

Liturgical Formation in Seminaries and Religious Formation Houses in the Vatican Council II and Post-Conciliar Documents of the Church

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Abstract

Liturgical actions are those that the Church recognizes as part of its public worship. In this article, we discuss the mind of the Church about the liturgical formation in seminaries and religious formation houses in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents. Only a minister who participates (*actuosa participatio*) in the Liturgy can lead the liturgical community to active participation and truly experience the mystery of Christ.

Keywords: Liturgy, Seminary, Vatican,

Introduction

Cultic and ritualistic understanding of Liturgy is still prevalent among the faithful of the Church and the ministers of Liturgy even when we celebrate the 60th year of the first document (on Liturgy) of the II Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* this year.¹ The lack of proper liturgical formation is the reason for this sad situation. The recent Apostolic Letter, *Desiderio Desideravi* (2022, June 29), on the liturgical formation of the people of God by Pope Francis, again underlined the importance of it among the faithful, esp. of its ministers. As Pope Benedict XVI says, “the proper celebration of the Eucharist

¹ This document on the renewal of the liturgy published on 4 December 1963.

involves knowing, understanding and loving the Church's Liturgy in its concrete form. In the Liturgy, we pray with the faithful of every age – the past, the present, and the future are joined in one great chorus of prayer" (Benedict XVI, 2010). So the present article discusses the mind of the Church about the liturgical formation in seminaries and religious formation houses in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents. Only a minister who participates (*actuosa participatio*) in the Liturgy can lead the liturgical community to active participation and truly experience the mystery of Christ.

Liturgy in the Church

Liturgy is the most important action and inner life source of the Church. Today the "work of our Redemption is carried on" (SC, no.2) through Liturgy in the Church. Liturgy is "an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ," as "the whole public worship performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is by the Head and his members," and "an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body which is the Church" (SC, no.7). According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "it means the participation of the People of God in "the work of God." Through the Liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church" (CCC, no.1069). This action of Christ/God in the Liturgy is intimately connected with God/Christ's saving action in history, which we may call the "mystery of salvation." We can say the Liturgy is the commemoration (*anamnesis*) and re-presentation of this mystery of salvation here and now through signs and symbols. So Liturgy can be considered the "today" of salvation history (DD, no.2). Only through participation in the mystery of salvation unfolded in history is one conformed to Christ and become a member of the Body of Christ, i.e., the Church. A person is incorporated into the Church through Liturgy. They grew and matured in the Church through Liturgy. And above all, we can say Liturgy makes the Church. That is why the Vatican Council II calls Liturgy the "source and summit" (SC, no.10) of the Christian life.

At the same time, we shall understand the mind of the Church on non-liturgical prayers and popular devotions concerning Liturgy. Even when emphasizing the usefulness of these private and public pieties in a person's spiritual life, overemphasizing these devotional practices often destroys the ecclesial spirituality of priests and religious. According to II Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* "the liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church" (SC, no.9), and "the

spiritual life is not limited to participation in the liturgy” (SC, no.12). Liturgical actions are those which the Church recognizes as part of its public worship. So those actions and prayers that are not recognized as part of public worship are not Liturgy. Examples are popular devotions such as the rosary, way of the cross, novenas, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, etc. “But such devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it and lead the people to it since the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them” (SC, no.13).

Necessity of Liturgical Formation

If Liturgy is the most important action of the Church, then instruction and formation for that action are surely worthwhile and essential for both people of God in general and the ministers of the Liturgy in particular.

Actuosa Participatio

Why liturgical formation at different levels, especially to the priests and religious, is essential? Fundamentally active/actual participation of the people of God in the Liturgy is the vision of the Church. This is not only for the priests and religious but for the whole people of God. A proper celebration is the means to the actual/active participation of the faithful. As Pope Benedict XVI, in his Apostolic Letter *Sacramentum Caritatis*, says, “the primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself. The *ars celebrandi* is the best way to ensure their *actuosa participatio*” (SaC, no.38).

By *actuosa participatio*, the Council envisions interior/internal participation than mere external activities. As Ratzinger (2007) says, “active participation means something greater [than exterior activities in the Liturgy]. It demands real familiarity with the texts and the forms of the Liturgy, hence a liturgical formation, without which the purely exterior activities remain empty and meaningless. The liturgical formation is thus the fundamental presupposition and even a basic form of active participation in the celebration of the Mass” (Ratzinger, 2007, p.98). This means entering into the Liturgy’s profound internal meaning/spirit and participating in the mysteries of salvation celebrated in the Liturgy. This is actual participation than mere external active participation. The liturgical formation is a formation to enter into the

internal Spirit of Liturgy realm. Pope Francis calls this as “entering into the time of God and space of God”² in the Liturgy.

Greater Understanding of the (Symbolic) Language of Liturgy

The language of the Liturgy is signs and symbols. If we do not understand this language, it is challenging to participate actually in the Liturgy and enter into the “time of God and space of God.” These signs and symbols are like windows to the divine milieu where divine persons of the Trinity act. As Pope Francis says, “modern people—not in all cultures to the same degree—have lost the capacity to engage with symbolic action, which is an essential trait of the liturgical act” (DD, no.27). However, “a human person is an incarnate spirit and therefore as such capable of symbolic action and of symbolic understanding” (DD, no.28). In Liturgy we “experience the power of symbol, which does not consist in referring to some abstract concept but rather in containing and expressing in its very concreteness what it signifies” (DD, no.26).

Priests as Ministers of the Liturgical Celebration

As leaders/ministers of the liturgical celebration, priests are ordained to lead the people of God to the fullness of the mystery of Christ. “A prime need, therefore, is that attention is directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy” (SC, no.14). “For this, they will need proper direction so that they may be able to understand the sacred rites and take part in them wholeheartedly. They will also need to celebrate the sacred mysteries personally and popular devotions imbued with the Spirit of the Liturgy. In addition, they must learn how to observe the liturgical laws, so that life in seminaries and houses of religious may be thoroughly influenced by the Spirit of the liturgy” (SC, no. 17). Pope Francis reminds future priests to lead their brothers and sisters. The ministers who preside in the assembly must know the way, “know it from having studied it on the map of their theological studies but also from having frequented the liturgy in the actual practice of an experience of living faith, nourished by prayer—and certainly not just as an obligation to be fulfilled” (DD, no.36).

² Pope Francis says: “The liturgy is the time of God and space of God, and we must put ourselves there in the time of God, in the space of God, and not look at our watches. The liturgy is nothing less than entering into the mystery of God, allowing ourselves to be carried to the mystery and to be in the mystery. It is the cloud of God that envelops us all.” *Homily* on 10 February 2014.

Liturgy and Spirituality

Liturgy and spirituality are not two parallel roads. Liturgy comes at the center of priestly and religious spirituality. So the Vatican Council II instructs that “in seminaries and houses of religious, clerics shall be given a liturgical formation in their spiritual life” (SC, no.17). Today, we encounter and experience Christ in and through Liturgy. “The Liturgy guarantees for us the possibility of such an encounter. A vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good for us. We need to be present at that Supper to hear His voice, eat His Body and drink His Blood. We need Him. In the Eucharist and all the sacraments, we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and having the power of His Paschal Mystery reach us. The salvific power of the sacrifice of Jesus, his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling reaches us through the celebration of the sacraments” (DD, no.11). In the Liturgy, we meet him personally, as the disciples met him on the way to Emmaus. He breaks the Word for them and then the Bread, where they personally experience the risen Lord. This experience was transformational in their lives. As Pope Francis says, “the liturgy is the first source of divine communion in which God shares his own life with us. It is also the first school of the spiritual life” (DD, no.30).

Liturgical Formation in the Church

For *actuosa participatio* of the people of God in the Liturgy, first of all, the leaders and ministers of Liturgy themselves shall participate in it and lead the people of God by example and instruction. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says: “In the restoration and promotion of the sacred Liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian Spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, through the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work. Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless the pastors themselves, in the first place, become thoroughly imbued with the Spirit and power of the Liturgy and undertake to instruct it. A prime need, therefore, is that attention be directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy” (SC, no.14). If the pastors themselves are not participating in the Liturgy meaningfully, then it is difficult to expect the people of God to do it. Those who give formation shall be formed first.

The liturgical formation has a long tradition in the Church. Some kind of formation in faith and liturgy/sacraments to the catechumens and the newly baptized can be seen from the beginning of the Church, especially concerning mystagogical Catechesis.

Mystagogical Catechesis

From the patristic time onwards, mystagogical Catechesis is the standard form of liturgical Catechesis in the Church. “Mystagogy can be defined as something which leads a newcomer into an experience of mystery. Experience, rather than mere intellectual knowledge, is its keynote” (Danavelil, 2015, p.9). In the Christian tradition, this mystery is “the Mystery of Christ.” Paschal mystery—the death and resurrection of Christ—is the central point of the mystery of Christ. Experience this mystery of Christ in the liturgy/sacraments is the aim of this mystagogy. So, mystagogical Catechesis in the early centuries of the Church is “the explanation or interpretation of the mystery in the Mysteries (Sacraments, esp. the Sacraments of Initiation) to the newly baptized/initiated [neophytes] to get a better understanding of their life in Christ through the celebration of sacraments, esp. Eucharist” (Pallikunnel, 2018, p.379). Mystagogical sermons of the Fathers of the Church, like Ambrose of Milan, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Chrysostom of the early Christian centuries, are very famous. Through these, they led the newly baptized Christians into a richer understanding of the mystery of salvation and experienced the mystery of Christ through participation in the Liturgy. Here the bishop explains the liturgical rites (signs and symbols) to the neophytes in relation to the mystery of salvation, especially its center Paschal Mystery.

Mystagogy is not only for the neophytes but for all. It shall not be informational but formational so that the participation in the Liturgy shall be transformational to that person. It shall be a “catechesis from a liturgical experience to provide both catecheses about the liturgy of the church and for participation in that liturgy more consciously and actively” (Colloton, 2006, p.173). It also generally takes place during the Liturgy, not outside of it.

Other Models

Though there are different models of liturgical formation, a combination of different models is better in modern times. For example, the Catechetical Directory of the Syro Malabar Church visualizes this

Catechesis through celebration, instruction, and apprenticeship (CDSMC, nos.105-117). It shall also be done according to the genius of each Individual Church.

Liturgy Itself as Formation: Eastern Christian Model. Liturgy is the celebration of the Christian faith, and the Christian faith culminates in Liturgy. So we need formation for Liturgy, and at the same time, participation in the Liturgy itself is a tremendous liturgical and faith formation. Generally, the Eastern Christian tradition considers participation in the Liturgy deepens the faith and further enhances the ability to participate deeply in the mysteries of salvation celebrated in the Liturgy.

Catechism Model. This is the model used in the Church for general liturgical formation, especially for children. Generally, this shall be a graded instruction given in the catechism classes according to the maturity and grasping capacity of the children. This is given with other faith instructions and formation. Today this shall be given using modern communication media. Instruction and active participation in the Liturgy, esp. in the Eucharistic Liturgy, enhance their understanding of it and further lead to actual participation in the mysteries celebrated in the Liturgy.

Some Important Documents on Liturgical Formation

The importance of Liturgy in the life of consecrated persons and clergies, and so the need for adequate liturgical formation, is emphasized in many of the documents of the Church. We are considering only some recent documents—Vatican Council II and later.

Sacrosanctum Concilium (4 December 1963)

This document on Liturgy elucidates the vision and mind of the Church on Liturgy. While the first chapter of this document (nos. 1-46) gives general principles of Liturgy for the whole Church (both Western and Eastern Churches), the subsequent chapters (chs. 2-7) enumerate the special norms for the Roman Liturgy. However, some of these norms apply to Easterners, also. Paragraphs 14 to 19 of the first chapter especially elaborate on the need and ways of liturgical formation in seminaries and religious formation houses. To have active participation in the Liturgy by the faithful, the pastors themselves “become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and undertake to instruct it” (SC, no.14). The following numbers instruct about the need of specially trained professors, courses in Liturgy, liturgical formation

in spiritual life, training in sacred rites, etc. in seminaries, theological faculties and religious houses.

Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries (3 June 1979)

This document by the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE) explains the importance of liturgical formation in seminaries (and religious formation houses) and the ways and means for it in a rather elaborate way. It deals with liturgical life in seminaries, including pedagogy of liturgical formation and teaching of the Sacred Liturgy in Seminaries, and a detailed appendix explains the norms and principles. The purpose of this document, as explained in its foreword, “is to offer suitable directives and norms so that the liturgical life and the study of the sacred Liturgy in institutions of priestly formation might be better adapted to modern needs. The great importance that the sacred Liturgy occupies in the life of the Church demands that the contemporary candidate for the priesthood be given a proper formation both in the area of correct practice and in the assiduous study so that he will be most able to carry out his pastoral ministry in this field.”

Desiderio Desideravi (29 June 2022)

Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter *Desiderio desideravi*, published last year on the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, discusses the liturgical formation in general and of seminarians in particular. In this document, Pope Francis elaborately discusses the nature and importance of Liturgy, the need for a serious and vital liturgical formation in the lives of the people of God, especially in its liturgical ministers, *ars celebrandi* of Liturgy and the necessity to understand the dynamics of (liturgical/sacramental) symbolic language. This document is more pastoral than dogmatic/theoretical.

Other Documents

Many of the documents on priestly and religious life and formation contain some instruction on the importance of Liturgy in their life and liturgical formation. When the documents on religious life emphasize the importance of Liturgy in the consecrated life, the documents on priestly formation directly mention the importance of liturgical formation. We are mentioning here only a few of them.

Optatam Totius (28 October 1965). Vatican II document on priestly formation, *Optatam Totius*, mentions the importance of liturgical formation in its paragraph no.4: “They [Major Seminarians] should

be trained for the ministry of worship and sanctification so that by prayer and the celebration of the sacred liturgical functions they may carry on the work of salvation through the eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.”

Perfectae Caritatis (28 October 1965). This Vatican Council II document on the Consecrated Life *Perfectae Caritatis* says about two sources of the spirituality of the consecrated people in the Church: Sacred Scripture and Sacred Liturgy. According to this document, the consecrated people shall “perform the sacred liturgy, especially the holy mystery of the Eucharist, with their hearts and their lips, according to the mind of the Church, and they should nourish their spiritual lives from this richest of sources” (PC, no.6). In the Liturgy the consecrated persons encounter the risen Christ personally and communally and be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into another Christ.

Pastores Dabo Vobis (25 March 1992). This document on the formation of priests speaks about the triple paths of priestly spirituality. “The decree *Optatam Totius* would seem to indicate a triple path to be covered: a faithful meditation on the word of God, active participation in the Church’s holy mysteries [= Sacraments/Liturgy] and the service of charity to the “little ones.” These are three great values and demands which further define the content of the spiritual formation of the candidate to the priesthood” (OT, no.46). To be inserted and immersed in the paschal mystery of Christ in the Liturgy, they need an apt liturgical formation. “A totally necessary aspect of the formation of every Christian, and in particular of every priest, is liturgical formation, in the full sense of becoming inserted in a living way in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and is present and active in the Church’s sacraments” (OT, no.48).

Vita Consecrata (25 March 1996). This document acknowledges the spirituality of the consecrated life is intimately related to the Liturgy: “An indispensable means of effectively sustaining communion with Christ is assuredly the Sacred Liturgy, and especially the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours” (VC, no.95).

Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis [The Gift of the Priestly Vocation] (8 December 2016). This document is the updated version of the 1985 *Ratio Fundamentalis*. It clearly says in its no.167: “The sacred Liturgy must be considered a fundamental discipline. It should be presented in its theological, spiritual, canonical and pastoral

aspects in connection with other disciplines, so that the seminarians can know how the mysteries of salvation are present and operative in the liturgical actions. Additionally, by exploring the texts and rites both of the East and of the West, the sacred Liturgy must be seen as an expression of the faith and of the spiritual life of the Church. Seminarians should grasp the essential and unchangeable nucleus of the Liturgy, as well as that which belongs instead to particular historical settings and is thus amenable to revision, nevertheless observing diligently relevant liturgical and canonical legislation.” And in the next number says: “It will be appropriate, in particular, to study the *ars celebrandi* [art of (proper) celebration], to teach seminarians how to participate fruitfully in the sacred mysteries, and how to celebrate the liturgy practically, with respect for, and fidelity to, the liturgical books.”

Different Levels of Liturgical Formation

Church envisages different levels of liturgical formation in the formative period of the future priests.

General Level

Liturgical formation in the basic/general level is a must for an active participation in the Liturgy by the people of God. As per the dictum “*lex orandi lex credendi*” faith and Church’s public prayer and worship are closely related. “Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it” (MCW, no.6). This may be in different levels: An initial level liturgical formation for catechumens, neophytes and children with a combination of mystagogy and formal liturgical catechism; and in adult level a more advanced ongoing/continuous liturgical formation programme.

Liturgical Formation in Religious Formation Programme

Importance of Liturgy in the consecrated life is emphasized again and again in different documents on Consecrated Life from the time of the Vatican Council II. The highest model of the consecrated life is Christ and its way of life is evangelical counsels. They are called to be like Christ and have intimate relation with him. “An indispensable means of effectively sustaining communion with Christ is assuredly the Sacred Liturgy, and especially the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours” (VC 95). Liturgy is considered as the richest source of their spirituality (PC, no.6). And in many places consecrated people are helping the liturgical communities for better participation in

the Liturgy. They need a deeper understanding of Liturgy so that they may be better helpers of the liturgical ministers.

Liturgical Formation in Seminaries

The Church views the liturgical formation of future priests in the seminaries (and religious formation houses) in different levels with utmost importance. That is why Church gives detailed plan of studies regarding this in its documents. This formation aims at to develop a liturgical vision and a spirit of Liturgy in the future priests.

Liturgical Subjects. Liturgical subjects shall be among the major courses and they shall be taught by the proficient professors. “The study of sacred Liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of studies; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal courses. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects” (SC, no.16). The document *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* by CCE gives an elaborate plan in its second part including the liturgical music and art, and in the appendix gives norms and principles for liturgical formation and teaching including different themes and subjects.

Other Theological Subjects. Not only liturgical subjects but also other theological subjects shall be taught in relation to the Liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* clearly says: “Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the Liturgy, as also the unity which underlies all priestly training. This consideration is especially important for professors of dogmatic, spiritual, and pastoral theology and for those of holy scripture” (SC, no.16). Later documents on liturgical formation underline this aspect again and again (ILFS, nos.51-54; DD, no.37).

Ritual Formation. Ritual formation of the seminarians, especially in their last stages of priestly formation, is a must for *ars celebrandi*. This shall be done according to the year/grade the seminarians progress towards priesthood—lector/*karoya*, subdiaconate, diaconate and priesthood—each one according to his grade. Proficiency in any art needs discipline, instruction and practice. The art of proper celebration of Liturgy is not an exception to this. At the same time they shall remember that even when every aspect of the celebration is kept and

every rubric observed is not enough to make their full participation unless they are not entering into the mystery of Christ/salvation (DD, no.23).

Liturgical Laws and Norms. Understanding the liturgical laws and norms is also part of the liturgical formation. Many consider liturgical laws and norms are to be violated than to be practiced, in the name of modernity, liberal mentality and creativity. The art of proper celebration of Liturgy (*ars celebrandi*) presupposes faithful following of these liturgical laws and norms in letter and Spirit, according to the mind of the Church. As Pope Benedict XVI points out “emphasizing the importance of the *ars celebrandi* also leads to an appreciation of the value of the liturgical norms. The *ars celebrandi* should foster a sense of the sacred and the use of outward signs which help to cultivate this sense, such as, for example, the harmony of the rite, the liturgical vestments, the furnishings and the sacred space. The eucharistic celebration is enhanced when priests and liturgical leaders are committed to making known the current liturgical texts and norms, making available the great riches found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the Order of Readings for Mass” (SaC, no.40). Changing the rites and prayers of the Liturgy is against the mind of the Church. II Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* without doubt says:

22. 1. Regulation of the sacred Liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.
2. In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the Liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.
3. Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the Liturgy on his own authority (SC, no.22).

Celebrants of liturgy act in the name of Christ and the Church. They are custodians of Liturgy, not owners. They have no propriety over Liturgy, as the document *Dominicae Cenaes* says: “He [celebrant of the liturgy] cannot consider himself a “proprietor” who can make free use of the liturgical text and of the sacred rite as if it were his own property, in such a way as to stamp it with his own arbitrary personal style. At times this latter might seem more effective, and it may better

correspond to subjective piety; nevertheless, objectively it is always a betrayal of that union which should find its proper expression in the sacrament of unity” (DC, no.12). The people of God have every right to participate in the proper Liturgy of the Church, not the made-up Liturgy of the celebrant. This principle shall be emphasized throughout the priestly formation.

Ars Celebrandi: A Must in the Formation Houses. Even if the seminarians/formees get a correct theoretical/theological formation, if the celebration of the Liturgy in the seminaries/formation houses is different from what they are studying then they get only a defective liturgical formation. So proper celebration of Liturgy in its letter and Spirit in the seminaries and formation houses of the Religious is indeed a prerequisite for a proper liturgical formation. In the seminary there shall be “possibility of experiencing a celebration that is not only exemplary from a ritual point of view, but also authentic and alive, which allows the living out of a true communion with God, that same communion toward which theological knowledge must tend. Only the action of the Spirit can bring to completion our knowledge of the mystery of God, for the mystery of God is not a question of something grasped mentally but a relationship that touches all of life. Such experience is fundamental so that, once seminarians become ordained ministers, they can accompany communities in the same journey of knowledge of the mystery of God, which is the mystery of love” (DD, no.39).

Liturgical Leadership of the Future Ministers of Liturgy. Liturgical ministry is at the core of priestly life and service. Therefore “they should be trained for the ministry of worship and sanctification so that by prayer and the celebration of the sacred liturgical functions they may carry on the work of salvation through the eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (PDV, no.57). They are to be ordained to preach the Word of God and to sanctify others through sacraments and Liturgy. So they shall take leadership in liturgical matters by helping the liturgical ministers both in the seminary and in the parishes they are helping, each one in his own capacity—some as readers/sub-deacons/deacons etc. At the same time they shall project Christ than themselves in the Liturgy. Pope Francis warns the liturgical ministers who are presiding with “a heightened personalism of the celebrating style which at times expresses a poorly concealed mania to be the centre of attention” (DD, no.54).

Liturgical Formation for Pastoral Ministry and Mission. Liturgical formation is also for a formation for further pastoral ministry and mission. Every liturgical celebration ends with a sending out to live the mystery celebrated in the Liturgy and witness to the Risen Lord among the nations. At the same time every mission looks forward to form a Christian/liturgical community and celebrate their faith in the Liturgy.

Conclusion

Conscious and active participation in the Liturgy is the goal of every liturgical formation in general. At the same time liturgical formation of future priests extends this goal further deep and wide because they are the leaders of the liturgical community and celebrants of divine mysteries in the name of Christ and the Church. Church documents, from the Vatican Council II Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, up to Pope Francis' recent Apostolic Letter *Desiderio Desideravi*, reveal the mind of the Church on this important and urgent topic for our consideration. These documents not only exposes the importance of Liturgy and liturgical formation for the people of God in general and for the future priests in particular but elaborates the ways and means to do this. Through this liturgical formation the future priests get not only theoretical information but formation in the Mystery of Christ and encounter him in the Liturgy and thus be transformed into Christ, the priest. Because "in the liturgy they acquire a deeper and fuller experience of the priesthood and their interior lives becomes more mature and more deeply unified" (ILFS, no.62). Even though the Church considers the liturgical formation as an extreme important matter it is unfortunate that for many bishops, major superiors and formators this is not a priority in India.

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