinforcing face-to-face or interactive situations because the elements that shape it are strongly dogmatized (this means that they force specific meanings/interpretations not linked to immediate interactive situations). This is called religious de-socialization.⁵ Perhaps, the original social function of the ritual may nowadays be observed only among some aboriginal tribes in Australia, Africa, or the Amazon jungle, and no longer among people who attend Sunday Mass in one of the many Catholic churches that exist in any city around the world.

The problem of secularism is understood in this theory as the relation of religion to the forms of social differentiation, and not so much as the diminishing importance of religion in today's contemporary world. What matters, then, are the ways in which religious communications work under the different types of societies observed throughout history.⁶ Secularism presupposes the communicative differentiation of society which would allow, from the point of view of religion, to consider modern society as a society of sinners or at best as a "secularized" society.⁷ It is relevant for the theory to provide explanations on the functioning of religion in stratified societies, and on the change in the operation of religious communications under conditions of functional differentiation (so-called modern societies) in the places of the world where this has happened.

A fine indicator of secularism is the strong individualism that widens the possibilities of religious choice in such a way that membership is no longer a lifetime decision, but is confined to a series of decisions of

Battles in the Chronicles of Conquest, México: UIA, El mundo sobre el papel, 2003, 189, 232.

⁵Niklas Luhmann, *Sociology of Religion*, México: Unpublished Manuscript, 2005, 49. This manuscript is integrated by Luhmann's two lengthiest articles on sociology of religion prior to the publication of his posthumous monograph *Religion of Society*. These are, *Religious Dogmatics and the Evolution of Societies* and *Differentiation Process of Religion*.

⁶Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, 241 ff.

⁷Luhmann, *Sociology of Religion*, 118.

variable length. What is witnessed today is a membership *à la carte*. Conversions are no longer “a great and astonishing event as with Saul/Paul, an outside event that conditions entirely the vital situation; therefore, it is no longer a kind of transcendental brain wash, but an individual decision to trust in a particular offer.”⁸ In this process the technical devices for the dissemination of communication have played a central role, first due to the printing press, followed by the newspapers, and, finally, by the so-called mass media.

These technical devices turn what is current into a new, and in this way current events become distant from the past. Continual re-enactments will be necessary to prevent past events from turning only into memories. An example of such re-enactment is the Catholic Mass, which is symbolized as present and not just remembered. The ritual demands communications under conditions of co-presence: it turns out to be a system of interaction as well as a symbiotic symbol.⁹

If the question on the meaning of secularism was raised once again, the answer would be: secularism is “a deficient and fleeting (?) adaptation to the conditions of modern society.”¹⁰ Another way of putting it is that the rules of social inclusion were modified when stratified societies turned into modern societies. In this change, the place of religion has been modified. While pre-modern societies, strongly hierarchical in their character, provided individuals with fixed places through the differentiation of households according to rank or depending on the distinction in terms of town or countryside, inclusion in modern societies depends entirely on the functional systems (by which is meant systems of communications: politics, economics, education, art, science, etc.). This inclusion/exclusion which depends no longer on religious communications, under modern circumstances intertwines with social organization with devastating results:

Those who do not have documents find no jobs; those who have to live in the streets can not enrol in school (I was told in Bombay). There are very few possibilities to enter reputable careers or to have access to better jobs without schooling. There is a small possibility for food if there is not any income at all, and therefore a lack of

⁸Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, 256.

⁹Luhmann, *Sociology of Religion*, 108.

¹⁰Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, 260.

energy for a normal work. The illiterate have almost no real possibilities to exercise their right to vote, etc.¹¹

In modern societies, that is, under conditions of functional differentiation, Durkheim's classical theory on the "integrating" social function of religion would have to be put upside down.

In all, where does religion stand? It seems clear that in modern society Catholicism turned from an inclusive religion (everybody belonged to it since birth) into one religion in the midst of many other religions. The traditional and feared exclusion (excommunication) has no real consequences in a modern setting. If "secularism" meant once the harm done to religion by the increasing non-religious orientations of modern society, nowadays, and from the viewpoint of culture, means that all religions are subjected to a permanent comparison with one another, and that it is impossible to anchor the point of view where comparisons are made from. This means that the communicative possibilities of religion must be circumscribed by the communicative possibilities of modern society.

Nevertheless, what is truly important is that there is no significant connection between the exclusions of other social systems and religion: "the almost total exclusions of other functional systems – lack of money, of schooling, of documents; almost no possibility to be considered seriously by the police, or of making oneself heard in court – could be plainly ignored by religion."¹² Thus, here stands the case for religious communications.

3. The Liturgy and the Missal

The word liturgy derives from the Greek *leitourgia*, which means a general service of a public nature and, by extension, the public service offered in temples.¹³ The word has two meanings which are important to distinguish. It means the set of rituals, ceremonies, sacraments and prayers of a church; thus, one may refer to the Roman liturgy, the Antiochene liturgy, or the Byzantine liturgy. The word liturgy also means, especially among the churches of the East, the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, that is, what in western Catholicism is called the Mass. While it is possible to refer to the

¹¹Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, 262.

¹²Luhmann, *Religion of Society*, 263.

¹³*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, CD-ROM, Classic 1914 Edition, 2003, s.v. "Liturgy" by Adrian Fortescue.

Catholic Mass as “liturgy,” it is incorrect to call the Eucharist ritual of the eastern churches “mass.”

Central to the Mass is the recreation of Christ’s words during the Last Supper. Bread and wine were taken to the priest who in solemn attitude took them, repeated the words of Jesus and handed them out among those who received the Holy Communion. What Jesus said in the Last Supper can be found in Mark 14:22-24, Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 22:17-20, or in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. Jesus took the bread and blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: “Take and eat all of you, for this is my body.” Then, he took the chalice and blessed it again and gave it to his disciples, saying: “This is my blood, of the eternal covenant, which is being shed for you.” Of those who witnessed these words only Luke reproduced the command: “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19). The rite was a continuation of the Jewish domestic liturgy. It could be said that “the common meal of the first Christians imitated the last gesture of Christ: it was at once a memorial of the Supper and the ritual repetition of the voluntary sacrifice of the Redeemer.”¹⁴

The Mass generally took place at the end of the service offered by synagogues, where psalms were read and prayers and instruction to the faithful were performed. In this sense, the Mass was in its origins “the Christianized service of the synagogues.”¹⁵ Centuries later this would be known as the liturgy or Mass of the Catechumens. This was followed by the Eucharist in which only the baptized may participate. Two elements of the service disappeared during the second century A.D.: the feast or *agape* before the Eucharist, and the spiritual exercises in which the faithful “were moved by the Holy Ghost to prophesy, speak in diverse tongues, heal the sick by prayer, and so on.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, the other two elements of the Mass – instruction and Holy Communion – subsisted in practically all rites.

Justin Martyr (100-165), in his *First Apology*, gives the first true account of the Mass as he witnessed it in Rome.¹⁷ However, the book *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* still contains clear resemblances to the

¹⁴Mircea Eliade, *History of Religious Beliefs and Ideas*, Barcelona: Paidós Orientalia, 1988, 2: 400-401.

¹⁵*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liturgy” by Adrian Fortescue.

¹⁶*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liturgy” by Adrian Fortescue.

¹⁷Lucien Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, Spain: Ediciones Paulinas, 1990, 74.

Jewish forms of blessing bread and wine on the Sabbath.¹⁸ The Lord’s Prayer was already a recognizable prayer. The Eucharist was celebrated with the parting of bread and giving thanks, and only those who were baptized were allowed to take part. Also the *Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions* gives information on the early liturgy, though written in Syria much later, around the fifth century. In it, the Eucharistic Prayer begins with the dialogue: “Lift up your hearts...” The *Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions* shows parallelisms with the *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, written at the end of the first century, where the Sanctus follows the prayer. This circumstance has led to the supposition that the former is a copy of the latter. What is more plausible, in fact, is that the different liturgies gradually took shape in a rite with common features. Justin Martyr’s account of the service is as follows:

1	Lessons	6	Thanksgiving prayer by the bishop
2	Sermon by the bishop	7	Consecration by the words of institution
3	Prayers for all people	8	Intercession for the people
4	Kiss of peace	9	The people end this prayer with Amen
5	Offertory of bread and wine	10	Communion

The Eucharist Prayer was the most important part of Eucharist. In the third century, this prayer contained the following elements: thanksgiving prayer (*eucharistía* in Greek); “remembrance of the words with which Jesus instituted the Supper before his being captured and sent to his ordeal; offering of bread and wine given by the chosen people to their God; and the petition to send the Holy Spirit over the elements and over the faithful.”¹⁹ From the fourth century onwards the knowledge of the liturgies grew notably. The plurality of rites since then can be grouped into four: the liturgy of Antioch, the liturgy of Alexandria, the liturgy of Rome and the liturgy of Gaul.²⁰ The first three cases correspond to the old patriarchal cities, while Gaul and north-western Europe, despite being part of the Roman Patriarchate, maintained their own liturgy until the eighth century.

¹⁸*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liturgy” by Adrian Fortescue.

¹⁹Étienne Trocmé, “Christianity from the Origins to the Council of Nicaea,” *History of Religions*, 5:223-444, México: Siglo 21, 1979, 342-343.

²⁰*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liturgy” by Adrian Fortescue.

The aforementioned *Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions* belongs to the Antiochean liturgy, of which Jerusalem is a part. It seems necessary, thus, to connect the Roman liturgy with the Antiochene, and to recognize that the latter is closer to the original.²¹ Besides, the old Roman liturgy – represented by the oldest sacramentaries: Leonine, Gelasian and Gregorian – is not the one used today, since the Roman Missal has received substantial additions from Gallican sources. Suffice to say that the original liturgy was much more simple and austere, bereft of any but the most basic actions. These modifications – “complication” of the liturgy – as this study strives to demonstrate, were not just the result of the Gallican influence or of chance, but find an explanation in the process of religious generalization experienced in the West, and which supposed, among other things, the reaffirmation of ritual identity in the East,²² and the dogmatization of the Roman ritual, as has been clearly shown by the creed formula.²³

The Roman Missal is the book used by the Catholic Church for the celebration of Mass in the Latin Rite. The book is basically divided into two parts of different sizes: the “Ordinary of the Mass,” located for convenience near the centre of the volume, which contains the liturgy used throughout the year, and the rest of the book, its major part, which contains the fragments of the liturgy that vary day by day depending on the festivities (“Proper of Saints”), on the season (“Proper of Time”: Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter), and on the motives for Mass celebration (common, ritual, for diverse needs, votive and for the dead).²⁴

The Roman Missal that is used today is a mixture of various ceremonial books. In the past, the book used by the priest at the altar did not have more than what was needed for him to say. This book was known as Sacramentary (*sacramentarium*), as its contents were centred on the consecration of the sacrifice.²⁵ Other portions of the service (Introit, Gradual, Offertory, and Communion) which were chanted by the chorus were contained in another book, the “*Antiphonarium Missae*” or

²¹*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Liturgy” by Adrian Fortescue.

²²Jules Leroy, “Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches,” *History of Religions*, 7:205-252, México: Siglo 21, 1981.

²³Marco Ornelas, “Testing Luhmann’s Hypothesis: Heresies and Religious Generalization in Western Christianity” Unpublished Manuscript, 2006.

²⁴*Roman Missal*, 14th edition, México: Obra Nacional de la Buena Prensa, 2005, 271-410.

²⁵*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Missal” by Herbert Thurston.

“*Graduale*.” Also the passages read by deacons (the Epistle, the Gospel, lessons from the Old Testament on special occasions) could be found in the “*Epistolarium*” or “*Apostolus*” in the “*Evangelarium*” and other lectionaries. Apart from these books, an “*Ordo*” or “*Directorium*” was needed to decide on the appropriate Mass. “Only by a slow process of development were the contents of the sacramentary, the gradual, the various lectionaries, and the ‘Ordo’ amalgamated so that all that was needed for the celebration of Mass was to be found within the covers of one volume.”²⁶

The first step in this development seems to have been the introduction of small books, named “*Libelli Missae*,” for the celebration of devotional private Masses. These booklets contained one to three full Masses. Since these Masses were private services, they were celebrated by just one priest without the participation of the chorus or other ministers.²⁷ A typical example of these books, a liturgical treasure in itself, is the Irish Stowe Missal. The first *sacramentaries*, which were already adaptations in the sense of the “*Libelli Missae*,” cannot be found before the ninth century. It is not until the second half of the thirteenth century that missals according to the modern type could be found. The first printed missals appeared from the end of the fifteenth century; the first printed Roman Missal dates back to 1474 and was printed in Milan.

4. The Oriental Non-Orthodox Liturgies

By the sixth century, hierarchical Christian communities appeared in the East, which were separated both from the Orthodox and the Roman church.²⁸ Until then, the church knew no divisions besides the one established through the provinces and ecclesiastical dioceses grouped in patriarchates: Rome in the West, and Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Constantinople in the East. The characteristic pluralism of eastern Christianity has its origin in theological controversies of the fifth century. The problem unresolved by the Council of Nicaea (325) concerned the relationship between the two natures of Christ, human and divine. In this respect three possibilities appeared. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, gave Christ two natures (*biphysite* doctrine), so independent of each other

²⁶*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Missal” by Herbert Thurston.

²⁷*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Missal” by Herbert Thurston.

²⁸Jules Leroy, “Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches,” *History of Religions*, 7:205-252, México: Siglo 21, 1981.

that the properties of one could not be shared with the other. This thesis was condemned by the Council of Ephesus (431), which adopted the stand of the patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril, according to which Christ had only one nature (*monophysite* doctrine): his two natures constituted one true unity in only one Christ. This opinion was later modified by Pope Leo of Rome and was the basis of the decision taken at the Council of Chalcedon (451): “Christ has two natures without confusion or change, without separation or division. Union does not suppress differences between the two natures, but on the contrary, the properties of both natures remain untouched, and are found in one person (*prosôpon*) or hypothesis.”²⁹

Contemporary eastern churches still reflect these theological postures. Those who accepted the doctrine of Chalcedon constitute the Melchite church; those who accepted the biphysite doctrine are the Nestorian church; and monophysites are dispersed among many churches: Syro-Jacobite, Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopic.

From a theological point of view, this division was more of form than of substance. Since it happened in times when terminology was not yet defined, more than an opposition of concepts it manifests confusion, and recent studies have demonstrated that what some called ‘nature’ did not differ much from what others called ‘person’ or ‘hypothesis’ and the other way round. Common goodwill could have solved this confusion of vocabulary, if political passions had not interfered and exploited this religious misunderstanding. When historical facts previous to the emergence of the churches of the East are analyzed, one could very well conclude that, behind theological opposition, another opposition was hidden: that against the authority of the Emperor.³⁰

The first schism of Christianity, the rupture between the churches of the East and the West, has been treated elsewhere³¹ and dates back to the eleventh century. If it is true that Byzantium was one of the main patriarchates of Christianity, it is also true that all other eastern churches maintained their organizational and ritual independence. Nevertheless, the separation of all these churches from the Byzantine orthodoxy is not so profound with regard to practice and general faith. All are hierarchical

²⁹Leroy, “Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches,” 206.

³⁰Leroy, “Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches,” 207.

³¹Ornelas, “Testing Luhmann’s Hypothesis: Heresies and Religious Generalization in Western Christianity.”

churches and recognize a supreme authority, upon which bishops, priests and laymen depend. Monks are of prime importance because bishops are chosen from among them. Bishops practice celibacy (though ordinary priests do not). All these communities recognize a variable number of sacraments.

Only on one point are they sensitive: on the use of their own liturgies, always reticent with regard to new ceremonies or prayers, since communities consider the defence of their ritual heritage as a symbol and a means of maintaining internal unity. These liturgies are so important to them because they define their personality: one could talk without differentiation of the Coptic Church or the Coptic Rite, of the Armenian Church or the Armenian Rite, to designate one and the same reality.³²

All these churches have a strong ethnic character. Since these countries had been invaded by Muslims, they have strongly affirmed their cohesion, as they feared being absorbed. The patriarchs became also political leaders. These communities have developed their own tribunals, and even now its sentences are in many cases recognized by the civil authorities.³³ Since these churches distanced themselves from Byzantine orthodoxy, they also became separated from Rome. The Roman church has tried several times to attract them, and when it has been successful, for example at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-39), the union did not last for long. Nevertheless since the sixteenth century the Roman church has established alliances with dissident groups, and has supported the creation of new churches united to Rome, called *uniatas*.

5. The Latin Liturgy: Tridentine and Pauline Masses

A comparison between the Tridentine Mass and the Pauline Mass brings out the following points of interest:

1. The most important modification of the missal, 400 years after the standardization of the cult being decreed as a reaction of ecclesiastical orthodoxy to Protestantism,³⁴ was ordered during the Vatican Council II. The modifications were not significant as far as the central elements of the ritual are concerned, but they did open up possibilities of participation to

³²Leroy, "Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches," 208-209.

³³Leroy, "Non-Orthodox Eastern Churches," 209 ff.

³⁴Marco Ornelas, "Communicative Background to the Publication of the Roman Missal," Unpublished Manuscript, 2006.

the assembly, such as the change regarding the orientation of the priest (i.e., he now faces the faithful), the authorization of the use of vernaculars, and, in general, the clarification of the Ordinary of the Mass in such a way that the “devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.”³⁵ Nevertheless, and in accordance with the possibilities opened by communications, there are traditional Catholic groups opposed to these changes. These groups were initially led by the French archbishop Marcel Lefevre, who considered that modifications to the Mass format represent, “both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session 22 of the Council of Trent.”³⁶ The Congregation for Divine Worship allowed these groups to celebrate Tridentine Masses in 1984, and a few years later, in 1988, John Paul II granted them permission to practice the Tridentine form of the Roman rite.

The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI that promulgated the new missal established that the main modification affected the Eucharist prayer; rites were simplified and the homily enhanced. The lectionary was re-structured and distributed in a three year cycle (psalm 43 [42] and the Last Gospel disappeared as permanent fixtures). Also, sections relating to the Proper of Seasons, the Proper and Common of Saints, ritual Masses and Votive Masses were modified.³⁷

2. As one can see, the Mass is divided into two parts: “first, the celebration of the Word – these are the readings of every Mass; then follows the celebration of Jesus’ sacrifice, that is, the memorial of his death and resurrection, and the re-enactment of the Last Supper through the offering of bread and wine.”³⁸ The part related to the Word corresponds to the Mass of the Catechumen in the Tridentine Mass, and to the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word in the Pauline Mass; the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice corresponds to the Mass of the Faithful in the Tridentine Mass, and to the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rite in the Pauline Mass.

³⁵“Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI,” *Roman Missal*, 14th edition, 16*.

³⁶“Tridentine Mass,” *Wikipedia* (2006 Edition), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tridentine_Mass#Footnotes (11/14/2006).

³⁷*Roman Missal*, 14th edition, 16* ff.

³⁸Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 11.

<p style="text-align: center;">Tridentine Mass 1570 (Sacred Texts, 2006: Latin Mass; Fortescue, CE, 2003: Liturgy of the Mass)</p> <p><i>The Mass of the Catechumens</i> Sign of the Cross Psalm 43 (42) Confession/Confiteor (I confess to Almighty God...) Introit (usually from a psalm) Kyrie (Lord, have mercy...) <i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i> (“Glory to God in the highest...”) Epistle (from St. Paul’s epistles) Gospel Sermon Nicene Creed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pauline Mass 1970 (<i>Misal Romano</i>, 2005: 271-410)</p> <p><i>Introductory Rites</i> Greeting Act of penitence/<i>Confiteor</i> <i>Kyrie</i> <i>Gloria in excelsis Deo</i></p> <p><i>The Liturgy of the Word</i> Psalm/Acts of the Apostles Gospel Sermon Nicene Creed</p>
<p><i>Mass of the Faithful</i> Offering of bread and wine Holy Trinity Prayer Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts...) Intercessions Consecration/ Transubstantiation (Luke 22:19-20) Lord’s Prayer Breaking of the Host The Peace <i>Agnus Dei</i> (“Lamb of God...”) Communion Final prayer and dismissal (<i>Ite Missa est</i>) The Last Gospel (usually John 1:1-14)</p>	<p><i>The Liturgy of the Eucharist</i> Offering of bread and wine Sanctus Eucharist Prayer Intercessions Consecration Lord’s Prayer The Peace Breaking of the Host <i>Agnus Dei</i> Communion</p> <p><i>Concluding Rite</i> Blessing and dismissal</p>

3. It is interesting to note the persistence of the sermon, which in both masses precedes the profession of faith. It is important because “actually, for most of the faithful, the *Lectio* constitutes their only bible; and the homily their only explanation and updating of God’s Word.”³⁹ As has been said before, this updating of God’s Word through the sermon will be

³⁹Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 50.

achieved by means of the technical-communicative device specific for speech, i.e., rhetoric.

4. As regards the Creed, a central element, where the increasing dogmatization of the ritual may be observed:

The Roman ritual used three creed formulae: the symbol of the apostles, the symbol of St. Anastasius (which was removed from the Divine Office in 1955), and the Nicaea-Constantinople symbol, that adds to the apostles' symbol the statements decided in the councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)... The Nicaea-Constantinople formulae helped to mend the christological errors, i.e., the statements on Christ which do not entirely acknowledge that he is both God and human being.⁴⁰

More precisely, the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea decided in favour of Christ's divinity (*homoousios*) and fixed the date for Easter against those who made it coincide with the Jewish celebrations. Later on, the second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople) found against those who questioned the divinity of the Holy Ghost. This council was responsible for the addition of the phrases of the creed "which refer to the Holy Ghost (*qui simul adoratur*) and the rest that follows until the end."⁴¹

5. Some differences between the eastern and western traditions related to the Liturgy of the Eucharist can also be noted. "According to the eastern tradition, it is the *epiklesis* (the invocation of the Holy Ghost) that consecrates the bread and wine in the body and blood of the resurrected Christ. According to the western tradition, the words of Institution are responsible for such consecration."⁴² There are also differences related to the participation of the assembly during the consecration.

Since the beginning of the third century there already existed a double tradition in the liturgical milieu of Syria: the one that put emphasis on the formula of cult, and which gave great importance to the words of Institution, and another one from eastern Syria, which stressed the

⁴⁰Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 52.

⁴¹*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Ecumenical Councils" by J. Wilhelm. The creed says: "[I believe in the Holy Ghost]... Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified: Who spoke through the Prophets. And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen." *Roman Missal*, 14th Edition, 288-289.

⁴²Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 95.

epiklesis and did not use the words of Institution at all. An example of the latter is the *Anaphora* (name given by the churches of the East to the Eucharist Prayer) of Addai and Mari. To this prayer, “‘to do’ is more important than ‘to say’. This teaching is always valuable. A community is of the ‘Eucharist’ type, not because it says it celebrates the Eucharist, but because it enacts it.”⁴³ Also among eastern churches the Lord’s Prayer has always been recited by all the community; nevertheless, by the end of the sixth century in Rome the Lord’s Prayer was an exclusively presidential prayer, recited only by the priest.⁴⁴

The discussion of the moment in which the consecration takes place, and the different ways in which these two traditions participate in the Eucharist only confirms the diverse meanings given to cult celebration: one reinforces the dignity and authority of the faithful, and favours their in-depth religious experience (i.e., the one from eastern Syria), while the other subordinates it to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In the end, one is interested in re-creating the Last Supper, while the other one is only interested in representing it or externalizing it by means of strict protocol formulae. This is a consequence of religious generalization in the Eucharist Prayer. The sound impulse of religious generalization finally prevailed and was the predominant trend in western Christianity.⁴⁵

6. Conclusion

The Latin rite of the mass may be defined as a particular blend of rites and dogmas that requires the permanent iteration under conditions of bodily co-presence, in order to interpenetrate human beings with Catholic communications. The rites and dogmas that constitute the Catholic Mass accomplish the social function attributed to religions in general: to achieve successful communication or, simply, to circumscribe or guide expectations.

Secularism is understood as the relation of religion to different types of societies, and not so much as the diminishing importance of religion in today’s contemporary world. A fine indicator of secularism is the strong individualism that widens the possibilities of religious choice. Catholicism turned from an inclusive religion (everybody belonged to it since birth),

⁴³Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 101 ff.

⁴⁴Deiss, *The Mass: Its Celebration Explained*, 113.

⁴⁵Ornelas, “Testing Luhmann’s Hypothesis: Heresies and Religious Generalization in Western Christianity.”

into one religion in the midst of many other religions. The traditional and feared exclusion (excommunication) has no real consequences in a modern setting. There is not any significant connection between the exclusions of other social systems (lack of income, education, political influence) and religion, and here stands the case for religious communications in the contemporary world.

The Catholic Mass remains a ritual, one which has been subjected to a strong dogmatization process. This means that many of its constituent elements find their meaning in diverse historical situations which have become outdated. The typical example is the Nicene Creed in which many dogmas have been inserted, such as the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son (the divinity of Christ) and the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, the standardization of the format for the celebration of the Mass must be taken into account, the background of which is found in the response of ecclesiastical orthodoxy to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

In its original form, the celebration of the Mass was but the Christianization of the synagogue service. The different parts of the Mass were basically the lessons and the sermon which explained and updated the teachings, and the commemoration of the Last Supper. The Eucharist sacrifice was made of the offering, the Eucharist Prayer and the communion.

As has been noted, the creed is the element of the Mass where the effects of the increasing dogmatization of the ritual are observed, though, in fact, the Eucharist Prayer had been subjected to a semantic fixing in the part which corresponds to the words of Institution, which is the moment, according to the Latin ritual, when transubstantiation happens, that is, when the bread and wine transform into the body and blood of Christ.

The relevance given to the ritual diversity observed in the churches of the East, a process which began by the sixth century, helps to confirm, comparatively speaking, the importance and intensity of the process of religious generalization which took place in western Christianity, and was expressed in a hierarchical structure, dogma construction and sacramental action sanctioned by Rome. The process of religious generalization developed in parallel with a change in the form of social differentiation: the change to the modern or functionally differentiated society.

Finally, it should be noted that the Latin liturgy, regardless of the changes decided by the Vatican Council II, keeps homogeneity in substance, even though there subsist traditional Catholic groups that

consider that these changes were not in line with the liturgical guidelines set out at Trent. It should be granted that this is partly true, in special, with regard to the possibilities of participation opened with the use of vernaculars. But the truth is that real differences do exist among the Eastern Rites, who consider that consecration happens at the time of the invocation of the Holy Ghost (*epiklesis*), and one can even find a Eucharist Prayer without the words of Institution, as is the case of the Syriac Anaphora of Addai and Mari. Also, the Latin liturgy stresses the authority and participation of those who preside over the assemblies (i.e., the priests); on the contrary, Eastern liturgies allow the open participation of the faithful.